



## **Unit 5: Food Safety on trips to the farm and farmers' market**

Field trips to farms and farmers' markets offer exciting learning environments for young children. These experiences will stimulate their senses and they will want to touch, feel, smell, and taste everything along the way. These excursions offer unique ways to explore and learn about the many varieties of fruits and vegetables. However, there are also food safety risks you need to be aware of and plan for. Children may be exposed to unsafe foods on a farm due to contact with pathogens such as those found in soil, water, and feces from animals. At a farmers' market it is also important to remember that most fresh produce has not yet been washed. Until the produce is washed it is at an increased risk for transmitting foodborne illness.

[Film] *When we go to this farm where there will be animals we actually have to be really cautious in the fact our state for licensing does not want to have direct contact with animals in some cases. So what we'll probably do is, I think they even have sheep, we'll bring back a little bit of fresh wool that the children can all touch to feel that opportunity of what a sheep is going to feel like since we're not exactly sure what the hand washing facilities will be available to us there.*

By the end of this unit you will be able to identify food safety concerns for children at a farm or farmers' market, and identify ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness during visits to farms and farmers' markets.

Music...

To keep children safe from foodborne illness on field trips to farms and farmers' markets it is important for teachers to plan ahead for all facets of the trip. This includes preparation for packing lunches, hand washing, and handling taste tests.

Planning for and packing safe bagged lunches or snacks should be a priority. When parents provide the food send home a note with information on how to prepare safe bagged lunches or snacks. Include a list of recommended nonperishable foods. Nonperishable foods do not need to be refrigerated. Common examples are whole fruits and peanut butter sandwiches. Remind parents that meats including poultry, seafood, or cold cuts, peeled or cut fruits and vegetables and dairy products need to be kept cold and should be packed with a food safe icepack in an insulated lunch bag. When transporting bagged lunches be sure to have the proper equipment such as a clean cooler with food safe icepacks. When you arrive at your destination keep the cooler in the shade under a tree or even under a picnic table. Remember that perishable foods need to be kept cold at 41° Fahrenheit or below.



To learn more about safe bagged lunches and a sample downloadable note for parents refer to the Resources section of this training. Click on the Sharing Board icon and take a few minutes to explore the Food Safety on Field Trips to Farms and Farmers' Markets sharing board questions. Once you have posted a response to a question or responded to someone else's post you will be able to continue the training.

Music...

Whether in the classroom or on a field trip hand washing is the number one way to help reduce the risk of foodborne illness. When children are touching and picking fruits and vegetables or petting farm animals having access to a hand washing facility is important. Check to see if one is available for children on your field trip. If you are unsure a quick call ahead can help prevent a potential problem. Plan plenty of time in your schedule for children to wash their hands. This is particularly important after they participate in activities in the farm fields, handle fresh produce, or touch farm equipment. If children interact with farm animals it is also important to have them wash their hands immediately after feeding or touching the animals, fencing, or pens. Children may ask why they need to wash their hands when they don't look dirty. This is a great time to talk to them about pathogens and germs and how they are so small they can't be seen.

[Film] *This is a germ. Guess how big he is? Over one million times the size of the actual germ. So who knows what germs are?*

*Germs that come are in your mouth and little.*

*And they can be on your fingers or hands.*

Encourage hand washing and explain that washing their hands is the best way to remove these germs which can make them sick.

[Film] *What are we gonna do after being in the garden?*

*Wash our hands.*

*Right, 'cause so let's do our practice washing. Ready? Turn on the water. Turn the water.*

*Turn on the water.*

*Get your hands wet. How many pumps of soap?*

*One.*



*One pump of soap. Start lathering up.*

*Bubble, bubble, bubble. Wash in between fingers.*

*One, three.*

*Rinse. Get all the bubbles off, all the dirt down the drain. How many paper towels do we use?*

*One.*

*One paper towel. And use your paper towel to shut off the faucet. Then it goes right into the trash, right?*

Hand washing is important in reducing foodborne illness because it can help eliminate some cross contamination from germs or bacteria or pathogens that could be on your hand that could possibly get onto the food that we eat. Although using hand sanitizer can help reduce the risk of foodborne illness it should not be considered a replacement for hand washing. Washing with soap and water is the best because it helps remove dirt and reduces germs. The CDC recommends using sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available. Check the label on the hand sanitizer for the alcohol content but remember sanitizers do not reduce the dirt on hands and the dirt makes the sanitizer less effective.

Now that you have learned about packing safe bagged lunches and the importance of hand washing take a few minutes and update your Best Practices planning tool. Click on the Best Practices icon now to continue the unit.

Music...

Delicious fresh fruits and vegetables at farms and farmers' markets can be tempting.

[Film] *Look, the biggest one.*

Samples of fresh produce may be offered to children to taste. However, it is important to remind children not to eat any food unless their teacher or chaperone has offered it to them. Remind teachers and chaperones ahead of time that all fruits and vegetables need to be cleaned before eating. This includes fresh produce harvested from the fields and fresh produce offered in a taste test.

[Film] *That's cool, right?*  
*Yeah.*  
*A purple eggplant.*



Of course it is a challenge to not have three and four year olds want to put something in their mouth immediate if it's being put out there for them. Much like in opening a fresh pumpkin for them. They may have been exposed to those seeds but you saw nobody actually put them right in their mouth because we talk about how we want to make sure they're gonna be clean and we have them ready. We talk about how it will feel but it's not something we're going to eat at this time.

Unpasteurized products are often available at farmers' markets. However, unpasteurized foods are not safe for young children. Pasteurization is a process that heats the food to a high temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Any unpasteurized milk or juices must be labeled so that consumers know that they are consuming a product that has not been heat treated and poses an increased risk of foodborne illness. It is a good idea to find out beforehand if pasteurized products will be available for children to sample. Always read the labels before offering foods to young children. Look for the word "pasteurized" printed on the label. If this information is not on the label or the item is unpackaged on a plate for sampling ask the farmer or person in charge if it has been pasteurized before offering to children. If they don't know it is best to be safe and not offer the sample.

Purchasing farm fresh eggs is a great way to support local farms. Always make sure the eggs have been refrigerated at no more than 45° Fahrenheit. Be sure to check your state and local ordinances before purchasing farm fresh eggs for your center.

Music...

Field trips to farms and farmers' markets provide many hands on learning opportunities. But it is important to remember that food safety should be a priority at every step from planning your excursion to packing safe lunches, to hand washing and taste testing.

Congratulations on completing Unit 5 Food Safety on Field Trips to Farms and Farmers' Markets. This is the final unit of the food safety from farm and garden to preschool training. What steps can you take over the next year to meet your best practices goals? Click on the Best Practices icon now and add your future goals to your Best Practices planning tool.