

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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**Oxford Farming Conference appoints three new directors for 2026-28 term**

The Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) is pleased to announce the appointment of three new Directors to its board for the 2026-28 term.

Leprino Foods Sustainability Manager Ben Williams, farmer and land manager Jamie Graham, and Savills Director and Head of Rural Research Kelly Hewson-Fisher bring diverse expertise and a shared commitment to driving positive change in the agricultural sector.

With an exceptional amount of interest in the positions, the interview panel were keen to select individuals who had experience and knowledge within business development, policy and governmental affairs, and farming and management, to complement the strengths of existing Directors.

**Ben Williams** began his agricultural career in education, managing farm units at secondary schools and colleges, where he developed a model to engage disengaged students. He also honed skills as a butcher and launched a successful street food business. In 2018, Ben joined the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) to lead knowledge transfer for the pork sector, focusing on innovative education and sustainable production. Since 2021, he has been with Leprino Foods - the world’s leading producer of mozzarella - overseeing sustainability for a network of 380 contracted farms across Wales and Northern Ireland. Ben’s key areas of on farm focus are sustainable feed, herd management, fertilisers and regenerative agriculture as well as novel fuels.

Commenting on his appointment, he said, *"I applied, as at the time, I was looking for a group of leaders that could help drive change in the agricultural sector and felt a bit lost. Having attended previous OFC events and seeing some of the challenging topics and speakers the OFC had tackled, OFC and its attendees felt like a network of leaders who shared my desire to drive real, positive change in the agriculture and horticulture sectors.*

“*The chance now to help grow, develop and support that network in making real change is really exciting. To be an OFC Director at a personal level is an amazing challenge, a great opportunity and something I can’t wait to get stuck into.”*

**Jamie Graham** is a farmer and land manager on the scenic banks of Loch Lomond, Scotland, where he oversees Montrose Estates, a diverse rural enterprise including a livestock farm with 160 suckler cows and 1,500 ewes, renewable energy assets, hospitality, leisure, and forestry activities. Passionate about reducing the climate impact of livestock farming, Jamie has also successfully led a low-carbon finance business to an initial public offering (IPO) on London's AIM and has been deeply involved in clean energy and sustainability ventures. He has served as an advisor, angel investor, and Cleantech Dealmaker for the Department for International Trade's Global Entrepreneur Programme. Jamie's commitment to community extends to his roles as a board member of Borderline (now part of Scotscare), Director of the Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust, and Chairman of the Buchanan Community Hydro Society.

Jamie expressed, *"I am honoured and delighted to have been selected as a Director for OFC 2026-28. I very much look forwards to working with the Council and wider OFC community in together discovering, describing and inspiring the future for UK agriculture. There are many and new questions being asked of our sector. OFC can help us to find the best answers by convening the widest possible constituency, informing solutions by sharing experiences and inspiring the next generation."*

**Kelly Hewson-Fisher** brings extensive experience in agricultural business consulting, water resource management, and rural research. Brought up on family farms, she has held roles at ADAS, Anglian Water, and the National Farmers' Union (NFU). She joined Savills in 2023 and currently leads an 11-strong team focused on integrating data, policy, and research to provide insight, commentary and thought leadership for the rural sector across the UK.

She said, *"I am delighted to be appointed as a Director of OFC. It feels a privilege to be able to hold this position for a three-year term and follow in the footsteps of some of the great people we have in the UK agriculture sector. It’s an exciting time to be part of the conference, to support any transition of change and continue to build for the future. Having been part of the Inspire Programme, I am looking forward to supporting these programmes and continuing to build relationships."*

The OFC Council roles are entirely voluntary, with expenses covered. The new Directors will attend the 2025 conference to begin their induction for a three-year term.

**Geoff Sansome,** the current Chair of OFC, shared his excitement for the new appointments, *"We are immensely proud to welcome Ben, Jamie, and Kelly to the OFC board. Their vast and diverse expertise, coupled with a shared passion for sustainability and innovation, is exactly what the Oxford Farming Conference represents. Since its inception, OFC has been at the forefront of shaping the future of agriculture, acting as a crucible for new ideas, bold thinking, and leadership within our sector. For over 80 years, the conference has brought together pioneers, visionaries, and change-makers, and with the addition of these new Directors, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering progress and empowering the agricultural community to meet the challenges of tomorrow.*

*“Together, we will continue to inspire, support, and lead the conversation on the most pressing issues facing UK agriculture and beyond, ensuring that the OFC remains a beacon of thought leadership in the evolving landscape of farming."*

The 2025 conference will explore how current and future farming policies provide new opportunities for farmers, how to adapt to the changing natural world, and how adversity can produce inspiring innovators and leaders in agriculture. The conference will take place from 8 to 10 January 2025, with both physical and online attendance options.

For more information about the Oxford Farming Conference and to book tickets, visit: <https://www.ofc.org.uk/>

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**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)

* 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'.