

# SEA MERE FARM, HINGHAM

## TEACHERS' INFORMATION PACK

### Welcome

Thank you for your interest in visiting Sea Mere. We hope that the experience will give your pupils inspiration and information. The visit allows pupils to see for themselves how the countryside is managed increasingly for the benefit of wildlife and to encourage diversity.

This visit can be used to teach all aspects of the curriculum through learning about the countryside. We hope that this information pack will give you ideas to inspire your pupils and get the most out of your visit.

We welcome children of all ages and can accommodate group sizes from 10 to 30. We hope this pack will help you prepare a successful programme tailored to suit the needs of your group.

### Farm information

Farm name: Sea Mere Farm  
Farm address: Seamere Road, Hingham,  
Norwich, NR9 4LP  
Contact: Judy Watson  
Telephone number: 01953 850217  
Email: [judywatson@seamere.com](mailto:judywatson@seamere.com)  
Website address: [www.seamere.com](http://www.seamere.com)

### Farm Description

Sea Mere Farm covers around 300 acres. Until 2008 160 acres of the farm were arable, but since entering into a **Higher Level Environmental Stewardship Agreement** only around 100 acres are still used for arable crop production – wheat, barley, oil seed rape and sugar beet. A similar area is under grass, some grazed and some growing wild flowers to further encourage insects and birds. These wildflower meadows are a spectacular sight in summer.

The farm includes a large area of **woodland**, some of which surrounds the Seamere – a natural 20 acre circular lake (known as a kettle sink hole – see below). The woodland is managed in accordance with our Stewardship agreement with an emphasis on habitat improvement. It is not a commercial woodland.

The final part of the farm is an area of **marshland**, formerly used for turf cutting by the residents of Hingham. It is a damp habitat and grazed for part of the year.

The **Higher Level Environmental Stewardship** scheme aims to improve diversity on the farm and to encourage wildlife, particularly species that are under threat. To achieve these objectives Environmental Stewardship works to restore and improve the natural landscape making it more attractive to both humans and animals. For instance, under the Agreement some previously arable fields are reverting to natural wildflower meadows, other areas are planted to provide wild birds with food during the winter, in other areas the grass is allowed to grow long to provide nesting habitats for other birds, and so on. Visitors to the farm will see unclipped hedges, bat boxes in many places, retained stubble, grass cut to different lengths and glades opened in formerly dense woodland.

**Educational visits** to the farm are financed under the Agreement so **there is no charge for school groups**.

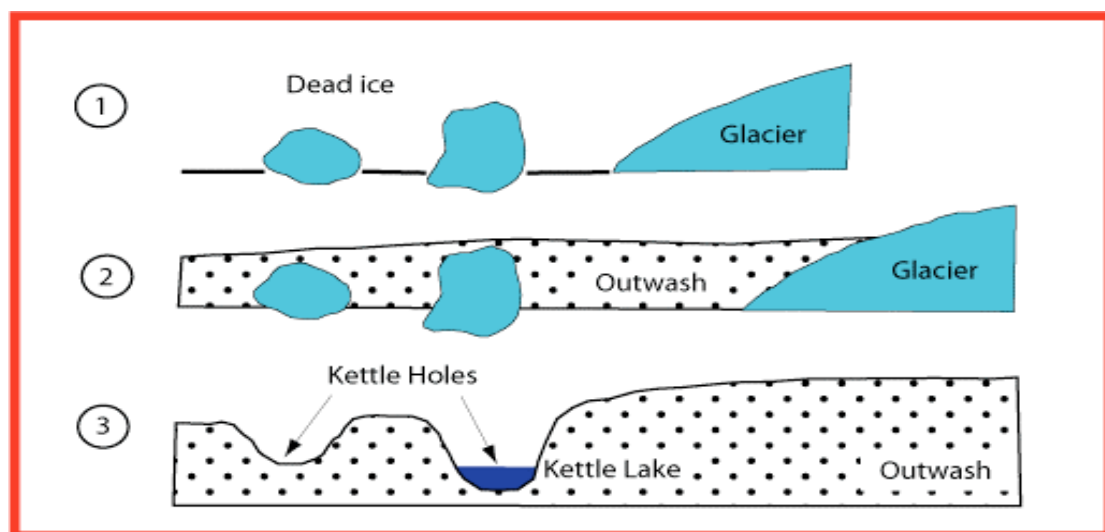
### Seamere Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The mere, turf meadows and woodland surrounding the mere form the Sea Mere SSSI – see [www.english-nature.org.uk/special/sssi/unitlist.cfm?sssi\\_id=1003834](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/sssi/unitlist.cfm?sssi_id=1003834)

The opportunities for study by schoolchildren and other groups are immense and range from the study of the plant and animal life living at Sea Mere to art and landscape history.

### Seamere Kettle Sink Hole

A kettle hole is formed by blocks of ice that are separated from the main glacier during the Holocene period approximately 10,000 years ago. If conditions are right, the isolated blocks of ice then become partially or wholly buried in outwash. When the ice blocks eventually melt they leave behind holes or depressions that fill with water to become kettle hole lakes. Many kettles have been infilled with sediments, especially peat, during the Holocene.



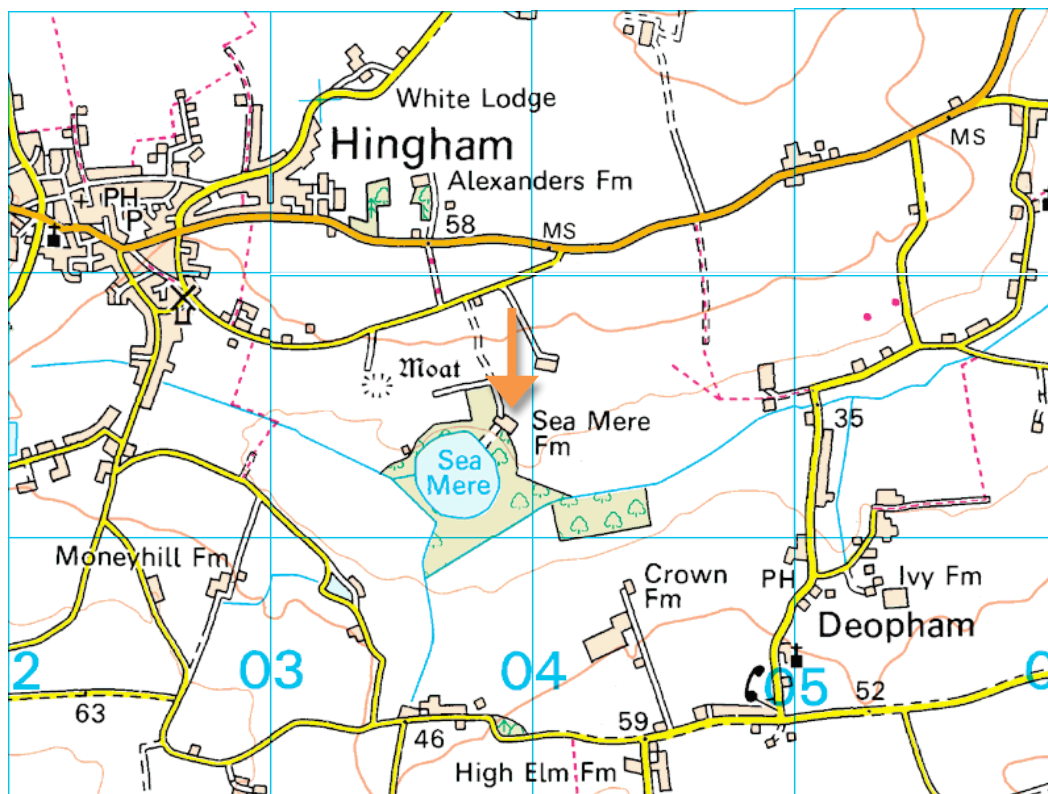
## How to find us

From **Hingham centre** take the B1108 direction Norwich. One mile outside Hingham, turn right into Seamere Road. Once in Seamere Road, take the second drive on the left which will take you to the farm.

From **Norwich**: take the B1108 direction Watton from the City. Exactly 2 miles after the Kimberley level crossing, turn left into Seamere Road, then take the second drive on the left, as above.

From the **A11**: leave the A11 at the Breckland Lodge roundabout, taking the exit marked Gravel Pits. Carry on through Gt Ellingham, turn left and immediately right at the far end of the village (Hingham Road), then carry on into the centre of Hingham. Then follow directions as from Hingham centre.

If using **Sat Nav**, postcode NR9 4LP will take you down the first drive off Seamere Road, so carry on past it for a hundred yards and take the second turning.



## Booking a Visit

In the first instance, please telephone the farm or send an email to [judywatson@seamere.com](mailto:judywatson@seamere.com). Visits are free but you will need to organise and pay for transport. We will send a confirmation email once a date has been agreed. Visits should last no more than three hours.

# Before Arrival

## Risk assessment

If you have not visited Sea Mere before we recommend a pre-visit to our farm, during which you can carry out a risk assessment and become familiar with the site. Any specific requirements or needs of the visiting group can be discussed.

## Health & safety

We comply with Health and Safety Regulations and hold public liability insurance. However it is important that all pupils and supervising adults are aware of the correct Health and Safety guidelines.

The Health & Safety Executive has produced guidelines, HSE sheet AIS23 – Avoiding ill health at open farms – Advice to farmers. The supplement to AIS23 advises teachers and others who organise farm visits on controlling the risk of infection from animals which the pupils may have contact with during their visit.

All wild animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans, causing ill health. While the hazard from infection resulting from a farm visit is real, the risk can be readily controlled by following sensible steps which will help make your visit safe, healthy and enjoyable.

Please make sure that the pupils always wash their hands thoroughly before and after eating, and after any contact with animals.

## Preparation checklist for pupils and supervisors

1. Decide what the **ratio of pupils to teachers/assistants/parents** should be, using advice from your local authority.

As a general rule, the ratio of supervisors to pupils should be  
1:4 for pupils between 3 and 5 years old.  
1:8 for those between 5 and 8 years old.  
1:10-15 for those between 9 and 11 years old.  
1:15-20 for pupils from 12 years old and above.

These are examples only and group leaders should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group.

2. Discuss with the supervisors, who may be parents, teaching assistants or staff of the school, **their role** during the visit. They must understand the need to make sure that pupils wash, or are helped to wash, their hands thoroughly after contact with animals.

3. Teachers will be expected to learn from the day so that follow up work can be done. It should not be necessary, though often is, to emphasise that this is not a 'jolly' for the accompanying staff.
4. Discuss with pupils the rules for the visit.
5. Check that cuts, grazes, etc. on pupil's hands are covered with a waterproof dressing.

### **Clothing**

Make sure that pupils wear appropriate clothing, including Wellington boots which must be removed when pupils are in the classroom.

### **Behaviour**

Teachers/group leaders are responsible for the pupil's behaviour throughout the visit. Pupils should understand and always follow the Countryside Code (see end). They must listen carefully, and follow the instructions and information given by us.

### **On arrival**

We can accept coaches, which can park in the farm yard, turning left in front of the house. However we would like advance warning if you are coming in one large coach so that we can make sure the farmyard is clear.

You will be met by Judy or Michael Watson (the owners), and Rory Hart who will be the tutor for your group.

### **Facilities**

Study Centre with a heated classroom, small kitchen, lobby for boots and coats, and two toilets with sinks for hand washing. If the weather is fine and it is appropriate for your group to have lunch at the farm, informal seating on logs can be arranged in the dutch barn.

### **Evaluation Form**

This visit is provided free of charge. In order for us to be able to claim a payment as part of our Higher Level Stewardship agreement we require that you complete an evaluation form which we will provide. Please take a few moments to complete this form after the visit and hand it to us before you leave. Additional feedback regarding the visit is also appreciated. Thank you.

# The Countryside Classroom

## What is Farming?

Farming is the age-old practice of producing crops and livestock for food, fuel and fibre. Modern agriculture is a highly competitive global industry. The UK produces 70% of the food we eat, the rest coming from other parts of the world. It is the first link in a sophisticated chain to prepare and process our food before we buy it in the shops. What a farmer grows depends on individual circumstances such as location, weather conditions, size of the farm, history of the area and market forces.

Farming has created the landscape that we see. It is the hedges and walls that divide fields that give the landscape its pattern, along with areas of trees and the colours of different crops. By carrying out activities such as cutting hedges and planting trees, farmers are helping to look after much of the wildlife in the countryside.

Many farmers also now operate broader enterprises to include leisure activities and environmental management. Defra provides advice and funding through agri-environment schemes to encourage farmers to follow farming methods that enhance the landscape, encourage wildlife, protect resources, archaeological and historic features, and improve opportunities for enjoying the countryside by providing access. By conserving our countryside in this way we also play our part in the international agreement to maintain the natural diversity of animals and plants throughout the world. The countryside offers an invaluable teaching resource.

Please note that we regularly update this Teachers Information Pack. It would be greatly appreciated if following your visit you pass to us any lesson plans, activity ideas or worksheets that you have used successfully during your visit, so that they can be incorporated into our pack if appropriate.

## Learning opportunities

Management of a Site of Special Scientific Interest

Management of woodland and wet habitats

Woodland management

Wildlife conservation

Horticulture

Wildflower meadows

Habitat creation for birds, mammals, insects and invertebrates

Pond dipping

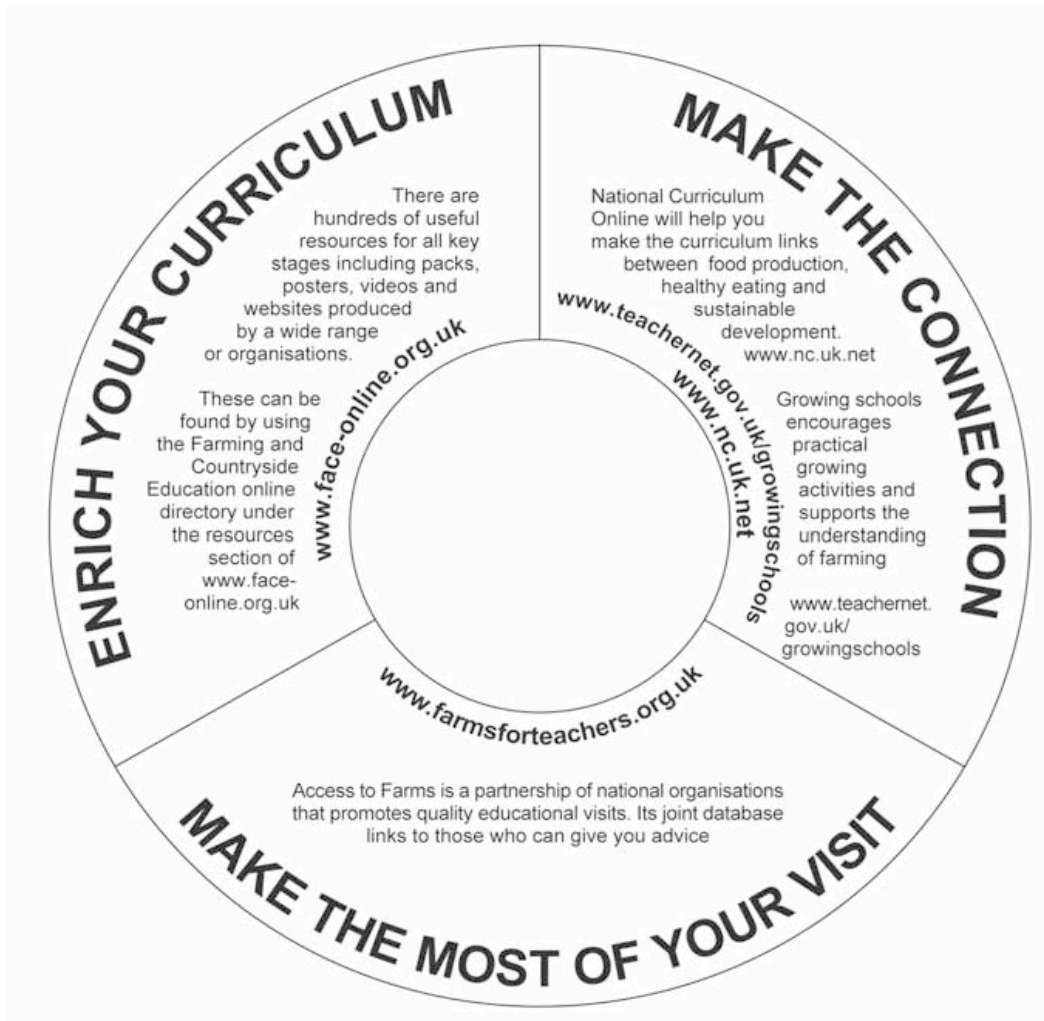
Collection of seeds

Discovery of creatures that live in different habitats – wet, dark, dry etc

Legal wildlife activities

Butterfly and moth identification

At appropriate times of year take something back to school for further study – frogspawn, planted acorns, collection of found objects.



## Links to the National Curriculum

At **Key Stage 1** the farm visit can widen the pupils' first-hand experience in a whole range of visual, tactile and other sensory situations. Within this are the important messages of the life cycle and seasonal change. There is a wealth of opportunity for language development and literacy skills.

At **Key Stage 2** the visit can stimulate and excite pupils' curiosity. It also satisfies their curiosity as they begin to apply their knowledge and understanding of ideas. Pupils can consider the farm as a good example of an environment affected by human activity, think about attitudes to farming, the rural environment and the conflicts of interest that arise. They talk about their work and its significance and communicate their ideas using a wide range of language.

At **Key Stage 3** many different subject requirements can be satisfied. For example in history, the adaptation of farm buildings over the centuries can offer first-hand evidence of social and technological changes. This readily promotes the skills of handling and assessing. Pupils can investigate and debate a wide range of complex issues and begin to understand the environmental, social and economic implications.

## Further information

Copies of the AIS23 information sheet and supplement and other useful Health and Safety leaflets are available free from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA

**Tel: 01787 881165**

**Fax: 01787 313995**

Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk) ©HSE

## The Countryside Code

- *Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs*
- *Leave gates and property as you find them*
- *Protect plants and animals and take your litter home*
- *Keep dogs under close control*
- *Consider other people*

[www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)

Education packs are available from [countrysidecode@face-online.org.uk](mailto:countrysidecode@face-online.org.uk)

## Complaints procedure

If you have any complaints regarding your visit please inform us so that we are able to improve our service