

The Almond Valley Heritage Trust

RISK ASSESSMENT

For School and Group Visits to Livingston Mill Farm at Almond Valley Heritage Centre

Significant Hazards

- Animal bites
- New or old wounds becoming infected
- Picking up germs from animals
- Transfer of disease to pregnant women from sheep and lambs (Enzootic Abortion)
- Farm machinery
- Hay fever, asthma and allergies to animals
- Ponds and mill lade
- Touching or ingesting chemicals or animal treatments
- Climbing on gates/fences and leaving gates open
- Dangerous animals/ escaped animals
- Animal waste areas/Dung heaps
- Fire

Existing Control Measures – How to minimise the risk

- Hand Washing. The risk of catching most germs on farms can be eliminated by good hygiene. Hands must be thoroughly washed with antibacterial soap and warm water, and then dried with a paper towel. Signs remind visitors to wash their hands immediately after touching animals, and this message is reinforced during handling sessions. There are hand-washing facilities with antibacterial soap in the toilet blocks and at trough sinks in various parts of the farm. Teachers or group leaders are responsible for ensuring that children wash their hands thoroughly.
- Eating. Food should only be eaten in designated areas i.e. the picnic barn or picnic areas. Staff should discourage visitors from eating in areas close to animals.
- Feeding the animals. Children are not encouraged to feed the animals unless supervised by a demonstrator.
- Cuts and Scratches. These should be cleaned thoroughly and covered up immediately. Old wounds should also be covered. First aid facilities are available at reception.
- Pregnant Women. If you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant you should stay away from any pregnant ewes and lambs. This is to avoid the transfer of micro-organisms that can cause illness. Signs should be present at lambing times.
- Tools, Equipment and Farm Machinery. These should all be stored away from public areas but could be around whilst in use. Visitors should be advised never to touch these nor climb onto a farm vehicle without invitation by a member of farm staff.
- Ponds and watercourses. The mill lade and other watercourses in the centre of the site are protected by fences, but the lower pond and lade remain unfenced to allow pond-dipping and other nature studies. The margins of these watercourses are mown, but those in charge of younger children must remain vigilant and not leave children unsupervised in these areas
- Chemicals and Animal Treatments. These should all be locked away and in areas not accessible to the public. Children should be warned not to touch any items that are being used by farm staff to treat an animal in front of the public.

- Fire. There are many flammable substances on farms. Use of matches should be restricted and no smoking signs strictly observed. In case of fire, please sound the alarm, evacuate the buildings, call 999 or alert a member of staff and assemble in an open area as directed
- Contact with Animals. Animals should be approached quietly and carefully and treated with respect. They should only be handled when farm staff give permission to do so. If an animal escapes, please do not approach it, alert a member of farm staff.
- Tractor and Trailer Rides. This ride is given along a farm track using a specially designed passenger trailer. Children must be accompanied by teachers or group leaders, and visitors should remain seated whilst the tractor is moving.
- Animal Paddocks and Pens. Children will normally not be allowed to enter animal pens where animal faeces are on the ground. Accidents can occasionally happen elsewhere however, eg when cows are brought in for milking. If a visitor gets faeces on their footwear, inform a demonstrator and they will direct you to an area where boots and shoes can be brushed or hosed down.
- Milking Demonstrations. Visitors should remain at an appropriate distance to the cattle unless invited by the farm staff to participate. They should not attempt to dip their fingers into or taste the milk from the bucket.

Assessment carried out by Dr. Robin Chesters

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