



## Farm visits Learning Day Key Stage 2 - Years 3 to 6

# Host Guidance



The **co-operative**

Sponsored by Natural England and supported by The Co-operative.  
Produced by Learning Days Ltd as part of the Year of Food and Farming

Learning Days™ 

---



## Host Guidance Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	3
Explanation of the Farm visits Learning Day teaching materials	4
Activities for school children visiting your farm	6
Sources of further information	8
Activity worksheets	10



## Introduction

This 'Host Guidance' has been developed to support all those hosting visits for school classes which have completed a 'Farm visits Learning Day'.

The 'Farm visits Learning Day' is an educational resource produced by Learning Days Ltd as part of the Year of Food & Farming. The Learning Day is targeted at primary school children aged 7 to 11 and provides a day of learning in the classroom about farming, food, and the natural environment, in preparation for a visit to a farm.

The 'Farm visits Learning Day' has been sponsored by Natural England and supported by The Co-operative.

The first section of this guidance is an explanation of the Learning Day. The second section is a list of activities that you may wish to include in your school visits' programme for this age group. The activities are straightforward and reinforce the learning in a real life setting. They are an extension of the themes covered during the Learning Day.

The final section is guidance on sources of further information for planning and hosting school visits to farms.

## The Farm visits Learning Day

### Target group Key Stage 2 - Years 3 to 6

The objective of this resource is to enable children to get the most out of a visit to a farm. Prior to a farm visit, the children will have spent a day learning about farming. The key focus for this day is the creation of model farms by children, in groups, in their classroom. The children investigate the many aspects to modern farming. The farms are introduced as businesses and children receive a basic introduction to the economics of farming, alongside the stewardship role of farmers.

Four topics are covered and the themes of farming as a business and the importance of stewardship are common factors. The four themes are:

- food production
- landscape
- biodiversity
- access & recreation

### The different sessions

#### 1) About farming

Objective: to gain an understanding of the food supply chain and the fact that farms are a main initial source of food.

The children learn about the food supply chain using wheat to bread, then milk as examples i.e.

seed → wheat → harvested → milled → bakery → shop → bread

cow → tanker → factory → carton → shop → glass

#### 2) Farm investigations

Objectives: to gain an understanding of the different types of farm in this country and how farms affect the landscape; to begin to appreciate the multi-functionality of farming

The children are presented with a variety of images of farms and are asked to consider the time of year, the landscape, and the wildlife likely to be encountered. There are explanations of arable, livestock, dairy, horticultural and mixed farms. The children will be making models of a mixed farm.

#### 3) First planning activity

Objective: to prepare ideas about features found on a farm

The children build up a list of things that they think will be found on a mixed farm and use the list as a starting point for the preparation of their farm model. They consider farm animals, crops & fields and buildings in the first instance (later they will consider the biodiversity and stewardship issues). For example:

##### animals:

cows  
sheep  
pigs  
chickens

##### crops:

wheat  
oilseed rape  
barley  
lettuce  
beans  
strawberries  
apples

##### buildings:

farm house (where the farmer and possibly his family lives)  
cow shed  
pig arks  
chicken house  
silo (to store grain)  
barn (storage area for winter feed and other supplies)  
visitors area (covered area for visitors)

#### 4) Starting the models

Children plan their work and consider how each aspect of their farm designs and models will come together. Materials used include coloured paper for fields, cellophane stripes, bobbins for straw bales, paper farmhouse templates, silo templates, cotton wool sheep, etc.

Note: farming methods and technology are not covered in this Learning Day module

#### 5) The farmer's land

Objectives: to gain an understanding of how farming is a business; to raise awareness and understanding of the different types of habitats on farm land and the diversity of wildlife that is there; to understand that farmers are looking after the landscape on our behalf and making it possible for us to enjoy it.

Year 5 & 6 children calculate the value of wheat grown in a field and Year 3 & 4 children calculate the value of a row of strawberries.

Aphids are introduced as a pest that can ruin crops. Children learn about the implications of such a loss and the fact that nature has a solution - ladybirds. The ladybird lifecycle is explained and the children learn about the need for a habitat for ladybirds and similar farmer-friendly wildlife.

Field margins are introduced plus the following habitats - hedgerows, wooded areas and wet areas. Images are shown leading to an exercise in matching wildlife to habitats.

Children are told that the wildlife live in these habitats because it is somewhere to shelter, find food and a place to breed.

#### Visiting the Farm/Countryside Code

As part of this session it is explained that a farmer's land is part of our country and that we are allowed to enjoy our countryside, the wildlife and the views. Also that it would be wrong if we all trampled across a farmer's field while the crops are growing or scared the animals. This leads on to the provision of paths and walkways for us to move around safely and that we are expected to obey some simple rules when we enjoy the countryside. The children learn the Countryside Code.

#### 6) Model completion

The children complete their models making sure that they take into account the need to look after wildlife on their farms and to allow places for the public to walk on parts of the land. Cut-out images of wildlife can be added plus tracks and bridleways.

The teachers are encouraged to use their own creativity to use school resources in the creation of the models. Several models are made within each class as the children work in groups.

#### 7) Plenary for the end of the day

This is a round up of the day's events highlighting the following key messages:

- The farm's role in the food supply chain
- The farm as a business
- The stewardship of the land and the natural environment

## Activities for school children visiting your farm

The following are examples of activities to conduct during a visit by a class that have had a Farm visit Learning Day. These activities should extend children's learning on the topics covered. The activities assume each child is equipped with pencils or other writing/drawing equipment and perhaps a clipboard to aid writing.

### **1) Food production**

Identify a suitable field/area and invite the class to write down any item or activity that they feel will be a cost to the farmer while producing a crop from seed, or animal, to the next point in the food chain (explain what this will be e.g. wholesaler). Invite a few ideas to start the activity off. As prompts, suggest that they consider the following aspects: people, keeping the crop growing, keeping animals healthy, harvesting, storage and distribution. Share the results and use them to illustrate that farmers always have to think about the cost as they are running a business (elaborate as you wish).

### **2) Landscape**

Select a suitable location (e.g. overlooking a crop field) and provide each child with a copy of the seasons worksheet (see pages 10 & 11 - printed double-sided). Explain that they have to describe the scene by writing a short description on their worksheet for the current season (point out the box allocated on their worksheet). They then have to imagine what the scene would look like for the other seasons and describe them on the worksheet. The class teacher will be able to build up the first description with suggestions from the class (colours would be a good focal point).

The class can then draw in the actual scene for the current season and imaginary scenes of the same area over the other seasons.

### **3) Habitats**

Invite the class to write down 10 examples of wildlife they would expect to see in a habitat that you have briefly described and they are about to visit. Invite the children to share some of their ideas with you. The class then visit the selected habitat and try to find any of the examples they had predicted. When they find a real-life example, they tick their item and create a total at the end. Share their success at the end of the activity. You may want to suggest up to 5 additional examples worth double points if they are found.

### **4) Wildlife**

Organise the class into groups of 3 or 4. Invite one member of each group to write 3 headings on a piece of paper - plants, small [creatures], large [creatures]. Explain that, for this exercise, small creatures are 2cm or smaller and demonstrate (e.g. less than the thickness of 2 fingers). Allocate an area of a habitat to each pair. Explain that it is a competition to find as many examples of different types of wildlife in their area under each category in a set time (e.g. 10 minutes). Encourage the children to score using the 5-bar gate scoring system (###). Share scores for each category plus the overall score.

### **5) Access & recreation**

Assemble the class at a location at the beginning of a path, track or bridleway and explain the function of that particular route. Split the class into groups of 4 and explain that the activity is about the Countryside Code. Explain that the task is to see which group can travel furthest down the route. They will move by remembering any of the 5 rules of the Countryside Code.

Allow a few minutes and invite one member from each group, in turn, to secretly inform you of one of the rules. Any correct answer allows the group to walk 10 (large) paces away from the starting point. The process is repeated by recalling the spokesperson from each group, in turn, to reveal another rule. The 5 rules are revealed to the class at the end.

The Countryside Code:

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people e.g. keep out of the way when farm animals are being gathered or moved and follow directions from the farmer

### **6) The multi-functionality of a farm**

Invite the class to draw any objects or buildings seen around the farm that they would like use as ideas to add to their model farms on their return to school.

### **7) A conclusion for their visit**

Invite the class to make a list of anything they did not expect to see, for example - farm animals, wildlife, scenery (landscape features), activity on the farm. Share their experiences as a way of reviewing the day's events.

## Sources of further information

If your farm is new to hosting visits from schools, this section will help you understand the main aspects to consider and the many sources of support and advice available to you.

The main aspects are:

- Health and safety
- Planning the visit experience
- How to support the school
- The CEVAS accreditation scheme

### Health and safety

A health and safety check and a risk assessment document should be produced; this should be given to schools before the first visit. School representatives should be encouraged to visit your farm in advance to discuss health and safety and to agree on the visit programme.

Advice is provided on the Health & Safety Executive website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)) and from Farming and Countryside Education (FACE) ([www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)).

Public liability insurance cover is necessary. Contact your local education authority for confirmation of the minimum cover required.

### Planning the visit experience

Planning the visit is an opportunity to evaluate what your farm has to offer visitors, particularly school children of different ages. Aspects could include the crops grown, livestock, landscape features, wildlife, food processing, and other farm activity. Think about the staffing levels required, which areas to use for activities, and providing toilets, hand washing facilities, and places for shelter for all weather conditions.

We recommend you contact one or more of the organisations at the end of this section for more information and guidance on hosting visits:

### How to support the school

Teachers and group leaders are likely to want a pre-visit meeting with you to discuss the form the visit will take and to discuss health and safety issues. They will need to explain what they want to see and talk about. School leaders are required to carry out a risk assessment of their own which can be compared to your version.

You may wish to provide a Teacher's Information Pack. A Teachers Information Pack is a tailor-made document giving information to teachers about the farm and how it can be used as a countryside classroom to assist with curriculum studies or a course.

Natural England and FACE have sections on their websites where Teacher's Information Pack templates and completion guidance notes can be downloaded.



### [The CEVAS accreditation scheme](#)

If you are intending to host regular visits to your farm you are strongly encouraged to become accredited under the Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS). This involves a two day course and self accreditation of the farm site.

CEVAS resources are available from FACE ([www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)) and application forms for training from the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens ([www.farmgarden.org.uk/atf](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/atf)).

### [Sources of further information and guidance](#)

**Access to Farms (ATF)** ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/GrowingSchools/support/detail.cfm?id=39](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/GrowingSchools/support/detail.cfm?id=39)) Tel: 01373 302204  
ATF is a partnership of national organisations that promote farming and education through links with schools.

**Country Trust** ([www.countrytrust.org.uk](http://www.countrytrust.org.uk)) The Trust aims to bridge the gap between urban and rural communities through showing the working countryside to children, their teachers and parents from inner city areas.

**Countryside Access** ([www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/)) including the Countryside Code Education Pack.

**Farming and Countryside Education (FACE)** ([www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)) Tel: 0247 6858261 FACE has produced advice sheets for farms hosting visits and has regional education co-ordinators who are available to support and advise.

**The Countryside Foundation for Education and Farms for Schools (FFS)** ([www.farmsforschools.org.uk](http://www.farmsforschools.org.uk))  
Tel: 01422 885566 FFS aims to ensure that school trips to farms are safe, enjoyable and educationally worthwhile.

**Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens** ([www.farmgarden.org.uk](http://www.farmgarden.org.uk)) The Federation is the representative body for city farms, community gardens and similar community-led land based organisations.

**Growing Schools** ([www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools)) is a government programme which aims to encourage schools to use the outdoors as a classroom.

**Linking Environment and Farming (Leaf)** ([www.leafuk.org](http://www.leafuk.org)). Leaf runs a network of farms to visit and organises the Open Farm Sunday.

**Natural England** ([www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)) Natural England provides grant aid to some farmers to host school visits. See the Country Walks website (<http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk/>)

**Soil Association** ([www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)) Tel: 0117 314 5000 The Soil Association has a network of organic farms which are open for visits and a range of educational materials.

**Year of Food and Farming** ([www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk](http://www.yearoffoodandfarming.org.uk))

**Summer**

**Autumn**

How I would describe the view:

How I would describe the view:

**Winter**

**Spring**

How I would describe the view:

How I would describe the view: