

PRESS RELEASE  
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## Young children “chick” out poultry farm! *The Country Trust organise first poultry farm visit for local primary school.*

Year 4 children from Mile Cross Primary School, Norfolk got a rare opportunity to see behind the scenes at a working poultry farm on **Monday 21 March 2016**. They visited a Traditional Norfolk Poultry Farm in Hingham, near Norwich, where the children learnt about different breeds of chickens and turkeys and how they are cared for and reared to provide us with high quality food. On the first day of spring they also had the opportunity to feed and handle four-day old chicks. The visit has been organised by leading national education charity, The Country Trust, in partnership with Traditional Norfolk Poultry who grow and process free range and organic chickens and turkeys on 50 farms across the region.

Visits to real working farms are at the heart of the Country Trust’s year-long Food Discovery programme running at Mile Cross and in other East Anglian primary schools. Children learn how to grow and cook their own food and then see food production on a commercial scale on farms. At the poultry farm, Mile Cross children learnt first-hand about the lifecycle of chickens, part of their national curriculum studies. Jackie Harris, Teacher at Mile Cross Primary School says *“We know how important it is to give children the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom. This was an amazing opportunity for the children to see how some of the chicken we buy in supermarkets or in readymade meals is produced, and the time and effort it takes. They were able to meet those who rear the birds and run the business which builds their confidence and opens their eyes to possibilities for the future.”*

This is the first time The Country Trust has worked with Traditional Norfolk Poultry to host a farm visit. Country Trust Co-ordinators Sally Hetherington-Aherne and Mell Harrison, have been working hard with the team at TNP to ensure the visit was a huge success, planning every aspect of the visit from health and safety and biosecurity to the different activities the children got involved with. Sally says *“The farm was terrific and provided a unique experience for the children, none of whom had ever visited a poultry farm before. Mark, the farmer, not only took the welfare of his poultry very seriously but also ensured the health and safety of the children was paramount too. The children had the opportunity to ask lots of questions to understand more about where the chicken they love to eat comes from. We really hope that this is the first of many visits for Norfolk children”.*

During the course of the morning the children also made enrichment toys for the chickens in order to provide stimulus and interest for the birds. The toys were made from a variety of material including recycled bottles, cds and bottle tops. TNP’s Poultry Welfare Officer, Jane Codling has promised to keep the children informed about which toys are the most popular with the chickens.

Hannah Morter Agriculture Coordinator at Traditional Norfolk Poultry says *“We are really excited to be working with The Country Trust and showing our work first-hand to the next generation of possible consumers. Who knows, we may even have inspired some children to want to work in the industry themselves one day! We endeavour to create a natural environment for our birds, close to that enjoyed by their forest dwelling ancestors and we’re proud to show this to the children.*

If you would like to know more about the work of The Country Trust or become a supporter, please go to [www.countrytrust.org.uk](http://www.countrytrust.org.uk)

-Ends-

## Editors' notes

The visit took place:

**Date:** Monday 21 March 2016 **Time:** 9.00-12noon  
Frostrow Farm, Brazier Road, Norwich

For more information, please contact Sally Hetherington-Aherne on [shetheringtonaherne@countrytrust.org.uk](mailto:shetheringtonaherne@countrytrust.org.uk) or call 07929 342804

## About The Country Trust

- Founded in 1978, The Country Trust is the leading national educational charity that brings the working countryside alive for those children least able to access it, whether through disadvantage or disability. Every year we support hundreds of volunteer farmers and landowners to welcome thousands of disadvantaged children from all backgrounds and faiths onto their farms.
- The Country Trust has 3 main strands of activities:
  1. Farm Discovery - day visits to real working farms
  2. Countryside Discovery - residential visits to the countryside
  3. Food Discovery - yearlong programmes exploring every aspect of growing, cooking and even selling food
- The Country Trust focuses on working with the following:
  - Primary age children from schools with an above average percentage of children eligible for Free School Meals
  - Schools catering for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
  - Looked After Children and Pupil Referral Units
- In 2015 The Country Trust enabled
  - 17,961 children to go on a farm or estate visit
  - 6,600 children took part in farm led assemblies and food and farming workshops
  - 860 children took part in Food Discovery Programmes
  - 883 children went on 29 Residential visits
  - 415 children with Special Educational Needs took part in Countryside Adventure days in Hampshire.
- The Country Trust currently works with schools in and around London, East Anglia, Hampshire, Birmingham and the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, the North West, North Wales and Northumberland.

## What we do

- We make it easy and safe for children to visit farms and for farmers to share their knowledge and passion.
- We bring urban and rural communities together, increasing communication, respect and understanding of the countryside as a place of possibilities but also a place on which livelihoods depend.
- We facilitate children's cultural understanding about the life and work of the British countryside through visits and talking with those who live and work there.
- We enable children to experience the wonder of the countryside:- open space, breathing space, the people who live and work there, habitats, farm animals and wildlife.
- We enable children to understand the possibilities of food, what a variety there is, why and how it grows, who grows it and where, what it tastes like, why all this matters.
- We introduce adult role models who nurture and take responsibility for crops and animals. People who often work in strong family units.
- We bring two interdependent but disconnected communities together for a stronger future. Our school community includes many urban children and a significant number of children from ethnic minorities.
- We can help schools to meet the new Ofsted common inspection framework which now includes a judgement on 'personal development, behaviour and welfare'. Ofsted states that the first-hand experiences of learning outside the classroom can help to make subjects more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding. It can also contribute significantly to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

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