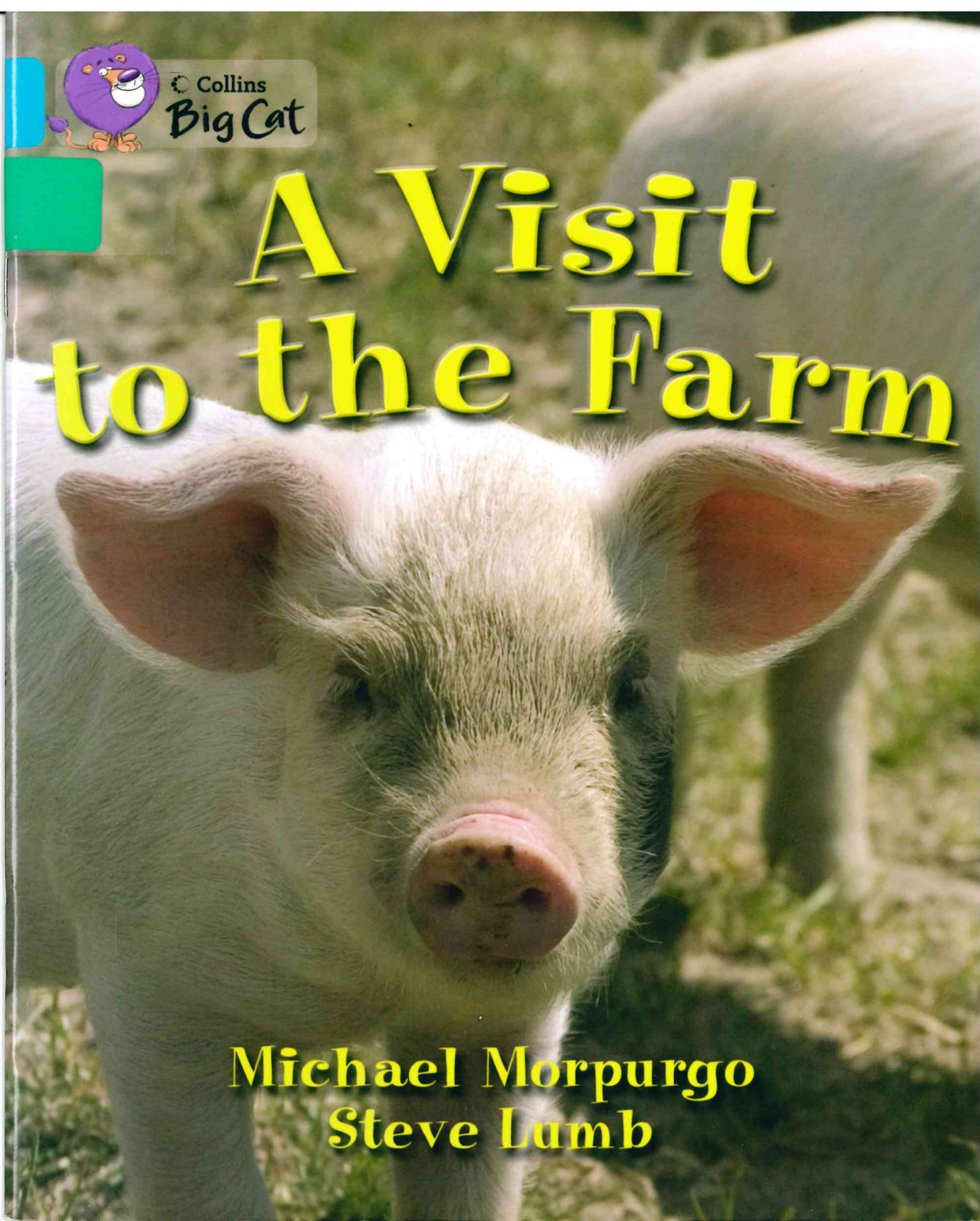




Collins
Big Cat

A Visit to the Farm

Michael Morpurgo
Steve Lumb





Published by Collins
An imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers
77–85 Fulham Palace Road
Hammersmith
London
W6 8JB

Browse the complete Collins catalogue at
www.collinseducation.com

Text © Farms for City Children Limited 2005
Design and photographs © HarperCollinsPublishers Limited 2005

Series editor: Cliff Moon

10 9 8 7

ISBN-13 978 0 00 718610 5
ISBN-10 0 00 718610 X

Michael Morpurgo asserts his moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A Catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Photographer: Steve Lumb
Design manager: Nikki O'Reilly, www.together-design.com
Guided reading ideas author: Linda Pagett

Acknowledgements

Photographs: p7, right: Alamy/imagebroker/Harald Theissen; p20: Apex/jim Wileman. All other photographs taken at Wick Court. With thanks to: Heather Tarplee, Farm School Manager, Jonathan Crump, Farmer, Sue Hussey, Deputy Head Teacher, Bevington Primary School, London, The Trustees of Wick Court. And to Michael Morpurgo, without whom this book would not have been possible. All royalties from the sale of this book go to Farms for City Children, Registered Charity No. 325120. Collins would like to thank the teachers and children at the following schools who took part in the development of Collins Big Cat:

Alfred Sutton Primary School
St. Anne's Fulshaw C of E Primary School
Anthony Bek Primary School
Biddick Primary School
Britannia Primary School
Christ Church Charnock Richard C of E Primary School
Cronton C of E Primary School
Cuddington Community School
Glory Farm County Primary and Nursery School

St. John Fisher RC Primary School
Killinghall Primary School
Malvern Link C of E Primary School
Margaret Macmillan Primary School
Minet Nursery and Infant School
Norbreck Primary School
Offley Endowed Primary School
Portsmouth Primary School
St. Margaret's RC Primary School
Wadebridge Community Primary School

Printed and bound by Printing Express Limited, Hong Kong

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Farms for City Children was founded in 1976 by Michael Morpurgo and his wife, Clare. The charity aims to enrich the lives and develop the potential of children from urban areas, by giving them the opportunity to spend a week in the countryside on a working farm. Each year, over 3000 children stay on the farms in groups of 36–40, for one week. There are three farms: Treginnis Isaf in Pembrokeshire; Nethercott in Devon and Wick Court in Gloucestershire. See the website at www.farmsforcitychildren.org for further information

A Visit to the Farm

Written by Michael Morpurgo

Photographs by Steve Lumb



 Collins

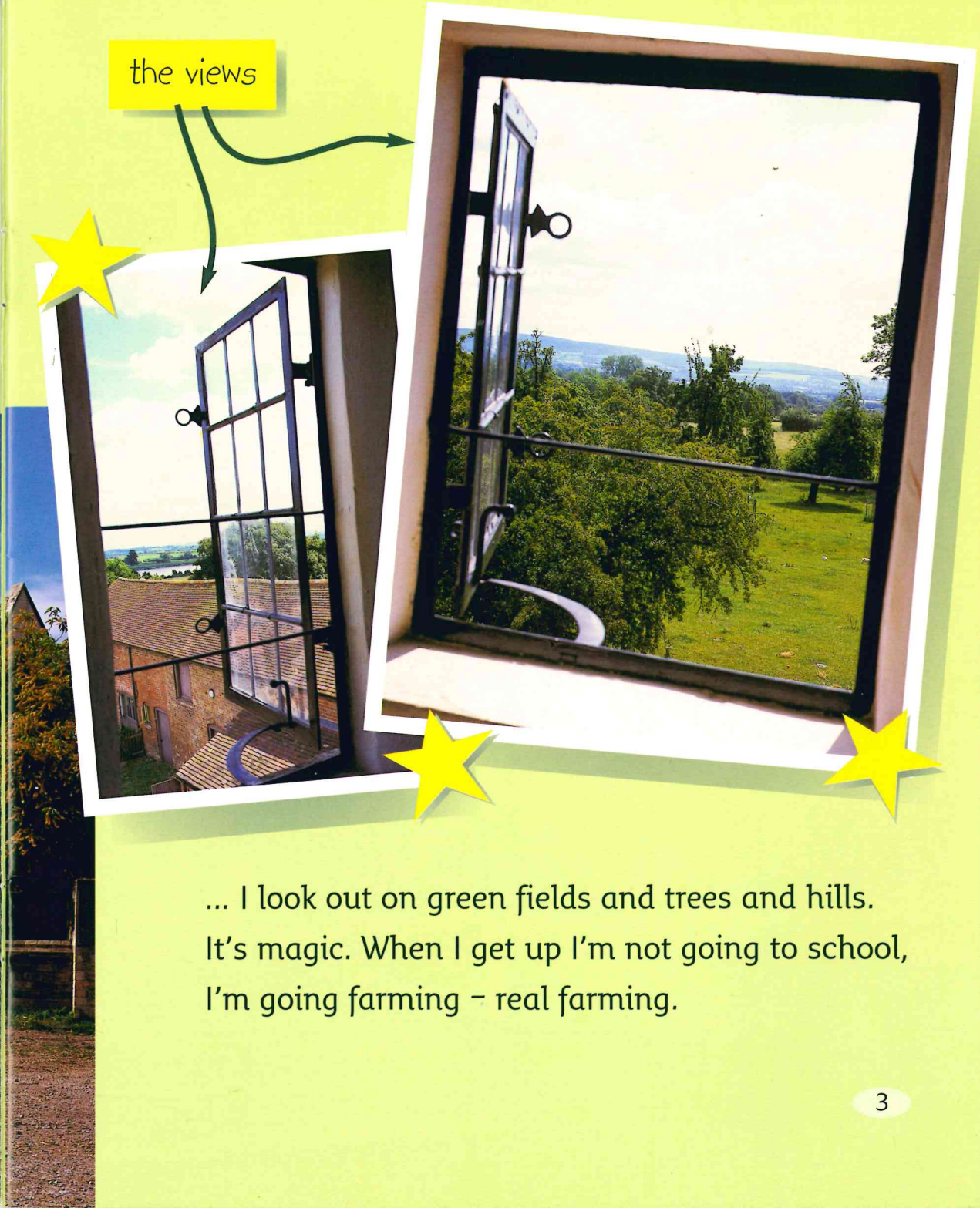
Wednesday 16 May
Dear Mum and Dad,
I'm living in this huge great house,
and when I wake up in the morning
I don't look out at the streets and
houses and cars like at home ...



the house

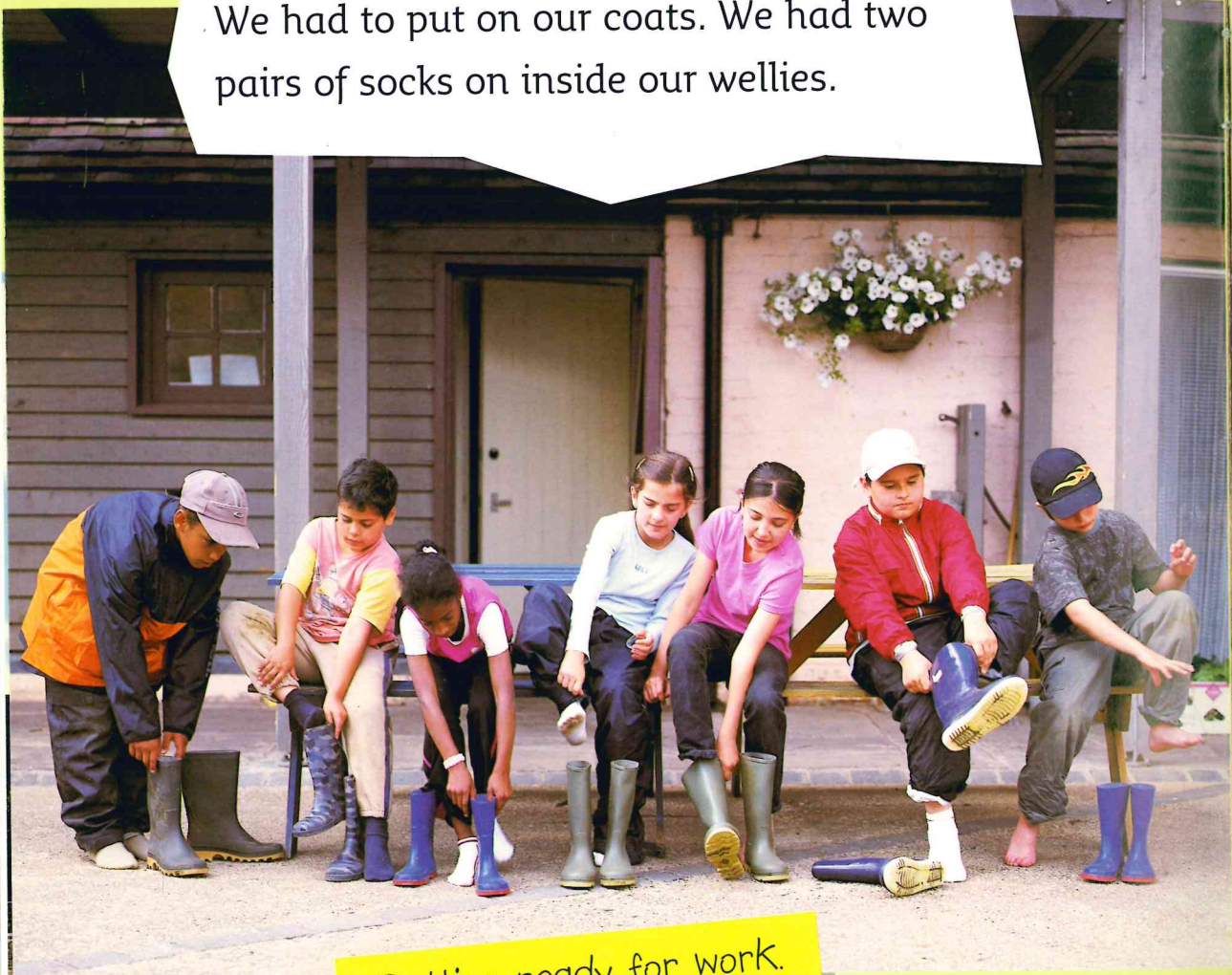


the views



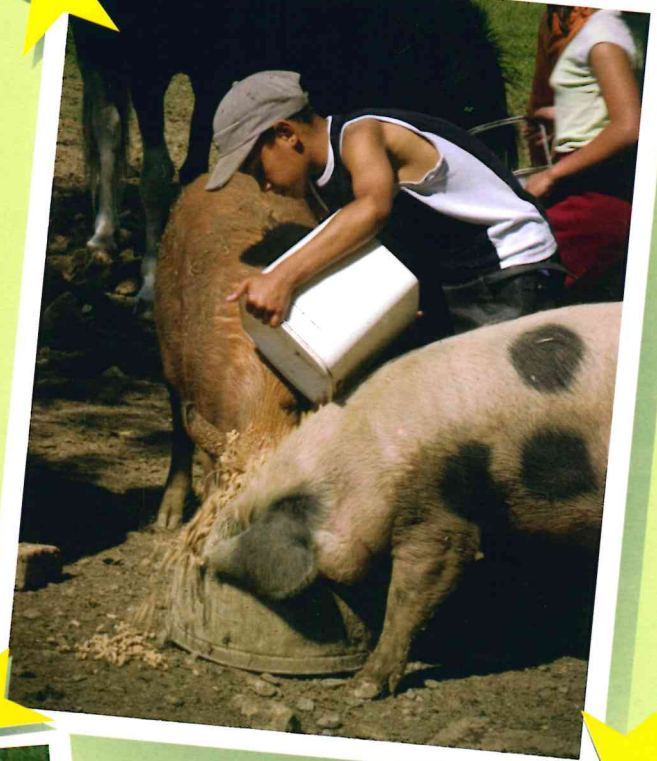
... I look out on green fields and trees and hills.
It's magic. When I get up I'm not going to school,
I'm going farming - real farming.

Here's what I did today. We had to be ready for work at 7.30am. It was cold outside. We had to put on our coats. We had two pairs of socks on inside our wellies.



Getting ready for work.

Then we went off to feed the pigs. You should hear the noise they make. And the **smell!** You have to mix the food and slosh it in. They chomp it up really fast. No manners at all, I'm telling you.



The little ones are really sweet. I counted eight of them and they are only three weeks old.

Then we drove the sheep out of the barn and into the field. Lots of them had baby lambs.

They make me giggle, the way they run around and leap about. They're so funny.



After breakfast we saw a lamb actually being born. I helped to pull her out. She was all slimy and steaming, but so beautiful. We're calling her Molly, after Molly Parsons, because it's her birthday today.

Then we went off for a long walk all around the farm, feeding hay to the sheep and counting them to make sure they were all there.



We had a bit of playtime and did some painting in the classroom, and then it was lunch.



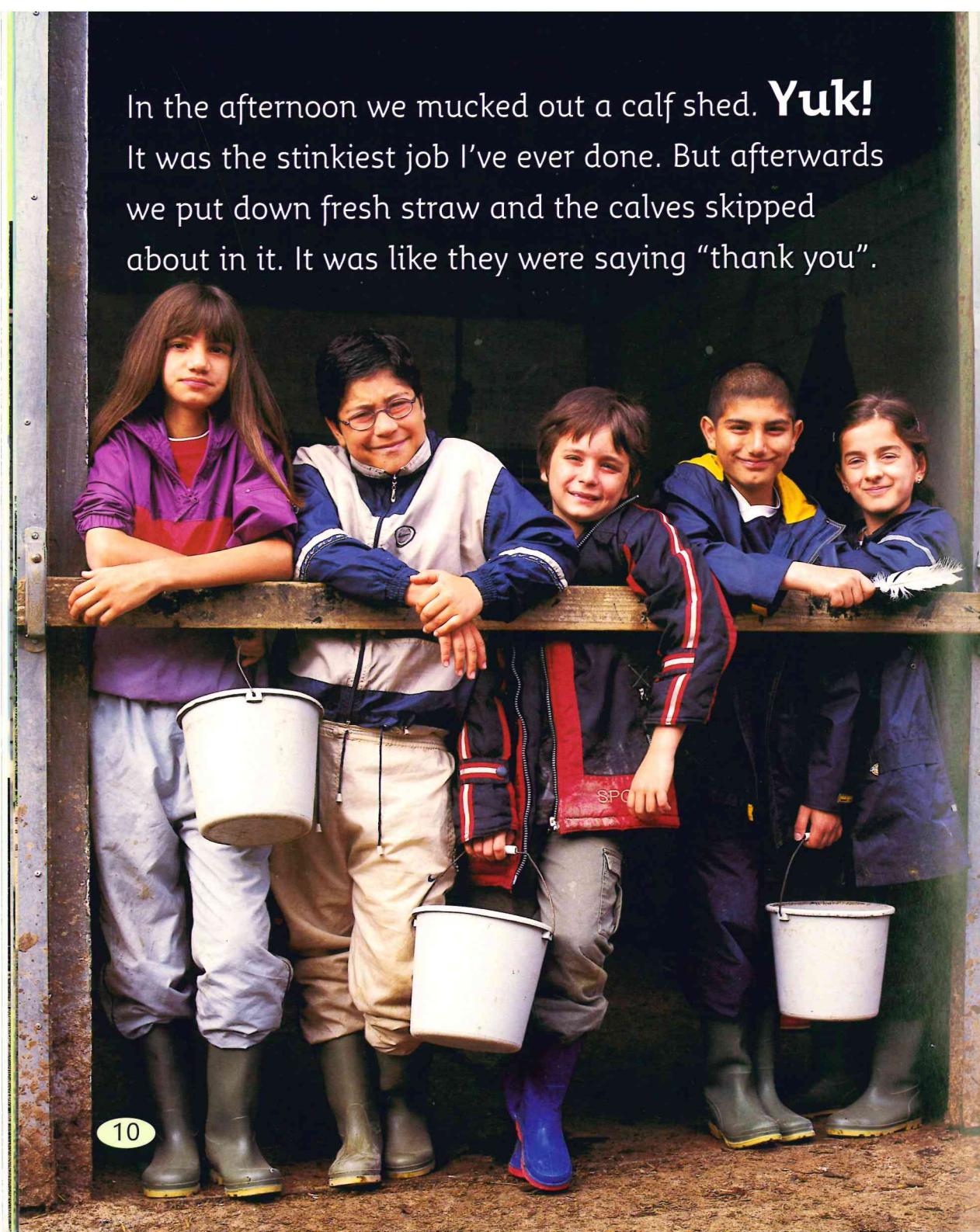


We painted pictures of the animals.



Farming made us hungry!

In the afternoon we mucked out a calf shed. **Yuk!**
It was the stinkiest job I've ever done. But afterwards
we put down fresh straw and the calves skipped
about in it. It was like they were saying "thank you".

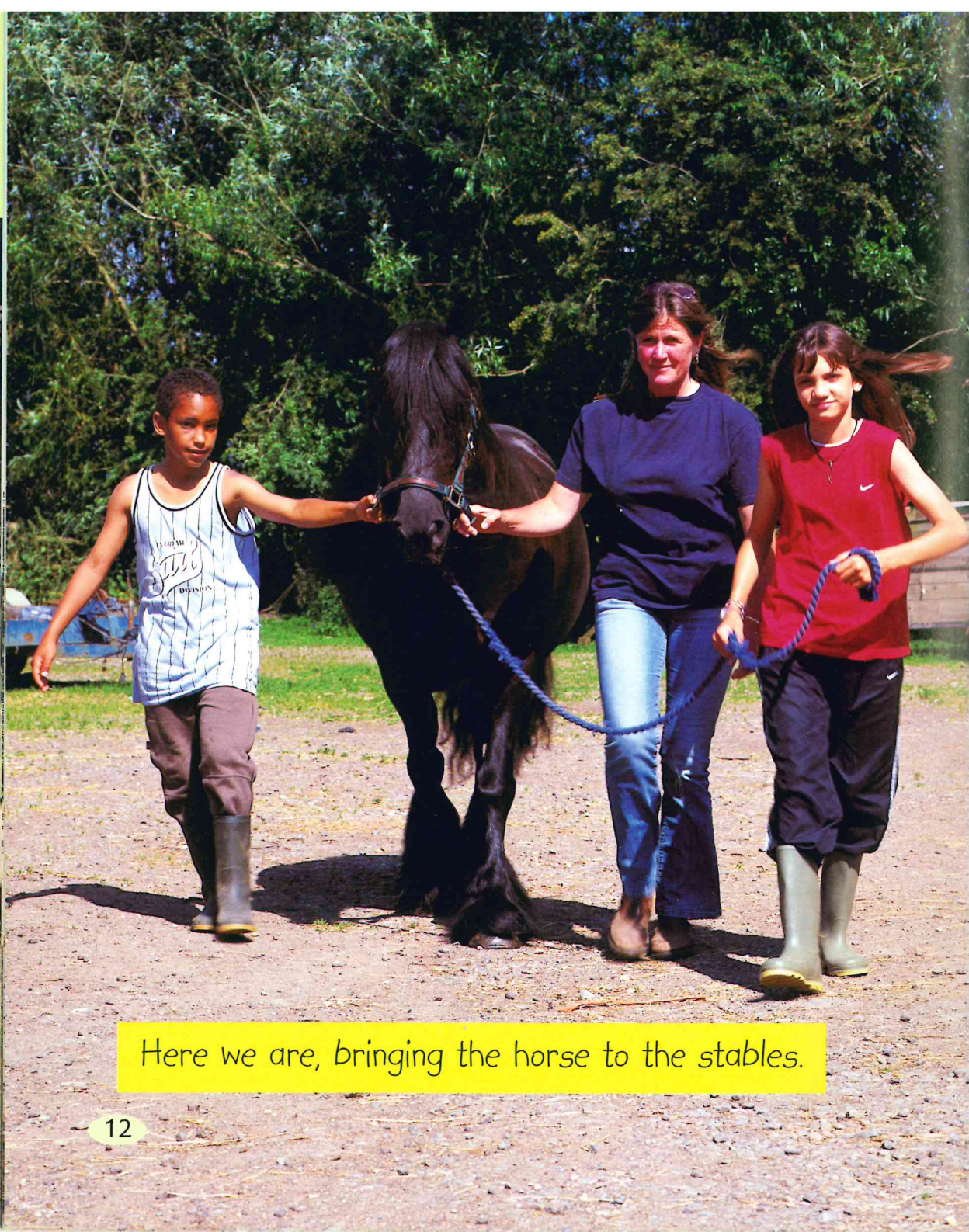


We're putting down clean straw for the calves.

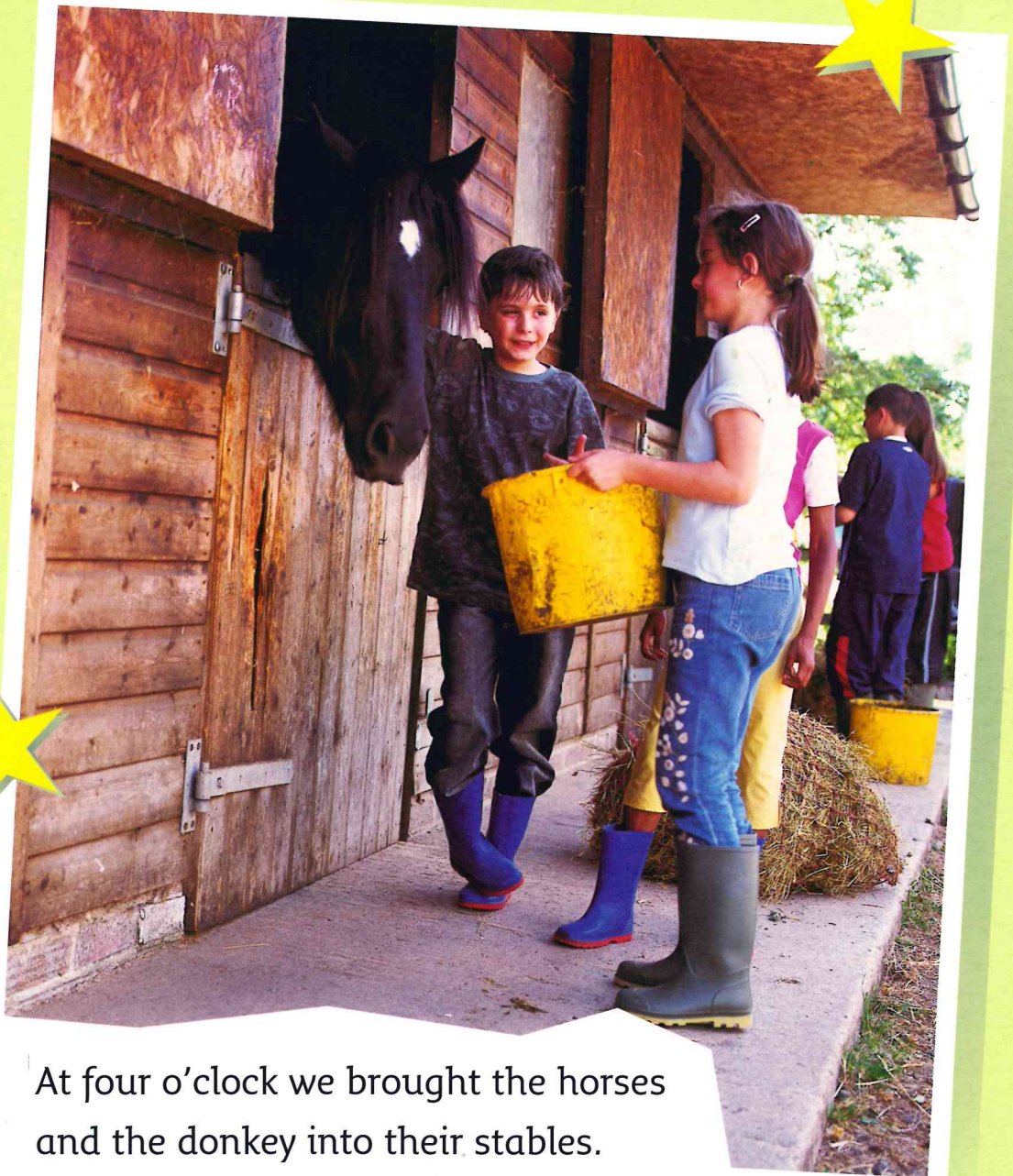


These calves are saying "Thank you".



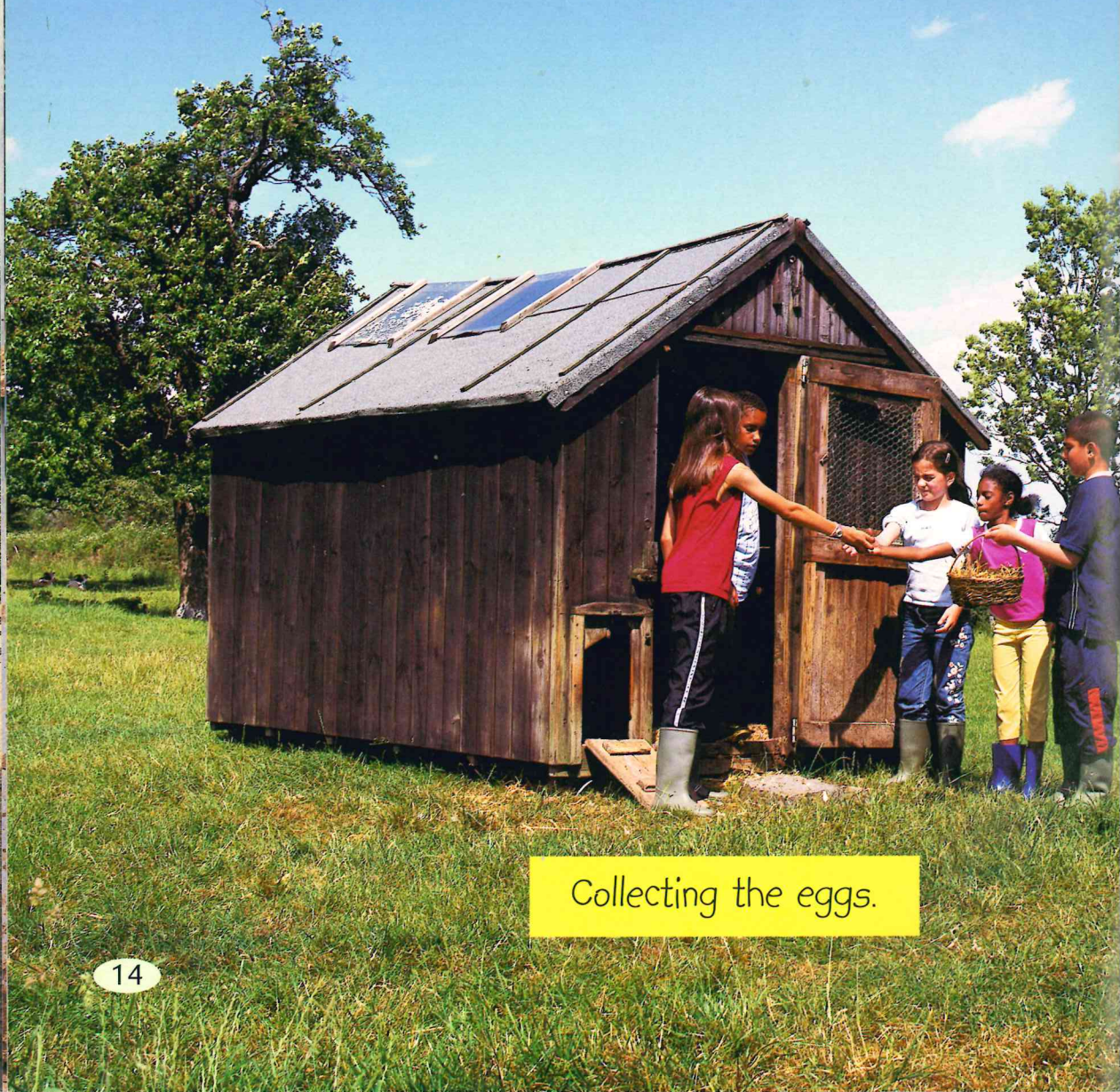


Here we are, bringing the horse to the stables.



At four o'clock we brought the horses and the donkey into their stables. We gave them some water and hay.

Then we collected the eggs and shut up the chickens, ducks and geese. The old goose had a go at me again and I ran away. I don't like geese. The ducks just waddle in, easy as you please.



Collecting the eggs.



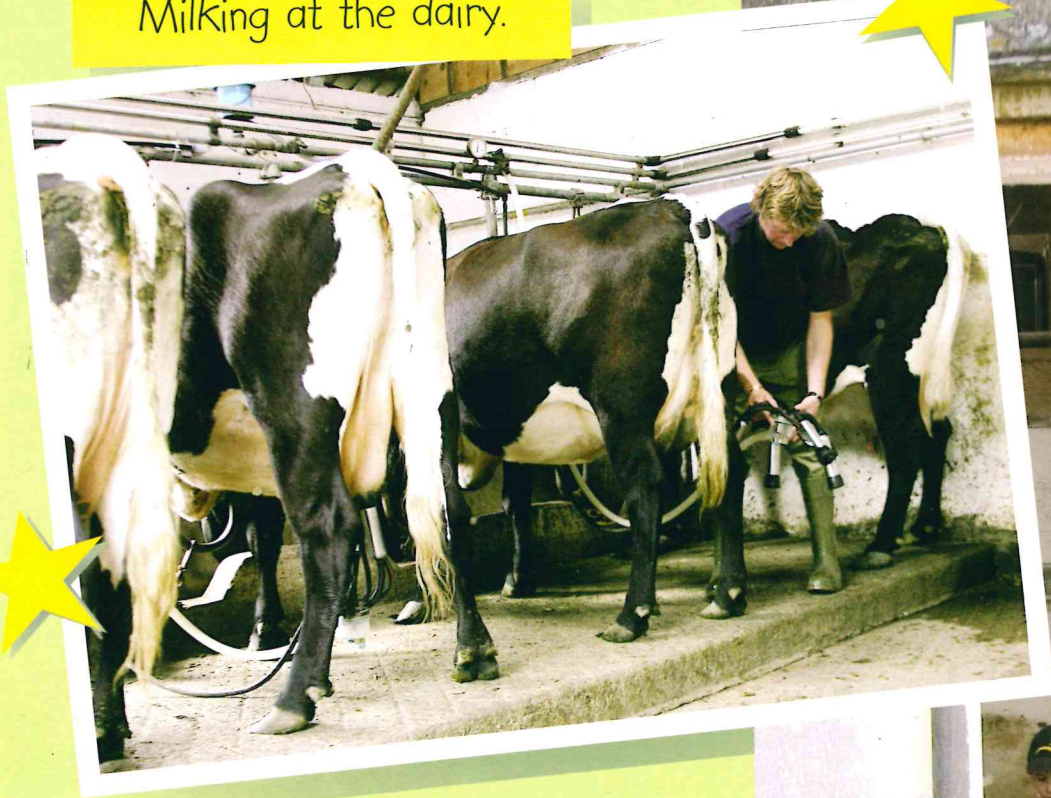
Watch out for the geese!



Hisssss!



Milking at the dairy.



This evening we went milking. We helped by cleaning down the dairy afterwards. It's got to be spotless with no germs. We put down straw in the stalls so the cows have got somewhere soft to lie.

Cleaning the dairy.



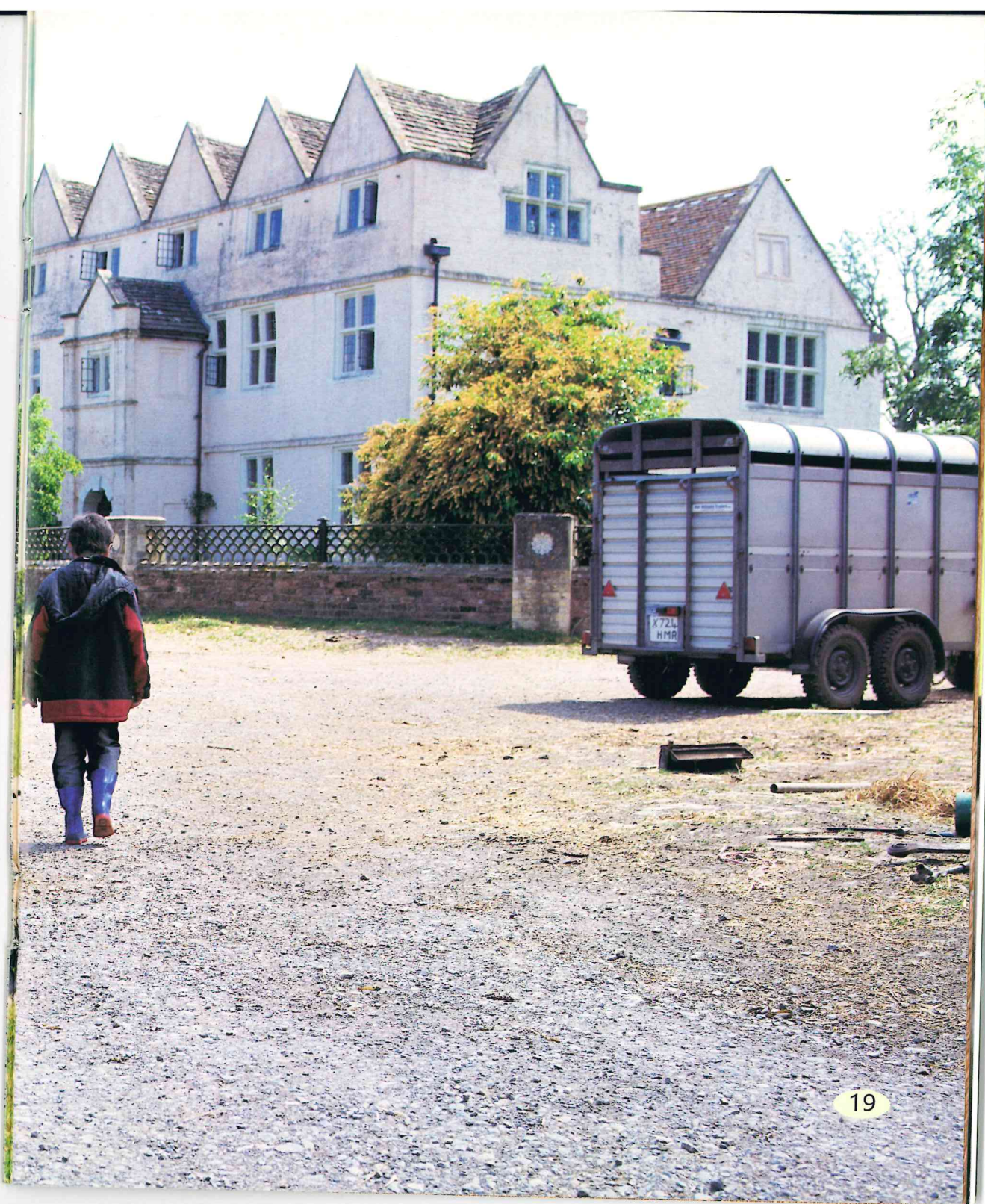


I love the gentle way the cows look at me. They've got brown eyes, and long eyelashes. Cows are my favourite, I think. Gentle giants.



Back over the hill after that. The insects were buzzing – there were millions of them!





Then this man came to read us a story which everyone said was quite good, but I only heard the first part because I fell asleep.



I think his name was Michael.

I wish you were here so you could see it all for yourself. I'm having the best time of my life ...
... and the smelliest.

Love, Sam xxxxx

Do not
disturb!



Our Timetable

WEDNESDAY

7:30AM Feed the pigs and drive the sheep
out on to fields.

8:30AM BREAKFAST

9:30AM Count and feed the sheep.

11:00AM BREAKTIME

11:15AM CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

12:30PM LUNCH

1:45PM Muck out the calves' shed.

3:45PM Bring horses in and collect eggs.

5:00PM TEATIME

6:00PM Milk the cows and clean the dairy.

8:00PM Home and storytime.

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calves 10, 11

cows 16, 17

dairy 16, 17

donkey 13

ducks 14, 15

eggs 14, 15

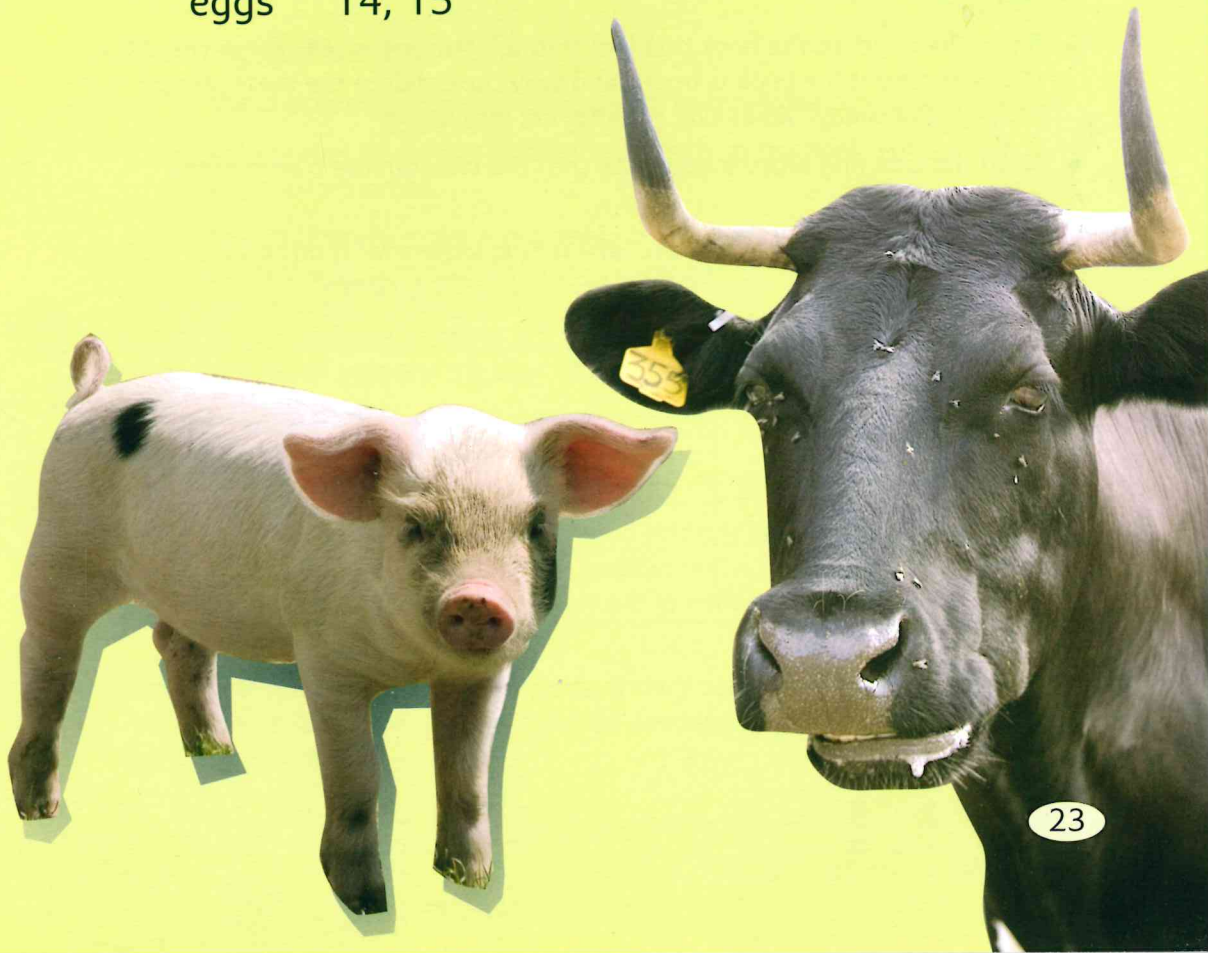
geese 14, 15

horses 12, 13

lambs 6, 7

pigs 5

sheep 6, 7



Ideas for guided reading

Learning objectives: Read recounts and recognise structure, e.g. sequence of events, use of time connectives like *first*, *next*, *after*, etc; identify simple questions and use text to find answers; read familiar texts aloud with pace and expression; make collections of significant words; interpret a text by reading aloud with variety in pace and emphasis.

Curriculum links: Geography: Plants and animals in the local environment; Citizenship: animals and us

Interest words: noise, chomp, breakfast, mucked, stinkiest, goose, waddle, germs, giants

Word count: 543

Getting started

- Show the children the book and leaf through the pages. Ask them what kind of environment the book is about and why the children are there. *Are the children on holiday? What kind of things are they doing?*
- Read the title and blurb together so that the children are aware of the context.
- Discuss how the book is written. *Who is Sam writing to? Is this a story? Do you think it is true? How can you tell the book is based on a letter?*
- Read pp2-3 to the children, modelling the enthusiasm that comes through in the writing. Then ask the children to read these pages to each other with appropriate expression.

Reading and responding

- Ask the children to read the text quietly and independently up to p21, and to think about expression when reading. While this is going on, ask each child to read aloud a short section of the text, remembering to adopt Sam's voice in their reading.
- Observe, prompt and praise their fluency, pace and expression, and reading of unfamiliar words, e.g. *stinkiest*, *waddle*.

- Discuss words and phrases which show Sam's enthusiasm, e.g. *real farming; it's magic; the smell!*

Returning to the book

- Ask the children to discuss Sam's time at the farm. *Did he enjoy it? What did he like the most?*
- Turn to p22 and talk through the sequence of events during the day. Discuss with the children what Sam and his friends did in the morning, afternoon and evening.
- On the whiteboard, make a flow chart of events emphasising time words such as *then, after breakfast, in the afternoon.*
- Using pp22-23, ask questions to check quick retrieval of information, e.g. 'Find the page about pigs in the book'; 'What time are the cows milked?'

Checking and moving on

- Ask the children to make a word bank of farm words, e.g. *field, trees, pigs.*
- Map the names of mother and baby animals in the book, e.g. pigs → piglets; sheep → lambs.
- Ask the children to make a timetable of a visit on which they have been, based on the one on p22. They could use this to plan a recount, using time connectives to help describe the order of the events of their day.

A Visit to the Castle				
10:00AM	11:00AM	12:30PM	2:00PM	4:00PM
Arrive at castle.	Play in castle grounds.	Lunch in café.	Visit castle maze.	Leave for home.

Reading more

Pacific Island Scrapbook (Purple/Band 8) is a recount of a visit to the Pacific island of Vanuatu.

A Visit to the Farm



"Dear Mum and Dad ...
When I get up I'm not going to
school, I'm going farming -
real farming."
Find out what happens when
Sam goes to stay on the farm.

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ISBN 0-00-718610-X



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All royalties from this book will go to the Farms for City Children Trust.

A recount of a visit