



## Host Farm Guidelines Summary

This document has been prepared by Agri Aware in order to provide insight and advice into hosting a group of school pupils to a farm. Agri Aware accepts no responsibility for negligence and is not involved or associated with any visits organised without the direct pre-agreed involvement.

### **Basic Farm Requirements**

Farmers wishing to facilitate school visits to their farm must first assess their farm for potential risks and dangers that should have the appropriate signage. This signage should highlight immediate dangers such as hazardous material and slurry tanks, areas requiring warning such as livestock pens or machinery moving, and areas that you wish visitors to notice such as fire extinguishers or first aid kits.

The next step in assessing your farm is to review the condition of your facilities such as gates, barriers and chemical storage, if deemed in good working order, no action is required, if deemed to require some attention, it is advised to fix/replace these facilities to ensure the safety of everybody. The farm must also be appropriately cleaned and tidied to ensure it is a presentable order for visitors.

It is advised that farmers ensure they have all the correct documentation in order for a farm visit such as valid public liability and correct certificates for electric facilities on the farm.

### **Host Farmer Requirements**

To ensure a positive image and experience is created for school students when visiting the farm farmers should aim at creating a good impression from not only the physical farm itself but also from themselves. Dressing appropriately and making efforts to communicate with teachers regarding school curriculum or any specific requirements from the school can have a positive impact on the visit itself.

### **Reasons to Cancel/Postpone Visits**

Farms are ever changing places of work and are subject to numerous variables outside of our control, it is within the best interest of everyone to cancel or postpone visits to the farm for numerous reasons but some could include,

- Disease outbreak on farm
- Poor/Unsafe weather conditions
- Personal health of the farmer
- Defective Facilities/Equipment



## **Things to remember for the visit**

As people working in the industry we are accustomed to discussing technical aspects of farming and we expect people to act as grown adults when we host farm visits. With school children we must remember,

- They are children and we must think like them to notice potential dangers and hazards.
- They won't understand technical language, we must keep it simple and positive.
- Not everyone within a class of children will be from a farm, take the time to explain simple things to them.
- Use examples and demonstrate to them what it is you are talking about.

Taking the time to walk through the farm several times whilst keeping a look out for noticeable hazards and things not appropriate for a school visit will help to ensure you have everything covered, but double-checking and cross-checking everything and everyone associated with the farm will help to ensure you don't miss anything.

Writing out a plan or a list of things to check or give attention to, will also help. Never be afraid to ask for a second opinion or another set of eyes to go through everything with you.

## **Fulfilling a Visit**

Care should be given to choosing the correct date and time to host a visit, that takes into account both the farming and academic calendars. Ensuring there is help available on the farm during school visits to reduce risk and increase safety and enhance the experience for students is vital. If unsure of anything in specific, do not hesitate to ring the relevant person such as, school teacher, local vet, local DVO, local advisor etc. (everyone wishes to see these events happen and will be willing to help)

## **Reasons for a visit**

Although the lead-up to the visit might require some time and attention, the benefits for the industry far outweigh the miniscule inconvenience of hosting a visit,

- Giving school children a better understanding of where and how food is produced
- Creating a positive image of Irish farming within our own consumers
- Recreating relationships between schools and local farms
- Allowing farmers to showcase the hard work they do and to take pride in their farm
- Dispelling myths and false perceptions of Irish agriculture