# Farmers crowned top countryside champions by Gen Z, with Clarkson and Attenborough leading public trust



A recent poll has positioned farmers as the esteemed champions of the Great British countryside, particularly in the eyes of the younger generation. Conducted by the Future Countryside policy group, the survey revealed that 32% of individuals aged 18 to 27 viewed farmers more favourably than environmental activists, who garnered just 12% of the votes. Politicians were notably sidelined, only managing to capture a mere 4% of public support. This sentiment underscores a growing recognition among young people of farmers' vital roles in both the agricultural sector and the broader environmental landscape.

Respondents identified Sir David Attenborough as the premier celebrity representative for the countryside, with Jeremy Clarkson, known for his television series "Clarkson's Farm," following closely behind. Their prominence reflects a shift in how farming is perceived; Attenborough and Clarkson have effectively bridged the gap between nature, farming, and mainstream media, bringing rural issues to the forefront. Other notable names mentioned included shepherdess and farmer Amanda Owen, alongside TV presenter Clare Balding.

At the recent Future Countryside Conference held at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, Lord Herbert of South Downs, co-chair of Future Countryside, interpreted the findings as a pivotal insight into Gen Z’s views on agriculture. He remarked that while young adults are deeply appreciative of nature and farming, they prefer moderate and practical approaches rather than extreme measures. This demographic sees the countryside as an integral part of their heritage, and they fundamentally regard farmers as the most capable advocates to tackle pressing challenges such as food security and environmental restoration.

The survey's additional findings revealed that the top priorities for farmers, as perceived by the young respondents, include ensuring animal welfare (42%), safeguarding the land and natural environment (40%), and providing food for the population (37%). In contrast, practices such as rewilding and reliance on chemical fertilisers were deemed less significant by this generation.

In terms of cultural portrayals of rural life, the poll illuminated how media representations resonate with the public. Attenborough's documentary "Wild Isles" was rated as the most accurate depiction, while "Clarkson’s Farm" positively influenced perceptions of farming by humanising its struggles, addressing topics like bureaucracy and profitability. Clarkson’s candid discussions are credited with improving the public's understanding of agricultural issues, making him an unexpected yet effective ambassador for the industry. As noted by Defra minister Mark Spencer, Clarkson’s approach significantly engages viewers, particularly among younger audiences who might otherwise remain detached from rural matters.

Furthermore, Clarkson's Diddly Squat Farm has become something of a cultural phenomenon, drawing visitors eager to experience authentic countryside life. The influx of tourism associated with his farm underscores a unique “Jeremy Clarkson effect,” stimulating interest in the industry and highlighting the broader economic landscape of rural Britain. However, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges many farmers face, including planning issues that Clarkson himself has publicly critiqued. Such discussions shed light on systemic problems within agriculture and the necessity of addressing these concerns to foster growth in the countryside.

In conclusion, the prominence of farmers, coupled with the positive public perception of figures like Clarkson and Attenborough, illustrates a hopeful narrative for the future of farming. As younger generations articulate their values and expectations, there lies a crucial opportunity for the agricultural community to engage and adapt, ensuring that their stewardship of the countryside remains relevant and sustainable.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4414062/farmers-named-best-countryside-champions-gen), [[2]](https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4414062/farmers-named-best-countryside-champions-gen)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4414062/farmers-named-best-countryside-champions-gen), [[2]](https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4414062/farmers-named-best-countryside-champions-gen)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4086777/jeremy-clarkson-farmings-best-ambassadors), [[4]](https://inews.co.uk/culture/television/jeremy-clarkson-is-good-for-farming-and-a-huge-positive-influence-says-farming-minister-2140060)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/showbiz-tv/jeremy-clarksons-favourite-cotswolds-places-26644906), [[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarkson%27s_Farm)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/25/many-british-farmers-suffering-planning-difficulties-jeremy/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4414062/farmers-named-best-countryside-champions-gen> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4414062/farmers-named-best-countryside-champions-gen> - A recent poll by the Future Countryside policy group reveals that 32% of young people aged 18-27 view farmers as the best champions of the Great British countryside, surpassing activists (12%) and politicians (4%). The survey also highlights that Sir David Attenborough is considered the top celebrity to represent the countryside, with Jeremy Clarkson following closely. Additionally, the poll indicates that young adults appreciate nature and farming but prefer moderate approaches, viewing the countryside positively as part of their heritage.
3. <https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4086777/jeremy-clarkson-farmings-best-ambassadors> - A poll of over 1,500 people indicates that Jeremy Clarkson is viewed as a positive ambassador for farming. The survey shows that 95% of respondents have a favorable opinion of the TV presenter. Clarkson's straightforward approach to discussing farming challenges, such as bureaucracy and profitability, resonates with the public, enhancing the industry's profile and addressing issues like bovine tuberculosis.
4. <https://inews.co.uk/culture/television/jeremy-clarkson-is-good-for-farming-and-a-huge-positive-influence-says-farming-minister-2140060> - Defra minister Mark Spencer has praised Jeremy Clarkson as a positive ambassador for UK farming. Clarkson's series 'Clarkson's Farm' has been recognized for its impact on raising awareness about farming among consumers, especially younger audiences. Spencer acknowledges Clarkson's unique ability to engage viewers and stimulate discussions about rural issues, benefiting the farming community.
5. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/showbiz-tv/jeremy-clarksons-favourite-cotswolds-places-26644906> - Jeremy Clarkson's Diddly Squat Farm in the Cotswolds has become a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors interested in the countryside lifestyle. The area offers various attractions, including the Cotswold Wildlife Park, Jaffé and Neale Bookshop & Cafe, and other local gems. Clarkson's favorite spots provide visitors with authentic experiences of rural life, as showcased in his series 'Clarkson's Farm.'
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarkson%27s_Farm> - Clarkson's Farm is a British television documentary series featuring Jeremy Clarkson's attempt to run a 1,000-acre farm in the Cotswolds. The series has been praised for raising public awareness of the British farming industry and has become the most-watched Prime Video original series in the UK. It has also led to increased tourism in the Cotswolds, with visitors flocking to Clarkson's farm shop and surrounding attractions.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/03/25/many-british-farmers-suffering-planning-difficulties-jeremy/> - The 'Jeremy Clarkson effect' has influenced rural Britain, with many farmers facing planning difficulties. Research indicates that 93% of farmers agree that the planning system is hindering economic growth in the countryside. Clarkson's public criticism of his local council over planning disputes has highlighted broader issues within the agricultural sector, leading to increased awareness and discussions about rural development challenges.