

WINTER
2023



DISCOVER FARMING

NEWS FOR SCHOOLS

THE CLASSROOM @ WASHINGPOOL FARM

Local Primary and Secondary Schools are invited to visit the Discover Farming Classroom to learn and experience what is involved in bringing the food they eat to the table as well as gain an understanding of why farming and agriculture is so important to the local economy and environment.

NEWS FROM KATIE VINING, DISCOVER FARMING'S EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR



EXPERT DAY 2023

The new school year began with great excitement and Discover Farming's second Expert Day at the Washingpool Farm Classroom. Symondsbury and Broadwindsor Primary schools brought along their Year 5/6 classes to take part in the activities for the day. The children really enjoyed the freedom of learning outside the classroom and taking part in something that they cannot access within the 'normal' school curriculum. We had great feedback from the staff and children. They clearly had fun developing their understanding of fresh produce, uses of wool, the importance of soil and the daily life of a vet.

This year's experts who generously gave their time were:

- Connie Hawker, a local chef who cooked up a fabulous leek and potato soup with a mouth-watering sour dough. All freshly harvested produce from the growing fields.
- Ellen and Leila Simon from Tamarisk Farm getting the pupils involved in weaving and spinning. Learning about a by-product of keeping sheep.
- Tom Gregory and Hannah Dyke from Pineapple Estate spoke about soil and how important it is when growing anything. Their interactive activity worked on the science of good soil and the indicators of healthy soil...I believe the highest number of earthworms found was 101!
- Pam Sibley, a local vet brought along scanning equipment to scan some of the ewes. She talked about her life as a vet and demonstrated how technology is used in her day-to-day life.



Our Expert day helps to promote Discover Farming's goals of a greater understanding of food and farming, the benefits of fresh local produce and to encourage and inspire a younger generation to look for a career in agriculture. We already have plans for the Third Expert Day in September 2024!



SCHOOL VISITS

The new year has started well with more than 160 children visiting the classroom! We have had a number of visits from Symondsbury school (both Key Stages), Broadwindsor, St. Catherine's in Bridport and St Mary's in Beaminster.

I was able to really develop harvesting and the cooking of our lovely fresh produce with the slightly smaller groups on some of the community cooking kit from the Bridport Local Food Group. Only one adjustment for storm Babet! Leek and Potato and Pumpkin soup were great seasonal hits with both the pupils and the staff.

Classroom Improvements:

The classroom itself has stood up to a bashing from the recent storms and plenty of rain. We have a new workbench across one side of the classroom with some storage space underneath for equipment. The aim is to continue to encourage visits from children of all ages to the classroom with space to carry out more focussed work.



CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

Our careers team headed by Will Frost has attended Colfox School assemblies, Beaminster School and Wadham School careers days. We have also attended Kington Maurward careers and freshers' days. We have talked to enthusiastic students as well as interested parents. One careers master had 3 students come and talk to him about a career in farming after one of our assembly talks. We are making a difference!

We have had great support from our local employers in the industry. Many thanks to Synergy Vets, Hardwill's, Buglers and Cheddington Court Estate for their help.

Our Further education group with James Bowditch and Sophie Gregory has been busy talking to our local colleges of Kingston Maurward, Bicton and Cannington to help support our students and apprentices. Cannington College is soon to start an apprentice outreach in Rampisham for our West Dorset agriculture students. The group has talked to Chris Loder MP about the future of agricultural education in Dorset to help him improve educational provision for our local farmers to be.

NEW 500 FARMING WORDS WRITING COMPETITION

All local primary schools were invited to take part in our first writing competition. There were four categories: Upper Key Stage 2 (Year 5 or 6 or equivalent), Lower Key Stage 2 (Year 3 or 4 or equivalent), Key Stage 1 (Year 1 or 2 or equivalent) and Reception. Pupils were asked to produce an original piece of non-fiction writing that was connected to Food and Farming and focused on one of following topics: Why does farming matter and what does it mean to you? Why is it important to eat healthily and to eat seasonal foods? Why is farming the biggest job on earth? My favourite farming season and why?

Entries were received from June – November 2023 from 7 schools:

- Broadwindsor C of E Primary
- Greenford C of E Primary, Maiden Newton
- Powerstock C of E Primary
- Salway Ash C of E Primary
- St Mary's C of E Primary, Bridport
- St Mary's C of E Primary, Thorncombe
- Symondsbury C of E Primary

The judges for the competition were the Society President, Michael Fooks and his wife Pam, and Gemma Thorne from the NFU.

RESULTS

Reception

Winner: Joseph Dare, Symondsbury

Year 1 & 2

Winner: Theo Cox, St Mary's School, Bridport

Runner-up: Max Beyon, Greenford, Maiden Newton

Year 3 & 4

Winner: Joe Cox, St Mary's School, Bridport

Runner-up: Harry Rhodes, St Mary's School, Bridport

Year 5

Winner: Franklin Laszlo-Bushrod, Symondsbury

Runner-up: Edward Keen, Salway Ash

Schools with the best entries:

Winner: St Mary's C of E Primary School, Bridport

Runner-up: Symondsbury C of E Primary School

The winners of each category receive a certificate and book voucher for £30 and the runners-up receives a certificate and book voucher for £20.

The Winning school received a certificate and book vouchers for £300 and the runner-up book vouchers for £250



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"We congratulate all of those that entered. The aim of the competition was to produce a piece of non-fiction writing that would get children thinking about the importance of food and farming, it has certainly done that. We had some excellent entries; the judges were very impressed with the standard and the thought and effort that went into all the work", said Education Co-ordinator, Katie Vining.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

To assist and encourage further education in agriculture and closely allied topics an annual scholarship is available to students aged 16 years and over who live within a 12-mile radius of Melplash Village Church.

The scholarship offers financial assistance with their apprenticeship, diploma or degree course. The financial support will be extended throughout the successful student's course provided they receive a satisfactory annual report from their college or university.

This year a total of £34,000 and was awarded to 18 students. Since the scheme started in 2007 the Society has awarded 86 scholarships to the value of £226,000.

For more details and an application form please visit www.discoverfarming.co.uk



CHILDREN'S DO YOU KNOW?

Chilli Quiz

Because it's getting colder!

1. Is a chilli a fruit or a vegetable?
2. How far back can we trace cultivation of chilli peppers?
3. When was the first chilli pepper recorded in the U.K.?
4. What is the name of the scale used to rate how hot a chilli is?
5. What is the hottest chilli in Dorset, how hot is it and where is it grown?



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO EAT HEALTHILY AND SEASONALLY?



"Eating foods grown in our lush green countryside and warm waters, reduces food miles with the freshest produce, retaining goodness and flavour. We need a balanced diet to stay healthy and active as we get older."

Tim Dommett, Discover Farming Committee

DISCOVER FARMING OUT & ABOUT

at **LEAF Open Farm Sunday**
on 11th June at Denhay Farm, Broadoak



at **Melplash Show**
on 24th August at West Bay



CHILLI QUIZ ANSWERS **A1.** Fruit – seed-bearing – part of the nightshade family, same as tomatoes. **A2.** About 6,000 years in South America. **A3.** 1548. Brought in from South America by Spanish and Portuguese. **A4.** Scoville scale – measure of heat units created in 1912. Scoville Heat Units (SHU) **A5.** Dorset Naga is over 1 million SHU it is grown by Seaspring Seeds in West Bexington.

The Discover Farming Classroom at Washingpool Farm (DT6 5HP) is situated just outside of Bridport on the B3162 heading towards Salway Ash. The Classroom is part of the educational programme set up and operated by the Melplash Agricultural Society to help educate children about food, farming and the environment. (Charity No 1130201)

www.discoverfarming.co.uk



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