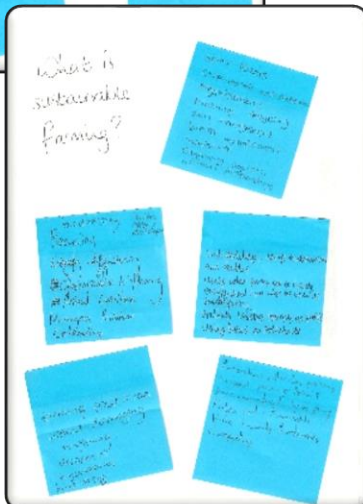
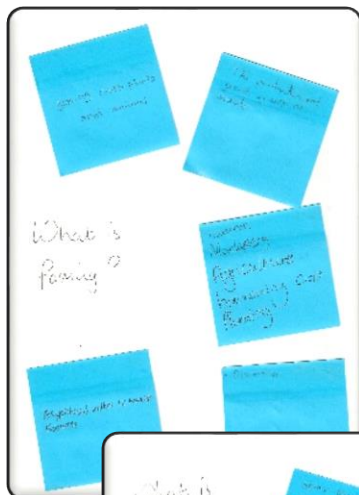




Sustainable agriculture and the story of local food

GCSE Geography students at Sherfield School benefitted from a visit to their local farm shop to learn about the role of the retailer in the farm to fork story, focusing on the practicality of supplying and stocking local produce.

Students then took part in a workshop exploring the reality of sustainable agriculture. With modern farming practices playing a large part in the management of landscapes, both human and physical, this is an important aspect of the students' learning journey.



GCSE Geography students from Sherfield School, near Basingstoke in Hampshire, visited nearby Wellington Farm shop to see what local produce was available. Spending time with the Gardener, Butcher, Chef and Shop Manager meant they could learn how seasonality, availability, consumer demand and financial implications determine the stock available. Armed with a bespoke workbook to help them focus their research, students enjoyed learning where many of the products available in the shop had come from.

Back at school, students looked at the implications of food miles and different methods of rearing, growing and producing different foods.

A workshop exploring sustainable agriculture brought the unit to a close, students applied their knowledge to some of the many different aspects of integrated farm management. Initially, students were asked to define farming to gauge their prior learning, and then given 'props' to help bring various aspects to life, such as learning how to take the temperature of a toy pony to illustrate animal welfare, hunting for worms in the wormery as they learnt about the importance of soil health, and using sheep fleece to help deter slugs. As the students' second set of comments show, a lot of learning took place and students were confident in their understanding of farming, in particular sustainable farming, at the end of the session.

Visiting the Wellington Farm shop enabled students to see the challenges of reducing food miles and sustainable farming in a real-life context. They made clear reference to this in their end of unit exams, especially when discussing 'to what extent is it preferable to source food locally?' referring to the concept of seasonality and recognising that local food production is not always viable. Jo's sustainability workshop provided a more in-depth overview of what it means to farm sustainably and how this is being implemented in the UK. Students really valued both elements and having Jo set up the visit made everything that much easier. Feedback from students was very positive and I would be keen to repeat the visit next year.

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