



Hosting Farm Tours

Tips From the Experts

Check out these successful farm tour tips and tricks from our local farmers!

Brenda Pepper, Pepper's Dairy, Roaring Branch:

- ◆ We put milking gloves on all children to prevent contamination of both the children and the calves
- ◆ We set up stations for the children to visit which they stay at each station for 20 minutes
- ◆ We have a calf station to feed the calves water, parlor station to watch the milking and see where the milk goes, a cow station where we have the amount of feed and water that a cow eats in a day in a pile and buckets, and if weather permits a hayride. We have lots of help and make sure they have fun with the kids.

Ralph Moyer, Mor-Dale Farm, Myerstown:

- ◆ School sponsored tours should be covered by their insurance, but it probably wouldn't hurt to ask.
- ◆ Ask if they have any special needs students or medical conditions that you should be aware of before they come. An example we had was a participant who had a wheelchair or walker. We had to make a ramp to accommodate a child to use our bathroom in the house because they could not access the porta-potty. Ask about allergies. We used peanut hulls for calf bedding and had to limit access for those allergic to peanuts.
- ◆ Our policy is to always answer questions honestly, but age appropriate, and if we don't know, we try to tell them where they can find the answer if we can't provide it for them.

Carrissa Itle-Westrick, Valewood Farms, Loretto:

- ◆ Use the teachers as a resource! Even though it's a field trip, they are still being paid for the day! We used to have extra staff to help move the groups between stations but now we rely on the teachers and parents to help us especially with group movement.
- ◆ Simple messages are best. I follow the tiered messages from DMI. I present the summary of a topic, and provide more information only if asked. We have a regular script that we follow for our tours. (We offer several tour guides with rotating stations based upon group size)
- ◆ Develop a brochure so that you have something "official" to send to local schools
- ◆ We recommend having a separate agritourism insurance coverage for all on-farm events.

Trish Adams, Kar-Dale Acres, Shinglehouse:

- ◆ Have fun...the three things that work for us are:
 - ◇ Feeding baby calves with a bottle of either warm water or milk. Let the kids take turns holding the bottles.
 - ◇ Hand out freebies such as cow erasers, magnets, etc. (Check with American Dairy Association North East or Allied Milk Producers for many options)
 - ◇ Have snacks. Kids love to eat ice cream, cheese sticks, yogurt and drink chocolate milk
- ◆ Be prepared...you will be opening up yourself and your farm to others. Be presentable and show off your farm's uniqueness. Be ready for the good and bad questions. Keep a good attitude & squash misconceptions.
- ◆ Get your message across...reassure that ALL milk is safe and nutritious, animals are well cared for and farmers are environmentally friendly. Show your support for other farms also. (Farmers need to stick together)



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