



Duration: 2 hrs

# The factory farming debate

Age: Upper KS2 (years 5 and 6)



## Subjects:

KS2: English and PSHE

## Learning objectives

- To discuss and debate a topical issue, respect other people's point of view and constructively challenge those you disagree with, consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- To understand what intensive animal farming involves and to appreciate its impacts on animal welfare.

[Link to curriculum coverage](#)

**Overview:** Pupils participate in a debate about the ethics of keeping animals in factory farms.

## Resources

- *Meet the animals!* film
- *Talk time* questions
- Note-taking sheet (optional)
- *Debating factory farming* ppt:
  - True or false stand-up/sit-down quiz
  - Motion for debate
  - Definition of factory farming
  - Summary of arguments for and against factory farming
- *Factory farming* card sort activity
- Prompt sheets with statements for and against the motion

[Visit the website to download or order resources](#)



### Starter

- Tell the pupils that they will first watch a short film about farmed animals living in animal sanctuaries and then take part in a debate about the pros and cons of rearing animals inside factory farms.
- Pupils watch the *Meet the animals!* film and during the Talk time breaks discuss some of the suggested Talk time questions (available on the website).
- Discussion points for after the film (if not already covered in lesson 5 Five Freedoms):
  - What is a factory farm?  
(A farm where animals are confined in cages or pens and kept inside sheds for their entire lives.)
  - Why are the animals reared inside sheds on a factory farm, rather than being allowed outside?  
(Because it reduces the cost of production, and meat, eggs and dairy products can be produced and sold in shops more cheaply and profitably.)
- If pupils are watching the *Meet the animals!* film for a second time, provide them with a Note-taking worksheet to help them record notes.
- True or false stand-up/sit-down quiz
  - Display the True or false, stand-up/sit-down quiz (slides 1 to 13 of the Debating factory farming PowerPoint presentation)
  - Tell pupils that you are going to present a series of statements. If they agree with the statement, or believe it to be true, they should stand up, and if they disagree with the statement, or believe it to be false they should sit down.

### Main

- **Card sort activity**
  - Provide pairs of pupils with sets of the *Factory farming* cards.
  - Ask them to rank the cards in order, with the ones they agree with most at the top and the ones they disagree with lower down. They can place more than one card at the same level if they believe the factors are equally important.
  - Give students some time to discuss the following questions with a partner/the rest of their group:
    - Which statements do they agree with most and why?
    - Which statements do they disagree with most and why?



- **The debate**

- Display the 'Motion for debate' (slide 14 in the Debating factory farming PowerPoint presentation).
- Explain the motion and describe how the debate will work.
- Use slides 15 to 21 to briefly explain what factory farming is.
- Form children into groups of 3 or 4.
- If there is space in the room, ask half the groups to go to one side of the room, and the rest of the groups to the other side.
- Tell those on one side of the room that they will be for the motion, and those on the other side that they will be against the motion.
- Ask pupils on one side to list five reasons for the motion and those on the other side to prepare a list of five arguments against the motion.
- Provide copies of the prompt sheets with sample statements for and against factory farming
- Introduce the debate: This class believes that 'It is wrong to keep animals in factory farms'.
- Carry out the debate with groups for the motion on one side of the room and those against the motion on the other.
- Each group takes it in turns to present one of their reasons, or arguments, for or against the motion. When all the reasons have been presented allow questions and comments from both sides.
- At the end children vote on the debate motion expressing their own personal view.

### Plenary

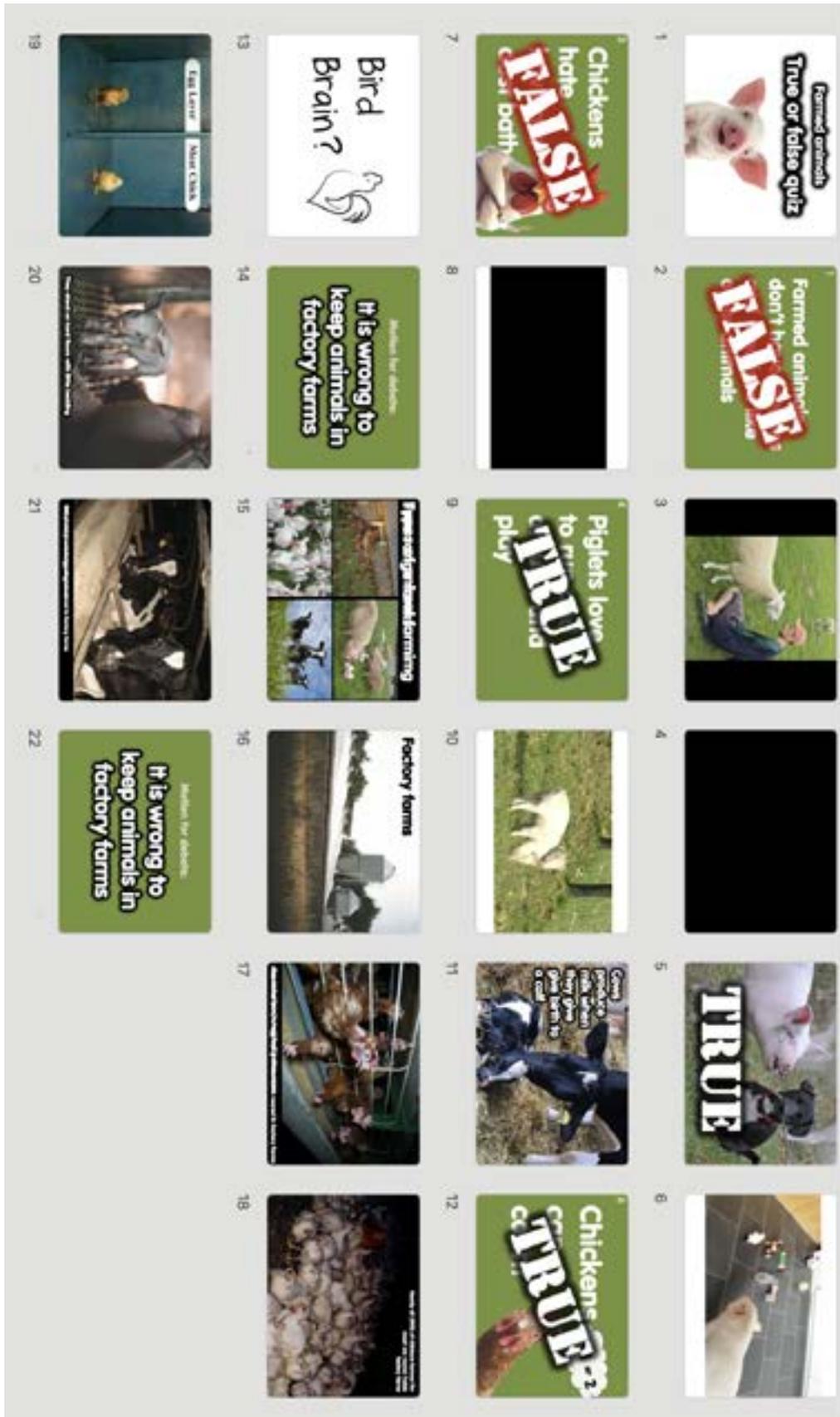
- Ask pupils in pairs to discuss:
  - one thing that made them feel something
  - one thing that surprised them
  - what they would like to change if they could

### Resources appendix

- **Debating factory farming ppt** p4
- **Factory farming card sort activity** p5
- **Prompt sheets with statements for and against the motion** pp 6 & 7



# Debating factory farming ppt



Visit the [website](#) to download this ppt presentation.



# Factory farming card sort activity

## Factory farming card sort activity



<b>Consumers have a right to cheap food from factory farms.</b>	<b>All animals should have the freedom to live outside and be happy.</b>
<b>Factory farms are important to the economy and provide people with jobs.</b>	<b>Factory farms damage the environment and contributes to climate change.</b>
<b>People need to eat meat and dairy products to stay fit and healthy.</b>	<b>It's cruel to confine animals in cramped sheds for the whole of their lives.</b>
<b>Animals inside factory farms are happy and are well looked after.</b>	<b>Animals don't need to be farmed for food as people can live perfectly healthily on a vegan diet.</b>

Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet, or to order free class sets from us.

# Statements for the motion



Info sheet

## Statements for the motion



Info sheet

### Arguments against factory farming

#### Animal welfare

- Animals in factory farms are confined in small spaces, preventing them from behaving naturally and doing the things they like doing such as running around and playing, digging in the soil, making nests, dust bathing or foraging and exploring.
- The animals spend their whole lives confined inside sheds.
- The hard floors that the pigs have to stand on often lead to painful leg problems.
- Intensively farmed chickens are forced to grow so quickly that they suffer from health problems, and their legs often collapse under their weight.
- The cramped, stressful conditions can lead to unnatural aggressive behaviour amongst animals, such as tail biting and feather pecking.
- Painful practices such as debeaking chickens and docking pigs' tails are often done without anaesthetic.
- Inside chicken sheds there may be 19 birds per square metre. This means that each bird has less floor space than the size of an A4 sheet of paper.
- Mother pigs in factory farms are put into a metal cage called a farrowing crate to give birth and rear their piglets. In these cages they can't turn around and they can barely lie down properly.

#### Environmental impact

- Factory farms generate large amounts of animal waste that can pollute rivers and lakes.
- Factory farming contributes to climate change. The methane gas given off by animals in factory farms is a damaging greenhouse gas.

#### Risks to human health

- Crowded and unhealthy conditions in factory farms can promote the spread of infectious diseases, such as swine flu and avian influenza (bird flu), which can be transmitted to humans.
- The overuse of antibiotics in factory farms can lead to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which pose a serious threat to human health.
- The overconsumption of animal products contributes to health problems such as obesity, heart disease, bowel cancer and diabetes.

Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet.

# Statements against the motion



Info sheet

## Statements against the motion



Info sheet

### Arguments for factory farming

#### Animal welfare

- Farmed animals don't have feelings and emotions like us or like pet animals.
- Animals in factory farms have spent their whole lives inside sheds so they don't know any different – what they have never had, they don't miss.
- Animals inside factory farms are well looked after – this country has some of the strictest animal welfare laws in the world.
- Animals are happy in factory farms because they are protected from the rain and cold in the winter and the hot weather in the summer – they are kept warm, comfortable and well fed.
- Feeding people affordable, good quality food is more important than any animal suffering.
- Mother pigs in factory farms are put into a farrowing crate to give birth and rear their piglets. This is done to protect the piglets and to stop the mother crushing them.

#### Environmental impact

- Rearing animals intensively inside sheds means they take up less land, which means there's more land for natural habitats such as woods and wild meadows.

#### Economics

- Factory farms produce meat, eggs and milk far more cheaply than free-range farms.
- If we stop factory farming, poor people will not be able to afford to buy meat.
- Factory farms are important to the economy – they provide cheap food for shops to sell and people to eat.
- Lots of people are employed by the factory farming industry – as well as farm workers, there are animal feed suppliers, vets and livestock equipment manufacturers.
- 96% of the birds we eat in the UK are reared on factory farms and for pigs the figure is 85% – we simply don't have the space to raise that number of animals on free-range farms.

Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet.