

## 10.0 Farm Visits

Farms can be dangerous places with specific hazards that may arise from slurry or grain pits, potentially dangerous machinery, electric fences, uneven and/or slippery ground, chemical and other stores, as well as potentially dangerous live stock. Therefore educational visits to farms require particularly careful planning.

### 10.1 PRIOR TO THE EDUCATIONAL VISIT

Regard should be given to the following issues prior to the visit taking place: -

- Prepare the pupils/young people thoroughly so they know what to expect, and what is expected of them (see code of conduct) during the visit.
- Ensure all those attending the visit wear suitable clothing and footwear.
- Ensure all those attending the visit have been informed of any specific hazards.
- Pupils and young people should not be allowed in animal pens.
- Preferably undertake an exploratory visit to check the farm suitable for the intended visit. It should be well managed, have a good reputation for safety standards, animal welfare and maintain suitable washing and other welfare facilities that can be used by the visiting party.
- Ensure that the farmer or the farm management is fully aware of the limit of the visiting group's knowledge and awareness of the countryside and of agriculture.
- Discuss and agree the visit requirements, organisation (especially emergency arrangements) and programme of activities with the farmer or site manager.

### 10.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

All those involved in a farm visit should be informed of the required code of conduct prior to the visit and knowledge of that code checked, it should then be constantly enforced during the visit.

The farm-visit code of conduct should include the following: -

- Listen carefully and follow the instructions and information given by the Group Leader and supervisors.
- Do not use or pick up tools (e.g. spades, forks etc.) unless permitted to do so by farm staff and the Group Leader/supervisors.
- Do not ride on tractors or other machinery.
- Do not climb on walls or animal pens.
- Pupils and young people should not be allowed in pens.
- Approach animals quietly and gently.
- Do not frighten or torment animals.
- Do not play in the farm area.

### 10.3 HYGIENE ON THE FARM

All farms have a degree of bacterial contamination. All animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms that can be transmitted to humans (such organisms are called zoonoses). Some infections such as E-Coli 0157 present a serious hazard as they can potentially cause a severe illness. The risk from such an illness is particularly great to children under the age of six. The risk of infection can be readily controlled by good hygiene practices, these should include: -

- Ensure there are adequate levels of supervision to ensure suitable control.
- No eating or drinking allowed outside of designated eating areas.
- Do not eat food that has fallen on the ground.
- Do not suck fingers or put pens, pencils or other objects your mouth.
- Wash hands, especially before eating, after any contact with animals and before leaving the farm.
- Wear appropriate clothing including suitable footwear (wellingtons/boots).
- Clean or change footwear before leaving the farm, then wash hands.
- Cover all cuts and grazes especially on the hands with a waterproof dressing.
- Do not place your face against the animal's or kiss animals.
- Do not taste any animal foodstuffs.

If a member of the group shows signs of illness (e.g. sickness or diarrhoea) after the visit, they and/or their parent/guardian should be advised to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.