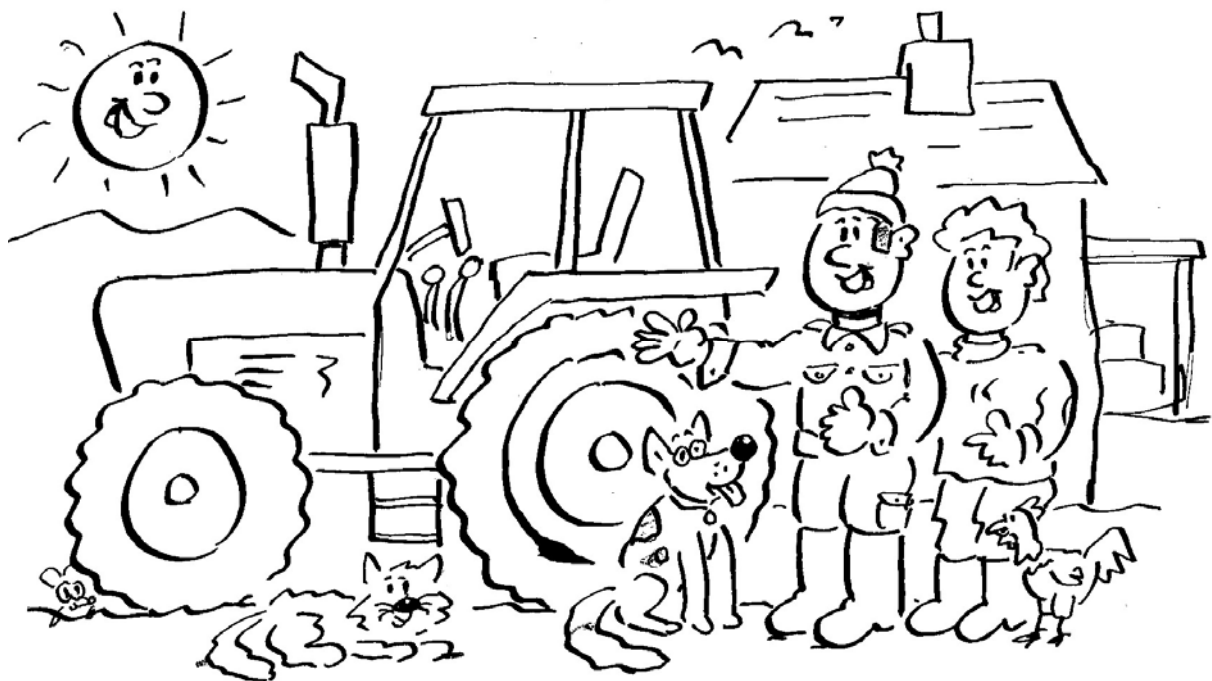




Young Farmers Visiting Schools

A guide to help you get started



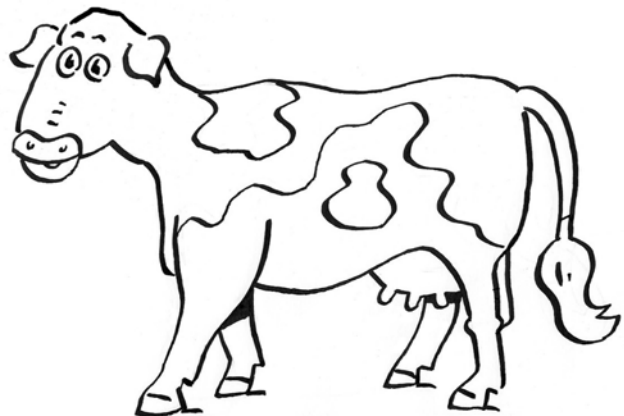
Introduction

It is estimated that by 2020 agriculture will require 60,000 new employees. However, the agricultural industry is perceived as one of the least desirable industries by the youth of today. Over the next few years we will need to make a big effort to educate young pupils about the benefits and opportunities of a career in the farming industry. Do pupils know about career opportunities in agriculture, such as; engineering, business, and science? And who better to educate and instil interest and passion into these young individuals than you, a Young Farmer!

This pack is designed to give you and your fellow members a few hints and tips when visiting schools. Young Farmers do so much great work within their local community, therefore you may have been asked to go in to a school and share your knowledge already. Or it may be you and your club wish to make the initial approach and offer to go in to a school to do a presentation or help with an activity. Whatever the situation, it is important to plan what you are going to do.

The most important point is that everyone is safe and enjoys themselves whilst learning about farming and the countryside. If the session goes well it is highly likely you will be asked to visit again. It is also likely that other schools will hear about what you are doing and invite you in to their school.

The children may have little knowledge of what work on a farm entails and to some children the simplest facts can be a real revelation. If you can engage the pupils and motivate them about the importance of farming and the countryside, it is time well spent. Being a member of a Young Farmers' Clubs (YFC) encourages excellent messages and morals, therefore be sure to tell pupils about what being a Young Farmer is all about, after all, one of those children could be the future chairman of your club!



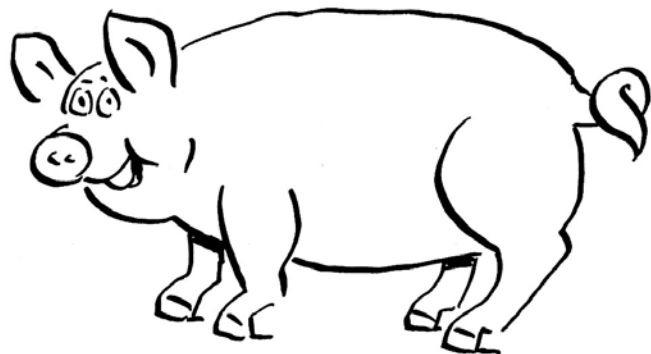
Making Contact with Schools

Sometimes a school may contact you. This makes the process a little easier as you can start discussing with the school what they require.

Having said this, many schools are unaware that there are Young Farmers who are willing to visit schools. In these situations the Young Farmers need to make the initial contact. There are several ways to do this;

- **Personal contacts:** you may know a teacher, governor or parent of a child at a school. Discuss your ideas with these people. Follow it up by speaking to the head teacher or class teacher.
- **Contacting a school:** if you have no direct contacts you may like to write a short letter to the school followed by a telephone call. Teachers are busy people so always follow up with a phone call to remind them.
- **Farming and Countryside Education (FACE):** contact your regional co-ordinator <http://www.face-online.org.uk/face-contacts/contacts> If a school contacts them asking about speakers they can then match you up with a nearby school.

When contacting a school it is always easier if you know what you can offer and when. If you just offer to “do something” a teacher with little knowledge of farming may not realise the scope of your expertise and the range of things you could talk about. Perhaps you could offer to do a presentation, learning exercise or a game which will educate pupils about the importance of agriculture and the potential career paths available.



Preparing for your visit

Think carefully about what you want to do when you visit the school. Have a plan but be prepared to be flexible. It is worth considering the following;

1. **How long you got / how long is the session?** Your standard activity or presentation may be 20 minutes but be ready to make it shorter or longer. Have some extra questions to ask the children or extra things to show them in case you have spare time. Equally, know how you can shorten your session without making it hurried. Most young children will sit, listen and interact for about 20 – 30minutes. Any longer and they become distracted. Older pupils can be expected to pay attention for 30 – 40 minutes (as long as it is interesting!).
2. **How many children are you working with?** Is it one class, all the juniors or infants or the whole school? Knowing numbers will help you prepare. You may need to alter things if groups are very large or small.
3. **How old are the children?** You need to know this so that you can make sure you use words they understand, you can appreciate their attention span, and you know how much prior understanding they may have. If the children are young you may want to make your presentation highly visual and educate them about life on the farm. If the pupils are older perhaps you wish to focus more on farming career paths.
4. **Where are you going to do your session?** Will it be in the classroom, hall or outside? Are these locations appropriate for what you want to do and will you have enough space and the right equipment?
5. **How can you engage the children?** Children like to be involved. Ask them questions, take visual aids, give them things to look at and pass around, use volunteers from the audience, build a game or quiz into what you do. Children learn when they feel safe and are having fun. Don't just stand and talk at the children. They will soon become bored and restless. Aim to engage all the children – not just those who are more vocal and answer your questions. Also make sure you can be heard by all the children.
6. **How can you establish the prior understanding of the children?** Discuss with the teacher how much the children already know. If the session is “pitched” too high or low the children will lose interest. Some groups have a wide range of children in them with differing abilities so be ready to explain things in a different way so that all have an opportunity to understand.
7. **How can you make sure everything is safe?** Think about this beforehand and when you are setting up. Make sure everything is safe, particularly if you use visual aids and presentation equipment. If you give the children anything to feel and pass around make sure it is safe to do so. You should never be left alone with the children: a teacher should always be present and it is his/her job to control the children's behaviour.

8. **What equipment do you need?** If you intend to use a PowerPoint make sure the school has the equipment you need in the room they are planning to use. Don't forget to take any of your visual aids, memory sticks or equipment with you. If you are not familiar with technology, don't worry. Children are just as fascinated by artefacts that you bring in.
9. **What time should you allow?** Make sure you allow enough time to find the school, park and set up ready for a prompt start.

When preparing to go in to the school, make sure you talk with a teacher who knows the children. Get as much information as you can and discuss what you plan to do to make sure it is appropriate. Good preparation and organisation makes the visit to the school run a lot more smoothly.

Session Content

Choose a topic which you are confident to talk about and then adapt the session depending on the age of the children and the specific requirements of the teacher.

There are many things a Young Farmer can talk about:

Primary Level

A day in the life of a farmer

What happens on the farm inwinter / summer / spring / autumn?

Wildlife on the farm

Where does your food come from?

The list goes on.....

Secondary Level

Science of farming

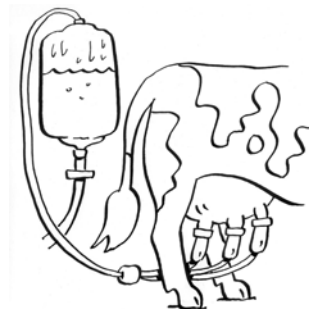
Farming as a business

Animal welfare

Sustainable farming practices

Careers in farming

And don't forget to promote Young Farmers and your club!



After the session

Once you have been to the school it's good to maintain the relationship. This sustained contact will mean that your visit is not forgotten and that the teachers and pupils keep thinking about Young Farmers – this could be a great way to attract new younger members to your club!

Many children think farming is something that happens when the sun shines!! Regular updates from a farmer would help them understand this is not the case.

Some schools may enjoy your visit so much they are then persuaded to visit a farm to see the work for themselves. Put them in contact with their local FACE co-ordinator (www.face-online.org.uk/face-contacts/contacts) who will find them a suitable farm nearby.

Your FACE co-ordinator may also be able to provide you with some resources for the teacher. Again, this is useful as it sustains the interest and helps the teacher integrate food, farming and countryside related topics in to their teaching.

Further help

If you are keen to work with schools but have more questions, don't hesitate to contact your local FACE co-ordinator. Their details are listed here www.face-online.org.uk/face-contacts/contacts.

Websites

www.face-online.org.uk

www.growingschools.org.uk

www.rhs.org.uk

www.schoolmilk.co.uk

www.renewableworld.org.uk

www.naturedetectives.org.uk

www.hgca.com

www.grainchain.com

