

Prince of Wales calls for more school farms

The Prince of Wales has called for more ‘school farms’ where pupils grow their own food and rear livestock, while the Duchess of Cornwall wants more young women to join the Women's Institute.



The Prince of Wales during a visit to Riseholme Agricultural College in Lincolnshire Photo: Rui Vieira/PA



By [Louise Gray](#), Environment Correspondent

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Addressing young farmers in Lincolnshire, the Prince said Britain needs to grow more of our own food in order to feed the growing world population.

But he said not enough young people are going into farming or horticulture.

The Prince suggested that more schools set up vegetable gardens or keep pigs and hens so young people feel connected to nature and learn how to produce food.

Already the scheme is popular, with schools in cities and the countryside setting up their own small holdings.

“I still feel very strongly that the school farm could play such a valuable part in introducing at an early stage the whole process of growing something or looking after an animal.”

Meanwhile the Duchess of Cornwall said more young women should join the Women’s Institute to learn traditional skills, although she admitted sowing is “not her forte”.

During a tour of Lincolnshire, the Duke and Duchess met young farmers and stone masons.

In a speech to Riseholme Agricultural College, the Prince said rural skills are the future.

“It is absolutely clear that the most fundamental challenges the world faces over the coming years will need to be solved by those working in agriculture. Feeding a population of nine billion people - and growing (is that sustainable in itself?) - with reducing resources, not to mention the inevitable impact of climate change, while at the same time sustaining nature’s capacity to sustain us, will be no mean feat,” he warned.

But after talking to young farmers, the Prince said there was not enough money or support for the sector.

He called for more training for young people in getting jobs in the rural sector, driving tractors and learning skills.

Without young people, he feared the traditional countryside will be lost as there is no one to keep up farms.

“If we take away the family farms and the farmers, what would be left? As each and every one of you understands, the special bits of the countryside so beloved by visitors do not just happen by accident. It is farmers who created it and who now care for it.”

Meanwhile the Duchess of Cornwall had a go at Christmas decoration making, beadwork and flower arranging before being made an honorary member of the Lincolnshire South WI in Great Hale.

“I was better at some of the crafts than others,” she said “I need a few more lessons from the good ladies here - when I come back to Lincolnshire maybe I could have another lesson”.

“I am a great believer in the WI, and the continuity it brings,” she said.

“We need to get more young people to join.”

Sandra Overton from the Burton Corner Institute showed the Duchess a type of needlework called prick and stitch, and how to use it in making Christmas cards.

On the Duchess's sewing skills, she said: “She's better than she thinks she is”.

The Duchess admitted: “Sewing's not my forte, I have tried and tried.”