

# FARM FIELD TRIP TOOLKIT

## *a guide for planning farm field trips*



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### INTRODUCTION

As a component of the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Education Grant awarded to NCAT as of September 1st, 2019, all 2019-2020 service sites are receiving \$1,500 - \$2,000 per year (for two years) to increase connections between Montana farmers and ranchers and students, through farm field trips, classroom visits from farmers and ranchers, or farmer / rancher participation on school wellness committees.

This Farm Field Trip Toolkit is intended to support FoodCorps service members in facilitating the planning and implementation of farm field trips (FFT), and has been compiled with the support of preexisting resources (listed in appendix).

FFTs are an incredible way to bring learning to life for students, and are the pinnacle of hands-on learning. What better opportunity for students to see where their food is grown and raised, and to meet the people who support their local food system?

As the point person in your school for planning the field trip, you will be responsible for initiating and facilitating the components of the event. Consider this an opportunity to flex your event planning muscles and develop deeper relationships with producers in your community.

Ready? Let's dive in!

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### PLANNING TIMELINE

*Month-by-month breakdown of planning for the field trip*

#### 3 - 6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

##### **Connect with Administration**

Connect with school administration to confirm dates and feasibility of field trip. Discuss the field trip approval process with your principals and ensure that you're covering the following: *Consider:*

- *Transportation contracts* - who do you contact? Estimated cost?
- *Permission slips* - does the school have a template?
- *Lunch* - does the school prefer to provide lunches or request students bring their own sack lunches?
- *Liability* - does the school provide insurance coverage for students on a field trip?
- *Individual classes vs. grade level* - which students will be invited to attend the field trip?
- *Volunteers / chaperones* - does the school have a process for soliciting volunteer support?
- *Standards alignment* - Does the administration require that field trips meet certain academic standards?

#### 2 - 4 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

##### **Connect with Farmers / Ranchers**

Conduct outreach in local area to nearby farms and ranches to determine interest and capacity to host farm field trip.

*Consider:*



- What time of year is it? Will the farm / ranch be busy with planting, harvesting, or calving? What will be available to harvest or sample?
- What's the group size capacity of the farm?
- Is there room for the bus to park / turn around?

Provide the farmer with a sample itinerary of activities, and clarify which parts you / the school will be responsible for facilitating, and which parts you'd like the farmer's assistance with. Remember that it is not the responsibility of the farmer / rancher to facilitate the entirety of the field trip - don't assume that they have experience or confidence in classroom management.

Discuss compensation with the farmer - \$100 - \$200 per field trip is an estimate. Ensure you know the invoicing process with your school (collecting W-9, etc.) to arrange payment.

### 1 -2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

#### Confirm Lunches, Transportation, and Attendance

- *Transportation:* Once you've confirmed the date and location with both parties (school and farm / ranch) proceed with securing transportation for the event.
- *Meals:* Coordinate with school to confirm which lunch option you'll use: sack lunch provided by food service, sack lunch from home, or using field trip funds to pay for meals.
- *Permission slips:* Follow school's process for sending home permission slips home to families to start a headcount for trip. Don't forget to add a line about wearing "farm appropriate clothing" - closed toe shoes are recommended.
  - *Tip:* Consider adding an option on the field trip permission form for parents to sign up to volunteer as a chaperone!

### 3 WEEKS IN ADVANCE

#### Recruit Volunteers

Ideally you'll have a 5:1 ratio of students to adults on the field trip - the more supervision, the better - especially on a field trip. In addition to the parent sign-up on the permission slip, consider other outlets for volunteer recruitment (school website or Facebook page, etc.).

Ensure that all volunteers have a clear understanding of their role on the field trip.

- *Tip:* If you're feeling *extra* in the mood for volunteer management, consider hosting a volunteer pre-meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities. Otherwise, 1:1 conversations or an email covering the field trip agenda + roles is plenty!

### 2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE

#### Plan and Confirm Agenda + Activities for the Day

Create the agenda for the field trip (see sample agenda included). Ensure that activities have a coordinating lesson plan connected and / or meet standards if your school requires standard alignment.

### 1 WEEK IN ADVANCE

#### Confirm Agenda with Farmer / Rancher

Reach out to your farm host and propose agenda with activities to ensure you're on the same page with the plan.

#### Reconnect with Volunteers

Reach out to volunteers to confirm their attendance and ensure they're informed of their role and responsibilities.

#### Deliver In-class Lesson

With your classes / grade levels that are attending the field trip, host a pre-field trip food system lesson to grease the wheels for the learning to come on their field trip. Suggested lessons, from the FoodCorps Lesson Guide:

- "People Who Feed Us" - Kindergarten, Spring
- "Life on the Farm" - 3rd grade, Spring
- "Get to the Source" - 3rd grade, Fall
- "That's Life!" - 3rd grade, Fall
- "The World Travels of Food" - 4th grade, Fall



## DAY OF THE FIELD TRIP

Gear up for a great day! Take pictures (following school's photo code), drink water, and have fun with your students!

## 1 - 2 WEEKS AFTER

After your field trip, host a follow-up lesson with your students to write thank you cards to the farm or ranch.

## 1 - 3 MONTHS AFTER

Look out for a farm field trip question on an upcoming Reporting & Reflection Log for you to document your FFT - including photos and cute kid quotes!

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## FARM FIELD TRIP CONTENT

*Best practices for on-farm learning*

So, you've dialed in your logistics and you feel confident about when and where the field trip will take place. Now it's time to plan the content of the field trip!

As with any field trip, the key is to break down the large group into smaller groups of students in order to divide them among different stations or activities. To effectively and safely implement a multi-activity field trip, you'll need the support of chaperones that are confident with classroom management. Ideally, the ratio of student to adult is 5:1.

Upon arriving at the farm, gather the students in one circle to cover introductions and group agreements. At the beginning of the field trip, *it's incredibly important to have a conversation about safety*, as there are increased hazards on a farm. Host a serious, but warm conversation about being safe on the field trip and set group agreements (walking feet, ask before eating, etc.) that encourage students to be respectful visitors.

After circling up for introductions and group agreements, it's time for the fun to start by breaking students up into smaller groups for activity stations. Make sure you have a strategy for separating students efficiently! While the exact activities you host on the farm are completely dependent on the farm's resources and layout, a few sample activities for farm activity stations include:

- Scavenger hunt
- Salad Dressing Challenge
- Planting / seeding
- Harvesting
- Weeding - but make it fun! Weed relay race
- Compost relay
- Farm tour (walking around farm and observing)
- Livestock observation

Remember, the magic of farm field trips is just being on the farm itself - even just a simple tour around the farm will satisfy most students' craving for adventurous and hands-on learning.



## APPENDIX & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Sample Agenda

SIFT Farm Field Trip Agenda		
Time	Activity	Notes
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Students travel from Philipsburg to NCAT  Set up SIFT Farm activity materials	3040 Continental Drive Butte, MT 59701 Meet in east end of parking lot
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Introduction to SIFT Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather as circle in parking lot</li> <li>• Cover ground rules</li> <li>• Explain agenda</li> <li>• Break into age groups and tour farm en route to first activity rotation</li> </ul>
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Morning Activity Rotations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salad + drink making</li> <li>• Garden bed prep</li> <li>• Scavenger hunt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent / teacher chaperones escort students between activities</li> <li>• Bell / noise to signal transition time</li> </ul>
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Handwashing station  Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunch on front NCAT lawn</li> <li>• Rain location: bus</li> <li>• Assign 2 - 3 teachers or parent chaperones to set up lunch during last rotation</li> </ul>
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Afternoon Activity Rotations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chickens</li> <li>• Wildflower planting</li> <li>• Compost</li> </ul>	
2:00 PM	Board bus	
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Return to Pburg	

### Resources

- Willamette Food & Farm Coalition - [Farm Field Trip Toolkit for Teachers](#)
- Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project - [Guide to Farm Field Trips for Farmers and Teachers](#)
- Green Mountain Farm-to-School - [A Farm Field Trip Field Guide](#)
- Vermont FEED - [Farm Activities](#)

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