

Safe Farm Futures

Senior

Part 2: Animals & You

AgriAware
EDUCATE • ADVOCATE • ENGAGE



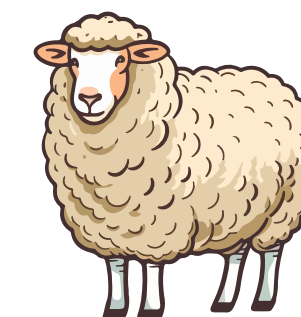
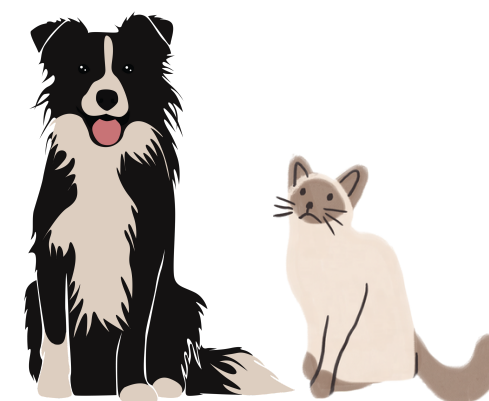
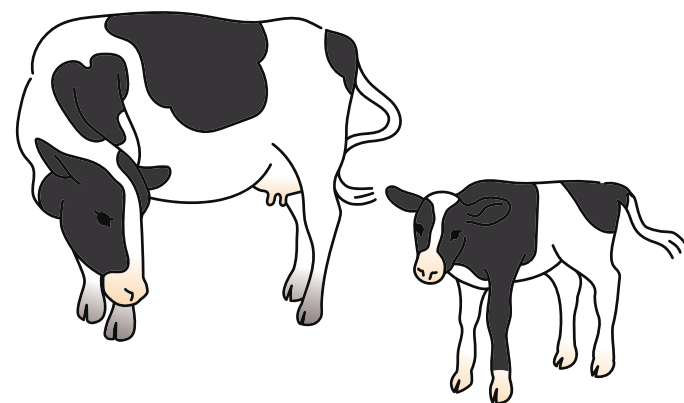
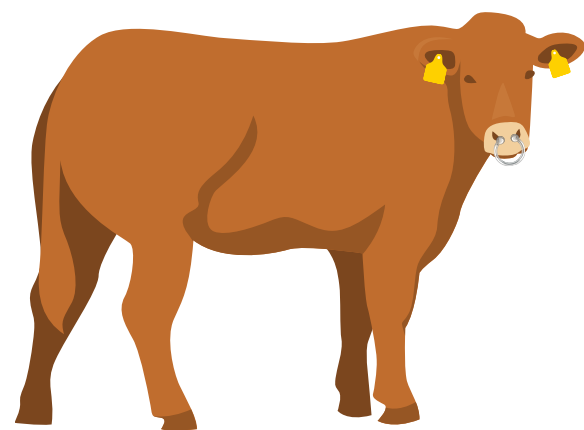
An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Teacher instructions: Work through the material below at your own pace. Animals & You is all about taking care around farm animals to ensure both people and animals stay safe. Many of these learnings are applicable to pets, strays and wild animals too.

Introduction

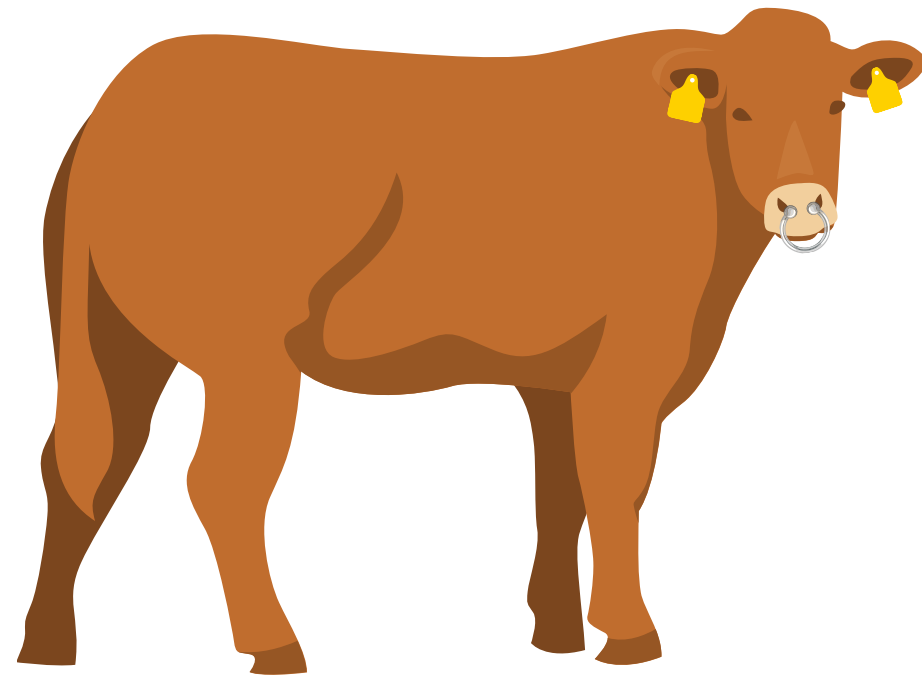
Animals are lovely creatures that can bring a lot of joy to people. Some people have pets in their homes. Others people enjoy seeing animals in the zoo, in the park or even on the television. When it comes to farm animals, the first thing we need to remember is that they are working animals. They all have jobs to do like providing milk or laying eggs. If we scare the animals when we visit them it can stop them from doing their job and make the animals nervous.

Suggested activity: Take a look at the animals below. What jobs do you think they have on the farm?



Living on a farm can sometimes blur the line between pet and livestock, but it's essential to remember that animals can be dangerous. As a guest on a farm, it's important to always be accompanied by a trusted adult. Keeping a safe distance from animals is the first step in keeping you safe. During Spring and Summer, cattle and sheep are typically grazing in the fields, while in Autumn and Winter, they are mostly indoors in sheds.

To ensure everyone's safety, let's take a closer look at how we should act around farm animals.



Beware Of The Bull

A bull is an adult male in the bovine family. They can weight up to 1,000 kilograms. This is as heavy as 40 x seven-year-old children. Bulls are very powerful and can run fast. Bulls can be outdoors in fields or indoors in sheds. Staying far away from bulls will keep you safe.

Bulls must have a ring in their nose. This will help to keep the farmer safe. If the bull needs to be moved, a farmer can put a chain or rope through their nose ring to help guide the bull. When working with a bull, a farmer will always have another adult with them to help in case of an emergency.



Questions to ask:

1. **Why do you think the bull has a ring in their nose?**
2. **What kind of emergency situations might happen when around a bull?**
3. **Do you think children should help when the farmer is working with the bull?**



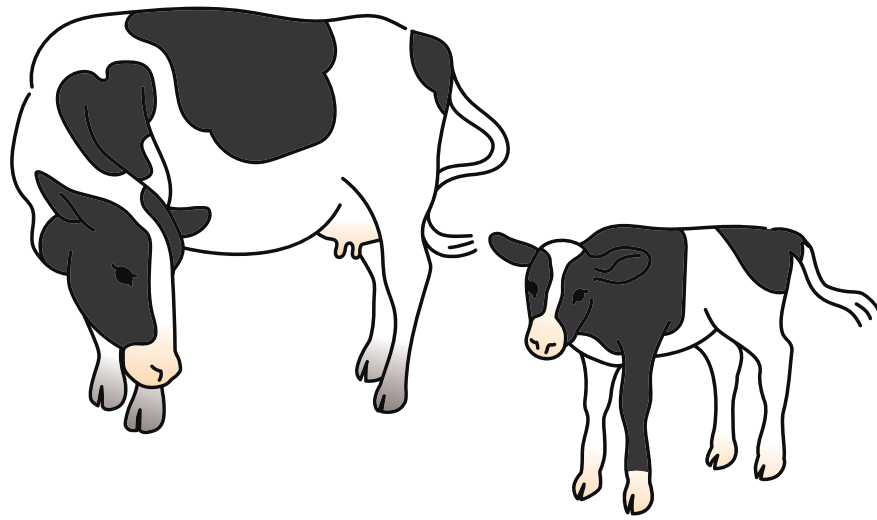
**Beware
of the bull**

A farmer must have a beware of the bull sign on their farm gate. This will tell any visitors to the farm or countryside that a bull may be close by.

People should never enter any field without permission from the farmer.

Suggested Activities

- Look at pictures of different breeds of bulls and notice how impressive they are. Common breeds in Ireland include Simmental, Limousine and Belgian Blue.



Taking Care Around Cows & Calves

Both beef cows and dairy cows will have calves once per year. They are very protective of their babies. Newborn calves are delicate and their mothers will do anything to keep their babies safe.

Farm Facts: Cows with a newborn calves cause more accidents on farms than any other animal, even bulls.
Never approach a cow with a young calf.

Both beef cows and dairy cows will have calves once per year. They are very protective of their babies. Newborn calves are delicate and their mothers will do anything to keep their babies safe.

If you have permission from the farmer to visit a young calf, you must bring a trusted adult with you. If the animals are indoors in sheds, the cows and calves may have separate living areas. Never approach a cow with a newborn calf.

Always wash your hands after touching animals or farm gates.

When going to meet a calf, there are a few things you need to remember:

1. Stay quiet and calm. Young calves will be sensitive to sound and movement.
2. Keep your hands down by your sides. Only touch the calf if you have permission.
3. Never climb over the barrier to visit a calf. The barrier is there to protect you and the calf.



Suggested Activities

- Watch this video from the HSA of Kieran telling us how to stay safe around cattle on a farm.
 - As a group, what you have seen in the video. What ways did kieran stay safe around cattle?



Safety on a Dairy Farm

Poultry



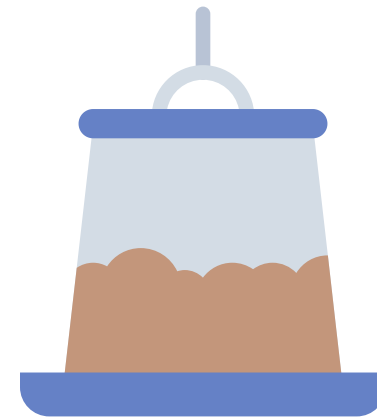
We learned in the introduction section that there are several types of poultry farms in Ireland that farm birds for meat and eggs. Each type of farm requires specific care and management practices to ensure the health and well-being of the birds and of the farmer.



Never pick up an animal you do not know. Chickens may become afraid and peck you to get away.



Sharp beak
used for
pecking food



Most chickens will be fed using a feeder. If you or the farm you are visiting have backyard chickens, scatter feeding is best. This is the natural feeding behaviour of chickens. They will peck the ground to find worms and other sources of protein.

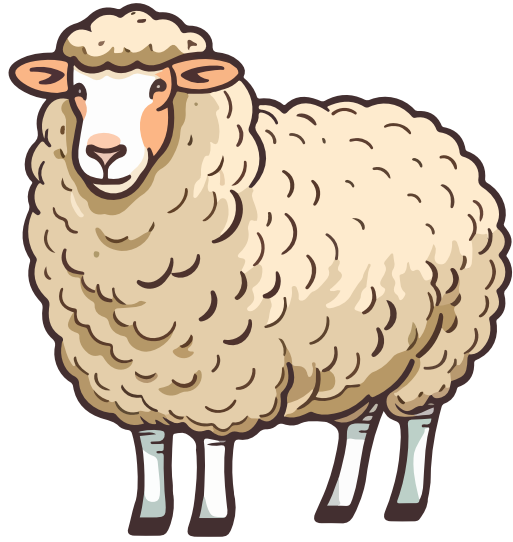


**Always wash
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Suggested Activities

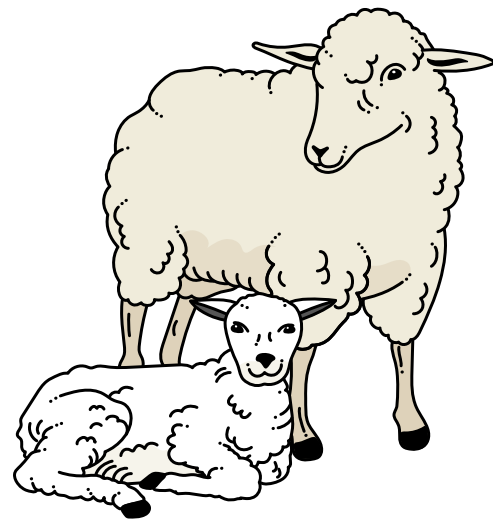
- Carry out a research exercise on the types of eggs you can get from different kinds of poultry e.g. geese, turkey, quail.
- Once you have conducted your research, you could try out different recipes using the eggs you have learned about.

Sheep



Sheep can be tricky animals to work with. Farmers need to be very skilled to keep an eye on their sheep and they often use a sheepdog to help move sheep from place to place.

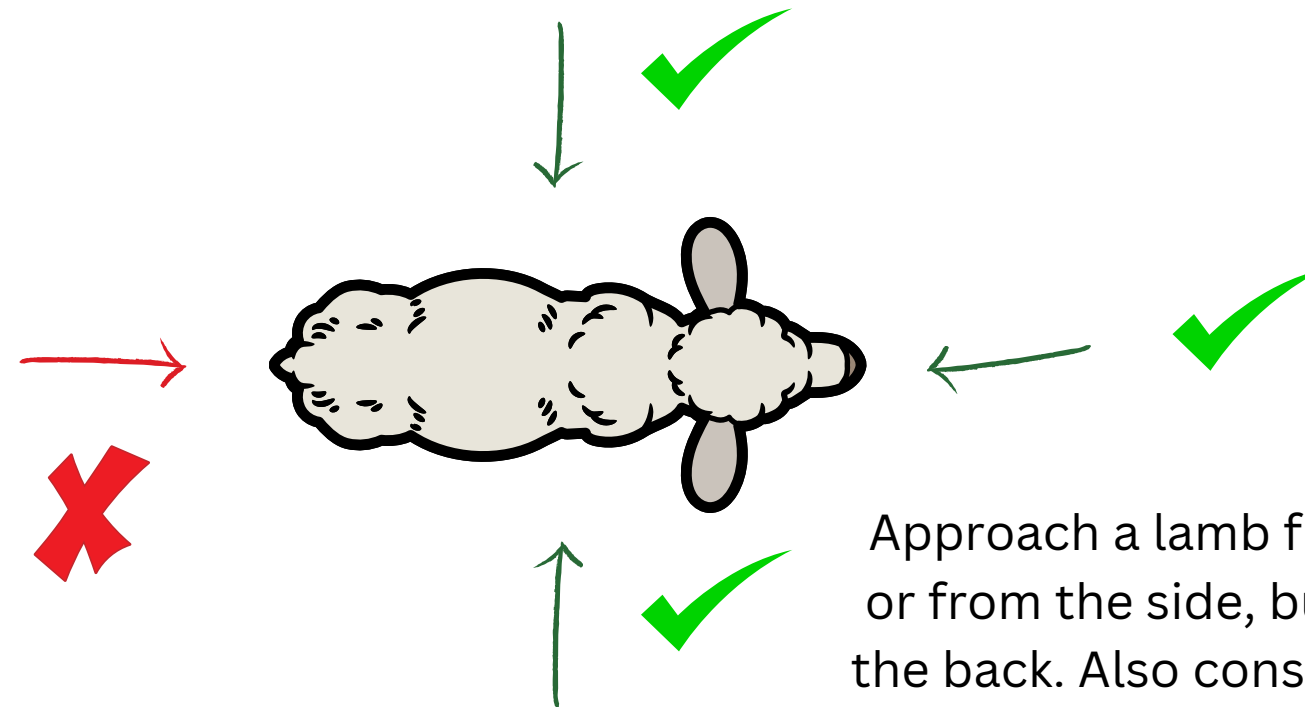
If you live on a sheep farm, you will know that one of the most exciting times of the year is when the lambs are born. If you are visiting a farm, it is important that you know how to safely approach a lamb. Keep in mind that the mother sheep, or ewe, will be very protective of her young, so it is important to never get between her and her lamb.



Never approach a very young newborn lamb



Stay calm and avoid sudden movements



Approach a lamb from the front or from the side, but never from the back. Also consider this when approaching calves.

Suggested Activities

- Lambs are a lovely sign that spring is here. Research why lambs are always born in spring.
- Watch this video from the HSA of Emily telling us how to stay safe on a sheep farm.



Safety on a Sheep Farm

Farm Animals and Disease

Visiting farms with many animals can be enjoyable, but animals may carry bacteria causing illness in humans and animals. Learning more about this is important for our health.

Farm animals can transmit zoonotic diseases to humans through bacteria on their fur, feathers, or skin, which can make people sick if proper precautions are not taken.

Try not to touch your mouth, nose, or eyes after petting farm animals until you've washed your hands. This is an easy way for the germs to get into our bodies and could make us sick.

After touching farm animals or anything they've touched, like fences or gates, it's important to wash your hands with soap and water. Washing your hands helps get rid of germs and keeps you healthy.



How to wash our hands:



Make your hands wet with warm, running water.



Use soap and rub it all over your hands. Many soaps have germ-killing ingredients in them.



Make sure to use soap on the front and back of your hands and between your fingers, and under your nails.



Hold your hands under the running water again to wash away all the soap.



Dry your hands with a clean hand towel or hand dryer.



Slurry Tanks

During the winter, when animals are kept in sheds we must store the waste they make in a large tank. This is known as a slurry tank or pit. Think of it like a big toilet where all the waste the animals produce is kept. This waste is used by the farmer to help fertilise fields and grow crops.

Slurry tanks are very important farm equipment, but they are extremely dangerous. The tanks are deep and filled with animal waste that emit toxic gases. These tanks must be built underground or be surrounded by a large fence. If people or animals fall in, it is very difficult to get out.



To stop toxic gases from building up in the slurry pit, the farmer must mix the slurry through a process known as agitation. When the slurry is being agitated, it releases these dangerous gases. This is why it is important to stay well away from slurry tanks when a farmer is agitating.

EVACUATE and VENTILATE before you AGITATE!

If you ever see someone in trouble near a slurry tank or if you smell strange gases, tell an adult right away. They can call for help and make sure everyone stays safe.

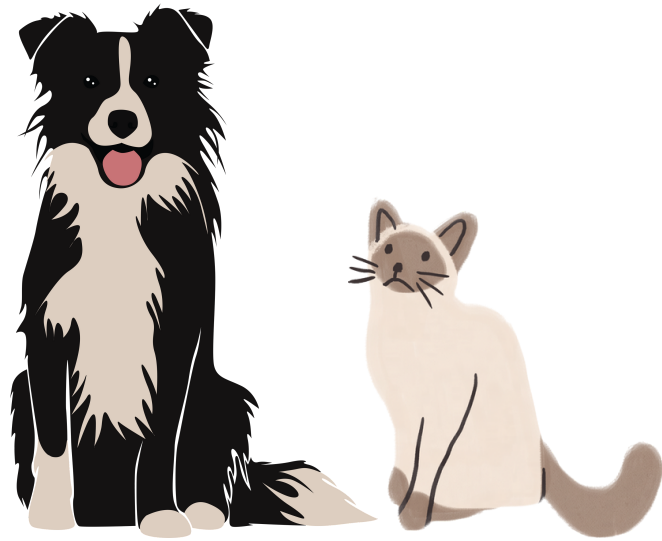
Hydrogen sulfide is an extremely toxic gas that is emitted from decomposing slurry. It can cause humans or animals to lose consciousness. At low levels, it can smell like rotting eggs but at high levels, there is no smell at all.

Suggested Activity:

- Watch 'Once Upon A Farm' as a class. This video contains important farm safety information but we would recommend that teachers pre-screen the video to ensure suitability for their class.



Once Upon A Farm



Pets & Strays

On farms, working dogs are typically collie breeds. Collies are known for their intelligence and being easy to train. These dogs have been bred for generations to work alongside humans, assisting in a variety of tasks such as herding livestock and protecting homes and families. If you have a working dog at home, they will know and recognise you. If you are a visitor to a farm, it is better to stay away from any animal you do not know, including cats, donkeys and horses.

If you have permission from the owner, follow the below rules to safely approach an animal you do not know:

Move towards the animal slowly with your hand stretched out and your fingers tucked into your fist

Let the animal come to you. If they are happy to be touched they will come closer.

Notice the animal's body language at all times. If they become restless or run away, never chase them.





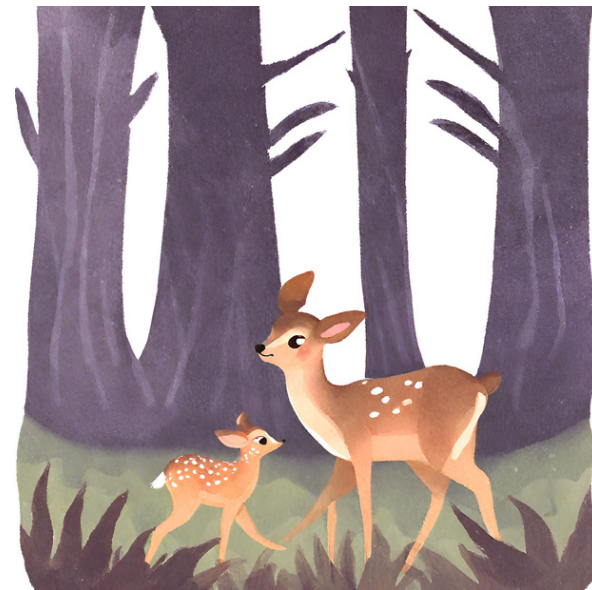
Wildlife on the Farm

While domesticated animals like cattle, pigs, and chickens are commonly associated with farms, wild animals can also make their homes on farms. This is especially true for farms that have forests near them, as these areas can provide shelter and food for a variety of wildlife. Some common wild animals that can be found on farms include deer, rabbits, foxes rodents and birds.

To keep wildlife and people safe, it is best to leave them alone. If you have any concerns with wildlife near you, reach out to a local expert group for advice.



Badgers make their homes under the ground in badger setts

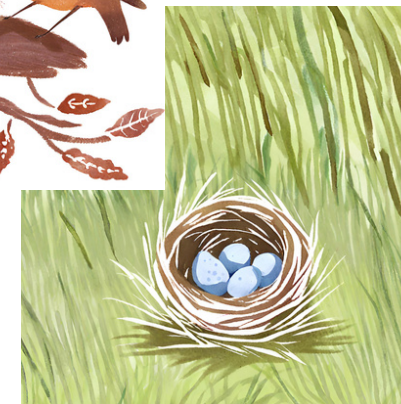


Deer like to hide in the forest when humans are around



Some birds like to build their nests in trees

Some birds like to build their nests on the ground

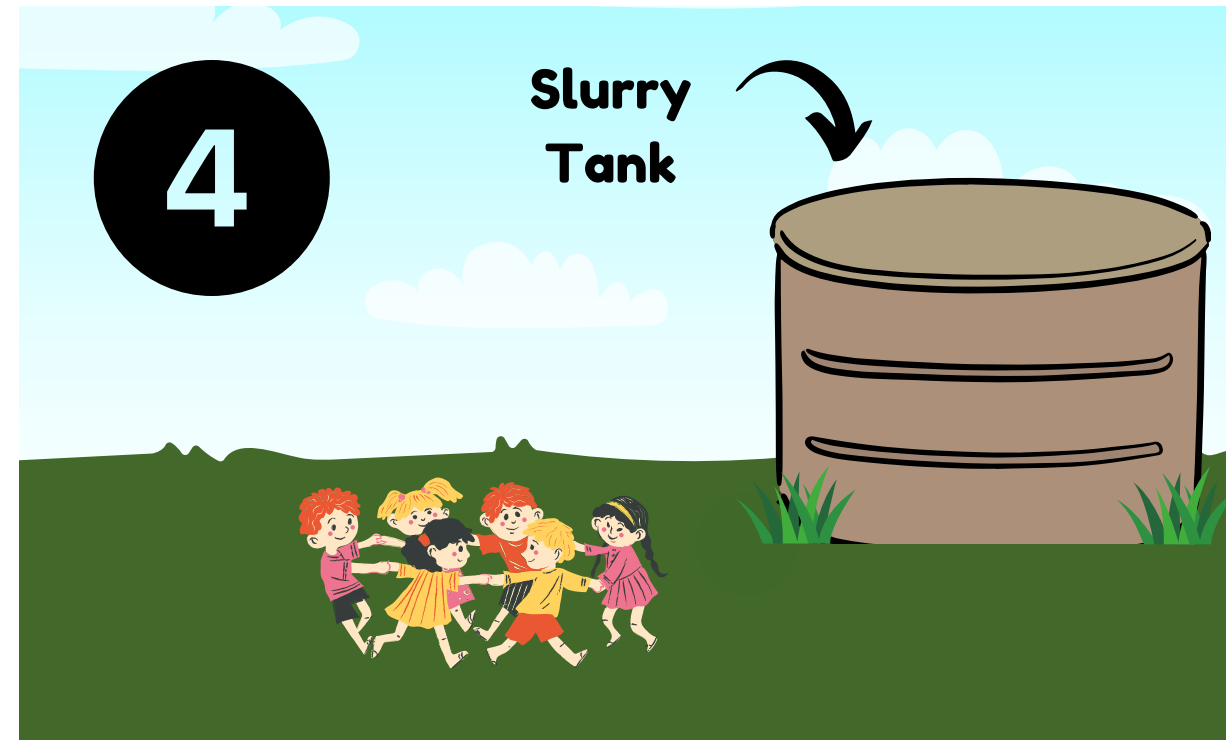


Hedgehogs like to build their nests in piles of leaves and under hedgerows

Suggested Activities

- Make a list of the different types of wildlife you might find on a farm and match them to their homes.
- As an art activity, use recycled materials to make a model animal home.

Quiz - What's Going On And Is It Wrong?



Quiz - What's Going On And Is It Wrong?



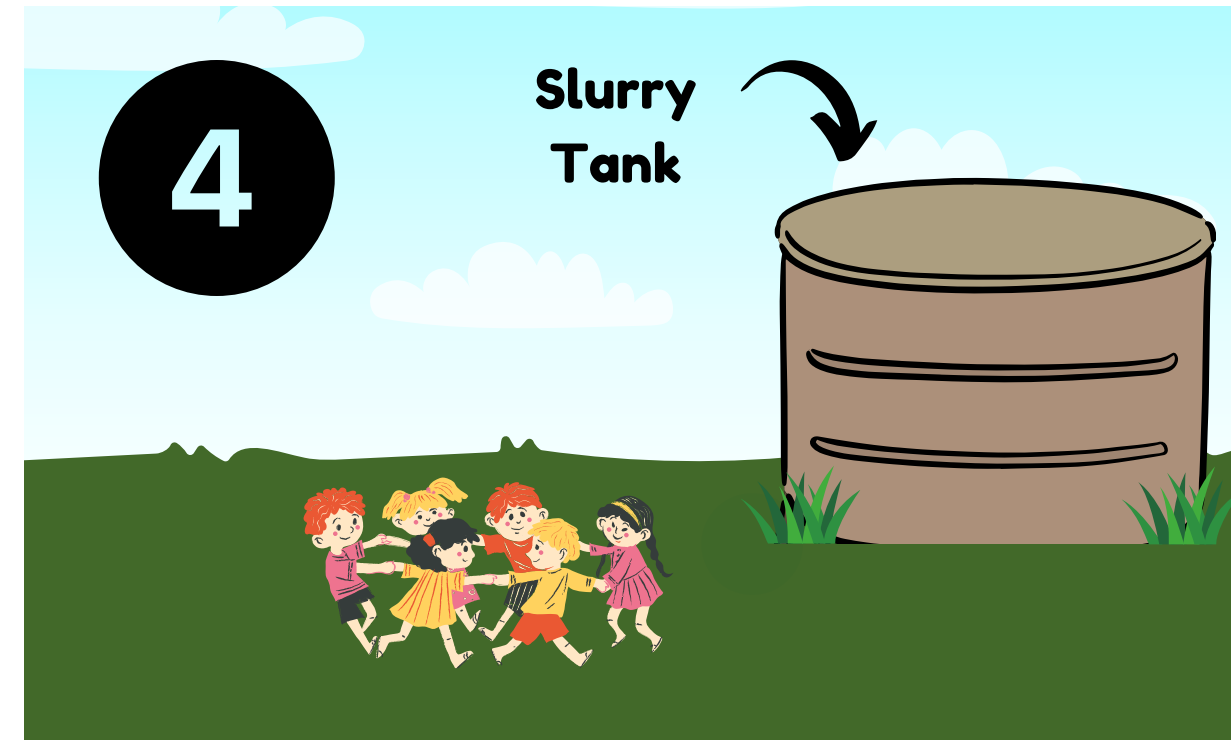
- This child is alone in the calf shed.
- The child is also approaching the calf from the back. This can be very scary for a calf.



- The fence around the bull's field is broken.
- There are no signs up saying there is a bull in the field.



- This child is trying to climb over the barriers to reach the lambs.
- There is no grown-up in this picture.



- There are no warning signs around the slurry tank.
- The children are not playing in a safe place. they are too near the slurry tank.