

Excellence Awards - 2024 Entry
85 Tottenham Court Road
London. W1T 4TQ
020 7631 6900

Entry ID: 15198

Third Party Authorization

Are you entering on behalf of, or in association with, any third party?: No

Basic Information

Category: 17. Best Use of Media Relations

Entry Information

Entrant company name (To be used in all awards materials/ presentation): Frank PR

Entry title:

Riverford Organic - Get Fair About Farming

Entry Text:

Riverford's brief to us:

1. Develop an ownable platform for Riverford to launch a comms campaign;
2. Drive awareness with a wider consumer audience and increase brand awareness for Riverford in a crowded market;
3. Engage opinion leaders in the farming community;
4. Lead to an uplift in interaction with the brand/visits to website and socials/sales.

With a heritage as a family-owned farming business, Riverford needed a campaign that would authentically put them at the heart of the story and give a voice to the rural community.

We set out to reignite the nation's love of British farming by highlighting the biggest (of many) challenges farmers face. A challenge that the British public would be unaware of and by shopping at the 'Big Six' supermarkets, would unwittingly be contributing to. One that the British farming community, MPs, celebrities and the public could lend their voices and votes to. A campaign, which if successful, would see the biggest positive change in farming business practice in a generation.

Building on some of the principles outlined in The Riverford Fair to Farmers Charter, our #GetFairAboutFarming campaign called on the 'Big Six' to adopt some of these key asks. We asked retailers to buy what they agreed to buy; pay what they agreed to pay, and to

pay on time, without exception, enabling us to champion Riverford's values of good food, good farming and good business.

With a budget of £70,000, our campaign kicked off with an open letter written to the 'Big Six' CEOs. Ahead of launch, we secured the backing of MPs, celebrities including Dragon's Den investor Deborah Meaden, conservationist Ray Mears, and TV presenter Chris Packham, industry bodies like Sustain and The Soil Association, and most importantly, farmers themselves.

This strong launch moment resulted in blanket national media coverage, over 113,000 signatures of a government e-petition, a response in the house of Lords and a debate in parliament in January 2024.

We engineered eight routes to ensure maximum media coverage. A headline grabbing statistic to lead the story – 49% of farmers expect to be out of business within 12 months, real life case studies, open letter signatories, exclusive quotes from notable supporters, visual assets, a hero video, and a broadcast day featuring our outspoken farmer and founder of Riverford.

Our media strategy was designed to land with a bang, highlighting the issue facing farmers, deliver in depth media coverage and then give media access to all the signatories of the open letter, turning the campaign over to the farming community, effectively flooding the media with voices.

We ran an exclusive first-run interview with Riverford founder Guy Singh-Watson and the Press Association, and gave him the freedom to speak passionately to broadcast, resulting in a strong digital asset.

Our case studies allowed for a greater diversity of coverage, including first person pieces on BBC Radio 4 Farming Today and That's Farming. High-profile backers also provided soundbites that were seeded out exclusively to target titles, including The Telegraph, Daily Mail, Metro, BBC and The Express.

Following a strong media relations effort to keep the campaign at the forefront of people's minds, with further coverage for signature milestones and a spoof 'Silent Night' Christmas advert around the lack of supermarkets' response to the campaign, the petition signatures climbed.

When they topped 100,000, and a debate was set, we piled pressure on the government by organising an impactful photocall. On the morning of the debate, we placed 49 scarecrows outside Parliament, to represent our key research figure. This 'protest' secured an additional 450+ pieces of coverage, including 50 nationals, 230+ regionals, 100+ broadcast and 60+ trades.

With #GetFairAboutFarming, we gave Riverford an authentic and ownable campaign platform the brand could use to punch through the competitor noise at a crucial trading period, engaging the farming community, wider stakeholders and consumers, while delivering tangible results for the farming industry and Riverford's bottom line.

Highlights include:

- 800+ pieces of media coverage.
- Headlines with real impact. The Independent read: "Supermarkets urged to act amid warnings British agriculture is 'on its knees'". while The Grocery Gazette published:

“Riverford founder Guy-Singh Watson: The man on a mission to make farming fair”. The Telegraph wrote: “‘Wasteful’ supermarkets putting British farmers on the brink”. Following the debate, Horticulture Week wrote: “Supermarkets accused of acting like ‘cartel’ towards farmers”.

- 113,000+ people signing the #GetFairAboutFarming petition.
- 115 high profile names backing our open letter.
- MPs debated Riverford’s proposed amendments to the Grocery Supply Code of Practice [GSCOP] in the Houses of Parliament on January 22nd 2024.
- The debate closed with Mark Spencer, Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries, responding to MPs’ concerns: “The Government want all farmers to receive a fair price for their products, and we are committed to tackling contractual unfairnesses in the agrifood supply chain.”
- We drove brand awareness for Riverford:
 - o Google trend data showed coinciding spikes in searches for "Riverford"; "Farming" and "Supermarkets" on launch.
 - o Riverford recorded over 31,000 clicks to the dedicated Get Fair About Farming website and saw 35,490 organic social engagements on the day of launch, alongside 589,430 organic social impressions.
 - o An uplift of 300+% on their Instagram page – their main campaign communication channel - alongside a 75% Facebook uplift.
- And delivered real-world business results:
 - o Increase in new and returning customers in the week following launch.
 - o c.2.5k extra deliveries of organic fruit and veg boxes that week.
 - o 55% increase in new customer average weekly numbers since campaign's inception.
 - o Riverford’s unprompted brand awareness rose by 1.7% to 11.8%. For comparison, competitor Abel & Cole sit at 10.5%. Prompted awareness also rose by +0.7%.
 - o Riverford also saw an 8% revenue increase during the campaign period (Sept – Nov '23) compared to the same period in 2022.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/878593961/45bc17e090?share=copy>

Supporting Information

Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):

Provided

Campaign image (if entering individual/team awards, upload headshot/team photo here):

Provided

Company logo:

Provided

Please write a 30 word entry summary in the third person:

The behaviour of supermarkets and suppliers are driving British farmers to the brink. Riverford took action with the #GetFairAboutFarming campaign, resulting in a Parliamentary debate and unmissable media headlines.