



Primary PGCE - Outdoor Learning Specialism - online workshop:

How to organise a meaningful, safe and fun farm visit

LEAF Education is a registered, independent charity which works with farmers, teachers, children and young people. Its activities aim to;

- stimulate interest and excitement about food, farming and the countryside
- link food and farming to the school curriculum – both Primary & Secondary
- demonstrate outdoor learning opportunities to teachers
- enable rural & leisure skills e.g. food production, woodland skills
- increase awareness of rural career opportunities

Our team of Regional Education Consultants can support you in a variety of ways to help you incorporate food, farming and the countryside into your teaching.

This workshop contains a number of short tasks which will help you;

- appreciate how farm visits can provide a range of curriculum-linked learning opportunities
- understand the health and safety issues involved and how to manage them

Each task can be completed independently in conjunction with LEAF Education's ***How to plan curriculum linked & safe visits to farms: A handbook for teachers*** and other signposted resources. It is recommended that you read the Handbook fully before organising your own visit, and you can also contact your Regional Education Consultant for advice, should you need it.

TASK 1: What are the key features of a UK farm?

It may seem like an obvious question, but this task is to get you thinking about farms as a learning resource, as well as a place which grows our food and manages the countryside. How much do you know about which crops and animals are grown, and typically where, in the UK? What equipment and technology is used on farms? What wildlife habitats exist on farms?



Windout Farm, Devon. Source: geography.org.uk

- Study the photograph above showing key features of a UK farm
- Watch these short films which demonstrate more features of modern UK farms

- 1) [LEAF vegetable farm, Suffolk](#)
- 2) [LEAF vegetable farm, Hampshire](#)
- 3) [A Jordan's arable farm](#)
- 4) [NFU – Livestock & arable farm tour](#)



- Make a list of things you might see on a farm which are a potential learning resource

sheep, tractors, wheat.....

TASK 2: How can children benefit from visiting a farm?

There are numerous benefits to children from visiting a farm. Not only is it a unique, stimulating environment in which to teach the curriculum, it also an opportunity to develop their wider skills and experiences.



- Read the extract below and watch [Teaching and Learning at your local dairy farm](#)

A farm visit....

“...can offer a wide range of learning opportunities in different domains. In the affective domain, students have been seen to show greater enthusiasm, self-confidence, motivation, discipline, self-respect, respect for other people’s property and tenderness toward the environment as a result of farm visits. Within the cognitive domain, students have developed their understanding of farm and countryside life, made connections between foods and their sources, improved their scientific and numeracy skills, made connections between different subject areas and reflected on their own knowledge.”

Dillon et al, (2003). Improving the understanding of food, farming and land management amongst school-age children: A literature review p.39. London: National Foundation for Educational Research & King’s College London.

- Read ‘Justifying Your Farm Visit’ on p.3 of the *Handbook for Teachers* and **give examples for three of the benefits of wider curriculum links when visiting a farm;**
e.g. Understanding of risk – children can learn how to behave respectfully and safely around livestock

1)

2)

3)

TASK 3: What are the key steps to organise a successful farm visit?

A farm visit can be an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding experience for students, teachers and farmers. The most successful farm visits are those which have been planned carefully in advance; linked to the curriculum and with health and safety measures in place.

The following are some key steps to organising a successful farm visit.

- **Number each sentence so they are in a logical order, and then copy and paste them into the table below 'Key steps to organising a successful farm visit.'**
- **We suggest you print or save this table as a separate document, and use it as a helpful checklist when you organise a farm visit.** Please note pages 5-6 & 11-12 of *A Handbook for Teachers* contain much more detailed information and suggestions.

Arrange a First Aid Kit	Go on a pre-visit visit	Book day & timings of visit in school calendar. (Early booking can allow parents to pay monthly)	Find a nearby farm – what does it offer? - arable, livestock, ponds woodland?
How will a farm visit fit in with topics/the curriculum?	Check costs and how it will be funded - or start fundraising!	Send letter to parents explaining safety, clothing & educational value (& religious sensitivity)	Book transport
Decide who will go – number of children and what year group	Check lunchtime, hand washing & toilet facilities, and wet weather options	Think about your aims and learning objectives for the day	Prepare the children for their visit – good behaviour, safety, check prior understanding
Do post-visit activities, feedback to other children & thank the farmer	Ask if there is adequate parking for buses/cars	Ask if the farmer has DBS, public liability insurance, and a risk assessment	Ask if the farmer has wellie washing facilities or feet dips
Hold a staff meeting - explain aims, clothing, health & safety. Encourage own pre-learning!	Prepare the children– pre-visit activities, key words etc	Decide who will go – check staff to children ratio	Write a risk assessment (Evolve?) and consult with the Educational Visits Coordinator
Apply for funding for transport	Find out if any children or adults have allergies or special needs requirements	Give the school and the farmer your mobile phone number	Check no adults are pregnant if visiting during lambing

Key steps to organising a successful farm visit	
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TASK 4: Why are pre visits important?

Study p.11 and **Appendix 5** of the *Handbook for Teachers* (you could also watch [Teaching and Learning at your local dairy farm](#) again to help you).

- **Name two things you could do on a pre-visit which you cannot do, or experience, over the phone;**

e.g. judge more accurately how long a farm tour might take using your experience of your students

1)

2)

TASK 5: How does a farm visit link to the Primary Curriculum?

Study the diagram in **Appendix 2 & 3** of the *Handbook for Teachers* showing many of the learning opportunities across Key Stage 1 & 2 of the Primary curriculum.

Use this diagram, plus the farm diagram and films you have seen in Task 1, or any other resources you can find online, to help you design a curriculum linked activity which students could do on a farm.

Key Stage:	Subject area/cross-curricular topic:
Location on the farm: Length of time required:	Subject specific vocabulary:
Learning focus/objective: <i>What should children know, understand or be able to do?</i>	Resources required:
Description of the activity	

TASK 6: How to make a farm visit safe?

Carrying out a Risk Assessment is a compulsory requirement for teachers organising educational visits. Each school will have its own procedures and templates for you to follow, but an example of a Risk Assessment for a farm visit is shown in **Appendix 4** of the Handbook. Try not to feel overwhelmed! Visiting a farm does come with risks, but with careful planning from yourself and your farmer, the risks can be kept to a minimum.

The most serious risks involve livestock, and there are clear government guidelines which you must be aware of before organising a farm visit. These are summarised in the Teachers Supplement of the *Industry Code of Practice*, shown on p. 8 of the Handbook for Teachers.

The Risk Assessment in the Handbook is a general one for the whole farm, and your farm may not have all the hazards shown. However, you may need to include an extra entry for a particular activity you have planned.

- **Complete a sample Risk Assessment entry for the activity you designed in Task 5 in the template below.** An example is shown below for pond dipping.

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	Control measures?	Further action required? By whom & when?	Date action done
Ponds, streams for pond dipping	Children – drowning, slips, falls, cuts, grazes, Weil's disease.	Close supervision by 3 adults. Avoid deep water and fast-flowing streams. Safe access point/barrier to prevent falling in. Health and safety talk prior to activity, hand washing afterwards.	Farmer – to check access point before visit. Give H&S talk during visit. Teaching staff – supervision of behaviour and hand washing during visit.	



We hope this workshop has increased your knowledge, understanding and confidence with regard to organising educational farm visits. We also hope as you begin your exciting new career in teaching, that you will remember LEAF Education is here to help in a range of different ways.

Our Regional Education Consultants can support you with regard to farm visits, but also help arrange for farmers and other food and farming experts to visit your school. We can deliver teaching sessions to students, collaborate on schemes of work, and design and facilitate CPD for teaching staff on various subjects and topic areas.

Finally, don't forget that [Countryside Classroom](#) contains a wealth of inspiration and free downloadable resources for all things relating to food, farming and the countryside.

Good luck and have fun on the farm!