



Beginning Farmers

The Invaluable Lessons Farming Teaches Kids

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As beginning farmers, we might not have had the experience of a family farm being passed down. Instead, we may have decided to embrace the farm life on our own accord, setting out to establish an operation from scratch. Although our family lines may not have been filled with farmers in the past, that is not to say they cannot be filled with farmers in the future. After all, many homesteaders believe that the legacy they have built will live on with their children. Including children in the farming lifestyle has many benefits. Sure, it is nice to have the additional help with chores, but it also fosters so much growth, sending our kids down a good path towards who they will someday become. It is possible that our children will grow up to lead lives that do not include farming, but the here and now is still very important. **Living and working on a farm can teach children so many things that will be instrumental in their lives far more so than playing video games or hanging out at the mall ever can.**

Below are some examples of vital life lessons kids can learn on the farm.

Through caring for farm animals, kids learn that in life **others often come before self**. Animals need to be fed, watered, and otherwise cared for before we as farmers get to sit down and relax. It doesn't matter if we don't feel like it or if we are sick and tired. What matters is that we take care of the animals that take care of us and do so in a timely manner.

Farm animals also teach children about **the cycle of life**. Regardless of the type of farming you do and how high your standard of care may be, at some point an animal will die, enabling kids to see that death is a part of life. On farms where animals are culled for eating purpose, this lesson applies tenfold as children learn to be grateful for the lives of animals and the sustenance they provide.

Farm life also teaches kids the **value of hard work**. If the work on a farm does not get done, the operation fails. It takes discipline and dedication to get down to business every day, and seeing this in action will give kids a good work ethic. They will know and understand that nothing good comes easy and that they have to work to survive.

At the same time, they learn to **work with others**, functioning as part of a productive team which will come in handy in all walks of life.

Life on a farm also teaches that **money is hard to come by** and even harder to let go. This means finding ways to improvise around the farm so that one item can serve multiple purposes. It also means that just because something is broken doesn't mean it can't be repaired or used for another purpose. Though it may take some ingenuity and problem solving skills, it is important to breathe new life into old farm equipment to keep it going and to save money at the same time.

Additionally, farming teaches **patience**. There are going to be a lot of days when things do not go your way. Cattle will be unruly. Horses will gallop away when you try to catch them. Goats will kick over that bucket of hard-earned milk. A rooster will decide you got too close to his hens and give you a run for your money. Despite all that, kids will learn to be patient and take things in stride.

There may not be any instant gratification, but in the long-term kids will see the benefit of all their efforts during those hard days. When the lightbulb comes on and that realization is made, it will be worth it.

Most of all, kids will learn how to survive. There will come a day for all of us when we are not present or able to provide for our children any longer. When that day comes, kids who know how to farm will be kids who know how to feed themselves, fix things, solve problems, work hard, and respect animals. At the end of the day, the farmer who raises such children should celebrate his or her victory, for it is through accomplishments such as this that those farming life lessons will live on.