

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE
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Farm visit in a CLAAS of its own!
The Country Trust organise primary school visit to farm machinery supplier and local farm.

24 children from Years 3 and 4 at Whitehouse Primary School, Ipswich will get an action-packed visit to one of the leading international agricultural machinery manufacturers as well as a real working farm on **Friday 22 April 2016**.

The visit, organised by national education charity The Country Trust, is the first by the charity to take children to agricultural machinery manufacturer CLAAS UK based in Saxham, near Bury St Edmunds. The children will be able to get up-close to a range of impressive farm machinery that they would usually only ever see in books or on television, including climbing aboard a massive combine harvester.

Lynn Chilvers, Sales Promotion Manager at CLAAS UK and her colleagues will explain to the children how the company was set up and its relevance to farming, this will be followed by a number of interactive activities throughout the morning. Lynn says *"I'm really looking forward to showing the children what we do at CLAAS UK and helping them to understand how important farm machinery is to food production. Our machinery draws on the latest technology and really is impressive. We want to attract bright, inquisitive minds into agriculture and visits like this can inspire the next generation to want a career in farming and its associated businesses."*

Some of the activities planned for the children will include carrying out a combine technique where they will learn how to thresh wheat by hand, have a go at grinding wheat to make flour and even learn about the mechanics of the combine.

After lunch the children will visit Symonds Farm, which is right next to CLAAS UK's premises in Saxham. Farmer George Gittus will show the children around the farm where they will be introduced to some of the animals and learn about the farm's biomass generator and what it does. Visits to real working farms are at the heart of The Country Trust's year-long Food Discovery programme running at Whitehouse and other East Anglian primary schools. Through the programme children learn how to grow and cook their own food as well as learn how food is produced on a commercial scale.

Jacqui Frost, Head teacher at Whitehouse Primary School says *"The children are very excited by this visit and really looking forward to seeing tractors and sitting in a real combine harvester. This is the second year we have worked with The Country Trust and the school have had several farm visits as part of our Food Discovery programme. They never fail to inspire and teach the children things that they would not normally relate to in a classroom. Learning about food, farming and the countryside is vital to the school's curriculum."*

The Country Trust is very pleased to be working with both Symonds Farm and CLAAS UK. Country Trust Co-ordinator Sally Hetherington-Aherne has been working hard to ensure all aspects of the visit will benefit everyone concerned including both businesses and of course the children, teachers and school. Sally says *"This will be an amazing opportunity for the children to understand what is involved in modern farming techniques and learn how the food they see in the supermarket gets there. The visit is quite unique too in that the children will be able to make a direct connection between the farm machinery they see at CLAAS UK and how it might be used on a farm like Symonds Farm"*.

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

-Ends-

Editors' notes

The visit will take place:

Date: Friday 22 April 2016 **Time:** 11.30-2.30pm
MANNNS, Saxham, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 6QZ

For more information, please contact Sally Hetherington-Aherne on 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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