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Ocado Retail and Soil Association to establish five nature friendly demo farms

Ocado, the world's largest dedicated online supermarket, has teamed up with pioneering environmental charity the [Soil Association](#) to set up five demonstration nature-friendly farms around the UK. The aim of these farms is to help significantly boost the adoption of nature and climate friendly farming practices around the UK.



Ocado CEO Hannah Gibson on farm with Soil Association CEO Helen Browning

Each of the five farms will focus on a different area of farming - from dairy cows, beef and sheep to orchard fruit and potatoes. Three of the farms selected will be farms that already work with Ocado with some supplying Ocado Own Range fresh produce.

One of the farms will be Godminster Organic Farm in Bruton, Somerset that supplies Ocado through White's Organic Jumbo Oats and Godminster organic cheese. Each farm will host training sessions for other farmers, sharing technical expertise and support on a range of topics such as monitoring soil health to establishing 'herbal leys'. Herbal leys are sown pastures made from a mixture of grasses, herbs and legumes which deliver soil fertility, biology and structure, boost livestock health, encourage biodiversity and work well with low levels of rainfall.

The demo farms are part of a wider partnership between Ocado and Soil Association which has been established to help transform the way we eat, farm and care for our natural world.

The partnership will also support research to advance farm animal welfare, working closely with farmers to advance animal welfare standards and demonstrate how giving farmed animals a good life is practical, profitable, and sustainable. Alongside the work on the ground Ocado and Soil Association will build a 'Farm to Fork Ambassadors programme' - encouraging people providing healthy and sustainable food to share their stories and experiences with others in the industry.

Hannah Gibson Ocado Retail CEO said: "Supporting local farmers and promoting homegrown produce is something we care deeply about at Ocado. In fact, we have recently launched a Best of British aisle on site to make it easier for our customers to shop food that's farmed and produced in the UK. Our new 'Farm to Fork' partnership with the Soil Association reinforces our commitment and by working with farmers who are pioneering agroecological farming practices, it increases the quality, freshness and sustainability of the food we're able to offer our customers."

Helen Browning, Soil Association CEO said: "I can't think of a better company for us to partner with. Ocado Retail has always championed small producers and we are excited to be working together with such a young and innovative company which shares our commitment to nature friendly food and farming.

"The support of Ocado will act as a catalyst for change, allowing us to deliver a programme that champions and supports fixing our broken food and farming system. It will enable us to deliver work that is essential if we are to achieve our climate, health, and biodiversity goals over the next few years."

Ocado has been a long-standing champion for local farmers and producers - earlier this month, the online retailer gathered over 800 UK-farmed products into a *Best of British* aisle on site. Endorsed by DEFRA and the NFU, the aisle comprises products that are British all year round, with the aim of supporting farmers and promoting the very best homegrown produce to customers. Over the coming months, the 800+ base - the largest range of any other UK supermarket - will be bolstered by seasonal produce as and when it comes into season.

Ends

For media queries or interview requests, please contact Pete Williams, head of PR, on 0117 3145149, 07768 811595, or pwilliams@soilassociation.org; or Sophie Nixon, PR manager, on 01173145022 or snixon@soilassociation.org

Note to editors:

Photo caption:

Hannah Gibson, Ocado Retail CEO and Helen Browning, Soil Association CEO launch the Farm to Fork partnership at Woodoaks Farm, Maple Cross – and take a tour of the farm which was donated to the Soil Association Land Trust in 2020 and is now in transition to organic and will be a major showcase of agroecological or nature friendly farming practices as well as a valuable community and educational hub to the public and school children.

About Ocado Retail:

Ocado.com (operated by Ocado Retail) is the world's largest dedicated online supermarket, and is a joint venture between Marks & Spencer Group and Ocado Group.

Reaching over 80% of the UK population, more than 1 million active customers benefit from an unbeatable range of around 50,000 products (including big-name brands, more than 7,000 items from the M&S food and drink range and Ocado's Own-Range), unbeatable service with next-to-no substitutions, and the freshest produce. Every order is carefully packed in one of seven distribution centres using world-leading software and technology. Shopping is then delivered directly to customers using a network of regional spokes and fleet of delivery vans.

Ocado developed the first grocery shopping app in 2010 and continues to innovate, offering customers the best possible experience. Ocado Retail is also responsible for Zoom by Ocado, its rapid grocery delivery service.

The Soil Association is a UK-wide sustainable food and farming charity which aims to protect nature by transforming how people eat and farm. Since 1946 the organisation has impacted millions of people, creating practical, nature-based solutions to recover climate, nature and health through sustainable and regenerative food, farming and forestry. We promote the connection between people, food, and the natural world, lobbying government on key environmental policies, helping to serve millions of certified school meals with Food for Life, engaging thousands in farmer-led research with Innovative Farmers, and measuring

the impact of sustainable farming with Soil Association Exchange. We have a network of spokespeople on farming and food topics who can provide expert comment and share their experiences. This includes organic farmer Helen Browning OBE, who is Chief Executive of the Soil Association Group. The Chair of Trustees is Martin Nye and Soil Association Limited is registered as a charity in England and Wales no. 206862 and as a charity in Scotland no. SC039168. Registered as a company no. 00409726.

To find out more visit www.soilassociation.org