

Top 8 Tips to Host a Farm/Ranch Field Trip

Inviting students to your farm or ranch gives a firsthand look at what farm life is like. Steve & Joan Ruskamp, Ag Pen Pal volunteers, share tips for hosting a successful field trip at their family feedlot.

1. Plan Ahead

Plan with the weather in mind. Can activities be held in a shop if needed?

2. Learning Stations

Have several learning stations to break larger groups down. Ask for help from neighbors, and 4-H & FFA members to help lead sections. Sections can feature one stop at machinery and another with animals.

3. Engage their Senses

Kids want to touch animals! Arrange an immersion time with bunnies, calves, or goats that kids can get close to and touch.

4. Share a Meal

Sharing a meal together brings the story of food full circle. We grilled hamburgers because they are easy to prepare. With a feedlot, we can share the nutritional value of what the students are eating.

5. Connect to their Studies

Plan examples of how math and science are used on your farm. We have ingredients used in a ration and talk about percentages, weights, and pounds per head that are fed. We talk about biology with the animal care and with how the land utilizes manure and holding pond water. Just remember to explain each word to students!

6. Stay Authentic

Make sure your farm story is shared. How is your farm/ranch unique?

7. Dig into Careers

Invite a veterinarian, nutritionist, nutrient manager, or another agricultural professional to visit over lunch about careers in agriculture. Anyone can be involved in agriculture even if they don't live on a farm.

8. Friendship is Important

Connect on an emotional level. Kids remember the smiles and outreach of a friendship.

"Student senses are engaged in the learning process of what we do on our farms. We believe field trips build positive experiences the students take into adulthood about how food is raised and the friendship they have with the farmer they visit."

– Steve & Joan Ruskamp, Dodge, Nebraska