

# FORSYTHE FAMILY FARMS 2009 INC.

Cultivating Curiosity, Planting Knowledge

Spring 2010

## Everyday is Earth Day for Farmers

**T**his year Earth week is April 19th to the 23rd. Since 1990, April 22nd has been designated

International Earth Day, a time for all of us to pay special attention to our environment and how we impact it through our values and actions.

Why should we all care about the environment? As with any species we need food, air, shelter and space for survival. Soil is one of the basic building blocks upon which these depend. Did you know that 9 out of 10 bites of food available to people around the world begin with the planting of seeds? In Canada less than 10% of our country is suitable for agriculture with less than 1% considered high quality land.

Farmers work directly with the land to produce the food we eat and products we use everyday. Although there are many global forces that impact them, their personal values and actions can influence their success on a daily basis.

### KNOW-DO-APPLY

#### Science in Agriculture

**J**oin a growing number of Grade 3 students who are helping the Tridians save their planet. Come spend the day with us learning about soil and how essential it is for life.

Our soil workshop is a fun, active way for the children to learn that soil is alive and how to keep it that way. Discover how soil is made; investigate its differences and similarities depending on habitat. Unearth what we get from soil.

Calling all grade 4's. Let's go house hunting. Explore a variety of habitats; discover who lives there, how they interact and the intricate web of relationships they weave. Follow the food chain and place yourself in it.

Children learn by doing and in these workshops they are doing a lot. In both our Science in Agriculture workshops, students are encouraged to apply what they've learned, relate it to their values and everyday actions and see how they impact the world in which we live.

Farmers protect and enhance their soil through a variety of production practices including crop rotation, maintaining the nutrient cycle between plants, animals and soil and incorporating Best Management Practices. These are outlined in the Environmental Farm Plan, a voluntary program that helps farmers examine their farming practices and improve these practices to the best level.

Uncontrolled urban sprawl is possibly the biggest threat facing agriculture with 55% of the best agricultural land in Canada located within a 160 km radius of our large urban centers. Southern Ontario has 50% of Canada's prime agricultural land and we're losing 1 square km of this land/day to bulldozers.

Check out the **APPLE AS PLANET EARTH** activity at [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org) to see how small is the amount of productive topsoil we actually have on this planet. Come for a farm tour - experience agriculture through fun and informative hands-on activities.

Here are some excellent internet resources for you and your class to explore environmental issues.

[www.earthday.ca](http://www.earthday.ca)

[www.ecokids.ca](http://www.ecokids.ca)

[www.oafe.org](http://www.oafe.org) (checkout Update #55, winter 2007)

You'll find an incredible number of website links from these sources.

Have a great Earth Day.



### Put Spring into your Program

**S**pring - a time of renewal when nature is released from the confines of winter. It is such an optimistic time of year; the fields and forests turn green and new life begins once again. What an interesting and exciting season to explore the farm.

Our tours emphasize learning by experience. We incorporate interactive, hands on, age appropriate activities that help children connect the farm to their world through the food they eat and the products they use.

Children, preschool to grade 3, can tour a variety of habitats on our farm to explore animal life, farm and field, and in our forest habitat - nature and story time.

For students in grades 3 and 4, our Science in Agriculture workshops provide an opportunity

for students to engage in a curriculum concept that is crucial to a farmer for success.

Grade 3 - Soil and Composting

Grade 4 - Habitats and Communities

Join us this spring, summer and fall. Discover how the seasons change on the farm. Book early to secure the date you want.

Call Myrna or Leslie at 905-887-1086



Tours Available in Markham and Greenbank 905-887-1086

**Check us out at [ForsytheFamilyFarms.com](http://ForsytheFamilyFarms.com)**

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## A VISIT TO FORSYTHE FAMILY FARMS

The farm provides a rich environment for covering topics found in the Science and Technology Curriculum strands – Life Systems for grades 1-4 and Earth and Space Systems for grades 1-5. Topics such as plants, animals, soil and weather are introduced to all children in our farm tour. These topics are an integral part of farming and food production and relate to the children's lives in what they eat, drink and use everyday. Activities are adapted to the children's age and comprehension level.



### **KINDERGARTEN:**

Students will experience the farm with an emphasis on using their five senses. Through songs, hands on activities, discussion and play they have the opportunity to explore and experience what farming is all about.

### **GRADE 1 - GRADE 3** students will have the opportunity to:

#### Field Session

- Plant a strawberry plant or pick the crop currently in season. i.e. strawberries/pumpkins
- Identify parts of the plant, their function and use
- Review the seasons, the accompanying changes and priorities of the farmer's job
- Identify the needs of plants for healthy growth and how to care for them

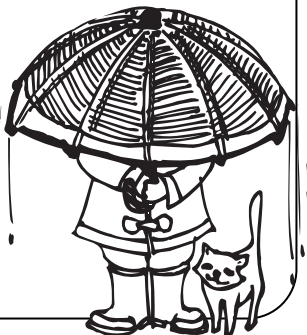
#### Animal Session

- Observe and feed farm animals in their natural setting
- Identify the farm animal's needs for survival, how these needs are met and compare their needs to ours and other living things
- Identify and compare our characteristics to farm animals, their similarities and differences
- Examine the role farm animals play in meeting our daily needs
- Differentiate between pets, farm and wild animals, determine similarities and differences

### **RAINY DAYS:**

There are a wide variety of activities to do on a rainy day. The following is just a sampling and they **are not** restricted to use just during adverse weather.

- Manipulate farm toys, explore how they work and what the farmer uses them for
- Investigate honey bees, pollination and their importance to plants and the farmer
- Identify parts of the plant that we eat
- Investigate composting and its importance for soil health
- Investigate soil, the different types and its components
- Investigate food systems, how food gets from the farm to their table
- Identify products that farm animals provide for our daily use and which animals provide them



Our activities aim to reinforce the vital link between the farm and the children's daily lives by cultivating their natural curiosity and encouraging the use of all their senses. Emphasis in the tours will be placed on areas specified in the curriculum guidelines as follows-

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Grade 1- | Characteristics and needs of living things — Daily and seasonal changes |
| Grade 2- | Growth and changes in animals — Air and water                           |
| Grade 3- | Growth and changes in plants — Soil                                     |

#### **Science in Agriculture Workshops**

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|----------|--------------------------|
| Grade 3- | Soils in the environment |
| Grade 4- | Habitats and communities |

Printed material is provided for follow-up activities in the classroom.

While it is important to make our farm tour educational, we also want the children to discover the fun side of farms. Time spent in our farm's playgrounds is an important part of the tour. A wagon ride through our fields gives the children a sense of the scope of farming and how it relates to the backyard garden.

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**FORSYTHE FAMILY FARMS 2009 INC.**  
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