

RISK ASSESSMENT for Group Visits to Tattershall Farm Park

Significant Risks Identified:

1. Picking up germs from animals/spreading animal diseases – E Coli and transfer of disease from animals to humans
2. Play equipment, slips, trips and falls and other risks
3. Animal bites & contact with Animals
4. Hay fever, asthma and allergies to animals
5. Tools, Equipment and Farm Machinery
6. Chemical Cleaners & Animal Medication
7. Fire
8. Flood

Existing Control Measures – How we have tried to minimise the risk for our visitors

1. **The risk of catching most germs on farms can be eliminated by good hygiene.** E coli 0157 is a bacterium that lives in the gut of animals, including cattle, sheep, deer and goats. It can also be carried by pets and wild birds. Simply carrying the bacterium will not normally cause an animal any harm or illness, but if contacted by humans, the toxins it produces can cause illness ranging from diarrhoea to kidney failure. In some case the illness can be fatal. Young children and the elderly at the greatest risk. E coli 0157 is unusual in that very few individual organisms are needed to infect humans. People can become infected through a number of routes including the consumption of contaminated foods, direct contact with animals, contact with animal faeces e.g. camping on agricultural land and person-to-person spread both in families and institutions.

A number of outbreaks involving children have been associated with educational and recreational visits to open farms. While the hazard from infection resulting from a farm visit is real, the risks are readily controlled by simple everyday measures. Primary amongst these is the need for good personal hygiene. Infection can result from exposure to bacteria from animals or animal faeces and then eating, drinking or smoking without first thoroughly washing your hands. Staff keep our Farm Park clean and remove droppings etc. daily.

Hand washing facilities are available in the Café and in the Poultry Barn. Hands must be thoroughly washed with soap and hot running water - antiseptic hand gel is also provided (though is not a substitute for effective hand washing). Young children should be supervised whilst washing their hands.

Signs remind visitors to wash their hands after contact with the animals, before eating and before they leave the farm. Very young children, who are likely to put their hands

in their mouths should either be discouraged from touching the animals or should have their hands washed immediately after contact.

Our visitors are reminded **NEVER** to kiss an animal as all animals carry germs.

Pregnant Women - If you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant you should stay away from any ewes and lambs. This is to avoid the transfer of micro-organisms that can cause illness. There are signs around the farm park to remind visitors of this risk and our 'reception' team advise visibly pregnant ladies when they enter the farm park.

Eating - Food should only be eaten in designated areas i.e. the classroom, cafe, or picnic areas.

Cuts and Scratches - These should be cleaned thoroughly and covered up immediately. Old wounds should also be covered. There are 2 First Aid points on the Farm, one in the Café and one in the Shop. We have 2 qualified first aiders.

2. **Play equipment, slips, trips and falls and other risks**

There are various play areas around the Farm Park. Risks have been mitigated wherever possible during design e.g. fall heights have been carefully considered. Children must be supervised, and where age or height restrictions are in place these must be observed.

Soft Play Barn – Play Barn Rules are displayed on the wall here. The equipment in this area is padded, with crash mats. No shoes (socks must be worn) or food is allowed on the play equipment. Adults are encouraged to supervise young children while on this equipment. The Bouncy Castle in this area is for a maximum of 4 children with height restriction of 1.38m

Outdoor Adventure Playground – also home to a larger bouncy castle and 2 trampolines. Fall heights have been taken into consideration, though slips trips and falls are still the largest risk in this area. All equipment is on grass. Adults are not permitted on the outdoor equipment, but can observe from the picnic benches surrounding the area.

Toddler Playground – equipment here is Little Tikes plastic slides, swings and crawl through tunnels and again fall heights have been taken into consideration.

Giant Sand Play Room – Play sand has been used in this area, however as this area is inside the sand is very fine. The main risk in this room is if sand was to go into a child's eyes. Our first aid kits include eye baths. During busy periods the air in this room can be quite dusty and for this reason there are 2 windows that can be opened.

Toddler Play Room – Fall heights have again been taken into consideration for the equipment in this room. An additional risk in a room aimed at Toddlers is the passing of germs when children put toys in their mouths. We do regularly clean the toys in this room with anti-bacterial spray but request that parents supervise Toddlers and prevent them putting toys in their mouths.

Swing Barn – This is a barn that is 'bedded' with straw. As the name suggests there are swings, tyres, rope ladders etc. The pillars in this room have been padded and again fall heights have been taken into consideration, any landing would be on to a soft 'straw bale'. The nature of the straw bale padding means that the flooring has uneven levels, so trips and falls are a risk here. The windows in this area are fitted with safety glass.

3. **Animal Bites & contact with Animals**

All animals carry germs, and all animals have the propensity to bite. Where an animal is known to be likely to bite (e.g. Chipmunks and Ferrets) we put special signs up to warn our visitors. Where an animal has previously bitten a visitor we have mitigated the risk of recurrence by improving fencing. Children should be supervised at all times. Any visitor choosing to feed our animals should hold their hands out flat, and should not put their fingers into the animals' mouths. They should only feed food sold at the farm and should not eat the animal feed themselves.

Contact with Animals - Animals should be approached quietly and carefully and treated with respect. They should only be handled when farm staff give permission or signs permit visitors to do so. Animals that are considered higher risk are secured with padlocks. An animal that has been frightened will have a natural instinct to protect itself, so please be gentle at all times.

4. **Hay fever, asthma and allergies to animals** – Farms can be dusty, and stores of hay or straw can aggravate symptoms for sufferers of Hay fever and those with allergies.

5. **Tools, Equipment and Farm Machinery** - No vehicles are permitted on to the Farm Park during opening hours other than in exceptional cases where they will be escorted by a staff member. Equipment is stored away from public but on occasion wheel barrows when in use by our Animal Welfare team may be around the Farm Park. Visitors are advised never to touch these.

6. **Chemical Cleaners & Animal Medication** - Cleaning equipment is kept in areas that are not accessible to the public. Animal medication is kept in wall mounted cupboards out of children's reach. Children should be warned not to touch any items that are being used by farm staff e.g. Wheelbarrows, brooms etc.

7. **Fire** - Our Farm Park is strictly No Smoking, even in the outdoor areas. There are many flammable substances on farms e.g. Hay/ straw. Our Fire Extinguishers are appropriate to the risks e.g. CO2, Powder etc. and are tested annually. No smoking signs must be strictly observed. In case of fire, please sound the alarm, evacuate the buildings, call 999 or alert a member of staff and assemble on the grass adjacent to the car park.

8. **Flood** – Tattershall Farm Park is located next to the River Witham. Should there be risk of flooding for the Farm Park we would close to the public. There are several areas of deep water around the Farm Park, these are fenced off from visitors and Caution Deep Water Signs are displayed.

For more detailed information about Health and Safety on farms, please contact: Health & Safety Executive (01245) 706208 or HSE Infoline 0845 3450055 Ask for the following publications: On the Farm – Activity booklet for children, Managing Health & Safety in Schools, Avoiding Ill Health at Open Farms. • DEFRA www.defra.gov.uk