



One of the difficulties the charity faces is the lack of younger farmers involved, leaving many of the children thinking farming is a profession for the older generation.

To help tackle this, Young Farmers from Culm Valley YFC are supporting the charity and have spent weekends volunteering at the farm.

Amy Gubb, secretary of Culm Valley YFC, says: "Encouraging the younger generation to get involved with agriculture is something we are really passionate about."

"Farms For City Children is a wonderful charity and hugely beneficial for kids who do not have the same

privileges we do. Growing up in the countryside is something we take for granted. It has been so inspiring to watch them learn and work together."

Although not all school children will have the opportunity to visit the farms, more can be done within the education system to encourage knowledge of food and agriculture.

Important

Catherine says: "All schools should try to provide children with outdoor experiences. It is important for children to understand that if agriculture is what they love, it can be their life, regardless of background."



Founders of Farms For City Children Clare and Michael Morpurgo.

CASE STUDY: LEIGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEIGHAM Primary School, Plymouth, Devon, has been visiting Nethercott for the past 20 years. Year four teacher Kirsty Jeffries says visiting the farm offers children experiences they would not get anywhere else.

She says: "Bringing children here opens their eyes to a very different life. It is something which sticks with them for a long time, and being on-farm gives them a unique opportunity to develop personal and social skills."

While agriculture and food production is an overlooked part of the curriculum, the school ensures it is a focus in year four, largely in preparation for visiting Nethercott.

Choices

Kirsty says: "It is really important children know about agriculture and are able to make informed choices about food. In geography lessons, children look at where food comes from and the differences between fair trade and free trade. Many are horrified at the price paid to farmers once they find out just how hard these people have to work."

Although children are at the

farms for just seven days, the knowledge and experience gained lasts much longer.

Kirsty says: "It is a fantastic experience for children and something they never forget."

"In year six, children do a presentation about their time at primary school, and Nethercott is always mentioned. It is unique, memorable and magical."



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KIRSTY JEFFRIES

Q&A with Leigham Primary School's year four children (aged eight and nine)

Q What do you want to be when you grow up?

A Seeing all the animals here has made me want to be a farmer. I have always liked animals, I think they are cute.

Q What do you imagine when you think of a farmer?

A An old man with a beard, wearing an old hat and some boots. They have lots of animals and never wear anything fashionable.

Q What does farming involve?

A Money, looking after animals and making lots of food.

Q What is the best thing you have learned so far at Nethercott?

A I have learned pigs like rolling in mud and it shades them from the sun. It is sort of weird, because it makes pigs clean, but it would make us really dirty and smelly. I did not expect their skin to be fluffy either.

Q What are the main differences about being at the farm compared to being at home?

A It is so different. The city is noisy, but here it is quiet and peaceful. It is so much fun and you get to learn so much about the countryside.

Q Where did you think food came from before you visited Nethercott?

A I used to think food came from the internet.

Q The UK also imports food from other countries; what do you think about this?

A It is better to have food from this country. Britain has a lot of animals and you know where they come from.

Q Sometimes farmers are not paid a very fair price by supermarkets for their products - how do you feel about this?

A Farmers work really hard, but supermarkets do not do any work, they just sell it. It is not fair.