

Inspiration for activities & demonstrations*

Demonstrations

Sheep shearing; foot trimming; guess the weight of the sheep; feeding lambs; wool spinning demonstration; engage the senses: touch a fleece, smell the fleece, listen to the sound of the sheep, look at the different breeds.

Talk about

Different breeds of sheep; the lifecycle of sheep; stratified system of sheep farming; sheep feed; managing pasture; technology used; where sheep go when they are sold; cuts of meat; walking dogs responsibly around sheep and the importance of worming dogs.

Displays

Tools and equipment used; poster of different sheep breeds; cuts of meat; photos of your sheep through the seasons; products made from wool.

Questions to ask visitors

Can you think of some things that are made from wool? Do you know how many different breeds of sheep there are? How heavy do you think a ram/ewe/lamb is? When do we eat lamb? Easter traditionally, but eaten all year round. Did you know that 37% of our lamb goes for export. The French love British lamb and some French chefs have got into trouble by saying British lamb is the best!

Activity 1: 'Sheep on a Stick'

Materials

Scoured or clean/washed sheep's wool, white card 'cloud' for body of sheep—a 9 inch paper plate work well, black card, scissors, pipe cleaners cut in half can be used for horns, lolly sticks, or garden canes cut in half, black marker pens, PVA glue, sticky tape, wobbly eyes, white wool/yarn.

Instructions

- Cut out shapes for head and ears from black card. A few templates to assist are helpful.
- Cut the paper plate edges so it is a random cloudy-like shape.
- Children stick the sheep's head to its body (and its ears to the top of its head at either side).
- Using tape behind the ears, add twisted pipe cleaners for horns (optional).
- Children stick wool onto the body but not the head.
- Using some lengths of wool they can make some legs; tie the strands of wool together in a knot to make the sheep's feet.
- Add the eyes-googly eyes from a craft store are good, but you can use white card circles with a black dot from a marker pen.
- A lolly stick or half a garden cane are finally attached as a handle to hold the sheep!

Activity 2: 'Felt Making'

Materials

Scoured wool, some dyed scoured wool for making a pattern/initial, bubble wrap, reed mat, felting solution (soapy water with soap flakes with a little olive oil). You could use some of your own wool if washed, wool tops, scoured and combed from a supplier like knitshop.co.uk. Alternatively, you can buy felt kits from many craft suppliers if you prefer.

Instructions

- Tease the fibres of a wool sample so they are running parallel.
- Lay down the fibres on the bubble wrap in one direction for the first layer.
- Lay a second layer of fibres at a right angle to the first layer. A 10cm square should be sufficient to make the sample. Make layers nice and even.
- Repeat this to form a third layer.
- In a coloured wool, for example, from a craft site, lay down the initial of the maker or a simple criss-cross, swirl or other design of choice in an alternative colour.
- Sprinkle your felting solution over the fibres.
- Place the second piece of bubble wrap laid bubble side down on the felt. Rub gently to distribute the water and to agitate the fibres.
- Roll the forming felt in the bubble wrap and reed mat to create shrinkage.
- Remove the bubble wrap and roll just in the reed mat this time.
- Roll the felt in all directions. Then leave flat to dry.

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

- The sheep grazing in this field are some of the 32 million in the UK - that includes adult females (ewes), adult males (rams) and all their lambs. On average, ewes in the UK have around 1.3 lambs each, depending on their breed and how they've been fed. It's often only one, but can be as many as 5!
- Ewes only have two teats, so when they have more than two lambs a farmer may take the extras off, and adopt them onto a ewe with only one. This is a tricky process, and there are a number of techniques used to convince the adopting ewe that the adopted lamb is her own, as each lamb has a particular smell that she will recognise.
- Ewes are traditionally mated or 'tupped' in the autumn, with lambs born in spring to make use of the better weather and good grass growth. Before tupping, farmers put ewes onto their best pasture to ensure they are in good condition and to encourage as many lambs as possible, a process called 'flushing'. Most ewes can only get pregnant in the autumn, however some specialist breeds are able to mate at any time of the year, enabling a supply of lamb when it is needed most.
- Lamb is the ultimate free range food – almost all sheep need only grass, sunlight and a small amount of grain to grow. In fact, without grazing animals, huge areas of the UK could not be used for food production, as around 65% of our farmland is only suitable for growing grass to feed sheep and cattle.
- There are more than 60 different breeds of sheep in the UK and they all have a role to play. Some can survive on mountains and other harsh terrain and help to preserve the unique British landscape. Other breeds are known for the high quality of their lamb or wool.

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, as your visitors questions, it will really help to keep their interest. Try to engage all their senses, encouraging them to look, listen, smell and touch.

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

