

## GUIDELINES ON EDUCATIONAL FARM VISITS FOR ORGANISERS AND VISITORS TO FARMS



Visits to farms and other similar establishments are now a regular feature of modern education for young children, both from rural and urban environments.

Such visits can provide a wealth of information allowing children to discover the origins of some of our food whilst providing an insight into the rearing and the husbandry of our food animals.

But it is important to remember that farm animals can carry germs which can be passed to humans. Although most infections are not normally serious, a few can cause considerable discomfort to those affected.

### What you, the visit organiser, should expect at the farm

Those organising farm visits need to be aware that visitors may be more susceptible to infection from the farm environment and its products than those who live in that environment.

Advice should therefore be sought from the local authority environmental health department as to the suitability of particular farms and the facilities provided, before embarking on a visit.

Such facilities should include:-

- \* adequate hand washing facilities;
- \* wash hand taps at each exit to buildings in which animals are kept;
- \* simple, legible notices indicating restricted areas, toilets and hand washing facilities;
- \* notices provided at wash hand basins and exits from farm buildings reminding visitors of the need for hand washing;
- \* separate clean areas set aside for eating if refreshments are to be taken on site.

### On the Farm

Upon arrival at the farm children should be reminded of the importance of hand washing after touching farm animals and before eating.

The main rules to follow are:-

- \* **keep fingers out of mouths at all times** (consideration should be given to the suitability of thumb-suckers on such visits)
- \* **do not taste or take away any raw milk, milk products or animal feeding stuffs;**
- \* **do not drink from farm taps, streams, troughs or other pools of water except designated drinking water taps.**

### Contact with Animals

Children should be able to enjoy their visit to the farm and being in contact with and holding the animals is a great way for them to learn. However, it is important to appreciate that farm animals do carry germs which can be passed to children, causing upset stomachs, sickness and diarrhoea in some cases.

### Remember:-

- \* if children are allowed to touch, stroke or feed lambs and calves then close supervision is required to ensure hands are washed thoroughly afterwards;
- \* some lambs, particularly those under three weeks old, suffer symptoms of scouring (producing diarrhoea). To reduce the chance of germs being passed on only lambs over three weeks old should be hand fed by children.

## Advice for Pregnant Visitors:-

Pregnant visitors **should**:

- \* avoid contact with new born lambs or with lambing;
- \* seek medical attention if they experience fever or flu-like symptoms after visiting a farm centre;

Pregnant visitors **should not**:

- \* milk ewes that have recently given birth or touch any afterbirth.

## Remember the 10 Rules of Safety:-

1. Contact your local environmental health department for advice before embarking on a farm visit;
2. On the farm **children** should be **supervised** at all times;
3. Ensure children **keep fingers out of mouths** at all times;
4. Do not allow children to **taste raw milk**, milk products or animal feeding stuffs;
5. Water to be drunk only from designated drinking water taps;
6. Hands to be washed after touching, stroking or feeding lambs and calves;
7. Contact with young animals with symptoms of scouring, e.g. lambs under 3 weeks old, to be avoided;
8. Since muddy boots can contaminate hands with potentially harmful germs, children should wash their hands after removing soiled footwear before the journey home;
9. Pregnant visitors should avoid contact with new born lambs and should not milk ewes that have recently given birth or touch any afterbirth;
10. If they experience flu-like symptoms after visiting a farm centre, then they should seek medical attention.

Farm visits do carry a small but real risk of infection

This leaflet is intended to help you avoid the risks and enjoy your visit to the farm.

**For further information please contact:**

Environmental Health Section  
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E-mail: [ehcnet@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:ehcnet@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)



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