



Frequently Asked Questions about *Learning Tree Farm*



❖ **How did Learning Tree Farm begin? Why does it exist?**

In the early 1970's two teachers, Sally Keyes and Jean Ryan, believed that not all students learn well in a classroom setting. They took their students on walking or biking field trips to Island Park and Triangle Park in Dayton. Students became excited about seeing "so many trees in one place", bird nests in trees, bugs under rocks and the river. When the students returned to school, they shared their adventures. Sally and Jean were sold on the value and importance of hands-on learning!

So, in 1973 Sally and Jean, along with many friends as supporters, founded Learning Tree Farm. Learning Tree Farm is a non-profit with the mission *to facilitate hands-on learning experiences in a traditional farm setting*. To get the Farm ready for visitors took much hard work in the barns, fields, and yards. The first year brought 200 students from Dayton schools.

Today, the Farm serves 6,000 students each year from eight counties and the number is growing! The Farm offers memberships, corporate meeting facilities, senior outings and a variety of programs for school children of all ages throughout 8 counties in the Miami Valley.

❖ **How did it get its name? Is there actually a Learning Tree?**

The tallest, the oldest, and for humankind, the most bountiful of living things are trees.

From the substance of trees we derive, food, fuel and shelter, shade in the summer, fruit to eat, roots that help keep the soil in place, lumber for our homes, and wood for our fire; from their grace and enduring beauty we draw inspiration and a sense of renewal.



Because the Farm has over 40 different kinds of trees, because they are so prominent, and because they offer us much to learn, the co-founders chose Learning Tree Farm as the name!

There never was a specific "learning tree" for everyone. Each person looks at all the trees on the Farm and finds his or her own "learning tree".

Now, when visitors come they are asked to find their "Learning Tree" from the hundreds on the Farm!

❖ **What kind of animals are on the Farm? How many of each kind? What are the names of the animals? Can I pet the animals? How much does it cost to feed the animals?**

Throughout the years, the Farm strives to have a variety of all the traditional farm animals - cows, ducks, goats, pigs, sheep, donkeys, chickens, horses and ponies and assorted dogs and cats.



The animals live in two barns - the Bank Barn (built on the side of a banked hill) and a Tobacco Barn (originally named for drying the tobacco that was grown on the farm).

To take good care of the animals, Learning Tree Farm uses the services of a veterinarian and an experienced, dedicated farm staff. Food costs for the animals vary by season.

To fully live the "hands-on experiences" everyone is invited and encouraged to pet the animals. To safeguard the visitors and the animals, remember you are a visitor in their home - be gentle, be kind, speak quietly.

Some animals come to Learning Tree Farm with a name. Sometimes the names are not so obvious - Jill and Lil are sister cows! The staff usually gives names that easily identify the animals. For example, Goldie is a pony with a gold mane. We have 2 gray cats - one is *Gray* and the big one is *Bob*! *Angel* is a tan colored cat and very frisky. Visitors are encouraged to name the animals for the day!

If you have a question, contact us at

Learning Tree Farm

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937.866.8650 www.learningtreefarm.org



❖ Is there a garden? What does the Farm grow? How is it used?

The Farm has a vegetable garden, an orchard, grape vines, and an herb garden. Flower gardens grace the yard around Century House.



The vegetable garden has raised boxes for growing fruits and vegetables. In the spring, the vegetable garden grows many kinds of lettuce, carrots, early peas and radishes. Berries are very plentiful, too. In the summer, an abundant supply of tomatoes, onions, beans, cucumbers, various hot and sweet peppers and some ears of corn occupy the garden. The fruit trees bear apples and peaches. In the fall, rutabagas, squash, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and broccoli grow. In the winter, the gardens rest.



The grape vines produce purple grapes that are used to make juice and jam. Polly's Herb Garden is behind Century House. Basil, lavender, sage, rosemary, thyme, Italian parsley, costmary are regularly planted herbs.

Each garden is used as part of the programs. Visitors learn that the tops of some plants, bottoms of other plants and the middle of plants are edible. Tasting and smelling are integral to hands-on activities!

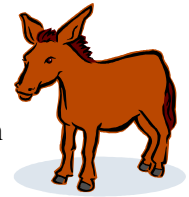
Learning Tree Farm produce is sold or bartered to help sustain the Farm.

❖ Explain the Programs.

Learning Tree Farms offers programs to all ages from throughout the Miami Valley region of 8 counties. All the programs include HANDS-ON experiences. All aspects of the Farm - animals, gardens, fields, staff - are used to enhance the experience.

Programs include *Hands on the Farm*, *Spring on the Farm*, *Summer on the Farm*, *Autumn on the Farm*, *Winter on the Farm*, *Farm Fun & Fitness*, *Finding Freedom on the Farm: The Underground Railroad*, *Hands on the Past*, *Native Americans & Pioneers on the Farm: Living the History*, *Sheep Shearing* and *Summer Camp*.

Everyone is encouraged to see all features of the Farm – ☀ the animals - donkeys, goats, pigs, Jill & Lil the cows, sheep, chickens, Goldie, the miniature horse, bee hives, Angel, Bob and Gray, the cats, plus Tug & Rowdy, the canine staff; ☀ herb, vegetable and flower gardens plus an orchard; ☀ woodland trails, meadows, hay fields, Gift Shop and play area; ☀ Century House, Milk House, Wash House, Agriculture Garage; ☀ Bank Barn & Tobacco Barn; ☀ Bring lunch and drinks to enjoy in the covered picnic shelter.



❖ How many buildings are on the Farm?

Century House, the original homestead, was built in parts. The first part has one room downstairs with a winding staircase that leads to a room upstairs. The downstairs room was used as the kitchen and sitting area with the original fireplace still usable. The 6 additional rooms were added with the last room added in the late early 1900's. Indoor plumbing was added in the 1970's.

Four outbuildings on the Farm are a Bank Barn, Tobacco Barn, Carriage House, and Smoke House. The fifth building includes the Milk House and Wash House, together as one.

❖ Who owns the Farm? How does it support itself?

Learning Tree Farm is a non-profit 501 c3 that is governed by a Board of Trustees.

The Farm receives support through admission fees, program fees, memberships, foundation/grant awards, fund raisers, and generous donors.



The two main fundraisers are the **ANTIQUES APPRAISAL** in late winter (February 28, 2009) and the **Autumn Fest** in early autumn (September 19+20, 2009).



If you would like information about supporting Learning Tree Farm, please call for information regarding the ANNUAL FUND, SPECIAL FUNDS, and THE ARBOR SOCIETY OF LEARNING TREE FARM which provides an opportunity to remember the Farm with a legacy gift in your will or estate plan.

~ to facilitate hands-on learning experiences in a traditional farm setting ~