

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR THE SALGOT ECO-FARM IN AIGUAFREDA

Hands-on learning visit for families and schools

1 Turning opportunities for first-hand experience into teaching aims

Pigs. Birth and feeding (from 4 to 7 years)

Observation and contemplation. How sows patiently suckle their piglets.

Newly born. The life impulse, movement, playfulness, strengthening, hygiene.

Freedom of movement without losing the bond with the mother sow.

All the same: piglets. And at the same time, they're already different: different colours, sizes, movements, expression...

Well fed with their mother's milk at first and then solid food, they start growing.

This is objective observation which the children can interiorise to become aware of their own life process. At the same time, they can describe it through language, which is thought.

When we were little, we suckled; as we grow up, we develop teeth to chew with, we strengthen the muscles of our mouths and eat more and more varied food, which we will get used to and will enjoy.



Stock farming and feeding on the farm (from 8 to 11 years)

Humans gradually domesticated certain animals.

Feeding on animal flesh provides proteins for growth. With domesticated animals and the farm, food doesn't depend on the uncertainties of the hunt.

The pig is a mammal with a high rate of reproduction (14 possible young, the sow has 14 teats) and two pregnancies a year and can live enclosed on a farm without going out to graze. In the West, pork has been preserved and seasoned so that it will keep all year round, especially in cold weather. When Catalonia's farming families were able to kill a pig they had been fattening up all year, they ensured a supply of meat and fat for the winter. Today, meat processors in Vic, Olot, Guissona and other places kill large numbers of pigs every day to provide fresh meat for the markets and for a wide range of preserved meats.



Producing healthy organic meat (from 12 to 14 years)

Pork has saved the Mediterranean and European peoples as far as Russia from starvation. The same goes for the Chinese. On the other hand, it has been rejected by Eastern peoples and is expressly forbidden for Jews and Muslims for a particular reason: trichinosis, a disease that is transmitted to humans. In very hot countries, pigs can't



live on farms and they eat everything, while in Europe they've been bred in enclosed farms. Today, pork has every guarantee for health. Breeding and slaughtering is controlled with vaccines and veterinary analyses of samples. Any sign of disease can be isolated and wiped out immediately. Nevertheless, overproduction creates problems; excessively long and distressing transport, excess concentration of liquid manure in the soil, excess toxins and increased cholesterol in humans... Some social groups, either by tradition or for religious reasons, never eat pork. There were reasons in the past and religious wisdom provided the rules. Nowadays there are no grounds for forbidding pork and religious or social rules must be redirected towards the present dangers: excess fat, bulimia or anorexia, addiction to alcohol or tobacco. Sustainable organic production is becoming established. Less quantity, more quality and proper treatment of the animals we sacrifice for our food. Regular intake of meat and preserves but in moderation, savouring rather than stuffing. Suitable environmental setting: climate, vegetation. The pig is a clean animal if it has enough room and water. It gets dirty if we make it live in cramped conditions surrounded by its own dung. Pork is always tenderer than the meat of other animals because of the proportion of fat it contains. Complementing it with the right vegetables favours absorption and digestion of both the meat and the vegetables. At all events, overweight and obesity must be avoided as these are unhealthy and difficult to reduce.

Animal reproduction and feeding (from 15 to 18 years)

Close observation of the pig's reproduction process on the farm. Menstrual cycle and ovulation, the action of pheromones, mating and artificial insemination. Breed selection and forecast of periods.

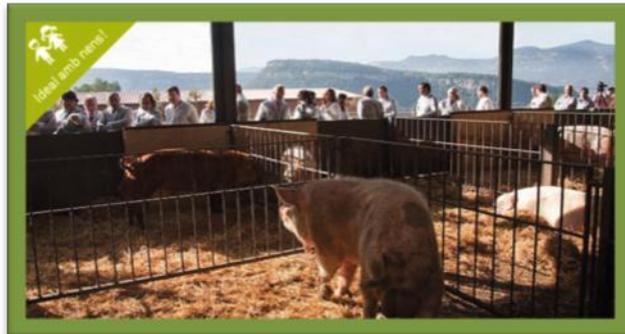
Natural bonding, suckling and weaning. Enriched feedstuff, growth and fattening period. Health checks. Measures to isolate external pollution. Departure for the abattoir. Demands of organic slaughtering.

Genetics applied to animal husbandry.

Technological possibilities, scientific knowledge and responsible ethics. Possibilities and limits.

Organ transplants for humans. Compatibility of pig's organs and viscera.

Environment: climate, vegetation, regeneration of altered sites (from quarry to organic farm to business with social responsibility). Sustainable: economic viability and limited growth (critical production).



2 References to school syllabuses in Catalonia

CONTENTS

- Observation, contemplation, data gathering, classification, establishing relations.
- Characteristics of the pig.
- Vital functions: nutrition, relation and reproduction.
- The life process: birth, growth, development, maturity and death.
- Feeding: from suckling to adult food. Food pyramid. A balanced diet.
- The primary sector: stock farming.
- The secondary sector: The food industry. Sustainable, responsible production.
- Ecosystems: the living being and its surroundings. Mediterranean woodland.
- Scientific progress: genetics applied to animal reproduction. Technological possibilities, scientific knowledge and responsible ethics. Possibilities and limits.
- Organ transplantation in humans. Compatibility of the pig's organs and viscera.

SKILLS / INFANT EDUCATION

- Progress in communication and expression suited to the usual different communication contexts and situations through different languages.
- Learning to discover and take the initiative.
- Observing and exploring the immediate natural and physical surroundings with an attitude of curiosity and respect and gradually taking part in social and cultural activities.

BASIC SKILLS / PRIMARY EDUCATION

- Linguistic communication skills.
- Social and citizen skills.
- Autonomy and independent personal initiative.
- Competence in knowledge and interaction with the physical world.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- To be specified by each school according to its specific teaching plan.
- Assessment criteria refer to:
 - The specific contents of the subject being studied.
 - Competences and skills relating to observation, knowledge and interpretation of the physical world and cultural diversity.
 - Competences and skills relating to expression, communication and the use of language.

3 Teaching guidelines:

The visit can be part of one of the subjects for study and learning included in the school syllabus or it can be an independent subject centred on work for projects or the work of synthesis and/or research.

Before the visit

Introduce the subject and motivate pupils through conversation with questions that stimulate reflection and questioning on knowledge and learning.

- Experience: what can we learn from what we know and what others know?
- Concept: what do we want to learn and what do we want to think about?
- Analysis: what relations do we propose establishing?
- Transfer: how will we apply and how will we share our learning?

This means raising interesting questions suited to the pupils' age, which children and young people will answer on the basis of their own experience even if their intuitions or ideas are a bit vague. Active listening by the teacher will allow an approximation to the needs and/or interests of the children and young people. A well guided and well intentioned conversation helps to bring out the main ideas and differentiate the important basic information from secondary or anecdotal information.

During the visit

The visit is an excellent opportunity to underline the importance of the field notebook and to introduce children and young people to this technique as a way of gathering information.

The field notebook is where different information about the excursion will be gathered. This information must be precise and concise; in other words, note down the main points with a single key word. Explanatory drawings can be included that help explain details such as a piglet's trotters or the bark of a tree. The drawings must be simple and as realistic as possible.

Once in class, the field notebook must be checked and the notes must be completed where necessary.

Pupils may also include photographs they themselves have taken on the visit, but the contents of the image must be explained in the caption.

After the visit

Subsequent elaboration in a work team (3-5 pupils) as soon as possible. Long conversation leading to a list of things we know and a list of conclusions for living life.

Individual write-up, one to five pages. Organisation of information, reflection.

For infants, this will be a drawing or photograph (preferably both) with a two-line explanation (spoken by the pupil, can be written by the teacher and copied underneath).

For primary pupils, a few pages with: description, reference to class subjects and individual comments illustrated with photographs with explanations and a drawing or diagram.

For secondary pupils, three to five pages arranged under: 1. Events, data, knowledge. 2. Context, surroundings, current affairs. 3. Experience, criteria or personal orientation.

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