Since its early beginnings on Farmer Tom’s farm in Cambridgeshire, the exciting FaceTime a Farmer initiative has continued to gather in momentum and popularity resulting in over 300 teacher and farmer pairings across the UK.

Children are benefitting from this effective project allowing them to see beyond the farm gate and also gain a developing understanding of where the food on their plate comes from. Farmers from many agricultural specialisms are participating including dairy, arable, livestock, poultry and eggs but also farmers from the cut flower and herb sectors as well as fish farming. This diverse mix is resulting in excellent conversations within the classroom between the farmer and the children that promotes effective learning.

FaceTime a Farmer continues to go from strength to strength, harnessing the power of digital communications to inspire, engage and educate young people about not only the journey from farm to fork but also the ever changing, diverse agricultural industry.

Growing connections

Our impacts

300
Schools and farms paired so far

9,000 children
18 Minutes average session
10,800 learning hours

From teachers

100% of teachers:

- would recommend to other teachers
- are continuing with the project next year
- believe the children that have been involved have a better understanding of the food supply chain
- have used calls to create curriculum learning opportunities in the classroom
From farmers

100% of farmers who have connected to a class are enjoying the experience

80% of farmers have focussed on the food supply chain in their calls

100% of farmers will be continuing with FTAF next academic year

Every 2 weeks on average FTAF calls take place

What people say

“What better way to communicate with the next generation of consumers than to go live into their classroom. Children are so used to tech these days that FaceTime is very natural for them and it offers a window on to a world that most of them would never see otherwise.”

Farmer

“Strutt & Parker is delighted to support FaceTime a Farmer. With everything going on around the Agriculture Bill, and the change in the way farming is funded in future, there has never been a more vital time to inform the public about all the good work that farmers do. It helps to address the notable disconnect between agriculture and an increasingly urbanised population’s knowledge of the industry and the crucial role it plays in producing food, managing the countryside and supporting local communities.”

James Farrell, Head of Rural Consultancy, Strutt & Parker

“It opened the minds of our students to the possible future career prospects that they would have never considered previously.”

Teacher

“The FaceTime a Farmer initiative is transforming how farmers connect children with their food, how it is produced and where it comes from. It is a simple but effective communication which is breaking down barriers to engage, connect and educate young people in food, farming and the environment. At Sainsbury’s we are thrilled to support the initiative and the opportunities it brings for young people and our farmers.”

Judith Batchelar, Director of Sainsbury’s Brand
In Spring Term 2019, a pilot of FaceTime a Farmer was launched in the Republic of Ireland, pairing initially 3 schools with 3 farmers. Coordinated by LEAF Education and promoted by Nuffield scholar Karol Kissane, the project was a great success. He states, “It has been a most enjoyable experience participating in FaceTime a Farmer. I really look forward to the fortnightly calls. To see the engagement and enjoyment the children get from seeing and hearing about what is happening on my farm is fantastic. Even though the children are in a city school, it has been very rewarding to see the interest they have in what is happening on farm and from call to call their questions have become much more detailed.” Matched teacher Laura De Nuinseann commented, “The project was wonderful and had such a beneficial impact on the children. The children were fascinated with the ‘live coverage provided’ and this real life experience of farming that they would never have experienced in a million years otherwise! I’m so glad we said yes to this pilot project!” Going forward, funding is now being sought to roll out the project across Ireland.

In Summer term 2019, Sweden became FaceTime a Farmer’s first international partner. Hushållningssällskapet is a rural development organisation which has partnered with LEAF Education to launch FaceTime a Farmer initially in a small rural area. The project has rapidly gained momentum and from September 2019 the initiative will also include working with schools in the city regions of Western Sweden.

“I am impressed by the children participating in the sessions. They are so focused on the dialogue and have so many questions. This is really a great way to engage children and teachers in different aspects of agriculture and sustainability.”

Karin Carlsson, consultant and project manager, Hushållningssällskapet, Sweden

“It is important to tell the children about all the care and work that is behind every litre of milk or every piece of meat.”

Alma Håkansson, farmer with milk production, Brålanda, Sweden

LEAF Education continues to develop FaceTime a Farmer in collaboration with founder Tom Martin to create the success it is today. Sponsored by Sainsbury’s and Strutt & Parker, the initiative pairs farmers with classes for a series of video calls throughout the year.

How to get involved

For further information on FaceTime a Farmer and how you can take part please visit: facetimeafarmer.com

or contact Julie Neale, our LEAF Education Programme Coordinator: Julie.Neale@leafuk.org

@LEAF_Education  #FaceTimeaFarmer

FarmingAndCountrysideEducation

LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming)
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