

Safe Farm Futures

Senior

Introduction to Farming

AgriAware
EDUCATE • ADVOCATE • ENGAGE



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

The following slides are an introduction to farming in Ireland. Each enterprise will be explored to give you an overview of the activities that take place on farms. Why not sign up for Agri Aware's Farming Through the Seasons to gain access to virtual seasonal tours from real farmers.

What types of farms are there in Ireland?

Farm Facts: Farms are the most dangerous work places in Ireland. If visitors and farmers are not careful, they can get seriously injured.

There are many different types of farming enterprises in Ireland. There are both farms that raise livestock and there are farms that produce cereals, fruits and vegetables.

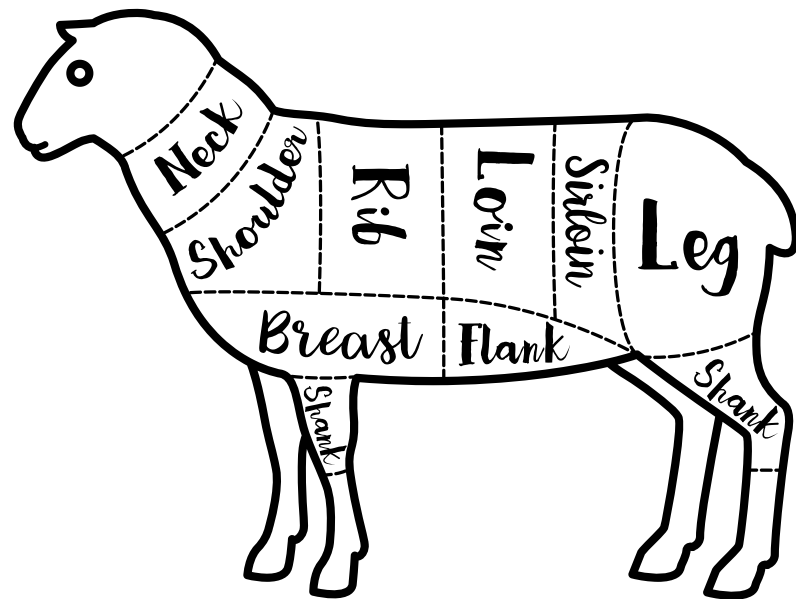
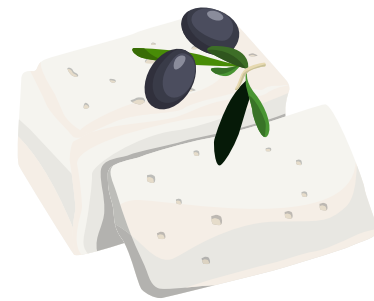
From the pictures below, can you name all of the different types of farms?



Suggested activity: Assign each of the enterprises above to groups within the classroom. Encourage the pupils to explore various aspects of the enterprises such as their history or the products that come from them. Each group could then present between 3-5 pieces of information about their assigned enterprise.

On sheep farms, sheep live in fields in large groups called flocks. They provide us with wool, milk and meat.

Sheep's milk can be used to make cheese. If you have ever eaten feta cheese, then you have eaten sheep's cheese as this is made from sheep's milk.



The cuts of meat we commonly eat from a sheep can be seen on the left. However, almost every part of a sheep can be prepared and eaten. This is known as nose to tail cooking.

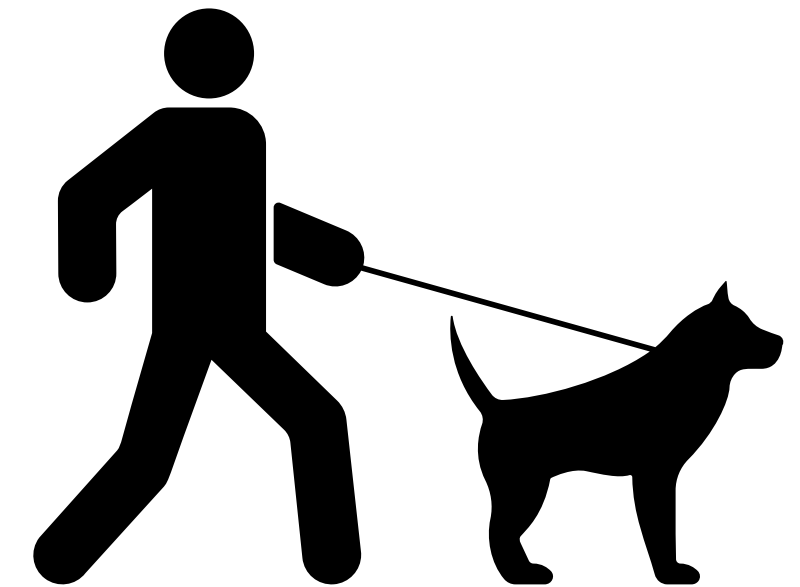
Can you think of other parts that are not represented on the diagram?

Farmers make sure their sheep are well cared for by providing proper food, ensuring health and happiness, assisting with lambing, and offering fresh grass outdoors or silage and meal indoors.



Farmers shear sheep annually before summer to help them stay cool. The wool collected can be used for various products like jumpers, mattresses, and carpets.

Sheep gather in flocks for safety. This reduces their vulnerability to predators. In Ireland, lambs face threats from foxes, pine martens and even dogs. When in the countryside, dogs must be kept on a lead to minimise the disturbance to sheep and lambs.



Suggested Activities

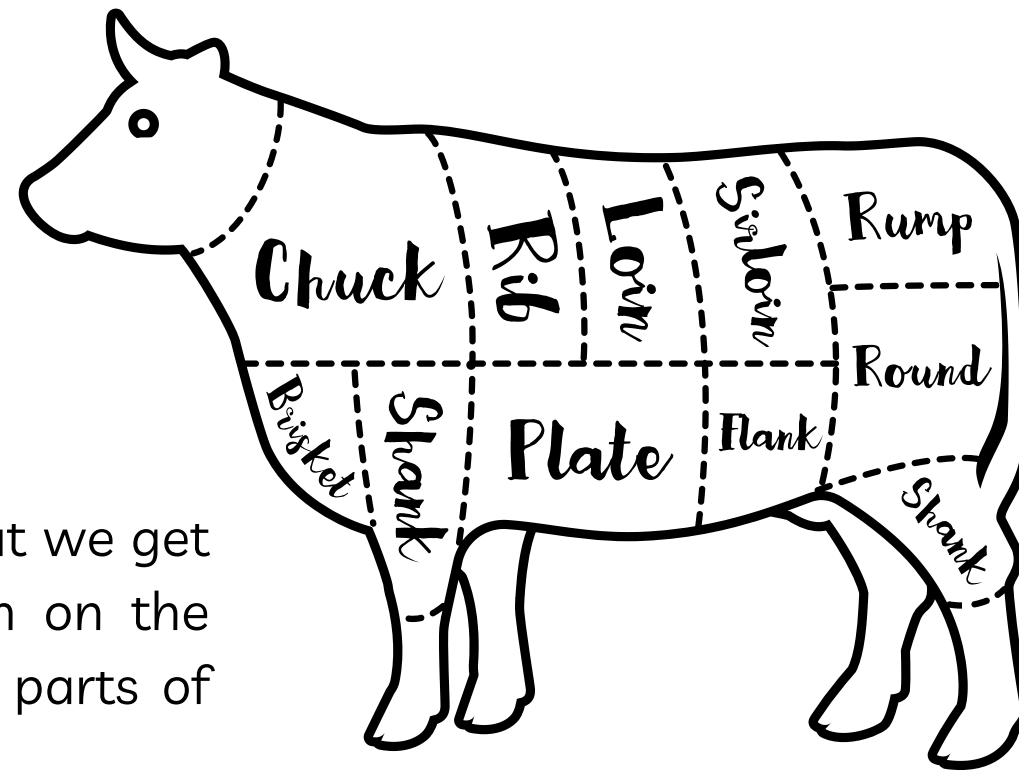
- Can you think of other parts of a sheep that can be eaten that are not represented on the diagram?
- Carry out a taste test. Try some sheep products such as sheep's milk or sheep's milk yogurt. Compare these to cow's milk products.
- Watch Agri Aware's Fun Friday's episode on Sheep. Click the button to the right to access the recording.

 [Fun Friday's Sheep](#)

Beef farms focus on raising cattle for meat production. These farms do not produce milk for people.

Cattle can also give us leather which can be used to make shoes, furniture and many other useful items.

The different cuts of meat we get from cattle can be seen on the right. We can eat many parts of the animal.



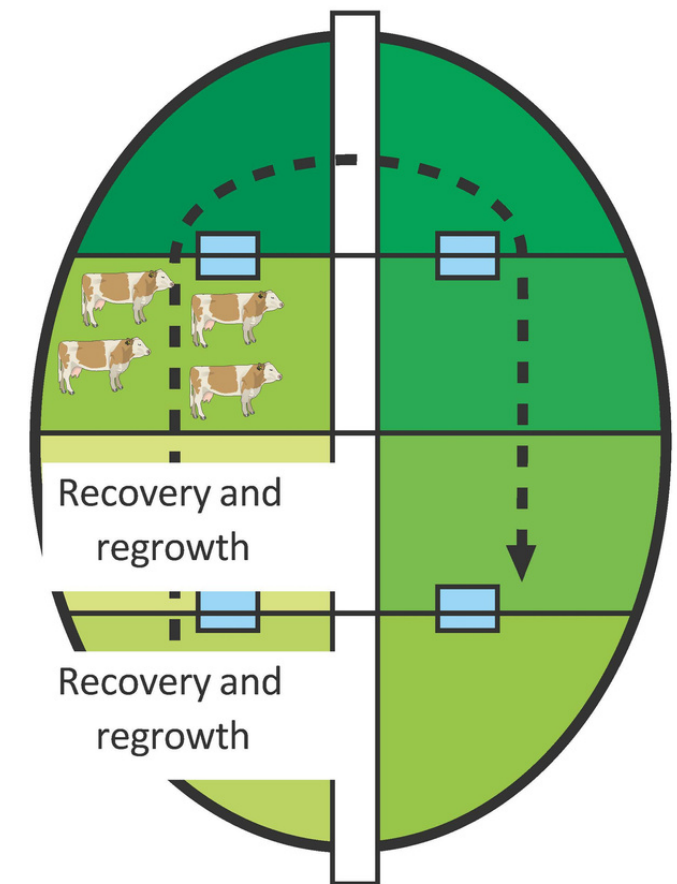
Did you know? The word cow is used to describe the mature female of the animal, while the word cattle is used for both male and female animals when there are more than one present.

Cattle prefer to live in herds as they are social animals, becoming stressed when separated. If cattle are stressed it can impact their weight gain which is important for beef animals.

During the winter months, cattle are indoors in sheds and in the summer cattle are outdoors grazing grass.

Farmers feed their cattle silage and meal during the winter months.

When cattle are outdoors grazing, farmers must pay close attention to how much grass they have access to. Cattle are allowed to graze grass down to between 4-5cm and then they must be moved to fresh grass - this is called rotational grazing.



Suggested Activities

- Research more about winter feeding of beef cattle? What is silage? What ingredients are used to make meal?
- As a group, can you think of what products we buy that contain beef?
- Research more about beef cattle, find out what traits they have that makes them are good for meat production.

Dairy farms are focused on the production of milk from dairy cows. A dairy cow is a female specifically bred to produce lots milk. Ireland is famous for its milk and it's milk products such as cheese, cream and butter.



For a cow to make good quality milk she needs to get the best food and care from the farmer. This includes feeding her silage, meal and even extra minerals.

Cows are provided with mineral licks during winter to ensure they get all the nutrients the need to stay healthy.

Cows spend most of their lives outside grazing high quality grass. This helps the cows to produce tasty, rich milk.



Milk is produced in the udder of the female cow. Dairy cows are usually milked twice per day using mechanical milking machines. Milking schedules may vary but are typically done in the morning and evening.

Did you know? The average dairy cow produces 25 litres of milk per day. At her peak, she may produce up to 25 litres per day.



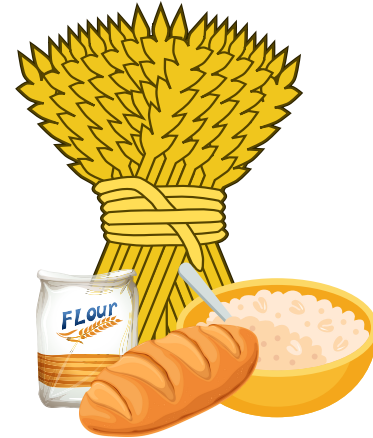
The milk is collected by a milk truck and brought to a processing factory where it is pasteurised and packaged into milk cartons. To make butter, the milk is churned, this means it is shaken until a yellow ball appears, which is the butter.

Suggested Activities

- Learn more about the pasteurisation process and why it is important. Find the word 'pasteurisation' on the carton.
- Watch Agri Aware's 'The Story of Milk' video. Click the button to the right to access the recording.
- Have you ever made your own butter before? If not, you can put a small amount of cream in a jar and shake it until a yellow ball appears. This is the butter. Cream is closer to what milk is like when it comes straight from the cow, with lots of fat in it to turn to butter.

 [The Story of Milk](#)

A tillage farm is a farm that produces crops. These farms specialise in the production of cereals. Cereals is a term used to describe plants that are grown for their grain such as wheat, oats and barley.

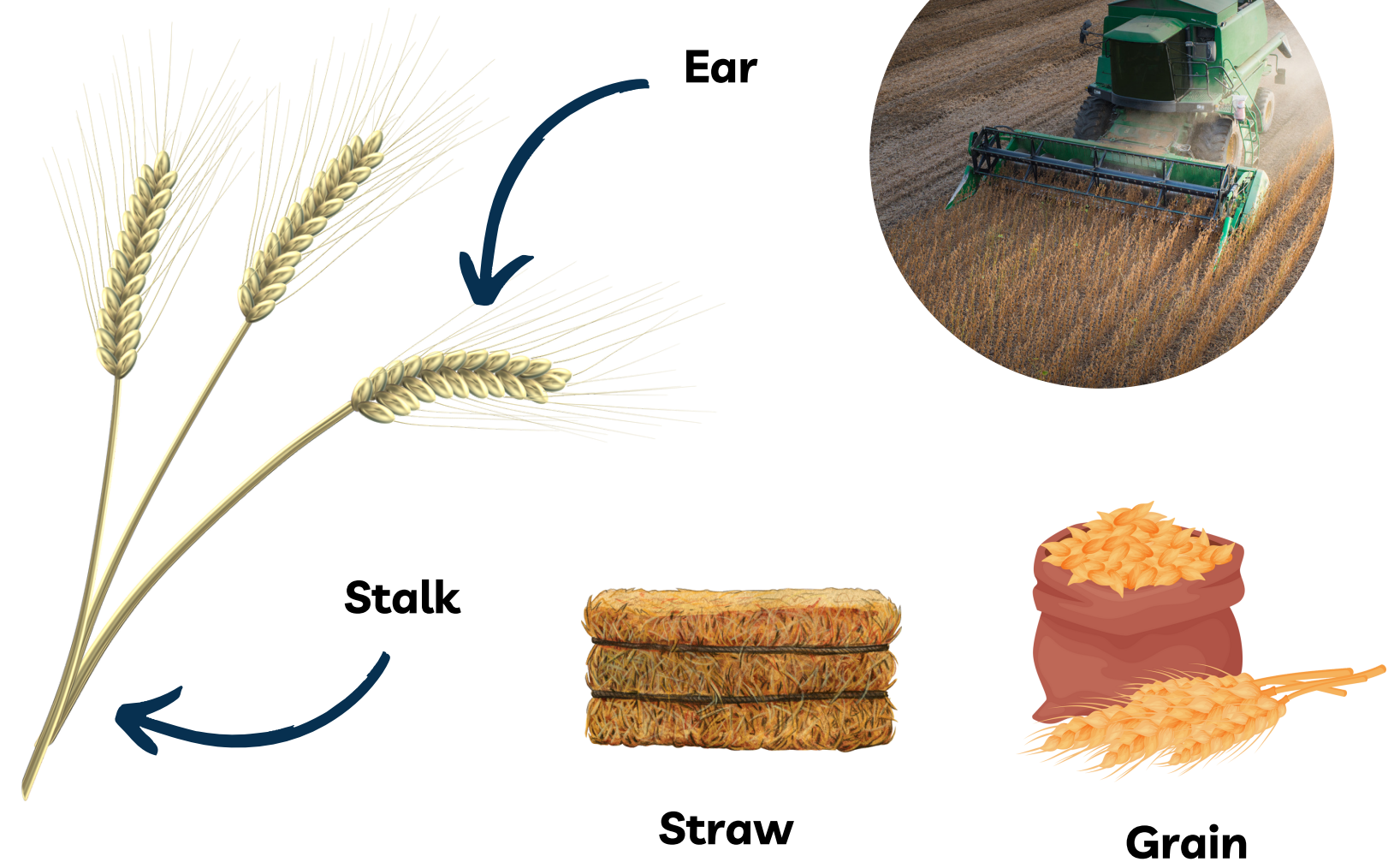


Although tillage farmers do not have animals to care for, the plants require almost as much care and attention. Farmers first need to prepare the soil for the seeds. They do this by ploughing the ground to make sure it is the perfect seed bed for plants to grow.

Farmers ensure the crops grow by using fertilizers. They also prevent diseases through the use of chemical treatments during the growing season.

Farm Fact: The word tillage describes the process of preparing the soil for crops to grow. So a tillage farmer is a farmer who grows crops

Farmers harvest crops using a combine harvester that separates the grain (edible part) from the stalk (straw). The **ear** is harvested for grain and made into food for people and for animals. The **stalk** is used to make **straw** for animal bedding.

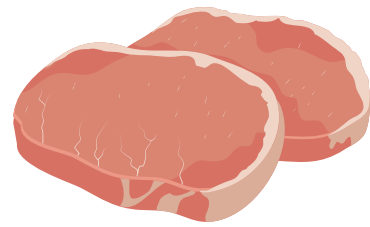


Suggested Activities

- Make a list of all the foods made from cereals.
- Watch Agri Aware's 'The Story of Flour' video. Click the button to the right to access the recording.
- Make a group poster showing the process of making flour from the farm to the bag.



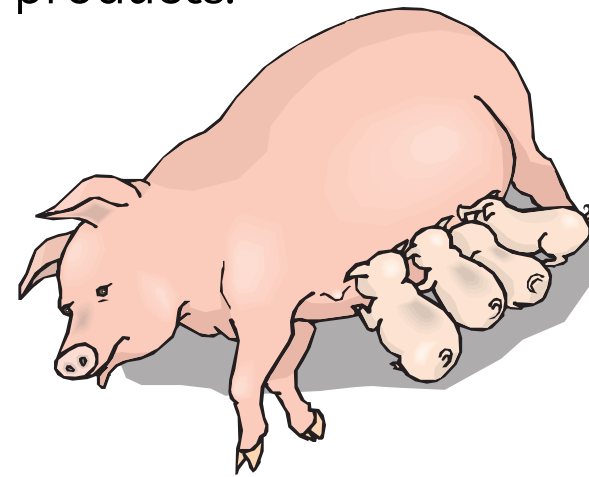
A pig farm, also known as a piggery, is a farm that focuses on raising pigs for meat production. It can also produce pig leather which can be used to make clothes.



The primary purpose of a pig farm is to produce pork, which is the meat obtained from pigs. Pork is a source of protein and is consumed in many ways including fresh cuts, processed meats (e.g., bacon, ham, sausage), and cured products.

Pig farms usually group the animals according to their age. They are typically housed indoors in specialised facilities designed to accommodate the needs of the pigs at various stages of their development.

The housing should provide a comfortable environment with space, ventilation, appropriate temperature, and access to clean water and feed.



The farmer looks after the pigs to make sure they are healthy and happy. It is very important to keep pigs active. They are smart animals. They are smarter than horses and dogs. Pigs are often housed indoors. Their houses must be kept clean at all times to ensure the animals are disease free.



Just like our pets at home, pigs can get bored. Farmers give their pigs toys to encourage them to play safely. This stops the pigs from fighting with each other.

Although pigs have a reputation for being messy, they are actually very clean animals. They are happiest in a nice clean environment. A farmer needs to clean out their house once a week, removing dirt and replacing it with clean straw.

Suggested Activities

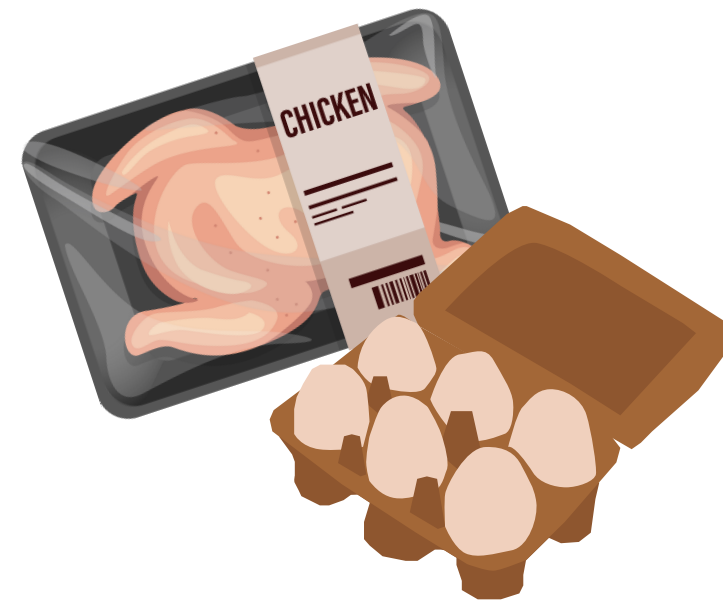
- Learn more about piggeries on the [Agri Aware virtual farm](#).
- At school or at home, watch the movie 'Babe'. Notice how easily the pig was trained by the farmer.
- Look at pictures of different pig breeds. Discuss their differences.

A poultry farm is a farm that has birds for either meat or egg production. They can also produce feathers that can be used in making pillows and bedding

There are many different types of poultry such as chickens, ducks, and geese. Chickens live in groups called flocks. Just like some of the other animals we have talked about, chickens like to live in groups for safety. Chickens are often housed indoors.



There are two types of chicken farms. A farm that raises chickens to give us chicken meat is called a broiler farm.



A farm that raises chickens to produce eggs is called a layer farm.

As chickens are often housed indoors, the farmer needs to feed them every day of the year. Unlike other animals on the farm, they do not eat grass or silage. Chickens are fed a chicken feed that includes cereals like corn and wheat. These grains help to give the chickens the nutrients they need to grow.



Poultry farms have special housing designed to accommodate the needs of the birds at various stages of development. Young chicks are usually provided with heat lamps. As they get older, roosting posts are provided to allow them to display their natural behaviour.

Suggested Activities

- Learn more about chickens and other poultry on the [Agri Aware Virtual Farm](#)
- Discover all the different types of poultry that are farmed in Ireland. We have given you the first three: chicken, ducks and geese.
- Create a parts of an egg poster. Label the shell, yolk and the white. Discuss the role of each part.