

AgriKids Farm Safety Ambassador

DISCUSSION SHEET



Theme 3: Animal Safety & Wellbeing

Level: Infants

Objective

In this theme the children will learn to recognise how animals are feeling by how they are behaving. They will also have an introduction into how farmers look after and care for their animals.

Learning outcome topics

1. What the animals are saying. Knowing the behavioural traits of animals when threatening or passive.
Cattle | Horses | Dogs | Cats
2. Basic animal care.
3. Zoonotic diseases.

Children will also learn more about why farmers keep certain animals on their farms

Tip: You can use the Farm Safety Workbook in conjunction with this discussion.

Topics

1. Lets meet the farm animals & learn what are they saying?

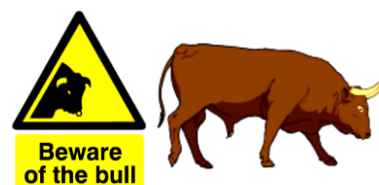
Ask the children to name animals typical to a farm. Write the answers down on the board and put a line under the following ones: **Bull / Cow / Horse / Dog / Cat**

We are going to discuss these animals in greater detail!

The Bull

What we need to know

- Bulls are territorial animals. This means they guard the area they consider belongs to them, eg. their field or pen.
- You should never enter a field with a bull.
- From about 9 months old a bull will have a ring fitted in their nose so they can be led & handled using a rope or chain.



Question:

Does the colour red make bulls angry?

Answer:

No it does not!. Bulls are colour-blind! They cannot 'see' or make out the colour red. So it's perfectly ok to wear red around a bull. What can anger them is movement, flapping and/or entering their territory, which threatens them.

Bulls and cows will show signs when planning to attack or 'charge'.

- They will stop grazing & watch you
- Bellow – make a grunting sound
- Start pawing the ground with their hoof
- Shake their head from side to side

The Cow

Many children will undoubtedly mention cows on the list. Do they know what food we get from cows? We get milk and beef.

As we get milk from cows we also have cream, yoghurts, ice-cream and butter. So why not ask the class to give a round of applause to say thank you to cows for all the yummy food we get.



But, it's important to let them know that cows are considered the most dangerous of the farm animals. Why? They are protecting their young or new born calves and therefore cause more livestock accidents than bulls. Farmers have to be extremely careful when working with freshly calved cows, they are very protective mummies!

The Horse

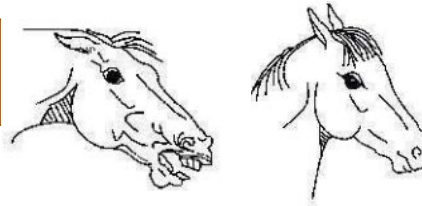
The Signs:

A great way to learn how a horse feels is by looking at their ears. Ask the class to put their hands on either side of their heads as if they were 'horses' ears. Now ask the children to mimic the following actions.



'Happy Horse'

Ears pricked forward and alert



'Cross or Scared Horse'

Ears flattened back is a warning sign. The horse is feeling aggressive or scared and you may be in danger of being bitten or kicked.



'Sleepy Horse'

Ears out to the side show the horse is relaxed, sleepy but in some cases unwell. Normally the hind leg will be resting and the



'Listening Horse'

Ears pivot and twist from side to side. The horse has been alerted to



Hand feeding a horse/donkey:

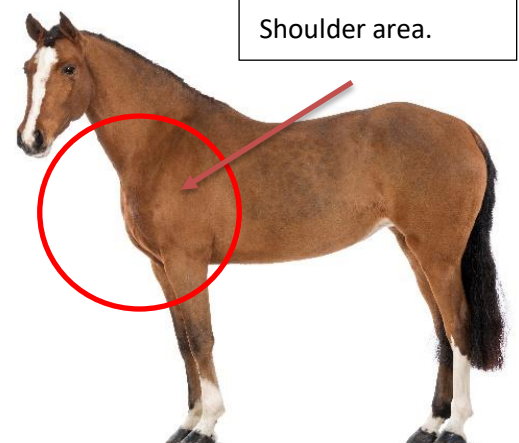
Ask all the children to extend their hands nice and flat, keeping their fingers and thumb together. This demonstrates the correct way to hand feed a horse or donkey. Now let's put it into practice. You can ask for a volunteer to act as a 'horse' or use a stuffed toy animal. Ask the children to follow your actions:

Did you know...

Horses cannot see directly in front or behind, so remind the children to never stand behind or directly in front of a horse. If they are startled, they can kick. Always approach the horse at their shoulder area



- Place your flattened hand below the horse's chin (muzzle)
- Explain how you don't need to move your hand as the horse will bring their head to you.
- Remember be patient: They may sniff at the food before they take it
- Never curl your hand so your fingers are facing upwards, if you do you are at risk of getting bitten.



Dogs and Cats

Many farms will have dogs and cats who also do important work as well as being household pets.

- a) Ask the children to name some jobs a dog or cat might do around a farm, here are the most common ones:

Dog	Cat
Herd livestock – (Sheep & cattle)	Hunt rats and mice
Protect the farm yard	Scare pigeons from meal store
Farmyard companion	

- b) Ask the children what physical or vocal signs a dog or cat might display to show a good mood or bad mood.
Below are the most typical ones!
- c) Now ask the class to act out an angry cat/dog or a happy cat/dog!

Dog		Cat	
Good	Bad	Good	Bad
			
Fast wagging tail	Growling	Purring	Hissing
Bringing you a toy	Showing teeth	Rubbing off your legs	Striking their paw
Ears up	Tail tucked in	Gentle meowing	Arched back
Relaxed eyes	Snapping	'Kneading' their paws	Ears lying flat
Relaxed body	Ears tucked back	Tail up high	Tail flicking back and forth

2. Taking care of our animals

Ask the children what their parents / guardians do to take care of them. You might hear answers such as:

- Feeding me;
- Keeping us warm;
- living in a house;
- a warm bed;
- minding us when we are sick.

If these are mentioned then you can say this is how farmers take care of their animals.

- Home – the shed should be well ventilate airy with a warm bedding (straw or shavings)
- Medicine - the farmer will treat the animals with different medicines to keep them healthy but when the animals are very sick the farmer will call a vet.
- Food – quality food that is not musty or stale is given to our animals. Many farmers grow and produce their own fodder (silage or haylage) to feed their animals. This is mowed grass that is baled and stored for the winter months.



Handling animals

Farmers should use proper handling facilities when working with their animals, that way everyone stays safe. When they are touching, leading or handling their animals they are very careful not to harm them.

Ask the children how they would hold a baby chick. Remind them that the chick's little bones are very delicate so they must be very careful when handling them.

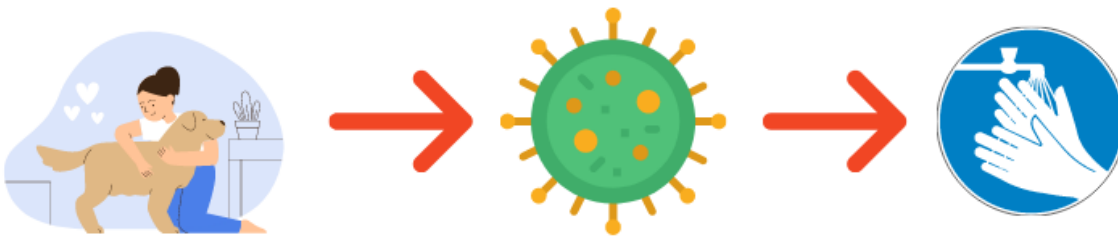
An easy way to demonstrate is to hold an egg as if it were a baby chick, cup it in your hand so that it doesn't roll off and gently enough so it doesn't crack.



3. Zoonosis

Zoonosis is when a disease goes from an animal to a person.

Remind the class how important it is to wash hands after touching animals and that farmers always wash their hands when working with animals or wear gloves.



Why not learn our handy poem below!

Get some water, not too hot
Add the soap, quite a lot
Now clean on top and in between
Twist those hands, they're NEARLY clean
Clean each thumb, one by one
Finger-tip twists, we're nearly done
Rinse them off and dry up too
They're clean, we're done good for you!



Follow up activities & projects

- Complete the activities in the workbook
- Try the Lesson Plan for this Theme.
- Check out our white board and PC games: Farm Yard Safety, Off to Work and Follow the Signs on agrikids.ie
- Download and fill in our 'Spot the Dangers' worksheets.
- Sign up for an AgriKids webinar
- Invite a vet, nurse or farm representative such as IFA or Teagasc to show the children more about animal care and safety
- Visit a local petting farm to meet some real farm animals
- Create a wall mural of all our favourite farm animals
- If you have a model farm in class add in some animals and put some people in charge of minding them each week.