



Wildlife Habitats on the Farm

Teaching Resource for Key Stage 2

This activity can be delivered on a farm walk and allows pupils to discover the range of wildlife that live on farms.



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Introduction

Curriculum Areas

- Geography
- Science
- PHSE
- Sustainability
- Literacy

Learning Objectives

- To understand that farmers grow our food
- To understand that farmers provide habitats on their farms for wildlife
- To identify habitats suitable for wildlife commonly found on farms

Resource Check List

- Teacher Notes
- Farmland Wildlife Cards (print off and laminate a set)
- Wildlife Habitat Homes Signs (print off, laminate and cut out. Stick to wooden sticks so they resemble “For Sale” signs. Pupils can use them to show the location of a suitable home (habitat))

Field Vole



Field Vole

- I am Britain's commonest **mammal**. There are about 75 million of us (there are more of us than there are of humans)!!
- I am small (10cm long with a 4 cm tail) and live in runs or burrows
 - I like to live in grassland, heathland and moorland
 - I eat seeds, roots and leaves
- I have to be careful as kestrels, weasels and barn owls like to eat field voles

Before the Farm Visit

In preparation for your farm visit it is suggested that teachers deliver the following activity;

“Farming, wildlife and your school grounds” which can be found on the **Countryside Classroom** website
<https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1443>

Slides 1 – 10 of this resource allow pupils to develop their understanding of the purpose of farms as well as identify the range of habitats that could be found on a farm.

It is worth recapping;

- What is a habitat?
- What does a habitat need to provide for a creature?
 - You may like to show your pupils some descriptions of homes that estate agents have written. Could the pupils write their own “particulars” for the habitats found on the farm. For example, trees and woodland areas “provide accommodation on many levels, with far reaching views, close to local food sources”

It is also worth discussing with your pupils the **“Countryside Code”** and how to act responsibly in the countryside.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMLHrBtLMTI>

When planning your farm visit it is worth discussing your ideas with the farmer and sharing this resource with them. Check the creatures on each of the “Farmland Wildlife Cards” are relevant to the farm you are visiting. As far as possible examples of common farmland wildlife have been used, however location and seasonal variations may mean the farm is not a habitat for some of the creatures. It may also be the case that the farmer has other interesting animals that make their home on the farm and you could add extra cards to your set.



On the Farm Visit

Before setting out on your farm walk brief your pupils. Their job is to act as “Estate Agents” and find the most suitable “home” for the creatures detailed on the Farmland Wildlife cards. Discuss what a habitat is and what it needs to provide for a creature. Recap the various habitats that they will see on their farm walk, (walls, hedges, field margins, woodland, meadows, ponds). It would be useful if the farmer could show photographs of the various habitats so that the pupils can look out for them on the walk.

It is suggested that pupils are organised in to pairs and the Farmland Wildlife cards are distributed evenly within the group.

With the farmer as your guide head out on your farm walk. As you arrive at each habitat ask the children what habitat it is, (woodland, hedgerow, field margin). Can the pupils tell you what the habitat would provide for a creature. Is the habitat suitable for any of the animals detailed on the cards?

If the pupils find a suitable habitat they may like to place one of the Wildlife Habitat Homes signs in the area and take a photograph of the sign and Wildlife Animal card.

Or,

If you have a smaller group of more independent learners, plus a safe area (where pupils can still be supervised) with a selection of habitats in one location, you may choose to allow your pupils to explore the area in pairs. Between themselves they can identify the most suitable home for their creature(s). Once they have identified a habitat they should place a Wildlife Habitat Home sign in the area. As a group, visit each of the identified “homes” and allow the pupils to explain why they thought this location was the best place for their creature.

At the end of your farm walk ask the pupils if they think the farm is a wildlife friendly farm. Does the farm;

Conserve wildlife?

Connect wildlife?

Create areas for wildlife?

Can they come up with examples of the above that they have seen on the farm?



After the Farm Visit

Hopefully, the pupils have been inspired by their farm visit and understand the importance of habitats.

- Could they use their habitat identifying skills they developed on their farm visit back at school?
- Could they audit their school grounds?
- What habitats are within the school grounds?
- Could they develop more habitats?
- Could they make their schools grounds a wildlife haven?
- Why is it good to create different habitats?

Re visit the **“Farming, wildlife and your school grounds”** resource.

Slides 11 – 15 would help your pupils with the above.



Extension Activities

To develop this area of work further you may like to:

- Consider the extension activities detailed in the **“Farming, wildlife and your school grounds”** resource which can be found on the **Countryside Classroom** website <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1443>
- Take part in the Farmer Time initiative <https://leafuk.org/farmertime/home>
- Contact your LEAF Education Regional Consultant who may be able to offer more suggestions <https://leafuk.org/education/contact-us#LEAF-RECS>

Planning a Farm Visit

You may have organised farm visits for your students before, but if you feel you need some help, have a look at;

“How to plan curriculum linked and safe visits to farms: A handbook for teachers” available on the Countryside Classroom website at <https://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1416> .

This should give you all the information you need. If you would like further support, don't hesitate to contact your LEAF Education Regional Consultant (details in the hand book or on the LEAF Education website www.educationleafuk.org)

Health and Safety

An extensive risk assessment is contained in the handbook mentioned above. However, pay particular attention to;

- Poisonous plants / nettles
- Pupil / staff allergies
- Cover cuts / skin abrasions
- Soil blowing in to eyes
- Ticks
- Tetanus status
- Hands **MUST** be washed as per guidance in handbook

LEAF Education

LEAF Education is a charity working throughout England and Wales to inspire future generations about food, farming and the countryside. The team of experienced Regional Education Consultants work closely with teachers and farmers to facilitate links and learning opportunities.

LEAF Education is part of LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming). LEAF is the leading global organisation delivering more sustainable food and farming. LEAF works with farmers, the food industry, scientists and consumers to inspire and enable sustainable farming that is prosperous, enriches the environment and engages local communities. LEAF promotes Integrated Farm Management, a whole business approach that delivers sustainable farming. LEAF also organises LEAF Open Farm Sunday, the farming industry's annual open day for the public.



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