



UK & Ireland Farm Study Tour 2013

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Tue, Jul 9 (meals on plane)	Depart Australia on July 9 from various Australian capitals (most flights will depart early to late afternoon); Arrive in Dublin around lunchtime on July 10. For example, flights from Melb: Emirates EK405 departs Melb 6.00 pm, arr Dubai 4.50 am (July 10) Connect with Emirates EK161 departs Dubai 7.00 am, arr Dublin 12.15 pm (July 10)	On plane
DAY 2 Wed, Jul 10 (L,D)	Check-in to our downtown Dublin hotel for a light snack and a well-earned rest. An optional brief city tour later in the afternoon to get your bearings then dinner and an early night. Those hardy travelers wanting to tackle jetlag head-on might choose to step out on the town tonight with options including the Dublin theatre, a comedy show, live music or maybe even a guided bar-fly or James Joyce pub tour. The options are many and varied.	Dublin
DAY 3 Thurs, Jul 11 (B,L)	This morning we enjoy a guided tour of early Viking Dublin taking in the Liffey River and waterfront areas, Trinity College and the Book of Kells (one of the oldest books in the world), St Patrick's Cathedral, Temple Bar and other sights. No tour of Dublin is complete without a visit to the beautiful St James's Gate Guinness Brewery and the enjoyment of a 'perfect pint'. The best Guinness in the world is poured at the brewery. The afternoon is yours to relax, shop, enjoy some traditional Irish music at one of the pubs or maybe take in some of the many cultural attractions at your own leisure.	Dublin
DAY 4 Fri, Jul 12 (B,L,D)	This morning we travel north into County Meath – one of Ireland's leading agricultural counties. An old Irish adage has it that one farm in County Meath is worth two in any other county of Ireland. This rich and fertile plain – laid down after the last Ice Age – has attracted farming settlers for thousands of years. Nowadays, urban sprawl is having a significant impact but we will visit some very successful farmers in the region. We will also visit Bru Na Boinne, one of Europe's most extraordinary archeological sites – and 1000 years older than Stonehenge – before continuing north through 'wee' County Louth and into Northern Ireland. We enter the Mid-Ulster region, and arrive at our idyllic overnight location – a 19th Century Manor House, the Tullylagon Hotel, set in 30 acres of private grounds – at the foot of the Sperrin Mountains.	Cookstown region
DAY 5 Sat, Jul 13 (B,L,D)	This morning, nestled in a beautiful wooded valley, we visit the last working beetling mill in Northern Ireland at Wellbrook. This is where high quality linen is made from the fibres of the flax plant – one of Ireland's traditional rural industries. Today, some of the world's best quality linen is made in Ireland. We talk to the locals about the growing of flax and we inspect the linen production process. We continue westward through magnificent farmland and into County Donegal and the stunning Glenveagh National Park in the country's northwestern corner. Donegal's motto is "Up here, it's different". Donegal County is full of extremes. The interior is spectacular and rugged, making farming a particular challenge. But it is the precipitous cliffs, golden beaches and rugged peninsulas of Donegal that no other Irish county can boast in such number and beauty. Weather and time permitting, we will travel to the magnificent Northern Atlantic coastal landscape of Slieve League, and at 600 metres, the highest cliffs in Europe. Then it's on to Donegal Town for overnight.	Donegal Town
DAY 6 Sun, Jul 14 (B,L)	A leisurely start this morning before heading south via Sligo and onto Galway – widely held as Ireland's most "Irish" city – 160 km to the south of Donegal Town. Galway is a magnet for artists, intellectuals and wayfarers. After a brief city tour to get your bearings, the rest of the afternoon and evening is yours to recharge the batteries or take in some of Galway's many musical and entertainment options. Indulging in the world renowned Galway oysters is a must.	Galway
DAY 7 Mon, Jul 15 (B,L)	A day trip today to the Connemara region with its landscapes ranging from seaside hamlets, rusty bogs, lonely valleys, mountains ranges and shimmering black lakes. We are now in Gaeltacht country where traditional Irish (Gaelic) is the local tongue. Sheep and wool production is also carried on by the local and very hardy farmers of Connemara. We visit the Sheep and Wool museum at Leenane where we learn of the importance of this industry in Connemara's past. We return to Galway this evening and a free evening.	Galway

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 8 Tues, Jul 16 (B,L,D)	Early start this morning as we continue south to County Clare, and a ferry crossing of the River Shannon. We'll visit the Cliffs of Moher and the famous limestone barren outcrops of the Burren region. Then it's onto the Dingle Peninsula and the spectacular fishing village of Dingle for lunch. The Dingle Peninsula stretches 50 km into the Atlantic Ocean and is dominated by the range of mountains that form its spine, running from the Slieve Mish range to Mount Brandon, Ireland's second highest peak. The coastline consists of steep sea-cliffs, broken by sandy beaches. The peninsula is widely considered Ireland's most magical region – the <i>National Geographic</i> certainly thought so when it once cited Dingle Peninsula as “the most beautiful place on earth”. Later in the afternoon we make our way back out of the Peninsula and onto picturesque Mallow (County Cork) for overnight.	Mallow
DAY 9 Wed, Jul 17 (B,L,D)	This morning we continue east to Waterford and a visit to the world-famous Waterford Crystal factory and showroom. Here, some of the finest glass blowers in the world exhibit their centuries old craft. You have the opportunity to buy some examples of their skills direct from the showroom. We are also in southern Ireland's 'bread basket' region where the better farms are pushing 10 tonnes per hectare of cereal production. Ireland has some of the highest grain yields in the world. But the very favourable temperate maritime climate and high rainfall also means heavy disease pressure. Today we find out more about the challenges of high input agriculture in Ireland from farmers in the region as well as from scientists at the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority's (Teagasc) Oak Park Research Station at Carlow. We then head south to Wexford and the coastal region where some of Ireland's first towns were settled by invaders and privateers.	Wexford
DAY 10 Thurs, Jul 18 (B,L)	This morning we catch our 8.45 am ferry from the nearby port town of Rosslare and enjoy a 4 hour crossing of the Irish Sea to Pembroke in southwestern Wales. We board our charter coach and travel east through the Welsh countryside and onto the Vale of Glamorgan – one of the most agriculturally rich areas of the UK. Here we call into Slade Farm Organics. A multi-award winning farm nestled on the Glamorgan Heritage Coast – an area of outstanding beauty. The farm is an integrated livestock and arable operation with a retail outlet on the farm supplying the finest selection of organic Welsh beef, lamb and pork. In 2008 the farm was also voted the <i>Most Wildlife Friendly Farm in the UK</i> . Later this afternoon we continue our way east to the World Heritage Listed and ancient Roman city of Bath. Free evening in Bath to try out any number of world class restaurants and entertainment options.	Bath
DAY 11 Fri, Jul 19 (B,L,D)	Bath is located in the Cotswolds region and is a spectacularly beautiful city. The city's Roman baths, majestic Abbey and sweeping Georgian terraces combine to produce one of the most elegant sights in Europe. The presence of local hot springs and easily worked limestone made it attractive to the Romans who built the original town. The town flourished for 400 years but declined quickly after the Romans left Britain and did not thrive again until the eighteenth century when once again it was water and stone that made Bath great – but this time because of Georgian influenced architecture. We enjoy a Bath city tour before setting off into the postcard perfect Cotswolds with the trademark and traditional drystone walls and thatched roofs. We visit a Cotswold region arable farm on our way to Salisbury Plain and a guided tour of Stonehenge. We are then off to London Town, just two hours drive to the northeast.	London
DAY 12 Sat, Jul 20 (B,L)	This morning we have a city tour of London including some of the famous sights such as Buckingham Palace, the Palace of Westminster and The Tower of London. The tour will include a cruise on the Thames before a free afternoon to do your own exploring of this wonderful city. There's also a great range of theatre and musical opportunities with scores of West End and other London theatre-district shows. For cricket tragiics, the Lord's Ashes Test is on in London. This is a great opportunity but the tickets are expensive and hard to get – so get in early to personally apply for tickets.	London
DAY 13 Sun, Jul 21 (B)	Free day to enjoy, at your own pace, some more of the wonderful sights of London such as the London Eye, St Paul's Cathedral, the Tate Gallery, numerous museums or the soaring treetop walkways, galleries and iconic listed glasshouses of Kew Gardens (a 326-acre UNESCO World Heritage Site just 30 minutes by subway from central London).	London
Day 14 Mon, Jul 22 (B,L,D)	Early start this morning to beat the London traffic and travel one hour to the north and the world famous Rothamstead Agricultural Research Station. Here we are updated on some cutting edge work on crops and soils. For example, in a world first, scientists from Rothamsted are combining modern genetic engineering with their knowledge of natural plant defences to test whether wheat can repel aphid attack. The 20:20 Wheat project is aiming to increase UK wheat yield potential to 20 tonnes per hectare within the next 20 years. The average wheat yield in the UK is currently 8.4 tonnes. Another Rothamstead project is aiming to increase canola oil content by 5 to 10%. Then it's onto the university town of Cambridge – and time for a punt on the Cam – before continuing northeast into the English 'bread basket'. We call into a thoroughbred stud at Newmarket, to see how equine royalty such as the unbeaten Frankel spend their days, before arriving at Holkham Estate – 6000 sprawling hectares of prime farming and, of course old chap, hunting country.	Wells-next-the-Sea

Date	Activity	Overnight
Day 15 Tues, Jul 23 (B,L,D)	This morning we inspect the stately Holkham Hall and the Estate. As well as Viscount Coke and his family, two other families live here throughout the year. The Hall is a member of the <i>Treasure Houses</i> group which consists of 10 of the most magnificent palaces, houses and castles in England today. On the 6000 plus hectares Estate, there is a total of 25 tenanted farms plus 1850 hectares that is farmed by the Holkham Farming Company. The land is generally farmed on a rotation based around sugar beet, canola and cereals. Wheat is grown on the better land along with break crops such as beans, peas and potatoes. Holkham Estate has a unique history of farming, shooting and conservation. The four-course rotation system was famously popularised here by Coke of Norfolk; while his son, the second Earl of Leicester, started the sport of driven game shooting. In the afternoon, we continue north and into the English Midlands. Our overnight destination is Doncaster – an historic market town founded in AD 71 by the Romans due to its strategic position on the River Don. Transport and connectivity continue to play an important role for this city. Doncaster is the largest metropolitan borough in the country, yet remains essentially green and rural, offering a wide variety of landscapes and natural features, interrupted only by picturesque villages and smaller market towns.	Doncaster
Day 16 Wed, Jul 24 (B,L,D)	This morning we travel north and meet with local arable and livestock farmers before arriving at the magnificent North York Moors National Park and onto the quaint village of Great Ayton. Here we call into the Captain Cook Schoolroom Museum. The knowledge that the young James Cook gained on this site provided the starting point for him to become one of the greatest navigators, explorers and chartmakers the world has known. His voyages of discovery are displayed along with a reconstruction of the 18th Century schoolroom he attended. We then continue west and onto of the Yorkshire Dales. <i>All Creatures Great and Small</i> becomes real life as we meander through this spectacular undulating countryside. We continue onto the Lake District for overnight.	Lake District
Day 17 Thurs, Jul 25 (B,L)	An early start to take in the sights of the famed Lake District to find out for ourselves what inspired people like William Wordsworth when surrounded by the spectacular hills, lakes, woodlands, villages and farms of this beautiful area. The Lake District measures around 70 km from north to south and 50 km wide. We enjoy a morning bus tour of the District's scenic highlights then free time this afternoon – perhaps a spot of fishing?	Lake District
Day 18 Fri, Jul 26 (B,L,D)	We continue our journey north this morning and into Scotland. After lunch on the shores of Loch Lomond – the largest loch in Scotland – we continue our spectacular drive through the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park before reaching our overnight destination of Fort William. We are in the heart of the Scottish Highlands and in the shadows of Ben Nevis. At 1344 metres, Ben Nevis is the highest peak in the British Isles.	Fort William
Day 19 Sat, Jul 27 (B,L,D)	This morning we'll do some monster spotting as we continue northeast along the shores of Loch Ness. Loch Ness is the second largest Scottish loch in area (56 sq km) but due to its great depth (230 metres at the deepest point), it is the largest by volume. We leave Loch Ness and enter the fertile Scottish Lowlands. We visit the site of the famous Battle of Culloden Field – the final confrontation of the 1745-46 Jacobite Rising – and the last pitched battle fought on British soil. The Hanoverian (British loyalists) victory at Culloden stopped the Jacobite army's (House of Stuart nationalists made up largely of Scottish Highlanders) attempts to overthrow the House of Hanover and restore the House of Stuart to the British throne. We continue through the coastal lowlands to Moray Estate, a 2250 hectare high input arable farm near Elgin. Then it's back into the magnificent highlands, the distilling heart of the world's finest malt whisky. Overnight in a grand country hotel.	Craigellachie
Day 20 Sun, Jul 28 (B,L)	Early risers can catch a River Spey salmon for breakfast before we visit a nearby Speyside distillery. Here we learn more about the full production trail from on-farm nurturing of malt barley through to the distilling of world famous single malt whisky. Free afternoon to consider a range of optional activities from deer stalking, clay pigeon shooting, right through to golf – or just relax by the fire with a good book and a wee dram at our magnificent Craigellachie hotel.	Craigellachie
Day 21 Mon, Jul 29 (B,L)	An early start this morning as our coach takes us 150 km south to highly diversified Carcary Farms near Brechin. Here we meet with the farm manager and researchers from the Scottish Crop Research Institute. Then it's onto famous St Andrews for lunch before continuing along the Firth of Forth scenic route – and our <i>Tractor Man</i> Ian Johnston's nostalgic ancestral home – through to Edinburgh.	Edinburgh
Day 22 Tues, Jul 30 (B,D)	A guided city tour of this wonderful city including sights such as Edinburgh Castle and Giles' Cathedral. Then a free afternoon to visit, at your leisure, some of the many museums or other attractions such as the famed Royal Botanical Gardens. Farewell dinner this evening.	Edinburgh
Day 23 Wed, Jul 31	Transfer to Glasgow for flights back to Australia, or extend your stay in the UK or Europe. Emirates EK26 departs Glasgow 9.30 pm, arr Dubai 8.00 am (Aug 1) Connect with Emirates EK406 departs Dubai 10.10 am (Aug 1), arr Melb 5.35 am (Aug 2)	