

# Swell AI Transcript: EIT Food Will Farm\_V1 .mp3

SPEAKER\_01:

Picture this, rolling green fields, crisp country air, the bleating of newborn lambs, and the feeling of soil running through your fingers. There's nothing quite like working on a farm. Yet across the UK and beyond, there's a growing concern that the younger generation are turning their backs on farming as a career choice. As we move through the 21st century, we find ourselves in a unique predicament. The agriculture sector plays a pivotal role in the global economy and its ability to sustainably feed a growing population. However, we're facing a shortage of young adults willing to take to the fields. What's the reason for this shortage? What does life actually look like for the young farmer? And how do we encourage more young farmers into this massively important profession? I'm Matt Eastland, welcome to the Food Fight podcast from EIT Food, exploring the greatest challenges facing the food system and the innovations and entrepreneurs looking to solve them. It brings me great pleasure to welcome our first guest of Series 5, author, influencer and farmer, Will Young. You may know Will as the breakout star from his season on Love Island or from his wildly popular TikTok account, at Farmer Will. But today we're going to be chatting about Will's first love, the farm. Will's a sheep farmer from Buckinghamshire and works on land that's been in his family since 1870. And since coming to fame, Will's used his platform to educate his followers on the realities of farm life and why more young people should become farmers. And that's exactly what we've invited him on the podcast to discuss. Will, total pleasure to have you on the show.

SPEAKER\_00:

Thank you for having me, I'm excited.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah, me too, me too. Right, let's talk about, I really want to understand your backstory and how you've got to where you are, but just for our listeners, I'd like to just frame this conversation a bit. So, I've read a study recently that reports over half of Gen Zers aged 13 to 26 would like to become an influencer, given the chance. which on one hand seems to be quite a contrast to more like traditional career choices like farming. So with that in mind, how optimistic do you feel about the next generation's attitudes towards farming?

SPEAKER\_00:

It's tough. It is really, really tough. I'm doing that all I can to try and spread the word of farming, but I've definitely seen it in my area and a lot of people that I've spoken to. People don't have an interest in farming. They don't want to farm. I don't know what that is down to, particularly what the interest or not on interest is. But, you know, there's a definite lack of younger people getting into farming.

SPEAKER\_01:

So let's try to dig into a bit. So what do you think of the challenges then? So you say you're not sure, but do you think it's just not sexy enough? Do you think there's just too much work involved? What do you think are the main obstacles for people?

SPEAKER\_00:

I think there's a couple personally. I'm really pushing for agriculture to get taught in schools. I think, you know, growing up, I came from a family farm background, so I knew farming was an option. However, you know, my peers in my class, they might not necessarily know agriculture is something that you can go down into. You know, you've got that side of it. You've got the economic side of it. To be quite honest, it isn't a high paid job. You're not going to earn loads of money. And you can see different farmers currently now looking to diversify their farm and different grants the governments are giving. They're not crop or animal kind of like sustainability. You know, we've got ground on our farm, which we've stopped livestock going on to just because the government pay you more to not have livestock sort of thing. Which seems counterintuitive. It's really, you know, it's really, really strange because surely the government would be like, you know, with the farmers, we want you to farm as much as you can and as much as possible. But, you know, if it's not getting pushed by the government, then kind of like when it goes down the chain, why is it going to get pushed to the younger generation?

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah. So I guess there's a younger generation teaching angle that would be good to talk about. And there's probably some kind of like government policy support angle, which we'll absolutely get into.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, quickly, because I did a bit of research. I'm doing actually a talk in Nottingham to some interns and young farmers, which is, you know, really incredible. I looked up a statistics. Do you know the average age for a farmer globally? Oh, I do not. Now, 60 years old really is the average age. I know. And that just really shows you even kind of like my parents, like that sort of generation, you know, it's absolutely mind-blowing that it's 60 years old that is the average age globally, and 59 in the UK. That's crazy. I know, it just really does show you, and you can't stress it enough, how much of a lack young people and the younger generation are getting into farming.

SPEAKER\_01:

And I guess that's why you know, all the work that you're doing on TikTok on Instagram, and I guess we're coming on to your book. I guess that's what you're trying to do, right? You're desperately trying to encourage more people to get into this as a super important profession.

SPEAKER\_00:

100% Yeah, at the start of my TikTok, if I take you back, it was done by like complete chance, posted videos to my friends. And one

of them was like, you know, up on TikTok. And I was like, I don't know, should I? And after a couple of days, I did and it you know, it blew up and there was a definite niche and an interest of, you know, people who were farmers and came from farming background, but then also people who had no idea about farming or agricultural or what actually happens on a farm. You know, the first point of call was just trying to bridge the gap between people who had no idea and people who did have an idea. And as the years and time went on, it was trying to bridge it to let people know it is an opportunity and it is something you can go into.

SPEAKER\_01:

And can we go back even further? Yeah. So, you know, thinking about what we all wanted to be as kids, I think I was saying to you just before the show, I've always wanted to be an author. You've beat me to that already, so well done on that. What did you want to be when you were younger? Because I think I read in your book actually you had aspirations to be a footballer, right?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah.

SPEAKER\_01:

So why did you kind of go from football into farming?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah. So I've actually tried loads of different things because if I take you back to my upbringing, my dad Didn't necessarily force or say put that pressure on me my brother to farm. He said it's always gonna be here It's always gonna be an option, but get an education See if you have any other loves and ever any other passions and the reason he did that is because when he was a kid You know three four years old my granddad put his put the wellies on was all right get outside You know get a shovel start mucking out sort of thing. You know so when he bought me my brother up and It was go and find what your loves and passions are. And, you know, I started off to play football, played academy football and actually left because I kind of maturely weighed up my realistic, you know, options. Am I actually going to be a footballer? Probably not. So, you know, tough choice. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, tough choice and to be quite honest. I didn't actually enjoy it that much. Yeah, I was really good at football, but just didn't you know training five times a week playing like two games It's a lot and you know, my social life wasn't wasn't great I was just football football football and I was like bad enough, you know, yeah, and I guess you probably Missed that connection to the the farm and nature as well, right?

SPEAKER\_01:

So it's probably a world away from actually really what was it at the core of who you are. I

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, a hundred percent. And then I moved on to an accountant, learning to be an accountant, which actually... I was going to say,

that's got to be useful though, right? No, I was about to say, fast forward a few years, we're now doing the farms book. So that's actually come in handy. And then retail, did a bit of retail. Couldn't tell you why I did retail, but, you know, because my dad was like, go out and see if you like anything. I was like, almost, I felt like, oh, maybe I have to sort of thing. But, you know, I always worked on the farm and helped out. And it got to a point where I was like to my dad, look, this is silly now. this is silly, I want to come back farming full-time and came back at the age of 17 and worked there since and have a look back.

SPEAKER\_01:

Well congrats, congrats, what an amazing journey and let's jump to your book. Thank you, you brought it in for us all.

SPEAKER\_00:

For the Love of Farming.

SPEAKER\_01:

For the Love of Farming and I've actually been reading this, really well written, I love your kind of transparency around farming and what farming life is actually about. So can I ask you why the need to write a book? Obviously you're doing so much on all these other channels. Why did you feel that this was what you needed to do next?

SPEAKER\_00:

It's just for me another platform to get kind of like the knowledge and the educational side and kind of like the realities of farming, farming actually out there, right, you know, I don't think you can have too many platforms to push, you know, the word of farming out to, to be quite honest, and For me, it's just one for the bookcase, to be honest. I'll be showing my kids that when I'm older. Look how cool your dad was.

SPEAKER\_01:

You were fabulous on it, I have to say. Well, OK, well, as I say, huge congratulations. And I think by the time this comes out, this will already be launched. So, you know, fingers crossed this goes really, really well for you. Thank you. One of the things that I kind of picked up as I was going through the book is that kind of huge responsibility of being a farmer. Yeah. And, you know, we're talking about skills and encouraging young farmers into the profession. But even your own words in the book, you say this is it's a kind of a job that you have to do all the time. You can't just get up and go away for a weekend. You know, it's it's always there. So how do you sort of square that with trying to encourage young farmers into it, knowing full well that, you know, there's a lot of young people out there who really they they want to travel, they want to be digital nomads and all that sort of thing. So how Yeah, how do we get young farmers excited about this space but being honest and open about the fact that there's so much to it?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, specifically for a farmer who owns the farm and owns the

animals, it's a completely different story because that's your business. If you speak to, I would say, someone who's not in farming but they're running a business and they'll probably spend 24-7 as well on that sort of thing, but there's other aspects that you can do to get into farming or agricultural I think everyone thinks you have to be a farmer, but you're not you don't have to you know You can be a mechanic or an apprentice on the farm You know you can be farm managers of someone else's farm, and that's just isn't like normal hours You would get you'd work like five six days. You know have a couple of days off and things like that I think specifically this is just a little bit different just because you know it is a family farm and a family business but for people to get into farming who haven't come from a you know a farming background it is a little bit different you know you would be working for someone else you know you'd get you know your week's work and you know different things like that and also getting younger people in from the economic side of that someone else is paying you you're gonna have a stable wage you know and farming is never going to go out, you know, you're never going to get to a time, let's say, you know, during COVID where they had to stop a lot of things, the farming industry, that was still running sort of thing. So it is a very sustainable career, which isn't going anywhere.

SPEAKER\_01:

Well, that's true. We've got to keep feeding the world, right. And I guess that's really useful. Because even myself, I forget when you say farming, you think you're a farmer, but of course it's a huge industry.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, 100%. There's so many different things you can go down into within the kind of like the agricultural industry, you know. We talk about the economic size, however, you know, if you, for example, if you're a young listener and you want a summer earning money, get on a tractor, learn to drive a tractor. It's long hours, but you'll earn loads of money within that period, you know, they pay well and that sort of thing. The only reason I touch on the economic struggles is because personally, and a lot of farmers who have livestock or have crops and they own them, feel like you're not getting paid fairly a price. However, people who do work for them would get a fair wage. I get it, I get it. The confusion between the two.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah, so being, yeah, I can imagine that being a farmer, there's a huge weight of responsibility, but like most jobs, if you're working for somebody else, like you say, there's stability in that, right?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah. And I think kind of like the most unfortunate thing, definitely within the UK, is so If you've got someone who, and this is a big problem, who wants to get into farming, you know, they want to buy ground, want to buy sheep. Unless you've got loads of money, it's unaffordable. You're not going to be able to afford ground,

afford, unless you get a massive loan, because we found that we would love to expand and get more ground on and we've got a couple of bits and bobs, but a lot of it, because it's getting sold for development, it's just, it's unaffordable. Is that right? Yeah, it is.

SPEAKER\_01:

I didn't realise that. I didn't realise that it's actually really hard to even expand even if you've got your own farm.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, you can expand like via renting but buying it's just you know it's not for example we used to be dairy and my dad sold the dairy herd in about 2001 and got sheep just because that's a different breed of farmer than dairy is. Any listeners who are dairy farmers, hats off to you, because that is tough.

SPEAKER\_01:

I love the fact that even within the farming industry, there's a difference between like, I do sheep, but you do cows.

SPEAKER\_00:

That's tough. Yeah, dairy is tough, but on our farm, my dad was working all the time, wasn't making a living from it to be quite honest. So sold the farmyard got sheep and farmed it and we bought a couple of fields that you're acres in when would that be like 2003? So what you're looking about 10 years ago? The price of the field now is like I'm not exaggerating and it's almost times 10 in value. Really? Yeah sort of thing which is you know, just from the development and things like that it's you know it's a real that side of things are a real struggle and the government haven't put in place grants or anything like that to help to help farmers.

SPEAKER\_01:

Okay okay well we'll talk about that I mean just then going back to specifically what you know what you're doing on the farm so lamb farmer you're you're a shepherd And I know in the book that you go through basically the seasons, looking at what life on a farm actually looks like. Difficult to do in, you know, just a couple of minutes, but can you give our listeners like a flavour of the sorts of highs and lows of what they're going to experience on a farm?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, the highs, I always say this with farming, the highs are so high and the lows are so low. I think you've got that. I don't think there's anything better than feeling kind of like reward for the work that you do. Right. I think with farming, you get that every single day, especially personally, kind of like with the animals, you know, if you have a sick animal and you make it better. It's such a war-warden feeling and you don't get that because you've got specifically like animals' lives in your hands. You're, you know, they're all my children sort of thing, you know.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah, I saw that. Children and siblings.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, you know, you're looking after all of them and you've got many other things, you know. Such a high for me as well is I work for my family. You know, all of the families really, really close. I've got my grandparents who live next door to me sort of thing. And, you know, sometimes that is probably something I do take for granted how close the family is and how proximity, how close everyone is. You know, my family is about 20 mile radius from each other, which is just, you know, you do probably take it. I will. I do a little bit of advantage for where you've got. I've met people who, you know, family members are across the world or, you know, a four hour journey sort of thing. So that side of things. is, you know, really, really incredible. And then you've got the lows, which this is actually mentioned within the book. You know, a couple of years ago, we had a really horrendous dog attack. Yeah, you know, where a dog or a couple of dogs came in killed 100 lambs, and you know, that sort of stuff, soul destroying, you know, that that can actually really hurt your mental health, get you really, really down. Because, you know, I'm speaking from personal experience that happened to me and my dad, you spent six weeks, you know, four to six weeks, Every single day like 24 hours around the clock lambing inside and treating these animals to get them fit and healthy enough So they can you know go outside because it's the weather's like winter. It's raining. It's cold So you can't you can't let the baby lambs go out sort of thing So you do that in sheds? Gets to a period of time and you let them out in a you know a couple of days after a dog comes in and does that it's stuff like that, you know, you got that reward and let's say that high and from caring for all of these animals and getting into a place where you can shift them out to then it all getting broken back down to a dog killing all of them. And you have to go out and experience that. That was a really tough time, you know, for me, my dad, and speaking from an economic factor as well, you know, luckily we did have farm insurance and it did cover it, but you were in for tens of thousands of pounds, you know, sort of thing.

SPEAKER\_01:

And I mean, to that point, I mean, the lows, I mean, again, something else I sense through the book, it's about that kind of mental health aspect, the resilience you need to be a farmer, because I was going to ask you the question, what makes a great farmer? You know, we'll talk about sort of skills, but do you think that that kind of characteristic of just being super resilient is something that if you're a young farmer this is something you're going to have to have or can you learn that?

SPEAKER\_00:

Going into farming I'd say you really do have to have a love and a passion for it I don't think you could go into it half-heartedly and not You know, as a like a try, like a trial and error sort of thing. You know what I mean?

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah, you've got to go in feet first.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah. And, you know, and I and I definitely think, you know, you said about being resilient. I think if you do have a love and a passion for something, it's just it's just comes with it. Right. That's going to take you through. Yeah. Sort of thing. And with mental health, I think there is such a massive issue within the farming industry. And I think that's just down to you're lonely, you're lonely, you know. I'm quite fortunate, I've got a really good relationship with my dad, it's me and him on the farm, although I don't work with him 24-7, you know, I do speak to him. Classamore is a mate, I really open up to him and he knows kind of like what's going on in my life sort of thing, but you know, if you have a farmer who's working on their own, or they maybe don't have that relationship, you do find yourself in a place of who do I talk to, who can I talk to, you know, and that's when things can actually get really tough.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah, I can imagine. And then thinking then about, OK, so a bit of mental resilience, definitely you need that. But I mean, for anyone out there who is really interested in getting into farming, where do you start? What's the first thing you should be doing? I want to become a farmer. I've got all sorts of career choices to me. Who should I talk to? What should I do?

SPEAKER\_00:

The first thing I would say to do is actually reach out to local farmers. Right. and basically say, just dependent on how old you are, hi, you know, I would love to get a little bit of work experience on your farm, is there anything I can help you out with? You know, not all farmers will say yes.

SPEAKER\_01:

I was going to say, do you think most farmers turn around and say, welcome it, or is it because it's just too hard?

SPEAKER\_00:

People are concerned about... In our area, we're really open to people coming onto the farm and getting work experience, you know, and I know neighbouring farms around me. It's not going to be the case for everyone because, you know, some farmers don't want that. I'd say that would be my first point is just reach out to as many local farmers as you can and actually get that first initial work experience on the farm. I've worked on different farms and I've actually found that I'm still learning. You know, I grew up on a family farm. I didn't go to college or university. I learned what my dad taught me, and my dad learned what his dad taught him, sort of thing. So if you're actually talking about knowledge within farming, our knowledge is probably not brilliant, because you're learning on the job, you know, you're learning on the job. I've only taught what my dad is taught, and you know, he was pulled out of

school at like 13, 14. that sort of thing. So I would say it's actually really good to get that work experience. And then obviously, you've got colleges, you can go down to that route. And then also, university further, we have had people come onto the farm, who, you know, I've come from different colleges, and I've had conversations with them. And they've really, they're really, really enjoying it. And you know, the great thing is, you'll put in so many like-minded people who, you know, do want to get an agricultural in a room, you know, you'll make, you've got young farmers as well where you will make friends and we'll, we'll have, because farming is unsociable hours and it's difficult to juggle, so if you're friends with people in a like-minded mindset, yeah sort of thing, you can, you can kind of like do all of that. But yeah, I think colleges and uni is is a great way to start. I'd love to be in a position of the UK to be in a position where agriculture was actually taught within like GCSEs. It's like a subject you have to take. Something really interesting is obviously my girlfriend's Australian. And I've had conversations with her about farming in Australia in comparison to UK and she can't believe it how farming is like you're a mythical creature, you know, in the UK, it's like, yeah, it's like, ooh, you know, he's a farmer, you know, and even with like stories or TV shows, farmers are always on their own. And I definitely feel like that within the UK, you know, it's they're almost not part of society, you know, and it's, really interesting talking to Jessie, my girlfriend, in Australia where everyone wants to be a farmer. You know, it's taught so much in school. It's, you know, praise, let's get behind the farming community. Yeah, let's raise loads of money. Let's help them out and everything like that. In comparison to us, where I just do think we're a few steps behind.

SPEAKER\_01:

In which case, what's the difference between the two? Is it that there's there's not enough government support? Or is it like you say, it's all about the fact that it's not taught early enough? I mean, if Australia's got this model where everybody wants to be a farmer, what is it that we are doing wrong right now that we need to get rid of?

SPEAKER\_00:

loads of things, isn't it? Where do we start? I think the main thing for me and the main thing for me to push at the moment is I'd love to get it taught in school. Because to be quite honest, if I didn't come from a farming background, and I love farming, absolutely Couldn't imagine doing anything different. But if I if my you know, family wasn't wasn't farmers. I probably wouldn't be a farmer I didn't know about it. I didn't know about it at school young farmers the clubs especially in my area There were they're just dropping because they're not getting enough people there and everything like that, you know, which is which is a real big shame so it's install it as soon as possible. Not saying you have to be a farmer, but just giving it an option. Even careers day at school, where there's loads of, you know, did you have careers day at school, where there was loads of different tables you could go around and talk to. I don't know about you, but I didn't have

agriculture as well.

SPEAKER\_01:

I never saw agriculture as an option. It was always desk jobs. It was never kind of like physical work or anything like that.

SPEAKER\_00:

I don't know why that is. Yeah, I know. And it's just, it's trying to, get a change in it, I guess, isn't it? And it's just letting younger people know farming is a bit cool as well. Farming is becoming cool.

SPEAKER\_01:

So tell me about, okay, why is farming cool? Is it because we talk on the show loads about like tech and innovation, I mean, in agriculture, in food, you know, are we seeing like a shift in farming where it's becoming or has become like super, super innovative and mechanized? And actually, is this something that could make it a bit sexier?

SPEAKER\_00:

100% make farming sexy and then people will be all over it, won't they? We want to get involved. But you know, there's been a rise in TV shows which has done really successful on... you know, huge platforms where people are actually starting talking about farming again, and that it is that it is it is cool, you know, being out with nature, that hard graft, everything like that. But it is really trying to get people installed as a young young age to let them know, you know, this is something to do and you can do.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah. Now, understood. And so on that point, then, so we're teaching kids, you know, in the future in in schools, it's completely embedded into the curriculum. What critical skills do you think that all young farmers then need to learn at that age? You know, so is it just about they need to these young kids need to be just out on the farms, understanding it, seeing it happen? Or are there like critical skills as a kid that you think should be taught?

SPEAKER\_00:

I think kind of like what should be taught in school, which does come under agricultural is where does your food come from? You know, I think that we talk about that a lot on the show. I think that's massive massive problem I don't think people a lot of people I bet if you did I don't know if you know the statistics But if you did a survey in the whole of UK how you know, you go into a supermarket and buy something Wouldn't have a clue how it got there, you know, and that would be what I would say should be a baseline at least taught in school Yeah, where does your food come from? How is it? from an animal, let's say, to the supermarket or a crop to the supermarket. How is that done? Which then would spark the minds of the younger people of, oh, you know, maybe that's something that I want to do.

SPEAKER\_01:

And funnily enough, I mean, quite one of our earliest podcast episodes, we had a food historian, Annie Gray, on. She was talking about how she was on like an old fashioned farm. They were doing like an exhibit. Yeah. And she was sat there, you know, plucking a chicken, you know, as you do to kind of bring kids into the experience. You said a kid sort of walked up to her and said, what's that? Yeah. It's a chicken. It was like, that's not a chicken. Chickens come in packages. And it's to your point, it's that, you know, we're just too far removed from where our food comes from.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, 100%. I think if that's taught, you know, up until year nine, when you actually pick your subjects, and then say, if you did pick agriculture, then you can actually dive deeper into, you know, the different aspects of farming, if it's like livestock crop, or, you know, different routes that you want to go down, if it's a good, you can be an accountant, as you've proven, you can be, but you could be an accountant, mechanic, you know, loads of different things.

SPEAKER\_01:

I deal with a lot of Gen Zs who are super passionate about the food system and particularly from the environmental sustainability aspect of the food system. So how critical do you think it is to really instill in the young generation that farming sustainably, whatever career path they choose in farming, is really important?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, definitely. I think that is the problem we're facing at the moment, because it is interlinked. You know, we want these sustainable farmers. However, the only people that will bring that in is the younger generation. But because you're not going to get a 60 year old or a 50 year old change how they farm because that's how they've done it all their lives sort of thing. So you do need the younger generation to come in to be climate smart with what they do and different innovations and things like that. But I think that's it's like a domino effect. Every piece of the puzzle, you know, affects one another. Yeah.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah, absolutely. Is sustainability a big part of the work that you do on the farm?

SPEAKER\_00:

We run very freely our sheep. So we've got 1500 sheep. We don't block graze. We don't feed them kind of like heavily in cake or anything like that. Don't overly bring them into the shed. So all they've got is grass. We've got them in like three different groups on like 200, 250 acres. They can go to eat where they want, go what they want, as much free range as possible sort of thing. But it's looking to diversify. Yeah. You know, and I think a lot of farms are doing that because there isn't a way to make the money. You know, for example, back when my dad was a boy, there were 12 working farms within the village. And now there's two, just because, just

two, just two, they've gone bankrupt near enough. Do you know what I mean? Just wasn't earning enough money. They had to sell up and get out of it. You know, in comparison, 12 to two, that's a massive change. And that was, you know, because they weren't sustainable, which is, and they were family farms, which is the, which is the saddest thing about it. these farms that are carrying on, if they don't diversify and make, because what you're doing is actually diversifying, making money to then pump that money into your farm. It's not really, you're not diversifying to make more money, it's you're diversifying so your actual farm in love carries on. Yeah, which is quite sad when you think about it.

SPEAKER\_01:

I mean, I guess it's not just sustainability, but it's also financial sustainability, right? You've got to keep going. And you mentioned that in the end of your book about the commercial aspect of farming and how it's so important. You know, obviously you love the animals that you have, but you also realise that that can only go so far because at some point you have to sell them. Of course. And how do you cope with that?

SPEAKER\_00:

I think obviously I've been brought up with it my whole life. It's a business. You do have to look at it as a business. However, you can also look at it which is what I do in the way that, you know, these are your animals, these are almost your pets, you want to treat them and give them the best life possible at the end of the day. You know, it is a business and you can't swerve away from that, you know, and I'll be lying to say it's easy because it's not, it's difficult. Even, you know, my dad's been farming, he's 55 now, been farming all of his life and weaning when you, you know, take the lamb away from the mother. because the lamb's too old sort of thing. Hearing the lambs cry or the mums cry, it's heartbreaking. It's something that you never get used to.

SPEAKER\_01:

I heard in the book you call it the field of screams?

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, it is like the field of screams when you do split them up but you have to do that sort of thing. Unfortunately, it's the hard sad reality of it. I haven't completely dealt with it. You do almost have to shut your mind off to it almost, you know, and my dad being 55 years old and you know, I had this conversation with him as well. It's something that he hasn't fully adjusted to, but. it's the business, it is what has to happen.

SPEAKER\_01:

Yeah and I guess to your earlier point about knowing where your food comes from and being more connected to it, that is the reality right? You need to understand where it comes from and you need to understand therefore what you're eating and what's happened in that process to be more connected to your food.

SPEAKER\_00:

Of course and I definitely do feel like if people start becoming more aware of where your food comes from then they might start looking at where it physically comes from whether that's Australia New Zealand the UK and then it will bring it back around to the point of back British farmers, you know Also another statistic for you. How crazy is this only 90% of people want to back British farmers? So there's 10% of people who just wouldn't

SPEAKER\_01:

Really? Yeah, I know. Okay, I wonder, I'd love to understand that.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yes, the reasoning behind that. Yeah, me too. I'd love to dive in and have that conversation. But that's, that's past the point. But then it gets to, I think so many people are talking about it, you know, back to farmers, back British farming, and verbally say it, but when you come into the supermarket, and something's 50p or, or a pound more than, And then you get into that kind of like the crisis and the economic crisis of what's going on and everything, you know.

SPEAKER\_01:

Well, maybe that's it. I mean, maybe that I guess we have to think about the context we're living in. Maybe that 10% are saying, well, I wouldn't because actually this makes food cheaper and I need to eat, you know, I need to feed my family and all those sorts of questions, which of course, it's a really, really difficult topic for sure. So let's talk about the future then, shall we? So from your perspective, what does the future of farming look like?

SPEAKER\_00:

The future of farming? I've got, I actually had this conversation earlier, I've got like a 10-year plan. I want to diversify the farm and the way that I'm going to do it back and forth with the council at the moment, just trying to get the green rubber stamp is to, the first start of the plan is to set up glamping pods. Okay. Yep. Which comes along with the idea of getting, you know, people who aren't from farming backgrounds onto the farm to see how a farm runs, which is nice. And obviously you're on a lovely glamping pod in the countryside, you know, the wind in your hair, the smell of fresh grass, all of that. And then I've just started purchasing like animals that people can actually like pet or, bottle feed or different things like that. So at the moment we've got the animals on the farm. We've got an emus, super strange. Yeah. Emus, donkeys, goats, pigs, alpacas. Can you pet emus? Uh, yes and no. Yes and no. Do you know what? They look scarier than they actually are. You know, their beaks aren't sharp because I just don't like it because they do almost square up to you and like make their neck longer and like, look at you, you know, like a snake would stand off, but they're really tame. They're really friendly. They're, you know, they're absolutely fine. And that's kind of like the process of connecting that with the glamping pods. So people can come and see, and then I would love to, you know, Cause obviously this all takes time and then further down the line actually open up kind of, so you

could get like lambing live experiences where you can come and actually see how sheeps give birth and you know, the process of what happens because it's not just the lamb comes out and that's it, you know, sort of thing. You've got kind of like the lamb comes out, you need to give it colostrum, you need to tube it, you need to check up on it, you need to ring it. So there's loads of, you know, things along the way. So it's almost trying to figure out a way of how you can incorporate the public into almost like a live show.

SPEAKER\_01:

Right, okay. A man with a plan. So this is going to take 10 years, do you think?

SPEAKER\_00:

It's got a 10-year plan and then obviously with offshoots and everything like that, but yeah, I would say. Well, that's kind of like, I'd say that's 10 year plan. Hopefully it happens in two, but I doubt it.

SPEAKER\_01:

Maybe somewhere in between. Aim high. Yeah. Well, make sure you do come back and tell us how it's all going in a few years. Going back to your book, which again is by the time the podcast is definitely going to be out. So I'm looking forward to that. You say in your book, it is my hope that my love of farming and animal welfare will in some small way rub off on enough young people to help the next generation of farmers. Without them, there is no farming, there is no future, which is quite sobering stuff. And I see all the hard work that you're doing on TikTok, on Insta, to promote the farm. But how important is it, therefore, that we educate the next generation on the prospects of farming? What's at stake here, do you think?

SPEAKER\_00:

It's where you get your your food from to be quite honest I think definitely we're seeing as a country if it wasn't for places where you can actually import from can we actually Feed our own country, you know, which is a scary scary thought because especially that's everything going on in the world You have no idea what can happen, you know And I think it's a very scary place if we ever get in a position where you can't feed even kind of like your own country sort of thing and and it's so important to get the younger generation involved because obviously the more people who get into farming, that means more food, it means more kind of like animals, more crops, everything like that, more meat, because farmers definitely Don't maybe overstock or don't stock as much as they can do because they haven't got the labor They just physically can't do it on their own One of the reasons why my dad got rid of the cows. It was the economic side, but then also He didn't you couldn't find anyone, you know, you literally couldn't find anyone to help him out sort of thing so the more people who can encourage and get involved with farming it will only do good and then alongside that, if you do get the younger generation involved and you can educate them kind of like on the climate issues, sustainability, all of that, they are the people who will then put that into action for the next farms,

which will only make the world a better place.

SPEAKER\_01:

So you heard it here, folks, you know, come on, everyone get into farming. Come on, we need more young farmers. And just to kind of finish this then, so what final piece of advice would you offer to a young adult who is considering a career in farming?

SPEAKER\_00:

So I'll give you a couple. I'll allow you to. Yeah, I'll give you a couple. The first piece of advice, and this is farming, but just, you know, if you don't want to get into farming, this is a piece of advice you can take as well. And this is what I've learned, never say no, always say yes, even if it's something that you may feel uncomfortable with, you know, you're not 100% sure with, you never regret the things you say yes to only, only the things that you say no to. So if you're getting into farming and you've never been on a farm before but a farmer offers for you to come on, don't say no because you're worried about, you know, not making a good impression or not being good enough or, you know, not understanding. Just say yes because that's what's going to build your knowledge and everything like that. And that moves nicely on to my next piece of advice is just reach out. I think that's the main thing. Reach out. And if someone says no, don't let that question whether you should or shouldn't do it. You know, you ask 100 people, you're going to get people come back and say yes. And if it's 100% something you want to do and it's your love and passion, you know, people are going to let you on the farm.

SPEAKER\_01:

I love it. So one, say yes more. Yes. And two, you know, go after the opportunities. Don't be afraid to reach out to people.

SPEAKER\_00:

Yeah, I think the actual experience in itself, you can do all your research and learn about it but there's nothing, for me anyway, there's nothing better than actually hands-on doing it.

SPEAKER\_01:

And as we can see from everything you do. Will, this has been an amazing conversation. Thank you so very, very much. I almost feel bashful to ask, but where can people go to find out more about Will the Farmer and what you do?

SPEAKER\_00:

So my Instagram is farmer underscore will underscore and the TikTok is just farmer will underscore. If you do want to find out what I'm getting out to and what I'm doing today on the farm.

SPEAKER\_01:

Love it. Love it. Love it. Okay. Thank you once again. Well, and you know, please keep us up to date. Definitely following everything you do. I'm gonna keep reading this and I encourage everybody else to so congrats and thank you so much. Thank you. So that was Will the

Farmer on another incredible podcast. And it was so great to have Will in the studio with us. He's been flying around all over the place trying to promote the book. And I wish him all the success in the world for that. So just in terms of the things that really stood out for me during the conversation. So I think it's fair to say, first of all, Will comes across not just to me, but also, of course, on his TikToks. He's very real. He's very human. And I think what I like about that when it comes to farming is he's definitely not trying to sell farming as a profession. You know, he doesn't sugarcoat what he's doing. And I encourage everybody to read the book because there's some just really, really interesting stuff in there about things that we don't see. But of course he wants to encourage people to at least try it out and have a look at it. And he was very keen to push the point around farming needs to be taught to us when we're younger. He'd love to see it as a GCSE, get it onto the curriculum, and again, at least give our kids the opportunity to understand a little bit about farming. And he was saying that it's about connecting people to where their food comes from that's so, so important. And, you know, finally, when I asked him about, you know, the advice you'd give, I think very succinct advice. Even he said himself, this is universally applicable to all careers, but particularly for farming. Say yes. When you're offered an opportunity, don't shy away from it. Don't be scared about farming. Just get involved and get stuck in and also go after the opportunities. You know, if you're able to reach out to someone and say, I'd love to experience a farm, I'd like to maybe become an intern or go for an internship. Go for it. Don't be worried about, you know, some people saying no, because, you know, Will says himself, they're open to people wanting to get involved. Not all farmers will be for very good reasons, I'm sure. But, you know, do reach out, do reach out. And I think the one last thing, which, again, reminds me sometimes that, you know, we do get too fixated on farmers. It's, you know, farming is a huge industry. It's not that because you go into farming that you necessarily need to become a farmer. There are accountants, there are desk jobs involved. It's a huge, huge world, like any industry. So let's all have a look at exploring those options. And yeah, like Will says, it's a fascinating space. So I'd echo Will's thoughts, encourage everyone to check it out, and particularly to check out Will's book. Thanks again, Will, for such a fascinating episode. This has been the Food Fight podcast. As ever, if you'd like to find out more about what we do, head over to the EIT Food website at [www.eitfood.eu](http://www.eitfood.eu). Also, please join the conversation via the hashtag EIT Food Fight on our X channel at EIT Food. And if you haven't already, please hit the subscribe button so you never miss an episode.