

Module 3 – Undertaking your farm experience

In this module, we will examine what a school visit to an organic farm should look like. We will also look at the best ways to communicate with young people, in order to ensure that they get the most from their visits.



In order to do this, it is important that the farm guide is aware of the ages and abilities of the group. They must also know what activities are possible in which season, as well as how the farm visit can link with the school curriculum.

Unit 1 of the module looks at how to structure half day and full day visits. Unit 2 features a number of activities that can be used during these visits. More complex teaching projects are covered in unit 3 of the module.

The activities in this module focus on organic farming and show ways in which farmers and educators can communicate the benefits of this sustainable land use system to the future generation.

What is the goal of this module?

- Unit 1. Structuring your farm visit
- Unit 2. Activities for the farm visit
- Unit 3. Complex projects and longer-term projects

After finishing the module, I will know....

1. how to structure a farm visit
2. some practical activities which can be run on a farm
3. how to combine the farm visit with school activities and the curriculum

Unit 1 – Structure of a farm visit

In this Unit I will learn how to...

1. structure the farm visit in a logical order.
2. create a narrative for the farm visit.
3. ensure a successful visit

Introduction

In Unit 1 you will learn to structure a farm visit so that that your visiting group can start to understand organic farming. The unit provides you with example scripts which will help you to structure your day with the group. To keep your group motivated and interested you should always think about an appropriate level of language and terminology that the group can understand.



Chapter 1 – Structuring your visit

In order to ensure that the visit runs as smoothly as possible, it is important to be aware of a few things before the group arrives:

- What is the age range of the group?
- How many will be in the group?
- What type of school is it?
- What time will the group arrive?
- What topics does the school want covering?
- Are there any specific limitations in the group (allergies, fear of animals, physical limitations)?

Once you have all of this information, you should be able to plan the visit and the associated activities accordingly. Any activities should be planned according to seasonality and what can and can't be done at the time of the year that the visit is planned. You may also consider theming the visit around the organic cycle by tasking children with investigating processes such as crop rotations and fertilisation. Other themes might include livestock management or nature on the farm. Once you have decided upon the theme for the day. Once you have decided upon the theme, you can develop your plan for the day further. Do this by considering the following things:

- What activities will you be running on the day?
- What time and where will each activity be run?
- What resources will you need for each activity?
- What will be learnt by doing the activity (these are known as learning outcomes)?
- What will happen if there is bad weather? You may consider having a back up indoor activity just in case.

Chapter 2 – Different types of visits

Every farm is unique in terms of its climate, landscape, production cycles, soil structure etc. It is therefore, important that each farm recognises and develops its own unique opportunities for learning. In the following worksheets, you will find examples of visit structures aimed at different age groups and for different types of organic farms.

Script example:

Add. Inf. Worksheet 2 climate change and the role of the organic farming

Add. Inf. Worksheet 3 script of organic vegetable and seasonal plant

Add. Inf. Presentation1 kindergarten event

Chapter 3 – Ensuring a successful visit

Every successful visit starts with a warm welcome and ends with a friendly goodbye. A good first impression as the group arrives will set you in good stead for the rest of the day. Likewise, at the end of the day it is important that time is put aside to ensure that all questions are answered before the group leaves. In this chapter, we will cover methods to ensure that any visits run as smoothly as possible.

Start of the day

welcoming the visitors:

At the beginning of the day, you should introduce yourself and your farm. Gain the trust of the visitors and ensure that they feel at ease enough to be able to ask questions during their visit. Go over the plans for the day and explain where the toilets and hand washing facilities are. You could also consider starting the day with an engaging and exciting activity like going to see the new born lambs.

Getting to know the group:

Get to know the group and try to gauge their level of knowledge by asking if anyone has visited an organic farm before. You might also test their knowledge of farming by asking some simple questions about the types of livestock they expect to see on the farm or what is special about organic farming. If possible, try to memorise the names of the children. If the group is too large, get the children to write their name on sticker, which they can wear during the day.

Introducing the day:

Give your group a short overview of the day and detailing what your plans are. Discuss health and safety, explain the rules of the farm and why it is important to follow the rules. It is important that children realise that they are visiting a working farm, that it is not a playground and that the livestock are different from domestic animals.

Add. Inf. Checklist Nr. 2 rules for the farm

End of the day

Feedback and questions

Ensure that you allow time for feedback and questions at the end of the day. Ask the children if they enjoyed their day. It is important to test what they have learnt, as this will enable the children to reinforce their memories. You can do this by asking questions such as:

- What do you remember from today?
- What was your favourite activity from today and why?
- Tell me one fact that you have learnt about organic farming.

By asking these questions, you will also be able to reflect upon how the day went from your perspective. Which activities were memorable to the group and which were not? What worked well and what could be improved next time?



Add. Inf. Worksheet Nr.4 methods for feedback

Unit 2 – Practical activities for farm visits

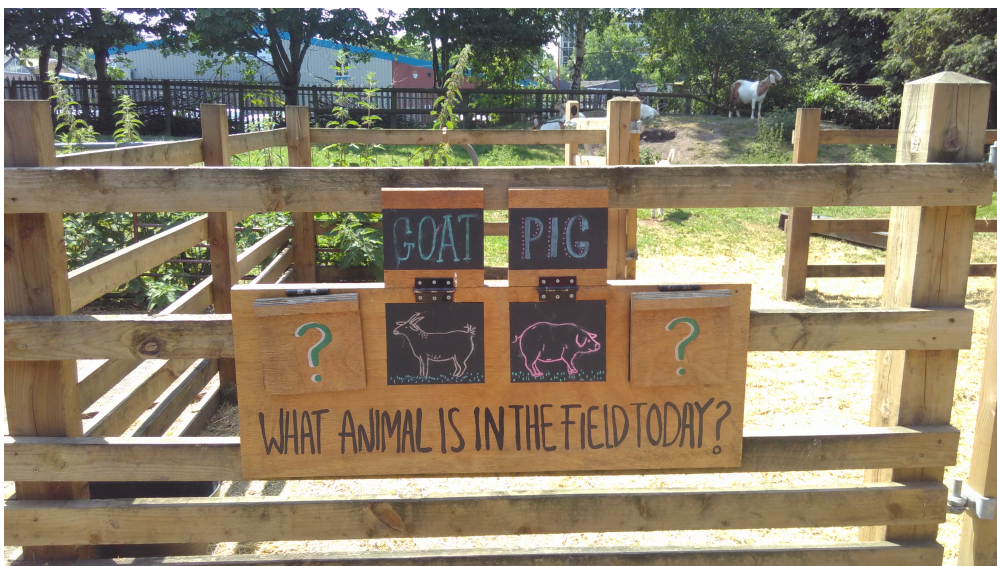
Within this unit, you will find worksheets for a number of practical activities that you can deliver during a group visit.

In this unit I will learn how to:

- identify specific activities that can be delivered during a group visit.

Chapter 1 – Animals

Below, you will find a number of activities relating to livestock on the farm.



Add.Inf. Activity 1 Year1 Animals including humans

Add.Inf. Activity 2 All living things and their habitats

Chapter 2 – Agriculture, vegetables and fruits

Below, you will find a number of activities relating to growing on the farm.



[Add.Inf. Activity 3 Plants](#)

[Add.Inf. Activity 4 Plants](#)

[Add.Inf. Activity 5 All about pumpkin](#)

Chapter 3 – Agricultural produce

Below, you will find a number of activities relating to agricultural produce. Once the group has explored the farm, you might give them the opportunity to experience how foods such as bread and butter are produced.

Activities:

[Add.Inf. Activity 6 From grain to bread](#)

Chapter 4 – the natural world

Aside from farming, nature conservation is an important aspect of organic farming. Below, you will find a number of activities relating to nature conservation.

[Add.Inf. Activity 7 exploring our soil](#)

Chapter 5 – Other

[Add.Inf. Hands On activity1 Soap making](#)

[Add.Inf. Hands on activity2 exploring soil Logo](#)

Unit 3 – longer-term projects

In addition to day visits, your farm may also have opportunities for longer-term residential visits, or repeat visits that follow a particular theme. Some groups may visit the farm several times a year in order to investigate a topic more thoroughly. Some schools may also visit the same farm a number of times a year to look at the farming cycle or to ensure that each year group has the opportunity to visit at least once.

It is also useful to have a preparation at school before the farm visit and a post processing at school after the farm visit. Because then learning in and out of school is connected very well. In this unit there are some examples for complex and connected farm visits. These farm visits are a connection to the lessons in school and can be presented on project days at school.

In this unit I will learn how to:

1. make the farm visit more sustainable
2. Engage children with their farm visit
3. structure complex different farm visits

Chapter 1 – Four season primary school project

Whilst a stand alone farm visit is an interesting experience, it is only a snapshot in time, and only reflect a small part of the farming year. In order for children to get a better understanding of the farming cycle, a number of repeat visits may be necessary. These visits could look at the processes of planting to harvest in order to chart these processes in their entirety. Below is an example text detailing a 'four season' primary school project.



Add.Inf. example1 four-season-project

Chapter 2 – Three-steps-lessons, farm visit & project day at school (for secondary schools)

In contrast to a half or whole day visit, the 'three step sessions' enable the children to deal with farming topics in an intensive and comprehensive way. Practically three to five days are recommended for these 'three step sessions'. Therefore, they often suit residentials or repeat visits over the period of one week.



Add.Inf. example2 3-steps-lessons

Chapter 3 – School Farmers' Markets project

School Farmers' Markets are real farmers markets held in school halls, community halls or playgrounds and are organised by the schools. The school community and members of the public have the opportunity to have access to and purchase fresh local produce.

Running a market is an exciting journey that combines engaging educational activity in the classroom with a 'wow day' event which can be linked to farm visits, whilst also generating income for the school. The whole market journey often takes place over the course of two or three months.

Setting up a farmers' market in school has proven to be an exciting way of engaging pupils in key curriculum areas by providing a real-life situation with which pupils take the lead and have the opportunity to take ownership of their very own business enterprise.

Over 100 schools have set up farmers' markets across the United Kingdom – from Shropshire, Warwickshire and the Peak District to Durham, London and Devon. In each case, pupils have been instrumental in organising the markets and setting up and running their own stalls, selling their own grown and baked produce, and inviting local food producers to sell their goods.

Add.Inf. example4 concept of a farmers market