



National
Guidance

Farm Visits

For the purpose of this guidance, the term “farm visits” includes farms and similar venues where young people may have close contact with animals e.g. city farms and zoos.

Farm visits can play a valuable part in the education and development of young people. Younger children can develop an understanding of the rural environment and where food comes from.

While the vast majority of incidents on farms involve the farming family, and not visiting groups, the Visit Leader will need to manage some specific risks. These include risks arising from the misuse of farm machinery, and the potential for *E coli* 0157 food poisoning and other types of infection.

Parents should be fully informed about the nature of farm visits undertaken by the establishment. Wherever reasonably practicable, the farm visited should hold a LOTC Quality Badge. The badge assures Visit Leaders that the farm has been subjected to safety and educational scrutiny and that the farm:

- is well-managed.
- has good safety standards.
- maintains proper washing facilities, clean grounds and public areas.

Wherever reasonably practicable, the Visit Leader should carry out a preliminary visit. Key checks include the following:

- eating areas are separate from those where there is any contact with animals.
- there are adequate washing facilities.
- there is clear information for visitors explaining the risks and the precautions to be taken.
- slurry pools and sheep dips are fenced off.
- areas containing chemicals are secured.
- moving farm traffic is properly managed with traffic-free areas for groups to meet and be briefed.
- risk-benefit assessment of any planned manual work or use of machinery.

During the visit, you should ensure that:

- supervision ratios take into account the age and ability of group.
- there is adequate supervision wherever young people can come into contact with animals and need to wash their hands.
- young people wash their hands immediately after touching animals and always before eating or drinking.

- on leaving the farm, footwear should be changed or cleaned and hands must be washed.

Supervisors should ensure that young people do **not**:

- put their hands in their own mouths after touching or feeding the animals.
- place their faces against animals.
- eat or drink while going round the farm.
- eat or drink until they have washed their hands.
- sample animal food.
- drink from farm taps (other than taps in designated public facilities).
- touch animal droppings.
- ride on vehicles – other than those modified to carry passengers.
- play or climb on tractors, farm machinery or stacked bales.
- play in the working farm area, or in other areas that are out of bounds, such as silos, slurry pits etc.
- use machinery, or engage in manual work, unless the risks have been properly assessed and managed.

