

# EXPLORING...



Farming &amp; Countryside Education

## Healthy Living

### Why healthy living?

There is something contradictory about health and modern life. On one side there are life-enhancing improvements which have literally transformed daily lives. The contrasting reality is that many people are making poor health choices that impact on their well-being. Such is the concern about the health of young people that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) wants schools to play a more active part in shaping attitudes to health including food, sport and physical activity, through the curriculum and wider school environment.

Schools are starting to provide many opportunities to be active and encourage children to make informed food choices along with offering healthy lunchtime options. This has resulted in a profusion of schemes including healthier vending machines, cooking clubs and growing clubs all trying to encourage young people to make healthier choices.

This newsletter aims to help teachers gain a better understanding of this complex area and be inspired by the case studies of activities that touch on many different aspects of school life.

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## Growing a healthy lifestyle

### The outdoor classroom

Gardening to encourage wildlife and using a school's green spaces as an outdoor classroom can enrich the teaching and learning experience right across the curriculum. But if you're not naturally green-fingered where do you start?

Teachers in the Midlands recently took part in 'Developing Your School Grounds', a bi-annual course for teachers run by Rutland's Barnsdale Gardens in association with FACE. Members of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust demonstrated some fun activities for a lesson in the open air, while in a practical session with the RSPCA delegates tried their hand at making mini-beast houses and bird boxes from recycled household items. Barnsdale owner Sue Hamilton and vegetable expert Susie Watson showed edible crops that can be grown easily in term-time plus some interesting and unusual containers for planting. This was followed by a crash course in composting from head

Rachel Toach of the RSPCA with some of the delegates, showing off their mini-beast houses



gardener Jon Brocklebank. The day ended with a tour of the gardens.

Bobbie Harvey of FACE, who was instrumental in setting up the course, said, 'This is the Year of Food and Farming in Education and the gardens here at Barnsdale provide a great opportunity for teachers to explore the potential of growing and gardening activities, as well as the many learning experiences offered by an outdoor setting. It's been a super day.'

Teachers' Day has always been over-subscribed and October was no different with 15 more schools already on the waiting list. The next course will run in March.

For more information visit [www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk](http://www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk)

# Growing a healthy lifestyle

continued

## Sowing a seed of inspiration

Many children seem to have a natural aversion to eating vegetables, especially green varieties. One of the best ways of encouraging them to eat healthy, fresh veg is to let them grow their own. This isn't as daunting as it sounds as many vegetables can be grown quickly and easily in containers in the classroom. Nick Hamilton at Rutland's Barnsdale Gardens gives the following top tips for successful container gardening:

- Check the information on the back of the seed packets to make sure you have picked a variety which is quick to grow and mature. With all container-grown vegetables you want to go for varieties that are 'suitable for close spacing'.
  - Salad leaves and rocket make a good first crop for the novice gardener, as do other shallow-rooted crops like lettuce, radishes, herbs and spring onions.
  - Mini or 'dwarf' varieties of carrot, beetroot and leek grow very well in containers, as does kohlrabi, which grows quickly and can be picked small.
- The possibilities for containers are endless – let the children use their imagination! Recycled options include old wellington boots, shoes, tins, saucepans and guttering. Or let the children make environmentally friendly papier mâché pots out of old newspaper, which they can decorate with acrylic paints.
  - All containers should have an adequate number of holes in the bottom for proper drainage. Remember to place a saucer under the container to catch the water. Additional holes should be drilled or punched in containers that do not drain quickly after each watering.
  - After planting you just need to remember to place the pots in a sunny place and to water regularly (making sure that the keen young gardeners don't over-water!).



## Sustainability conference

At a recent Food & Farming Sustainability Conference facilitated by FACE, Birmingham schools had an opportunity to learn more about the food and farming industry and how it is facing up to the issue of sustainability. Delegates explored how food and farming might sit within the sustainable schools framework, and afternoon workshops put this learning into practice. A full report and Power-Point slides are available at [www.face-online.org.uk](http://www.face-online.org.uk)

## Grow Your Own Potatoes

'Grow Your Own Potatoes' is an exciting hands-on project organised by the British Potato Council (BPC), that helps young children understand how food is grown and the importance of healthy eating. It's free to take part and each primary school will receive a growing kit containing potato seeds, planting advice and a £5 garden centre voucher. There is also online access to a wealth of supporting classroom activities from lesson plans and worksheets to a live 'potato cam'.

To celebrate the Year of Food and Farming the British Potato Council has created a new interactive height chart to help pupils and teachers track their plant's progress, using fun stickers. These will be distributed in every school growing kit. Encourage

your school to take part and register at [www.potatoesforschools.org.uk](http://www.potatoesforschools.org.uk) entering the code FACE.



# Getting involved with... healthy living

## Fun, food and fitness

ABOVE RIGHT: **Children from St Helena's Primary School**

BELOW: **Feeding calves**



How can schools inject that essential element of fun when teaching about food, farming and fitness? A Lincolnshire school has successfully tackled this issue by running an after-school 'Fun, Food and Fitness Club', now entering its second year. This year pupils at St Helena's Church of England Primary School in Willoughby have been looking at dairy products and their health benefits, enjoying many exciting events for the Year of Food and Farming.

Run by the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher, the club aims to make learning fun. The children have made ice-cream and cheesecake and looked at the effect of exercise on their bodies. They have discussed how dairy products form part of a healthy diet, including investigating how cheese is good for their teeth. The children enjoy a healthy milkshake once a week, and the money raised goes towards a healthy activity or visit of their choice.



The school started the year with an assembly about the life of 'their' calf (called 'St Helena's Barmaid'), and learning about the life of a heifer calf born into a dairy herd. The school hopes to follow the calf through her life and ultimately to see her have her own calves. A visit is planned for 2008. The children have made model cows that 'live' on their model farms. Emotive issues have arisen, such as why we have to kill animals, and they have been tackled in a truthful and sensitive way.

The club organisers have found it very rewarding to see, and hear, that the lessons learnt by club members are now filtering back to their peer groups. Special thanks are given to the club's supporters and also their sponsors: Alford branch NFU and Dairy Farmers of Britain.

## Want to show that food matters in your school?



Image supplied with the kind permission of the British Cheese Board

### Join the Food for Life Partnership!

The Food for Life Partnership is a five-year Lottery-funded initiative to transform food culture in schools and communities across England. Led by the Soil Association, it brings together the practical expertise of the Focus on Food Campaign, Garden Organic and the Health Education Trust. By reaching out to schools and communities, the Food for Life Partnership aims to revolutionise school meals, reconnect young people with where their food comes from and inspire families to cook and grow food.

All schools can now enrol with the Food for Life Partnership online and join a network of schools committed to achieving Bronze, Silver and Gold Marks for good food culture. Food for Life Partnership schools will be

given their very own webpage on which they can record their progress and share their ideas.

The Food for Life Partnership Mark is an action framework to help schools and their communities transform their food culture, and an award scheme to recognise their achievements. Schools take steps towards serving fresh, wholesome, carefully sourced school meals and championing good food culture, by harnessing the ideas and initiative of young people and community leaders. The Food for Life Partnership Mark links together, in a practical way, initiatives such as Healthy Schools, Sustainable Schools and the Year of Food and Farming.

Visit [www.foodforlife.org.uk](http://www.foodforlife.org.uk) to find out how to get involved.

## Cook up a healthy lifestyle

Cooking is an essential life skill, so why not add an extra dimension to your teaching by combining cookery with learning about healthy, locally sourced produce?

Hampshire Country Learning is launching a new project within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for selected local schools, including the local secondary school and its feeder primary schools. Delivery of the project is undertaken by Hampshire-based organisation Fit2Cook, who provide a varied programme of in-school activities relating to local food and cookery.

This particular project will involve a series of in-school workshops for selected pupils from each school. In the workshops pupils will learn all about locally produced, seasonal food and will have a go at preparing various recipes using the ingredients. The project will also involve professional development sessions for teachers whereby teachers will be given the tools they need to deliver their own classroom-based activities, benefiting not only current pupils but pupils in years



to come. The third stage of the project will involve each school visiting a local farm and learning how the ingredients they have cooked with were produced and processed in order to get to their plates. It is intended that the schools will maintain links with their local farms and continue the programme of activities in coming years.

For more information please visit [www.countrylearning.org.uk](http://www.countrylearning.org.uk) or email [jbritton@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:jbritton@sparsholt.ac.uk)

## Visit... SHOWS AND EVENTS

### 'We grow it, you eat it! by Norfolk Farmers'

There is great value in visiting shows and events where lots of learning opportunities are available, all in one place. To help teachers address the Year of Food and Farming initiative, the Royal Norfolk Show will host an exciting and stimulating exhibition called 'We grow it, you eat it! by Norfolk Farmers' as part of a series of Key Stage 2 school trails at the 2008 Royal Norfolk Show.

The exhibition will help children to understand and appreciate where their food comes from and the processes involved by demonstrating the process of food production from field to plate. It will also help them to understand the value of buying local produce, and will show the range and variety of produce for which Norfolk farmers are responsible.

Livestock, crops of vegetables, fruits and end produce will be displayed, and interactive activities will help children to identify



In addition to the main exhibition, there will be a display of machinery used in the production of crops, followed by motorised, racing baked potatoes and sausages!

different food items in each category. Schools taking part in the trails will be offered a free CD of teaching materials after the Show.

For further details please contact Linda Rose on **01603 731966** or email [linda@royalnorfolkshow.co.uk](mailto:linda@royalnorfolkshow.co.uk)

# Visit... A FARM

## FIT is fun!

Working farms are great places for children to learn where and how food is grown and to see the cycle of growth and harvest. FIT (Farmers-In-Training) workshops at the Magdalen Project, an education centre based on an organic farm in Dorset, are designed to help children celebrate farming, gain a deeper knowledge about farming practices and to experience real-life farming by carrying out day-to-day jobs on the farm.

The activities are diverse and include:

### Scarecrow Making

All good Farmers-In-Training need to know how to make a scarecrow to prevent their crops from being eaten by birds and other creatures.

### Green and Growing

Learning how organic and non-organic food is grown, tasting different vegetables and fruits, and discussing the problems faced by modern-day farmers.

### Happy Harvesting

The vegetable box scheme at Magdalen supplies locals with fresh, seasonal vegetables, and Happy Harvesting allows the children to harvest vegetables for their own vegetable box. Guessing what the different crops are, seeing who pulls the biggest carrot, and discovering what vegetable is growing underneath the ground when you pull on the leaves brings a sense of wonder to the children as they explore the vegetable patch.

Certificates are given to individuals or groups who show the most achievement, enthusiasm and participation during the day, for passing FIT and showing promise of being a Fantastic Future Farmer.

For more information telephone **01460 30144** or visit [www.themagdalenproject.org.uk](http://www.themagdalenproject.org.uk)



ABOVE: **The tractor spinning out the potatoes**

BELOW: **Children helping with the potato harvest**



BELOW: **18 children filled 16 sacks of potatoes in 45 minutes!**



## Munch Bunch

A firm favourite! After all the hard work learning about vegetables and harvesting, the groups bring their vegetable box to the open fire and cook a few dishes outside, and of course, eat them!

Favourites on the menu include healthy chips, made by frying sliced potatoes, onions, leeks, courgettes, and



anything else found in the garden, with fresh herbs. 'Pink chips' are another popular dish, whereby adding beetroot turns the potatoes pink! As well as learning how to prepare and cook food, the children discuss topics such as food miles (or in the case of their meal, food metres), packaging and the journey of vegetables from farms to forks. None of the food the children have harvested has entered a building, been transported by vehicles, been sprayed with chemicals, or been farmed by unfairly paid, exploited workers.

## Farm Tour

By taking tours around the farm, groups can observe farming practices. When meeting and feeding the animals, the children learn about their diet, the type of shelter they need, and work out what types of meat we get from the different animals. Adventures in the polytunnels allow the children to work out the purpose and importance of the polytunnels, how the crops are watered and how they grow, i.e. tomatoes growing above the soil and supported by canes, lettuce growing close to the ground on the soil, and carrots growing underneath the ground in the soil. Looking at machinery, children work out what it is used for, at what time of the year, and why.

# Resources

There are many organisations which can help you by providing useful resources:

## Say cheese!

The British Cheese Board has produced a wealth of exciting primary resource materials exploring cheese in a number of contexts within the National Curriculum, and at the same time reminding schools of the nutritional value of cheese in a balanced and healthy diet.



The family of packs comprises 'Say Cheese Science', 'Say Cheese Design and Technology', 'Choose Cheese Geography', 'Choose Cheese PSHE/Citizenship' and, specifically for the Foundation Stage, 'All about Cheese'. All five packs provide a wealth of creative, fun activities and comprehensive background information for teachers. Colourful A2 posters are included, and the Foundation Stage pack comes with six A4 colour sequencing cards.

'Say Cheese Science' and 'Say Cheese Design and Technology' are currently out of stock but are available to download from [www.britishcheese.com](http://www.britishcheese.com) The other packs are available to order from [magenta@edist.co.uk](mailto:magenta@edist.co.uk)

Image supplied with the kind permission of the British Cheese Board

## Health related fitness

A balanced diet is an important part of a healthy lifestyle but to be truly healthy children need to exercise regularly too. Research has shown that children who enjoy physical activity at an early age are more likely to remain physically active as they grow up, and to reap the benefit throughout their lives. Dairy UK and the Milk Development Council have joined together to produce 'A Teacher's Guide to Health Related Fitness at Key Stage 1', to help primary school teachers ensure that their PE lessons offer pupils activities suitable for their age range.

The resource provides extensive background information, lesson plans and practical tips and is written with specific reference to KS1 pupils. It covers cardio vascular fitness, cardio respiratory fitness, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility and mental health. The pack also includes an INSET video and three colourful posters.

To request a FREE copy email [magenta@edist.co.uk](mailto:magenta@edist.co.uk) To find out more about other free resources available from the Milk Development Council visit [www.schoolmilk.co.uk](http://www.schoolmilk.co.uk)

## The Grain Chain

A new user-friendly multimedia resource called The Grain Chain ([www.grainchain.com](http://www.grainchain.com)) offers children aged 5-16 a fun way to learn about healthy eating and gives an insight into the 'field to fork' cycle of how wheat is grown and used to produce breads and cereals.

It offers visual, up-to-date materials including activity sheets, games and quizzes which cover the key topics of arable farming, milling, cooking and nutrition. Teachers are offered the benefits of interactive white board activities as an additional classroom resource plus a dedicated teachers' section which includes detailed lesson plans and curriculum information.

There are a range of easy recipes with clear explanations, ranging from breakfast to healthy treats and party food. The recipes are in line with current healthy eating guidelines.

The Grain Chain is a joint venture between the Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA), the Federation of Bakers (FoB) and the Flour Advisory Bureau (FAB).

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## In the next issue...

**EXPLORING... the food chain**

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