

THE BLACK FARMER[®]



Farming with Soul

Wilfred Emmanuel-Jones is credited with being the first black farmer in the UK. Springing from humble beginnings in Jamaica and then inner-city Birmingham, he launched The Black Farmer, whose range of gluten free sausages occupy the number one spot as the UK's top selling premium sausage brand.



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#THISISMYSOUL
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What drew you into farming?

When I was a kid growing up in inner city Birmingham, living with my eight brothers and sisters and parents in a two up two down terraced house, it was my job to help my dad with the family allotment. There was no money, so being able to supplement what little food we had with vegetables from the allotment was vital. While there were jobs I hated – like picking Brussels sprouts in winter – what I did love was the sense of space and freedom this small oasis of land gave me in an otherwise overcrowded and noisy household. I vowed then that one day I would buy myself a small farm in the open countryside. [That dream] became my driving force and focus for the next 40 years of my life. I was then able to buy a small farm on the Devon/Cornwall border with a few acres. I am privileged to have a view to die for and be able to give lush grazing to a few cattle.

The new television advertisement for The Black Farmer is all about soul. What prompted this?

The Black Farmer brand was ground-breaking when I launched it 11 years ago. The name alone was a game changer. [It] changed the sausage market for the better. When I launched, the market was full of poor quality products with low meat content and no real flavour. Mine were 90% higher welfare pork, really well seasoned and gluten free. Others in the market soon followed and upped their product specification.

When it came to my first ad on TV, it had to be innovative. I wanted to throw away all the rules and think differently. I also wanted consumers to discover that not only is The Black Farmer a real person, but that my passions in life are what fuel the brand and everything I produce. There was only one director I felt had the vision, creativity and ability to work differently – my hero and Hollywood legend, director Tony Kaye. Intrigued by the script, he agreed to work with me and I also worked with poet and ad man Martin Galton to develop the script entitled This is my Soul. The resulting film is unique.

Do you think there is a connection between cooking, food and the soul?

Food and cooking are all about what is in the soul. They're all about home, family, memories – part and parcel of each and every one of us. It's about getting back to the things that matter – the everyday staples of life that nourish our souls. I draw on ingredients and dishes that I experienced in my childhood – they are not only comforting but also bring about a sense of well-being and security.

Why do you think there are so few minority farmers in the UK?

I believe it is because living and working in rural Britain doesn't present itself as an option to many people. Many haven't been to the countryside and don't understand it – it can seem vast, open and threatening if you are used to the urban jungle. It was one of the reasons that I launched my rural scholarship programme years ago, as I wanted young people from the inner cities to see that life and work in our rural communities is a real option for them.

What's next for The Black Farmer?

I will be launching a whole range of new product lines within the next few weeks, which is exciting, but my focus is on taking The Black Farmer into completely new market sectors – and export. Watch this space.



The Black Farmer ad can be found on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/53twFqvOJ5Q>

Serves 6
250g Puy lentils
1 tbsp olive oil
1 can chopped tomatoes
2 x 400g packs The Black Farmer sausages, grilled
2 tbsp olive oil
2 red onions, chopped
2 large carrots, diced
3 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped
1 small red chilli, seeds removed, chopped finely (add to taste)
1 tablespoon demerara sugar
Large sprig of rosemary
600ml chicken stock
2 tbsp flat leaf parsley, chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

The Black Farmer's Sausage and Spicy Tomato Lentils

Put the lentils in pan of cold water, heat and bring to the boil. Simmer for 5 minutes then drain and rinse. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan and cook the sausages for 5 minutes, turning until brown all over. Remove and set aside.

Add the onions, carrots, garlic, chilli and rosemary sprig to the pan and cook for 8-10 minutes, until starting to soften. Return the sausages and lentils to the saucepan and pour in the stock, tomatoes and sugar. Bring to the boil then cover and simmer for about 30 minutes until the lentils are tender.

Check the seasoning, sprinkle with the parsley and serve immediately.

