

TIPS!

So you want to invite people to your farm!

Many farmers receive visit requests or want to improve local understanding of what they do...

Here are some tips that will remove the butterflies and replace them with confidence that you are "on target".

Don't panic. The first time is the most difficult, and the Foundation's VISIT project will provide guidance for hosting visits to many different types of farms. You can easily download one that fits best, massage it to meet your individual needs, substitute your own photos, and even create a souvenir that continues the education process as a "take-home message".

Your Mission: To provide farm tours that are fun, educational, and successful; to educate farm visitors about the world of agriculture and "sow the seeds of understanding".

Remember...every farm is unique, and every farm tour will allow you to showcase your own farm in your own manner. The more visits you do, the more you will learn and come to understand the general public. Your tour may change, grow, and become much more than you ever envisioned.

1. Tour focus – Could be: farm operation, product, livestock, careers, nature, environmental education or ... many places on the farm present the perfect stage to incorporate additional lessons that extend beyond the farm gate.
2. Tour length & stops – consider age and physical abilities of the visitors. Lay out the visit to present the best "first impression" of every area. Be sensitive to short attention spans.
3. Tour information – engage your audience and gauge your language and explanations to their level of understanding. Learning by doing or through involvement with questions, touching, games or other challenges will work well.
4. Tour guide – who will give the tour? What "first impression" will they give? Are substitute guides available?
5. Pay attention to your visitors to gauge the depth of explanations and touring time. Be positive. Use good visuals and be open for questions.
6. Make a listing of topics to cover at each stop. Listen carefully to your visitors' comments and questions.
7. Wear a "visitor" hat and critique your own plans.
8. Set the visit time so that your operation is not interrupted and shows well.
9. Plan for parking. Set up the safest and most efficient traffic pattern.
10. Know how many visitors or groups you can handle.
11. Consideration of souvenirs, lessons, and resource material to compliment the tour and continue the education process AFTER the tour has ended.
12. Anticipate probable questions and prepare answers in advance targeted at different age levels.
13. Other considerations should include bathroom facilities and First Aid kits, etc.