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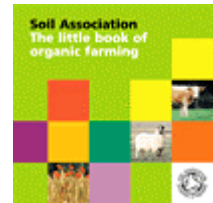
# Food for Life Curriculum Pack

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## Topic 2: What do we really know about farming?

A farm visit is the best way to introduce children to many of the issues facing farmers today, and these can be arranged via our network of organic farms. Go to [www.soilassociation.org/education](http://www.soilassociation.org/education) to find out more.

A useful classroom resource for this topic is the Soil Association's *Little Book of Organic Farming*. It is packed full of information and activities to help children learn about organic farming. Copies are available free from the education department on 0117 914 2440.



The following activities introduce some of the issues linked to farming and are designed to help children consider the differences between organic and conventional methods of farming. Teachers may choose to pick two or three from the list depending on the age and previous knowledge of the pupils. We would recommend beginning with the first activity to introduce children to some important themes in farming.

The Soil Association works to promote the benefits of organic farming, both in terms of human health and impact on the environment. We hope that the activities will highlight some of the problems associated with some forms of conventional farming, in particular factory farming. Teachers working in farming communities need to be sensitive to the fact that many of the children's parents will earn their living using conventional farming methods.

### Activities for key stage one.

Activity 1: Thinking about farming

Activity 2: Animals have rights too!

Activity 3: Wild about wildlife

## Activity 1: Thinking about farming

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### Curriculum links

Science Sc 5a, 5b, 5c

Geography 1c, 2a, 5a, 5b

PSHE 2b, 2g

### Objectives

- To help children see that farming has an impact on our environment and this impact can be harmful.

### Resources

1. Teaching resource 5 *Farming pictures*.
2. Activity Sheet 4 *Things I know about farming*.

### What to do

Write 'farming' on the board and ask the children to give you words that they associate with farming. Would they like to work on a farm? Ask the children to think about the kinds of jobs that need doing around the farm. Can they imagine a typical day on a farm?

Ask the pupils to fill in the first column of activity sheet 4 *Things I know about farming*. They could also draw a picture of a typical farm scene and describe it to a partner/the class.

Now show the children the farming pictures one by one and ask them questions about what they can see and what this tells them about farming, writing key words on the board. The pictures bring out different aspects of farming including habitats (some farm land provides excellent habitats for a range of animals, whilst some is effectively a monoculture, with just one crop growing), animal welfare and disease and pest control. The pictures may not be the kind of ones they have seen before, and may be surprising to some of them. When you have finished looking at the pictures, the pupils then fill in the rest of activity sheet 4 *Things I know about farming*.

## Activity 2: Animals have rights too!

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### Curriculum links

Science S2 1b, 1c, 2b, 2e, 5a

PSHE 2e, 5g

### Objectives

- To understand the difference between intensive and non-intensive animal farming
- To consider the rights of farm animals by developing an animal welfare charter.

### Resources

1. Teaching resource 5 *Farming pictures* – photo cards of animals.
2. Activity sheet 5 *Animal charter*.

### What to do

Show the pupils the photo card with the battery hens and the sow in a farrowing crate. Ask them questions about it. For example: Why do they think the animals are kept in cages? Have they ever seen hens or pigs on a farm? Did they live in the same conditions? Compare with the photo card of free range hens and pigs. What do the children think about the animals on this card?

Ask the pupils what they think would be important to make farm animals happy and comfortable. For example, how do they look after their pets? Write a list on the board.

The following points are based on the Soil Association's organic standards and may be a useful reference. Animals should:

- Always have free range access to pasture
- Have natural light and ventilation when housed
- Have enough space to move around
- Be fed a natural diet and clean water
- Be allowed to grow at a natural rate
- Have comfortable bedding
- To be given medicine only when they need it, and not 'routinely'.

Pupils could draw two pictures showing a battery hen and then a free range hen. Underneath they could put key words or a phrase that describes what the conditions are like.

## Activity 2: Animals have rights too! continued

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### Further activities

You could give the children an understanding of what confinement might feel like. Make a 2m<sup>2</sup> pen using ropes and posts or chairs. Fit in as many children as possible and then ask them to tell you how they would feel about spending all day like that. What would the problems be? This activity could be done during a PE lesson, as you could then let the pupils run around as organic chickens!

### Teachers' notes

The Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) Trust has a set of resources available free of charge. It contains activities, worksheets and three colour posters showing the contrasting conditions in which animals are reared. To order, email [ciwftrust@ciwf.co.uk](mailto:ciwftrust@ciwf.co.uk). Other useful resources can be found in the *Farm Animals* edition of the RSPCA's *Animal Focus* magazine. Go to [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk) and choose 'Education Services', 'Primary'.

Talking about animal welfare can be a very emotive subject, and it is important to remember that some children may be very sensitive about the issue. It may be worth sending a note home to let parents know you have discussed this issue.

## Activity 3: Wild about wildlife

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### Curriculum links

Geography 1c, 5a, 5b

Science 5a, 5b, 5c

PSHE 2g

### Objectives

- To realise that hedgerows support a wide range of animals
- To understand the importance of conserving biodiversity on farms.

### Resources

Teaching resource 7 *Wild about wildlife* and/or other pictures of wildlife habitats that might be found on a farm.

### What to do

Children look at the hedgerow picture in pairs and try and identify as many animals as they can (rabbit, hedgehog, fox, badger, mouse, lizard, vole, blackbird, robin, wren, magpie, ladybird, bumblebee). Are they surprised at how many there are?

Explain that these animals live in and around farmland and that the hedge is their home. What might happen to these animals if the hedgerows are cut down? Why might it be important that these animals are protected?

Children could then find out more about the animals that might be found on farmland, choose one, draw it and write a few words/sentences about it. You could use the children's pictures to make a hedgerow display with animals 'hidden' amongst the foliage.