



FaceTime a Farmer Case Study



The Farmer

Chris Chater is General Manager for Hook2Sisters Ltd based in Devon. Chris became involved in the FaceTime a Farmer project after working in the poultry industry for many years and wants to encourage young people into the industry. He believes FaceTime a Farmer helps to not only educate the children about the poultry industry but also highlights the many career opportunities that could be available to them.

The School

Bebington High Sports College is a secondary school in Bebington on the Wirral. Included in the school's extensive curriculum provision is the Animal Care Department, which provides some of the leading provision for Animal Care in Merseyside through their on-site working farm. The school offers to their pupils the chance to study Level 2 and Level 3 provision in Animal Care and Animal Management plus participate in a comprehensive range of vocational courses and extra-curricular activities and trips.

FaceTime a Farmer was coordinated by the Head of Animal Care, Sam McRae, and supported by three other Animal Care teachers. The school made the decision to become involved in the project as they felt it was a “money can't buy experience for both staff and students.”

The Sessions

Due to the limited WiFi signal on the school farm, the first FaceTime a Farmer session took place in the Animal Care classroom. The pupils participating were Year 11 students studying for Level 2 in Animal Care, who are considering choices for sixth form, and current sixth formers who are studying for Level 3 in Animal Management. This target audience is ideal for meeting Chris's goals for the session, to highlight career progression in the poultry industry, as pupils from Bebington High do show an interest in careers such as Agricultural Management and Veterinary Science after leaving the school.

Once connected, Chris was located on the farm and was able to begin to give the children an insight into the poultry industry focusing on slow growing broiler birds (chickens bred for meat) who were two weeks old. Before the session, the children had prepared a list of possible questions to ask Chris, however as the session progressed these led to a more open discussion which centered around British food sourcing. One pupil commented afterwards that this, “made me consider more carefully what we should buy.”

The children responded to the experience with great enthusiasm as Chris gave them a “truly fascinating” insight into the “vast scale of the poultry industry.” The children were interested

in the welfare of the birds and Sam commented afterwards on the, “high standard of animal welfare,” that they witnessed during the call. This then could be linked to the students’ curriculum learning in the classroom as animal welfare forms an integral part of their studies.

Impact

After the session Sam collated the responses from her students and their first FaceTime a Farmer session was considered a resounding success and incredibly eye opening.

The children made comments such as:

“It made me understand the scale of the poultry industry.”

“Gave me an insight into the global standards versus our own legislation and standards”

Sam, is already planning her next FaceTime a Farmer session with Chris and is enthusiastic about recommending the initiative to other schools, “It opened the minds of our students to the possible future career prospects that they would have never considered previously.”

Chris is equally positive about the impact of the LEAF Education FaceTime a Farmer initiative, “It’s been great talking to the children - some of them will become our farmers of the future. It gives me great satisfaction to answer their questions on how we rear our birds and ultimately where food comes from. We are seeing numbers of farmers decline over time and the only way for us to safe guard the future of food production is to open our doors and educate the next generation.”

Further information about this initiative and how your school or farm can become involved can be found at www.leafuk.org/facetimeafarmer

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Thank you to Hook2Sisters and Bebington High Sports College

