



The Irish farmer

Curriculum links:

- **Science** Living things
Environmental awareness and care
- **Geography** Human environments
- **SPHE** Myself and the wider world

Lesson objectives:

To revise material covered in previous modules. Introduce the students to the significance of seasons on the farm. To illustrate the seasonal changes in work that take place on the farm.

Teacher guidelines

It is suggested that teachers ensure that students are familiar with the vocabulary and concepts introduced in the previous modules before starting this lesson.

Keywords and concepts introduced in previous modules:

farmer food factories packaged

A farm is a place where animals like cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens live, and plants like fruit, vegetables and cereals are grown. Farmers work on farms where they care for the animals and grow the crops. Nearly all foods are grown on the farm and they are then sent to shops and markets to be sold. Some are sent to factories first, where they are packaged or made into other foods e.g. grain is made into bread.

After revision of the above, teachers could discuss the more detailed information below.

Keywords for this lesson:

seasons spring lambing calving sow summer shear
harvest autumn ploughing fertilising winter hay

Seasons

On the farm, there is lots of work to be done every day of the year, like feeding and caring for animals. However, as the seasons change, the farmer has different jobs to do.

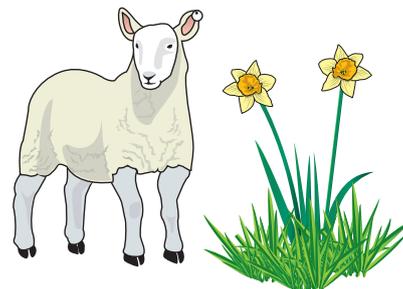
Spring

The **spring** months are February, March and April. In spring, the weather gets warmer and the days get longer. Spring is particularly busy time for the farmer, with the farm coming to life again.

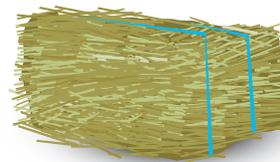
Lambing and **calving** take place during the spring months. The farmer must constantly check that the mother sheep and cows and their newborn lambs and calves are healthy. The cattle are moved out of the sheds and back into the fields when the weather conditions improve. In spring, the farmer must **sow** (plant) seeds for different crops (e.g. potatoes) to grow on the farm.

Summer

The summer months are May, June and July. Summer is usually the warmest season of the year with the longest days. During particularly hot summers, the farmer must water the crops to make sure they grow properly. The farmer also collects freshly cut grass and puts it into a pile and covers it with plastic. The freshly cut grass is conserved under the plastic cover and it turns into silage. Silage is used as a food source throughout winter months for animals when there is limited grass growth.



The good weather allows the farmer to **shear** (remove) the sheep's woolly coat, **harvest** (gather) strawberries and cereal crops and make **hay**. Hay is made by cutting grass and allowing it to dry.



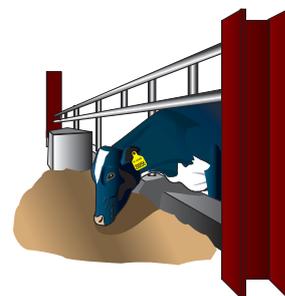
Autumn

The **autumn** months are August, September and October. In autumn, the days get shorter and the weather starts to get colder. The farmer finishes harvesting and begins to prepare the soil for the next crop. The farmer prepares the soil by **ploughing** (breaking up the soil) and **fertilising** it (adding nutrients).



Winter

The winter months of November, December and January are the coldest months of the year. During this time, the farmer brings the cattle in from the fields and houses the cattle in sheds where they will be fed silage/hay every day. Most sheep are left outside, as sheep are better equipped to withstand the cold. Cattle and sheep are fed silage or hay daily as there is very little grass growing in the fields, during the winter months.



Remember: The farm is not a playground! Be Safe. Always ask the farmer.

Suggested activities:

- Photocopy the activity sheet on page 41
- Discuss the fact that we are all dependent on the farmer to provide us with the food we eat each day. Ask the class to write an essay with the title "Life without farming"
- Make four wall charts, one for each season. Draw the weather and the changes that take place on the farm during each season
- Interview a farmer in class and get students to write essays with the titles: "Springtime on the farm", "Summer on the farm", "Autumn on the farm", "Winter on the farm"
- Teach students the way in which farmers grow crops by planting fruit and vegetables in the school garden (see www.incredibleedibles.ie)
- Discuss the interrelationship between people, animals and plants
- For extension material, see Module 4

Learning outcomes:

At the end of this lesson, students should be aware of the impact of seasons on the work that takes place on the farm.

Additional resources:

- www.agriaware.ie
- www.incredibleedibles.ie



The Irish farmer

Name: _____

Date: _____



1 Farmers work through all seasons – spring, summer, autumn and winter.

In which season do the following take place?

The farmer makes hay, shears the sheep and may have to water the crops.	_____
The farmer has to feed the animals every day. The cattle are often in sheds at this time.	_____
The farmer finishes the harvest, ploughs and fertilises the fields to prepare for the next crop.	_____
The farmer puts the cattle back out to the fields and sows new crops. Lambs are born at this time.	_____

2 Almost all of our food begins on the farm. Draw the foods that we eat in each season. Don't forget: ice-cream, soup, salad, sandwiches for school, turkey, Easter eggs (remember milk is used to make chocolate!)

Spring	Summer
Autumn	Winter

*To be used with teacher guidelines, page 2