

LEAF Open Farm School Days Whetstone Pastures Farm & Higham Lane Academy



Whilst having years of experience hosting primary schools and community groups, a secondary school visit was something Sandra and Anthony from Whetstone Pastures farm had never contemplated before until LEAF Education linked them up with Mrs Mesias and her Food Technology department at Higham Lane Academy School in Nuneaton.



Whetstone Pastures is a 600-acre mixed farm in South Leicestershire and has been in the Herbert family for over 100 years, including wheat, oilseed rape, field beans and pick your own fruit fields. However it was the farm's dairy unit, run by Jimmy and Esther Pritt, and the possibility of seeing a large scale milking parlour that really interested Madeline and her GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition students, *"food provenance is such a key part of the new GCSE now and I particularly wanted the students to understand dairy and how cheese is made."* The milk from Whetstone Pastures goes to make the world-famous blue stilton cheese called Long Clawson, samples of which were generously provided by Long Clawson Dairy Ltd and tasted

by the 33 GCSE students after having an exciting opportunity to see newly born calves and the

milking parlour. Following on from this, an opportunity to make homemade butter back at the farm's Strawberry Cottage tearoom, a converted rustic old cottage once lived in by the stock man who kept cattle in the courtyard.

In addition to learning about the dairy the students also had the opportunity to walk across the fruit fields and learn about how a wide variety of fruits such as strawberries, blackcurrants and gooseberries are cultivated. Finally, a fruit crumble making session and a chance to taste 'Sandra's Jam' which is sold in local shops and delis. Sky Duffey, one of the students said, *"seeing the calves up close was amazing, and making fruit crumbles and homemade butter was really fun!"*

Visits to real working farms like this are essential for teenagers, today's visit will stay in the memory of these young learners and enable them to remember key concepts much better for their forthcoming exams in June. In this instance the school and farm have now formed the start of a longstanding partnership which will see many repeat visits in the future, something that may not have happened without LEAF Education's help, *"LEAF Education's help has been imperative! Liz's support has*



enabled us to get out of the classroom; the whole process has been made much less stressful! Finding suitable venues and activities directly related to our curriculum can be difficult and very time consuming,"

Sandra Herbert was also pleased with how well the day went *"Anthony and I are delighted that the children were interested and asked so many questions, I am not sure we would have considered having a secondary*

school before but we are really glad that we can aid their knowledge and understanding, we wish them the very best of luck in their forthcoming exams!"

Would your school like to arrange a LEAF Open Farm School Day?

Contact your Regional Education Consultant to find out more and start planning your exciting day on the farm.

<https://education.leafuk.org/regional-education-consultants>

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