



# Why we keep animals at the farm

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There are three main reasons for us to keep an animal at the city farm: education, therapy, food.

## Education

Most people living in the city have few opportunities to see farm animals close up. Learning about farm animals happens at the farm both informally (through casual visits to the site and interaction with the interpretive material we provide) and formally (as part of a school group or structured course).

Through interaction with farm animals people gain a greater sense of the nature of farm animals; the conditions that farm animals are kept in; and the behaviours they exhibit. For those people who eat meat they have a greater sense of the origin of their food and, we hope, assign a greater value to it.

## Therapy

The animals we keep provide both purposeful work (in caring for them) as well as direct therapeutic value to people through contact with them. We run groups for people with mental health issues and for those with learning difficulties as well as hosting independent volunteers who help directly with running the farm and with the supported groups we run.

We have a few small animals (rabbits, guinea pigs) that we keep to be handled by children and adults as part of our therapeutic work.

## Food

Most of the animals we keep are used to produce food: either meat (pigs, sheep, goats) or eggs (chickens, ducks). We recognise there is debate about whether meat and dairy products should form part of the human diet, and we respect each person's right to take their own stance in that regard. We endeavour to educate people in their food choices and to offer as wide a choice as possible to meet their needs.

The organisation believes that it is possible to produce meat ethically and sustainably. We ensure our animals are kept in good conditions, are healthy and well cared for. We encourage people to reduce their meat consumption, to value highly any meat they do eat and to make positive food choices.

## Other reasons for keeping animals

There are some times when the city farm may keep animals for other reasons, though these are less usual and not a primary justification. We may choose some variety of animals because they are rare breeds (thereby contribute to conservation of a variety) or provide an element of spectacle or show (eg beautiful plumage on a breed of chicken). We have occasionally taken animals in need of rescue, though we strongly discourage people from leaving their unwanted animals with us. We do not keep exotic animals.