

Pumpkin patch family say 'unpredictable weather' played part in closure

A farming family has been overwhelmed by public support after it announced it was ending its annual pumpkin festival.

The Calder family said unpredictable weather had made producing their pumpkin field in East Lothian each year tough and time-consuming.

The popular festival saw people travel from all over to pick their own pumpkins and began in 2018.

The family thanked all their supporters who flooded social media with messages of gratitude and shared their own experiences of visiting their farm.

Lucy Calder, who runs Kilduff Farm, said the family had started the pumpkin patch as a project to interest their children in farming before opening it to the public.

The family announced earlier this week that they had decided to end the tradition.

Lucy said: "The comments on our social media posts have been very moving. Calling time on our pumpkin festival is bittersweet. While we know it's the right decision for our family, we will miss welcoming pumpkin pickers to the farm and all the fun we have had.

"While we have opened the farm to visitors and events over

the last few years, Kilduff Farm is above all a working arable farm.

“Our pumpkin festival started as a small diversification project to help encourage our children out onto the farm and to get them involved in day-to-day farming.

“It certainly achieved that and grew to be much, much more. We never imagined how special it would become to so many families across the Lothians and beyond.”

She added that every successful festival took a huge amount of work behind the scenes with her family and staff pouring ‘heart and soul’ into making it special for everyone who visited.

However, she said: “Growing pumpkins isn’t for the faint of heart and the increasingly unpredictable weather has made delivering an event of this nature and scale more and more challenging and time consuming over the years.

“Having made the decision to start our pumpkin festival for our family, we have made the decision, as a family, to stop and focus our time and energy back on our core business, smaller events, and family life for now.

“We certainly are not going away though and look forward to other projects unfolding here at Kilduff in time.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter