

Spring Marches On....26 March 2012

Discovering Our Countryside provides a clear, interesting and informative picture of the important role of agriculture and rural affairs in the lives of pupils from an early age, the films and commentaries have been developed specifically to enhance the work that you are doing in your own classrooms.

These are the scripts and associated teaching links and notes for the program of 26 January 2012.

Teaching links.

Below are this program's specific links to:

- National Curriculum
- The 9 Eco School topics.
- National Government initiatives:
 - Healthy Schools
 - Sustainable Schools
 - Every Child Matters
 - Learning Outside the Classroom
- Thinking Skills.

Note on National Curriculum links

The National Curriculum subjects and the units from the QCA schemes of work. (Rather than list each specific National Curriculum objective we have simply listed the QCA Units as these are already linked to the National Curriculum and are generally what schools reference when planning work.)

These will allow you to easily link each program into your existing work.

The programs can also be used to promote interaction by children in pairs and groups, circle time or class discussion, encouraging learning through discussion and interaction

Discovering Our Countryside is a modular approach to rural affairs - we hope you and your pupils will look forward to each new episode as it paints the picture of the rural environment and it's seasonality.

Specific links for this weeks program sections:

The ides of March are upon us!

Confession time – I have heard this saying lots of times without knowing what it meant, when I looked it up and found it meant the middle or 15th of March it seemed ideal for this program

Details of this program

This program looks at the mid-March seasonal happenings – in the countryside, and down on the farm.

- **Calving** – We finally manage to capture some cows calving on film – full graphic details so beware! We show how soon a newborn calf is up and suckling it's mother's milk and also how the farmer's jobs and responsibilities for this calf start from day 1
- **Sowing and harvesting** – Whilst farmers are busy sowing crops such as peas and wheat in the fields, growers are already harvesting some of the crops like cucumbers, which are grown under glass.

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- **Birds Courting** – Wildlife is now bounding into spring with frogs and toads mating and producing spawn, birds are already courting to find mates and produce eggs. Also a timely reminder about dogs and the ‘Countryside Code’ during this important time for both wildlife and newborn calves and lambs

These sections can also be found on the relevant topic page, which over the weeks will build up the seasonality picture for each of the main themes: Crops / Arable; Livestock; Wildlife and the Countryside

NATIONAL CURRICULUM SUBJECTS LINKS.

Citizenship KS 1 + 2

E.g. Shows how farmers look after animals and prepare them for having young

Relevant QCA Schemes of Work

Unit 3 Animals and Us

Design and Technology KS 1 + 2

Looks at growing crops in greenhouse to extend the growing period and provide fresh 5-a-day produce

Relevant QCA Schemes of Work

Unit 1c Eat More Fruit and Vegetables

Science KS 1 + 2

The videos have lots of science links to the units listed below for example:

Shows plants life cycles and what parts of a plant we use and harvest.

Some of machinery could be used to discuss pushes and pulls.

Relevant QCA Schemes of Work

Unit 1B. Growing plants.

Unit 1E Pushes and Pulls.

Unit 2A Health and Grow.

Unit 2B Plants and Animals.

Unit 3B. Helping plants grow well.

Unit 4B Habitats.

Unit 5B. Life cycles.

Unit 6A Interdependence and adaptation.

ECO SCHOOL TOPIC LINKS

Showing pupils just which of their food products are grown in this country will give them important background knowledge when discussing transport, energy and global perspective of food production and the healthy living choices they make when they go to the shops.

- Transport
- Healthy Living
- Energy

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- Global Perspective
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity

TEACHERS NOTES:

SPRING MARCHES ON - SCRIPT

INTRO

Spring Marches on

Sowing...

Calving

Courting

CALVING.

Catching a cow calving was much more difficult than we had expected - but as our farmer Mr Rook said although I was a farmer and not 'afraid' of the cows which they do sense; I am not their farmer so they are still wary of me and will not necessarily settle and calve when I am about!

We turned up several times of day and night to have just missed a calf being born

One time we arrived when a cow had just had 1 calf, we saw the feet of another poking out, just like this, she was having twins, by the time we had grabbed our camera – less than a minute, she had had her second calf – missed again

We saw a heifer starting to have her first calf ever – but she did not want to be filmed so turned away from the camera – so again we missed the actual birth..

Here's the heifer's calf only a few seconds old...

Finally we did get there just in time to see a calf being born – Mr Rook quickly steps in to make sure that the calf is ok

And like all the newborn calves we saw it was quickly up on it's feet and enjoying it's first taste of mothers milk

Within a few hours of being born Mr Rook must tag the calf and allocate it a passport so that this calf can be traced throughout it's life

Mr Rook also puts iodine on the calf's navel (belly button) this is how it was attached to it's mother when in her womb.

Until the navel dries and heals the calf could absorb bacteria the same as it did food in it's mother's womb. This could lead to infection and even death for the calf

So just to make sure the end of a years work is not lost Mr Rook also gives the calf an injection of antibiotic to make sure no infection can start

We will come back a see the calves being let out for the first time and grow during the summer

SOWING AND HARVESTING...

Farmers are now finishing preparing the land for planting spring crops

Spreading organic manure from animals to make the soil better for crops,

Ploughing manure and any remains of the previous crops in

Birds like seagulls often come to eat the insects disturbed by the plough

The land is being worked and broken down into smaller lumps - called a tilth, to make a seedbed

Crops like wheat or these peas will then be sown

The tractors will have extra dual wheels or tracks so they do not tread the soil down.

They may also have sat-nav to keep them in straight lines

This machine is a seed drill - it is placing pea seeds in the ground and then covering them with soil

We will follow these crops through the growing season

Whilst the crops grown in fields are very small or just being planted some of those grown in greenhouses are already being harvested

The cucumber pickers are very skilled and can pick them to a specific weight...

COURTING BIRDS

Now we are officially in Spring the whole countryside is very busy

The hedgerows and woods are coming to life,

ladybirds and bees are coming out of hibernation

The daffodil and bluebell shoots we saw earlier are now in flower

Frogs and toads are now breeding and producing spawn - have you looked in your home or school ponds. Be careful don't fall in!

Birds are busy 'courting' mates this means the males showing off to the females "Look how fit and healthy I am, I would make a great dad" they might be saying

Just like this male 'cock' pheasant he has produced magnificently coloured feathers to show off, he puffs these out to make sure the female 'hen' pheasants notice him

Just to make sure he also does this display and call which also tells other cock pheasants "stay away from this area this is my territory".....

If 2 males meet they may fight - or at least have a staring competition

Just like these 2 - these often end with no winner, but both males claim the victory!!!!

Cock pheasants usually attract several females to their territory and will mate with up to a dozen females.

Once mated the females build and nest on the ground and may lay a dozen or more eggs.

So it is very important that if you are walking your dog in the countryside in spring that you follow the "Countryside Code" and keep your dog on a lead otherwise it will scare pheasants and other ground nesting birds off their nest so the eggs will go cold and not hatch

'Wild' uncontrolled dogs can also be a menace to lambs and calves and farmers are within their rights to shoot any dogs running wild in fields with young animals in - make sure you are responsible when walking your dogs, unlike some people!!!!