

Farm Visits

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The Outdoor Education & External Visits website is at
<https://slp.somerset.org.uk/sites/sccoea/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

INTRODUCTION

Farm visits can provide young people with a valuable form of education and development but are places that can be relatively high risk. The presence of machinery, slurry pits and animals pose a range of risks that will require assessment together with good on-site management and planning. At the same time, farms provide useful educational tools on the growth and production of food and the rural environment.

Organisers should ensure by means of an exploratory visit that the farm is well-managed and applies adequate safety and animal welfare standards. It should have dedicated public areas, washing and toilet facilities.

The farm should, ideally, be one of the FUW/ NFU sponsored "Open Farms" which are specifically developed for visitors.

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ZOONOSIS INFECTIONS

Zoonosis infections form an obvious risk to visitors to farm sites. Visitors to farm sites do not possess the relative immunity of farm workers to the various infections. Organisers should ensure that all supervisors and children are informed of the precautions to be taken.

- LEPTOSPIROSIS (Cattle or rat form)
- CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS
- E-COLI

The above zoonosis infections are transmitted by contact, directly or indirectly, with the faeces or urine of animals or by the drinking of contaminated water.

Such infections are relatively rare but can be serious. Most are treatable with antibiotics.

Prevention of infection involves:

- Avoiding contact with urine, faeces or contaminated water;
- Avoiding drinking potentially contaminated water;
- Covering skin abrasions with waterproof dressings;

- Thorough washing of any possibly affected areas of skin.

Symptoms may include flu-like attacks, headache (often persistent), vomiting, muscle pain, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

Staff and young people operating in the vicinity of farms, on farm visits or on water activities should take the above precautions and inform parents accordingly.

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SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

Group control is important and the following list of do's and don'ts is useful to help ensure a visit to a farm is trouble free.

Some Do's

- Always wash hands immediately after touching animals.
- On leaving the farm, clean shoes.

Some Don'ts

There are some basic safety rules. Do not allow young people/group members to:

- touch animal droppings
- eat or drink whilst going round the farm
- eat until they have washed their hands
- sample any animal foodstuffs
- drink from farm taps (other than in designated public facilities)
- play in the vicinity of, or ride on, tractors or other machines unless part of an approved ride
- play in the farm area or in other areas that are out of bounds, such as grain storage tanks, slurry pits

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FURTHER GUIDANCE

Please see [Appendix A: Farm Visits – Planning Checklist](#). (Please note that this Checklist is available as a separate document from the [Templates & Forms](#) page in the [Start Here](#) section of the Outdoor Education & External Visits website.

More detailed advice is available from:

- The Farming & Countryside Education website – see [Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions – Industry Code of Practice](#).
- The NHS website at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leptospirosis> provides further information on Weil's disease.

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Appendix A

Farm Visits: Planning Checklist

Proposed Farm for a Visit:	
Visit Leader:	Date of Visit:

	Yes	No	N/A
Have you made an initial visit to the farm?			
Is the farm one of the FUW/NFU sponsored open farms specifically developed for visitors?			
Does the farm appear well managed?			
Do they have a risk assessment document available?			
Is the general environment clean and presentable, given the type of activity?			
Is there machinery on the farm that is accessible and could pose a risk to the young people?			
Do animals appear to be well looked after?			
Are there suitable washing and toilet facilities?			
Are there sufficient activities available to ensure the visit outcomes?			
Are there any special rules that the farm would like the young people to observe?			
Are there any additional costs other than the entrance fee?			
Can refreshments be bought on site?			

Notes:

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