

Inspiration for activities & demonstrations*

Demonstrations

Show ear tags, passports, hoof trimming; guess the weight of calf; show how crush works/crush demonstration with person (clean crush first!); engage the senses: touch a calf, smell feed, listen to the sound of the cattle, look at the different breeds; tag a calf.

Talk about

Traceability, passports, different breeds; the cattle year; feed; managing pasture; technology used; problems caused by dogs not on a lead; where the cattle go when they are sold; cuts of meat; how to stay safe in the countryside-advice you give to walkers crossing field with cattle in.

Displays

Tools and equipment used; different feed and supplements used; poster of different beef breeds; cuts of meat; photos of your cattle through the seasons.

Questions to ask visitors

Can you think of some things that are made from beef?
What other products do we get from these animals?
Do you know how many different breeds of cow there are?
Why do you think I keep this breed?
What do you think they eat? All year? When young?

Activity 1: 'Tag the calf' (5+)

Children can make their own calf head and 'tag' it using a paper fastener!

Materials

Paper plate or card. A template of a calf head, flag tags, yellow or white card. Felt tip pens/crayons.

Instructions

Cut out a card head shape. Get children to draw on eyes, nose and colour in the calf. Use a flag tag as template, draw and cut out. Make 2 tags. Talk about the letters and numbers on the tag. Children can create their own tag and attach it to their calf head with a paper fastener. visitors need help.

Activity 2: 'Make a Gourmet Burger' (10+)

A great activity if you are providing food and you are confident to let older children get involved! It also works well as a demonstration activity.

Materials

Minced beef, onion, seasoning, breadcrumbs, other ingredients of choice, e.g. a little chilli, herbs, sticky labels and cocktail sticks to identify burger.

Instructions

Make sure you have a clean area in which to do food preparation. If you are setting up a BBQ, why not get older children to make their own? They'll love it

- Mix a batch of ingredients together to make a 'bulk' mix. Gear this to your expected number of visitors. Remember to follow all obvious precautions to keep everyone healthy.

- Apron up, and hand wash for those about to work. Work with no more than 10 at a time.
- Show your bulk mix to the group about to work. Go through what is in it. Ask children if they can guess what is in a burger, where this fits into a balanced diet, etc.
- Distribute 100g of mix to each child (you could have a few extra ingredients to add) and get them to work on a clean board, to form a burger.
- Once formed, make a flag from cocktail stick and label to identify with child's name. Refrigerate if not cooking immediately.
- Clean up-work area, wash hands.
- Cook burgers on grill and serve with a bun. Emphasise how a good burger can be a healthy part of a balanced diet (especially if it's homemade) - it is balancing it with food from other groups that matters.
- You could charge for the burgers to cover costs!

The Back British Farming campaign website www.nfuonline.com/backbritishfarming lists the many reasons why British farming should be backed and how you can show your support.

For more information about LEAF and LEAF Marque and how to support our work, please visit www.leafuk.org

* Text kindly supplied by FACE
(Farming and Countryside Education)



Key messages

- Beef cattle generally live outside in the fields during the summer and spring and move into sheds for the winter. When they are outside, cattle graze on grass, which is the main part of their diet.
- Farmers make bales of silage when the grass is growing to feed the cows in winter. Silage is grass which is full of spring goodness that has been carefully cut and stored in bales or in clamps.
- Many cows calve the spring or autumn but some farmers operate an all year round calving cycle rather than in specific blocks or seasons. Calves are born around 280 days after mating (this varies with different breeds) and most beef cows are served by bulls, although some farmers do use artificial insemination.
- Animals that are being grown for beef are usually referred to as calves up until the age of about 6-9 months. Thereafter, they are known as 'stores' - animals that are suitable for 'finishing', putting on the layer of fat you see on your meat, and then finally as 'finished' or 'fat beasts'.
- There are a large number of breeds in the UK, ranging from small, hardy native breeds such as the Ruby Red Devon or Welsh Black and also continental breeds like the Charolais or Limousin. There are also many 'cross breeds' such as animals from the dairy herd and animals that farmers home-breed.

Speak Out top tips

- Be aware of background noise - pick a spot where everyone can hear you
- Create a circle – put an umbrella in the ground and ask people to stand round it; stand so that no one has your back to them
- Keep it personal – about you and your farm; it will be more memorable
- Be positive – if you are asked a negative question, turn it round and talk about the good things you are doing
- Keep out the jargon – a drill and headland mean something different; explain the terms you use e.g. an agronomist is a crop doctor, an acre is just over a football pitch
- Make your story relevant – start by talking about food and how your visitors benefit from your produce, rather than starting off talking about farming
- Use props – to illustrate what you are saying
- Talk with everyone – look at everyone, not just the people at the front
- Ask your visitors questions – interact with them, it will help keep their interest
- Engage the senses – encourage listeners to look, listen, smell and touch things to keep people engaged.

Health & Safety

- If you allow visitors to touch your animals, hand washing facilities, signage and supervision are essential
- You must provide: running water, liquid soap and paper towels
- Anti-bacterial hand gels are NOT a suitable alternative to hand washing
- Helpers need to encourage and supervise thorough hand washing
- Locate eating areas away from animal contact areas
- Eating and smoking in animal contact areas should be forbidden to avoid hand to mouth contact
- Ensure animals have clean, fresh bedding and that no bedding protrudes into walk ways
- Ensure yards, walk ways, gates and railings are clean – watch for areas of faecal seepage
- Provide a tap and brushes for visitors to wash mud off boots and pushchairs, followed by hand washing
- Make sure the event is insured and that a risk assessment has been carried out (if you are a helper, please read it)

Read the industry code of practice: 'Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions.'

For more health and safety information see the Open Farm Sunday website: www.farmsunday.org

