



5 A Day and School-Age Children

Field Trip to a Farm

Consider a class trip to a farm. Children will get the opportunity to see where fruits and vegetables are raised for distribution and sale. The following tips will help your tour go smoothly and will stretch the value of the time you spend "in the field."

Before your visit

- Call the farm to make a reservation. Ask if there is a fee and how long the tour lasts.
- Request teaching materials they may have to aid in preparation.
- If possible, go to the farm on your own before you bring the whole class. Introduce yourself, pick up relevant information and try to watch another class having the tour.
- Begin your farm unit one week ahead and plan to continue at least one week after the visit.
- Prepare your class for inclement weather and field conditions.
- Don't forget bee kits if you have students who are allergic.
- Inquire about places to eat lunch or snacks.
- Gather supplies for your trip: clipboard for each child, pairs of children, or small group (if the children need help recording information, a chaperone can be assigned to that responsibility); pens or pencils, crayons or colored pencils; and paper.

Pre-visit preparation ideas

- Discuss and make charts related to these questions:
 - What do we already know about the specific fruits and vegetables being grown?
 - What do we predict we'll see at the farm?
 - What do we wonder about farmers, farms, and fruits and vegetables?
- Brainstorm a list of questions that might be asked at the farm. In order to help the children think of the questions, give them categories and record their ideas under the separate headings. Examples include jobs, people, machines, fruits, vegetables and seasons; or who, what, when, where and why?

Pre-visit guest ideas

- Invite a local farmer or local extension agent to speak to your class about crops in your area.
- Have the class interview your guest speaker or host. Have students write their questions in advance as a writing assignment. Sample questions could be:
 - How did he/she farming?
 - Why is he/she growing that particular commodity(s)?
 - How much land do they have under production?
 - What machines does he/she use?
 - How do they sell their product?
 - How do they determine price?
 - What factors determine price?
- After the interview have them write articles on it as a newspaper reporter would.

At the farm

- Find the tour guides and let them know how you have prepared the students.
- The tour may include some of the following:
 - A walk or ride in the fields.
 - An explanation of the growing process.
 - Viewing (if possible) of the harvest, handling and storage techniques.
 - A chance to pick their own fruit or vegetable (supervised).
 - Explanation or viewing of processing the harvest into another commodity (like apples into cider).
 - A visit to the farm store and discussion of the market.
- Have students make drawings of the farm.

Please remember

A farm is a busy place! While your hosts have made a commitment to teaching children about farming, this is not their primary job. Please be active in the control of your class and careful of equipment and workers who are rushing to get the crop harvested and stored. To assure your safety and quality of experience, your hosts have planned a route and presentation within this busy context. There may be other schools or classes nearby who are in a different part of the tour. Please help your students to experience the beauty of the farm and to recognize that it is not a playground.

After your visit

- Compare pre-visit predictions with on-location discoveries.
- Discuss nutrients found in the fruits and vegetables grown on the farm.
- Make a "Jeopardy" type game with the information everyone has gathered.
- Make up a quiz to give parents, another class or the chaperones.
- Have a parents' night taste test featuring fruits and vegetables grown on the farm.
- Make a mural of the farm based on sketches.
- Make a model of the packing house out of blocks or Legos™.
- Make a maze using a tractor going through the fields.
- Make a diagram of a fruit or vegetable finding its way from a farm to a lunch box.
- Have students write reports, articles or stories about the trip and their discoveries.
- Have students write thank you letters to the farm.
- Work with the school's Child Nutrition Manager to identify and promote locally grown fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria.