

Farmer Time Case Study

Horticulture Case Study



The Farmer

Vitacress is one of Europe's leading suppliers of fresh produce, specialising in watercress, salads and fresh herbs. Laura Marnier, a growing manager and agronomist, was asked to take part by Sainsbury's, who Vitacress supply. Laura agreed along with her colleague Daryl Phillips, Head of Technical, as she is passionate about educating the younger generation about agriculture in order to "promote a better understanding of where their food comes from and the work that goes into producing fresh produce." In addition to this, Laura is keen to promote the developing use of technology that she uses in farming, for example robotics and forecasting models, to the new "tech driven generation."

The School

Beverley School is an all age specialist school in Middlesborough for pupils who have an autistic spectrum condition.

The Sessions



Laura and Daryl are used to hosting school visits at Vitacress, regularly talking to groups of children aged from 5 to 18. Laura contacted Wendy prior to the first call to learn about the children's needs so that the first session matched the abilities of the pupils very closely. Wendy and the children were particularly impressed when prior to the first session they received a surprise

delivery of mint plants from Laura to accompany her virtual tour of the glasshouse. Wendy stated, "this meant that the SEN pupils in my class had a really good sensory experience which helped their engagement and understanding of what they were seeing and what the farmer was doing." The session was a great success with Laura and Daryl including a live feed from the glasshouses, the children were interested in pest control within the greenhouse and the automatic environment controls.



Impact

Following on from the session, Laura was impressed with the overall interaction with the children, the use of fresh herbs helped generate questions and kept the session flowing. Laura was also eager to include what Vitacress does as a business to reduce plastic waste as they are the first herb grower to use recyclable pots. In the next session, Laura will send plugs for the children to grow which will then link to learning about what a plant needs to grow.

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

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