

How to Create a Classroom Calf Experience

Thank you for wanting to share your farm – and calf – with the students of your local community! This guide walks you through the process of creating a Classroom Calf Experience with a classroom near your dairy farm. It also provides links to resources, including PowerPoint templates, lesson plans for the teachers, and even an email template for you to share with teachers.

The Classroom Calf Experience is designed to help you highlight one calf from your farm and share her growth with the classroom over a span of six months. There are PowerPoint templates for three-month intervals where you can share with the class how she is growing and what her life looks like.

What you'll need to complete this project:

- ◆ A connection with a local classroom, either through the teacher or through a student in the class.
- ◆ A willingness to share photos and information about a calf on your farm, along with her mother and herd mates, to help the students understand what happens on a dairy farm.
- ◆ About 6 - 8 hours every other month to pull together the photos, prepare the PowerPoints, and send the email to the teacher. Additional time could also be involved if you are willing to host a field trip or do a live chat with the classroom at the end of the year.
- ◆ Basic Microsoft Office skills to format PowerPoints and drop in photos to tailor the templates to create your own updates.



Thank you for your help to share dairy farming and agriculture with the future generation in your local community.



Steps to Creating a Classroom Calf Experience

1 Reach Out to a Local Classroom. The best way to do this is by contacting the teacher through a phone call or email. Let them know you want to connect to show students what happens on the farm and where food comes from. Use file labeled [“Sample Outreach Email”](#) to reach out and share the benefits of the program.

2 Share Program Timeline with Classroom. Once you have a teacher who is interested in adopting a calf from your farm, make sure you let them know when and what to expect. You’ll have to decide when the best month is to introduce your calf to the classroom and after you introduce her, you’ll want to plan two more updates to share with the classroom, spaced one to two months apart. Let your teacher know when he or she will receive the information about the calf from you and when he or she can expect the other updates. That way he or she can incorporate the updates into her lesson plans. You can use the [“Sample Welcome Letter”](#) to prepare this information.

3 Pick Your Calf for the Classroom. Pick a calf from your farm as the adopted calf for the classroom. In choosing the calf, make sure you pick a calf who has gotten off to a good start, has received the appropriate amount of high quality colostrum and vaccinations, and appears healthy.

4 Prepare the First Update about Your Calf. Once you have selected your calf, take photos of your calf and her dam (mom) to share with the classroom. You can also include short videos in the Update, if you want. For tips on gathering video and photos, [click here](#). Use the [PowerPoint Update 1 file](#) to drop in your photos and prepare your update. Be sure to read the text closely in the PowerPoint and make sure you customize everything so it is specific to your calf. For instructions on completing the PowerPoint Update 1, [click here](#).

5 Share the First Update with Your Classroom. Once the update is completed, be sure to have another family member or friend read it over to make sure there is nothing that you missed updating. Once you are ready to send it, simply email it to your teacher or put it on a flash drive to drop off at the school. Encourage the teacher to share the PowerPoint with the classroom and ask them what questions the students have. You could answer some of those questions with your next update.

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Prepare Update Two for the Classroom. About 30 - 45 days after you sent the first update, you'll want to begin preparing the second update. Take photos and videos of your calf, her dam, and her herd-mates to include in the update. If you feel comfortable, take some video footage to share as well. This update talks about vaccinations, the different feeds she eats, and where she is housed, so you'll want to get photos and/or videos of all those things. [Follow the instructions](#) for completing Update 2 and [download the Update 2 PowerPoint template](#) to customize for your calf. Be sure to delete any slides that do not relate to your calf's experience or how you care for her.

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Share the Second Update with Your Classroom. Once again, make sure you have a family member or friend read the update before sending it to catch any errors. Also, review any questions you received from the classroom since you sent Update 1 and consider ways to incorporate them into your Update 2. If they don't fit in the PowerPoint, consider writing an email to the class that answers some of those questions. Either attach your PowerPoint to the email or put it on a flash drive to drop it off.

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Prepare and Send the Third Update to Your Classroom. Follow the same process to prepare and send Update 3 to the classroom. For instructions on completing Update 3, [click here](#), and [download the Update 3 PowerPoint template](#) from the resource page. This update covers her diet and housing, as well as ways the farmer takes care of her health and protects her from illness. So make sure you get pictures that relate to those topics. Once it is completed, send your presentation to the teacher through email or on a flash drive.

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Offer to Host a Tour of Your Farm. If the classroom is nearby, one way to culminate this classroom calf experience is by hosting an on-farm tour for the classroom and possibly other classrooms in the school. If the teacher is open to that, you'll want to think through your plan for hosting the tour. Our Discover Dairy "Farm Tour Guide" page has lots of resources to help you think through that.

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Host an In Person or Virtual "Meet the Farmer" Session. This can either be done in person or virtually through Zoom or another video conferencing platform. Ask the teacher what would work best for them. If they suggest virtual, ask them to set it up for you. If it is in person, offer to visit the classroom. Consider taking the calf with you if it is not too big. If it doesn't work to take the calf, just visit the classroom and take examples of things you use to care for the calf, like bottles, buckets, eartags, and other items.

Resources to Create a Classroom Calf Experience

For help in creating a Classroom Calf Experience, the Discover Dairy Team has built out a library of resources. Those include PowerPoint Templates for each of the updates, as well as instructions for completing those PowerPoints, and sample outreach, welcome and thank you letters. [Access the resources below and more](#) to aid in hosting your very own “Classroom Calf Experience.”

- **Sample Outreach Letter/Email**
- **Sample Welcome Letter/Email with Program Timeline**
- **Update 1 PowerPoint Template**
- **Instructions for Customizing Update 1**
- **Update 2 PowerPoint Template**
- **Instructions for Customizing Update 2**
- **Update 3 PowerPoint Template**
- **Instructions for Customizing Update 3**
- **Tips for Gathering Photos and Videos**

TIPS!

By opening up your farm and sharing one of your calves with a local classroom, you are helping teach more students about where their food comes from and what dairy farmers do to take good care of their animals. Here are some tips.



Keep it interactive. Encourage the teacher to share the students' questions with you and answer them as you receive them.



Share stories from your farm. Is there something funny about what the calf is named? Does she have an unusual activity she does like twirling her tongue? Think of ways to capture the children's imagination and help them connect with the calf.



Encourage the teacher to use Discover Dairy in the classroom. The lesson series is filled with STEM-based lessons about the farm, and tie in perfectly with the Classroom Calf Experience.