



FaceTime a Farmer and the Poultry Industry

In association with



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Introduction

FaceTime A Farmer is an exciting initiative organised through LEAF Education that is transforming how farmers connect children with their food and where it comes from.

FaceTime a Farmer is all about harnessing the power of digital communications to inspire and engage young people about farming and where their food comes from. Children chat live from their classrooms to farmers through FaceTime or Skype, discuss ideas, ask questions, share knowledge and gain a 'real-time' understanding of the issues farmers face every day.

“There are so many benefits which include learning about where our food comes from, rural landscapes, understanding the different jobs involved in farming, renewable energy, healthy eating and a great focus for British values”

We are always looking for teachers and farmers to register for FaceTime A Farmer. To register please visit:

<https://leafuk.org/facetimeafarmer>

FaceTime a Poultry Farmer

We now have a number of poultry farmers talking to schools through FaceTime to explain their work and to help children understand the process involved in rearing the chicken that ends up on their plates.

We are keen to invite any farmers and/or schools to apply to join the scheme which is free to enter. We are finding it is a simple and effective way to build useful links between farms and schools.

We have included case studies of two of the partnerships we are working with.



pdtaylor photography

CASE STUDY 1

The Farmer

Chris Chater is General Manager for Hook2Sisters Ltd based in Devon. Chris became involved in the FaceTime a Farmer project after working in the poultry industry for many years and wants to encourage young people into the industry. He believes FaceTime a Farmer helps to not only educate the children about the poultry industry but also highlights the many career opportunities that could be available to them.

The School

Bebington High Sports College is a secondary school in Bebington on the Wirral. Included in the school's extensive curriculum provision is a land-based science department which provides some of the leading provision for Animal Care in Merseyside through their on-site and off-site working farms. The school offers to their pupils the chance to study Level 2 and Level 3 provision in Animal Care and Animal Management plus participate in a comprehensive range of vocational courses and extra-curricular activities and trips.

FaceTime a Farmer was coordinated by the Head of Animal Care, Sam McRae, and supported by three other Animal Care teachers. The school made the decision to become involved in the project as they felt it was a "money can't buy experience for both staff and students."

The Sessions

Due to the limited WiFi signal on the school farm, the first FaceTime a Farmer session took place in the Animal Care classroom. The pupils participating were Year 11 students studying for Level 2 in Animal Care, who are considering choices for sixth form, and current sixth formers who are studying for Level 3 in Animal Management. This target audience is ideal for meeting Chris's goals for the session, to highlight career progression in the poultry industry, as pupils from Bebington High do show an interest in careers such as Agricultural Management and Veterinary Science after leaving the school.

Once connected, Chris was located on the farm and was able to begin to give the children an insight into the poultry industry focusing on slow growing broiler birds (chickens bred for meat) which were two weeks old. Before the session, the children had prepared a list of possible questions to ask Chris, however as the session progressed these led to a more open discussion which centred around British food sourcing. One pupil commented afterwards that this, "made me consider more carefully what we should buy."

The children responded to the experience with great enthusiasm as Chris gave them a "truly fascinating" insight into the "vast scale of the poultry industry." The children were interested

in the welfare of the birds and Sam commented afterwards on the “high standard of animal welfare,” that they witnessed during the call. This then could be linked to the pupils’ curriculum learning in the classroom as animal welfare forms an integral part of their studies.

Impact

After the session Sam collated the responses from her students and their first FaceTime a Farmer session was considered a resounding success and incredibly eye-opening.

The children made comments such as:-

“It made me understand the scale of the poultry industry.”

“Gave me an insight into the global standards versus our own legislation and standards”

Sam is already planning her next FaceTime a Farmer session with Chris and is enthusiastic about recommending the initiative to other schools, “It opened the minds of our students to the possible future career prospects that they would have never considered previously.”

Chris is equally positive about the impact of the LEAF Education FaceTime a Farmer initiative, “It’s been great talking to the children - some of them will become our farmers of the future. It gives me great satisfaction to answer their questions on how we rear our birds and ultimately where food comes from. We are seeing numbers of farmers decline over time and the only way for us to safe guard the future of food production is to open our doors and educate the next generation.”

Thank you to Bebington High Sports College and Hook2Sisters Ltd



The Farmer

Ryan Bigger has worked as the shepherd at the Royal Veterinary College, Boltons Park Farm for the past three years. Previously, he worked on a mixed farm in New Zealand and as an intensive pig farmer in Shropshire. He graduated from Harper Adams University in 2014. Ryan became involved in the FaceTime a Farmer initiative after responding to a post from LEAF Education on social media

The School

Langley Park Primary Academy, part of Leigh Academies Trust in Kent is a relatively new school, opening in September 2016. The school decided to become involved in the LEAF Education FaceTime a Farmer initiative in order to inspire their pupils and to learn more about where their food came from.

Currently, the Reception children have been working with Ryan and are thoroughly enjoying the experience. Rebecca Bye, the class teacher, uses a blog to update parents on what has happened in each session and she admits that she is also learning with the children during the sessions.

The Sessions

Before each session, Ryan and Rebecca make contact to discuss what the children are learning, Ryan then has some guidance on what to talk about. The children are also encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills by thinking of questions to ask Ryan.

Rebecca stated, "Ryan is super at answering some of the trickier questions, for example, when the children asked why the eggs didn't have chicks in them!"

During one session, following a school lunch of chicken, the children were able to talk to Ryan about chicken meat. The children were curious if their lunch would have come from a chicken like the ones on Ryan's farm. Ryan was able to tell them that his chickens were egg laying ones and that they would have eaten a different type of chicken.

Throughout the sessions, Ryan is kept very busy visiting different parts of the farm to show the children via Skype and introducing them to some new words, which is a vital part of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) curriculum. The children have also witnessed the changes on the farm as the seasons change which again encourages key learning.

Following on from each session Rebecca creates opportunities for the children to show what they have learned within their early years classroom setting. The children have made models of tractors and scarecrows and have planted bulbs to compare to how a farmer grows their crops.

The children, aged four and five, are enthusiastic participants in the project, comments include: -

"I like it, he says lots of things about lots of animals."

"We learnt about chickens, they have special chickens which get killed to eat, not the ones that lay eggs."

"We learnt about sheep. They've got special stuff on them to make them warm in the winter."

"We watched the tractor crunch the seeds."

Impact

Langley Park Primary Academy believe that their children are very lucky to have their own farmer to talk to, subsequently providing different opportunities for learning.

Ryan is enjoying his participation in this project, "I find Facetime a Farmer extremely rewarding as I can provide an insight into agriculture that some of the children wouldn't have previously been able to experience and show them where their food comes from in the UK. It's always a joy to see the kids get excited about what's happening in the background and how the farm changes throughout the seasons"

Rebecca cannot praise the project enough, "I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of FaceTiming our farmer and have learnt just as much as the children about the animals and what it is like to work on a farm. I have been very impressed with how kind Farmer Ryan is with the children, never dismissing their slightly odd remarks and sensitively answering other rather tricky questions. He always enquires what the children are learning about and tries to tie in the session with our topic. After each weekly session the children always come back to class with a real buzz, desperate to tell their friends about what they saw and what new things they have learnt. I've realised how mature our children can be when discussing the eating of animals but also how they genuinely care about seeing crops and animals grow. It has been a fascinating journey and we're so happy with the learning opportunities and experiences the children are having because of it. We have a lot to thank Ryan for and look forward to continuing our relationship with him.

Further information about this initiative and how your school or farm can become involved can be found at www.leafuk.org/facetimeafarmer

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Thank you to Royal Veterinary College, Boltons Park Farm and Langley Park Primary Academy, part of Leigh Academies Trust