

Session Overview - Farm Business Innovation show 2025

Title: Scaling Emotion & The Mindset Shift That Changes Everything

Stuart Beare shared an inspiring journey of farm diversification and agri-tourism at Tulleys Farm, highlighting the transformative power of mindset, customer experience, and strategic growth. From humble beginnings as a pick-your-own farm to becoming a world-class experiential attraction, Stuart outlined how Tulleys Farm leveraged creativity, community, and operational excellence to grow visitor numbers from tens of thousands to over 700,000, generating around £20 million in sales. The session emphasised embracing change, exceeding customer expectations, creating a distinct brand, and continuously investing in the product and visitor experience.

The talk combined practical examples—such as the development of Shocktoberfest, Christmas Lights Festival, and summer sunflower events—with strategic insights into marketing, community engagement, operational management, and international trend-spotting. Stuart also addressed lessons learned from challenges, including financial pressures, family transitions, and operational scaling, highlighting the importance of focusing on strengths and outsourcing specialist areas when needed.

Key Audience Takeaways

1. **Mindset Drives Transformation:** Shifting mindset from a transactional to a visitor-focused approach can radically improve customer experience and business growth.
2. **Diversification and Innovation:** Successful agri-tourism requires continuous innovation—Tulleys evolved from a pick-your-own farm to multiple experiential attractions, including Shocktoberfest and Christmas Lights Festival.
3. **Visitor Experience is Core:** Prioritise service excellence and exceeding expectations. A robust visitor services system, including responsive feedback and complaint handling, can turn challenges into “raving fans.”
4. **Invest in the Product:** Reinvest profits into infrastructure, attractions, and facilities (e.g., new toilets, food barns, mediaeval hub), creating long-term growth and improved visitor satisfaction.
5. **Branding and Relevance:** Segment brands under one umbrella (Tulleys Farm) to make experiences highly relevant to different audiences (e.g., pumpkinfarm.co.uk, christmaslights.co.uk).
6. **Community and Advocacy:** Cultivate a supportive community of local advocates and online followers to amplify marketing, counter negative feedback, and strengthen brand loyalty.
7. **Strategic Outsourcing:** Outsource specialist services such as marketing, PR, actor management, security, and tech, while retaining core operations in-house to ensure focus and quality.

8. **Learn Globally:** Seek inspiration beyond local markets. Observing trends in the US, Canada, and Europe enabled Tulleys to anticipate and adapt festival concepts and visitor experiences.
9. **Experiential Focus:** Simply selling products (like pumpkins) is not enough—successful agri-tourism blends activities, live entertainment, immersive environments, and a carnival-like atmosphere to create memorable experiences.
10. **Leadership and Team Growth:** Building the right internal team and maintaining hands-on involvement across operations ensures alignment with the brand vision while enabling strategic growth and creativity.