

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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**Oxford Farming Conference Launches "Inspiring Innovators" Programme for 2025**

*New initiative invites innovators in food and farming to share groundbreaking ideas at prestigious conference*

The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC), in partnership with McCain Foods (GB) Ltd., is thrilled to announce the launch of the "Inspiring Innovators" programme for the 2025 conference. This exciting new initiative offers a unique platform for trailblazers within the agricultural, food, and rural sectors to showcase their ideas, research, or new technologies to a distinguished audience at one of the UK's most prestigious farming conferences.

Set against the theme “Facing Change, Finding Opportunity,” the 2025 OFC will take place from 8-10 January. As part of the programme, up to six selected participants will have the opportunity to present their concepts during the opening session on the afternoon of Wednesday, 8 January 2025.

Jude McCann, and Sheena Horner, both OFC Directors, initiated the idea, Sheena said: “The Inspiring Innovators programme provides an exceptional opportunity for ambitious individuals from all backgrounds to share their ideas or concepts with an esteemed Oxford audience, raising awareness and driving interest in their research, start-up, or innovative technology. Participants will also benefit from valuable feedback from industry leaders and experts, offering insights that can further develop their vision.”­­­­

Moreover, candidates will be provided with professional presentation and skills training at the McCain Foods facility in Scarborough. This training day, scheduled for 19 November 2024, is designed to ensure that those chosen can deliver their ideas with maximum impact. Additionally, each selected innovator will receive a full conference ticket, including accommodation, allowing them to further network and engage with over 700 delegates during the conference.

The OFC is renowned for gathering the brightest minds and most influential figures in British agriculture, and the Inspiring Innovators programme aligns perfectly with the conference's mission to promote inclusive, diverse, and challenging discussions.

Geoff Sansome, Chairman of OFC 2025, expressed his enthusiasm for the new initiative: "At my first conference, I was inspired to share my own experiences in a session, which was both listened to and valued. The OFC has always been about fostering varied and thought-provoking discussions, and the Inspiring Innovators programme embodies these values by providing a platform for anyone with a transformative idea that can support the sector. We can’t wait to hear from the rising stars of tomorrow and bring their thinking to the forefront.”

James Hopwood, McCain’s Director of Agriculture said: "At McCain we are delighted to be partnering with OFC on the creation and launch of the exciting new Inspiring Innovators initiative. This is a unique opportunity for individuals from across all backgrounds to have an open platform to showcase their concepts, ideas, thoughts and interests to industry leaders. We look forward to supporting the successful applicants through the coming months and the discussion that follows."

Individuals interested in participating in the Inspiring Innovators programme are invited to apply by submitting a written application of no more than 1,000 words, describing their concept and how it aligns with the 2025 conference theme. Shortlisted candidates will then be asked to submit a one-minute video or attend a brief online interview. Finalists will be notified by the OFC Directors, who will assist with logistical arrangements for presenting at the conference.

The deadline for submissions is 5pm on Monday, 30 September 2024.

For more information and to submit your application, please visit: <https://www.ofc.org.uk/inspiring-innovators>

**Notes to Editors:**

For more information on the Oxford Farming Conference (OFC):

**Website:** [www.ofc.org.uk](http://www.ofc.org.uk/)

**Twitter:**[@oxfordfarming](http://www.twitter.com/oxfordfarming)

**YouTube:** [OxfordFarmingConference](https://www.youtube.com/oxfordfarmingconference" \t "_blank)

* The OFC is one of the only external events to be allowed to host a debate in the Oxford Union. It has a long and proud history going back to 1936 and a strong reputation as one of the UK’s leading agricultural events. It always takes place in Oxford in the first week of January and is based at the Oxford Examination Schools. It offers a vibrant programme of speakers, panel and politics sessions as well as networking.
* OFC is a charity that invests in agricultural education and knowledge-sharing. It attracts over 650 delegates every year, including many people from the wider food chain, retail, NGOs, scientific organisations, media, policy-making bodies and governments from around the world.
* HRH Princess Royal is patron of the OFC.
* The dates of the 2025 OFC are 8th - 10th January 2025.
* Geoff Sansome is the chair for OFC25 and the theme is 'facing change, finding opportunity'.