

Teachers' Notes: How should we treat farm animals?

An opinion-forming exercise designed to promote small group discussion

PSHE/Citizenship Science English Religious Studies Geography Animal Science/Management

Age range < 5 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 adult

Objectives

- To encourage a basic understanding of how animals are farmed for food including intensive and less intensive systems using concrete examples
- To develop an understanding of the ethical issues involved
- To develop speaking, listening and decision making skills
- To encourage respect for other viewpoints through more detailed analysis
- To encourage concern for the welfare of both people and animals

How It Works:

Each page contains four "cards" like the two illustrated below. Each explores different sides of a farm animal welfare issue. Students discuss whether they agree or disagree with the subject on the card. Extension activities encourage more detailed analysis.

More reticent students who don't like to talk in front of a whole class will often discuss actively in a small group. If it is true that we learn more by talking than listening, then good small group discussion activities can promote wider learning.

The activity is available separately as card or worksheets. It matters which version you choose to print – the notes on the back have to be printed in reverse order in the card version. You will get the wrong notes on the back if you use the wrong version!

Enriched colony cages for hens



- + Eggs almost as cheap as from barren cage
- + Hens have more space and a little more freedom to exercise
- + Can perch and lay their eggs in nests
- Still much more crowded than alternative systems
- Cannot dust-bathe or perch high and opportunity to exercise still very limited
- a cage is still a cage


Differentiation:

This is an extremely flexible resource which can be adapted over a wide range of age and ability.

Students commonly make quick decisions based on a reading of the heading and the picture. This is a good way to start, and works for groups with limited reading ability.

Additional activities require them to look at additional information below the picture and, for more able students, at the more detailed information on the back of the card.

Producing free-range eggs



- + Hens are free to go outside
- + They can perform a range of natural behaviours
- + Generates valuable additional income for rural communities
- Eggs are more expensive
- Hens consume more feed
- Hens more at risk from predators

A Flexible Resource:

This activity has been designed for use as cards, but it can also be used as worksheets for simpler management.

The resource can also be used in the following ways:

- As cards in **sorting activities** which increase understanding of methods of farming
- In **role-play** exercises where they consider the viewpoints of different stakeholders (eg consumers, farmers, farm animals, environmental protection groups etc).
- As a source of **information** for students researching for debates, essays etc

Please note that if using as worksheets, the additional information on the back of the sheet is inverted left to right (this is necessary to ensure the right information is on the back when using as cards).

Fitting into Lessons and Programmes

This resource is best used as part of a series of activities which encourage a wider understanding of food and farming and of the ethics involved.

We strongly recommend including films such as *Farm Animals & Us* (ages 10-15) or the more detailed *Farm Animals & Us 2* (ages 14-adult). Including farm visits is an excellent idea when time and resources allow.

These are available on YouTube, as free downloads or on DVD from ciwf.org.uk/education.

Tips for Managing Cards:

This activity can use cards or worksheets. Using the card version gives more options for flexible discussion and sorting activities, but requires more management.

Please note that the card and worksheet versions are different and you should print the correct one – the notes on the back of the cards have to be reversed (the back of the sheet is the mirror of the front). The cards need to be printed double-sided for this to work. If you are not sure which version you have printed, the one for cards says “Cut into cards ...” at the top of the front page of each sheet.

The cards are printed in advance with the pictures and basic information on the front and the additional information (on the next page) on the back.

Ideally they are cut up in advance and laminated. We recommend placing in envelopes (rubber bands perish and can make tempting projectiles). You need enough sets for a class divided up into groups of 2, 3 or 4.

Alternatively, hand out as sheets with pairs of scissors for the first group to cut up.

To avoid the risk of sets of cards getting mixed up, we recommend numbering each group of cards (first group puts a number 1 on the back of each card, second group a 2 etc). If they do get mixed up, they will be much easier to sort.

Possible Lesson Plan (50-60 minutes):

1. Class brainstorms foods we get from animals (2 minutes)
2. Class brainstorms ways in which animals are kept for food, eg how are hens kept, pigs kept etc (2 minutes)
3. *Where Do You Draw the Line?* Card or worksheet exercise completed in groups. Groups decide which methods of production they agree or disagree with. (5 minutes)
4. Watch Compassion in World Farming video *Farm Animals & Us* (17 minutes for ages 10 and upwards) or the more detailed *Farm Animals & Us 2* (26 minutes for ages 14 to adult). Both films are available free on DVD, for download or to view online at ciwf.org.uk/education.
5. Option to encourage questions and whole class discussion (this may take no time at all or the rest of the lesson according to the interest and dynamics of the group and whether the teacher prefers to progress back to a small group discussion exercise)
6. Small group discussion activity:
If using cards, sort them into groups of 4 or 8 according to the type of animal or the food being produced. Further divide any 8s into 4s according to what is being produced. There should be five sets of:
 - 4 laying hens
 - 4 meat chickens
 - 4 dairy cows
 - 4 breeding pigs (sows)
 - 4 fattening pigs (for pigmeat production)

NB If using worksheets which have not been cut into cards, omit this section since they will already be in the correct groups of 4 (approx 5 mins).

Choose one group of four and:

 - Sort from best to worst
 - Take the best and list all the advantages and disadvantages of the system (additional info is on the back of the cards to help with this)
 - Do the same for the worst
 - If time, repeat for other groups (10-15 minutes).
7. Whole group discussion of issues raised. Collect together the general arguments in favour or against more intensive farming and/or higher welfare/free-range and organic systems (approx 5 minutes).

Variations:

1. If you have a longer session, or can devote two lessons to the topic, show the film in a previous lesson, ideally starting the session with the *Personality Test* exercise.

Hopefully, this will allow time for each group to prepare the example they studied above to present to the rest of the class before the overall class discussion of the pros and cons of intensive vs less intensive systems.

2. Use the cards in a role-play exercise. Groups to take on roles eg animal rights, animal welfare, farmers, meat industry, battery cage manufacturers, conservationists etc. Provide with range of literature. Research using the internet.

3. Use the cards in a whole class exercise with the class sitting in a circle. Give each student one card. Each presents their view and places the card in the appropriate place in the middle of the circle (totally acceptable at one end; totally unacceptable at the other). Provide opportunities for whole class discussion after every five cards or so. In this case, it can promote a long discussion (in small groups, it is usually quite quick). Best used after viewing the film.