

Interested in hosting school groups at your farm? Follow these top 10 tips to set yourself up for success and to ensure the health and safety of visitors.

Tip #1

SIGNAGE

Make sure to post eye-catching signs that are both in words and pictures. Many school-aged children may not be able to read yet, but they can understand pictures. If you are in an area with multiple languages, make sure signs are bilingual. Post several signs around your farm. Review the VA Law [HERE](#) Review the WV Law [HERE](#)

Tip #2

DESIGNATED AREAS

Designate areas for your visitors. Have a parking area, eating area, petting zoo area, photo area, restroom area, play area, etc. This helps with safety, biosecurity, and overall health and safety of visitors and livestock.

Tip #3

PARKING

Have a parking area for your visitors. A one-way system is recommended with one way in and one way out. If this isn't possible, have a walkway for visitors and children to cross safely. If this isn't an option for you, you can have someone designated for parking/directing traffic.

Tip #4

RESTROOMS AND HANDWASHING

Always provide restrooms and handwashing stations. If you don't have a permanent structure, portable stations are recommended. Have hand sanitizer available near livestock areas, and at restroom and handwashing stations.

Tip #5

FARM SAFETY

Make sure you have an emergency plan for the "what if's" and communicate with your employees or family. Before an event, notify your local fire, EMS, and police of the event. Make sure you have an entrance where they can enter your farm easily in case of an emergency. Take keys out of equipment and block off or label closed areas with signage. Lock pesticide sheds and grain bins/augers and other farm equipment. If you are having a hayride or transporting visitors, make sure wagons have sides and ramps for getting on and off safely.



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TOP 10 TIPS CONTINUED...

Tip #6

WALKTHROUGHS

Always notify your insurance company of your agritourism plans before an event or visit. Prior to each visit, perform a walkthrough. Address all issues before the event.

Tip #7

ALLERGIES/FOOD SENSITIVITIES

Be aware of food allergies or sensitivities. If you have something on your farm that may be a high allergy or sensitivity, communicate this with your visitors and provide signage.

Tip #8

SOL/LEARNING OBJECTIVES

While hosting visitors, make sure you provide several takeaway lessons. If you know the age group, you can provide lessons that correlate with SOL regulations or learning objectives.

Tip #9

COMMUNICATION/SPECIAL REQUESTS

Communication is essential for a successful farm visit. Make sure you communicate to the group the expectations of your operation. Address special requests prior to the event. Communicate about allergies, sensitivities, and special needs. For example, if you have a group with an ADA accommodation, communicate about this beforehand so you can plan accordingly.

Tip #10

Have fun and be an AG ADVOCATE!

Always have fun and share your passion for agriculture! Take the opportunity to be a positive agriculture advocate and inspire the future of new young, beginning and small farmers.

Additional Resources

Visit the Knowledge Center [AgHub](#) to gain full access to resources available within the School Farm Visits portal.

