

Case Study

LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming)

– 'Step up to the Marque' to secure the future of farming

Introduction

For 18 years, LEAF has inspired and enabled prosperous farming that enriches the environment and engages local communities.

In order to continue to deliver long lasting and significant changes to sustainable farming practices, LEAF identified a need to increase its membership base.

This was to be delivered by communicating the strengths of the organisation and extolling its value to the industry.

Objective

Mistral was asked to develop a strategy that would increase the perceived value of LEAF activities and LEAF membership in a bid to:

- Increase revenue from current membership
- Attract new members into current groups.

Strategy

Mistral began by undertaking market research activities to define more fully the potential barriers to membership uptake. The aim was to gauge the level of support that could be expected from both farmers and corporate members.

Key messages were formulated and a strategy was devised which used a number of channels, such as speaker opportunities, case studies, the farming media, internal channels of communication and other stakeholder involvement.

Mistral introduced the Future of Farming Week, which took place from 16-22 March 2009. This was a new awareness campaign that encouraged farmers to 'step up to the Marque' and do at least one thing to help secure the future of UK Farming.

LEAF's 150 corporate members were contacted, briefed on the campaign and offered ways in which to help with the membership drive. An intensive press campaign, which built to a climax of activity during the week, highlighted LEAF activities, the benefits of LEAF membership and engendered genuine support from the involvement of key farming publications.

Results

Widespread media support and coverage – featuring Future of Farming Week and LEAF member case studies – was achieved across the farming media. This included two double-page articles in separate issues of Farmers Weekly, one in Fresh Produce Journal, and a full-page spread in Farmers Guardian.

Farmers and organisations up and down the country pledged their support to Future of Farming Week, taking steps to highlight to others the virtues of LEAF.

Particular highlights included:

- Celebrity farmer Jimmy Doherty joining LEAF, and undertaking the LEAF Audit
- The Covent Garden Market Authority breakfast event, which brought together LEAF Marque producers with London's wholesalers and chefs to discuss the increasing demand in the capital

- for food from sustainable sources
- Securing the support of a number of luminaries, including: HRH Prince Charles, Baroness Byford, CLA president Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher and farming and environment minister, Jane Kennedy MP.

