

Dear Teacher(s),

 We are looking forward to you and your students visiting our farm. For some of you this will be a new experience and one that I hope you will enjoy so much that we will see you year after year. Below are a few things for you to consider as you begin to prepare for a visit to our farm.

 **YOUR VISIT**: For those of you that may be new to the idea of visiting our farm let me give you a brief introduction. We are a sixth-generation family farm. This means that our girls work along beside of us in all aspects of our operation. We are also a fully working farm with many experiences awaiting you and your students. We began raising strawberries in 1980 and shortly after began hosting field trips. Agriculture is something that we feel all children need to understand. Their comprehension of exactly where and how their food arrives on their plate is paramount to our survival. Rhonda is typically the one that leads the field trips. She has a background in biology and a desire to see children learn. She will adapt just about any topic that you need into a fun lesson for your children and can tailor the lesson to the specific age of your group. She has experience is lessons ranging from bees and pollination to the impact our farm has on society. During your visit your group will not be combined with any other group. This makes the experience unique to your group. We would also like to encourage your children to ask questions while visiting the farm. Their curiosity brightens our day!

 **PARKING:** If your group is arriving by bus then you will notice that there is a circle drive at the farm house near the entrance. If the drivers would please pull into that circle to park. This will give them easy access to depart. Under no circumstance should the bus driver pull further down into the parking area. If your group is arriving by car or if you have chaperones that are following in cars, if they would please pull into the grass lot that is located to the right of the main entrance. It is marked as pick your own parking.

**ARRIVAL**: Once your group has all arrived, please have them gather together around the bus parking area. Have one adult come to the store or check-out barn and let us know that everyone has arrived. We will come to you and help direct your group and get the visit started. The parking area can be hazardous so we ask that the children wait with the buses until directed. If you have come in multiple cars then we ask that you please do the same.

 **STRAWBERRY PATCH**: Unless you have requested otherwise, we will spend a little time around the edge of the strawberry field learning about strawberries, bees, picking or any other topic that you would like us to cover. We love to have the children ask questions about what we do so encourage them to challenge our knowledge. At this time, we will also show them how and what to pick. We want you and the students to leave with quality fruit.

**PICKING CONTAINER:** Once the presentation is complete the children will be given an open top quart basket to pick into. There is a tag on the basket that you can write their name. Some teachers come equipped with a sticker to put on our label to expedite the process. Over the years we have tried many different containers. As inconvenient as it is to have an open top container, we have still found this to be the best option. Once you return to school with the children’s berries, just sit them down into a t-shirt or grocery bag and tie the bag down snug over the berries. The berries will not spill and other children will not be able to handle their fruit while traveling home on the bus at the end of the day. Ziploc bags are great but the children tend to dump their berries over in these bags.

**THE REST OF THE FARM**: Once you have finished picking then you are free to enjoy the rest of the farm. The strawberry field visit is the only one that we spend time instructing you or the children. The animal barn, hydroponic area, koi pond and animal feeding area are available for you to spend extra time with the children. Within the animal barn you may find a bee display and an assortment of farm animals for the children to visit. All of the animals can be fed. PLEASE remind the children to wash their hands with soap and water after visiting the animals.

**BATHROOMS and HANDWASHING**: You will find the bathroom facilities near the animal feeding area adjacent to The Dessert Barn. There is also a large hand washing sink located in the outdoor animal feeding area.

**PICNICS**: We are glad that you want to spend extra time with us during your visit. Unfortunately, we do not have enough picnic tables for everyone so we encourage you to bring picnic blankets. The century old trees at the entrance to the farm make a wonderful place to have a picnic. As with most old farms, these trees seem to always have a wonderful breeze. If the group has ordered ice cream, then we have it waiting for you at The Dessert Barn. Please send some of your chaperones to The Dessert Barn to get your ice cream. Please indicate if you would like to order extra ice cream of the chaperones.

**CHAPERONES & TEACHERS**: All adults that visit with the children are not charged a per head fee. If any of the adults would like to pick their own strawberries then they will simply pay for the berries. Please let all of your chaperones know that we are check or cash. We do have an ATM on site if needed. They may also purchase berries that have already been picked for them. There is also no additional charge for any siblings that attend the field trip.

**HAYRIDE**: Sometimes we may feel that there are better strawberries to be harvested in fields that require a ride to the field. This is done with a tractor drawn ride. We do not guarantee that the group will be taken on this ride but we do want to advice you that it is a possibility. Each class will remain together with the teacher riding along. Any adult chaperones will be given a ride after the children are taken to the field. If this is something that you do not want to do then please let us know. Again, this is not something we guarantee but something that we want to make you aware of as a possibility.

 **WEATHER**: We are here rain or shine but that does not mean that we expect you to be. You know your children and parents better than we do. If you feel that the weather is not suitable for your visit then we understand. Please give us a call and let us know. We will do everything to work with rescheduling you if the weather interrupts your visit.

 **PAYMENT:** You can pay us with either a check or cash. This can be taken care of at any time during your visit. If you need to send payment after your trip then that can be arranged as well. If you should have a student that cannot make the trip because of financial issues, then PLEASE arrange for that student to come. The fee for that student will be waived. It is more important for me to have the student present.