



**Merry Lea**

*Environmental Learning Center  
of Goshen College*

# Exploring Merry Lea Sustainable Farm

## 3rd - 5th

### Program Description

Merry Lea Sustainable Farm is a unique edible ecosystem where students taste their way to an understanding of humans, farm and habitat connections. Students delve into soil ecosystems, search for pollinators at work and meet our animals living at the farm. Making apple cider provides students a memorable example of how food can be processed before we consume it.

### Program Objectives

Students will:

- Discover much of the food we eat is grown on farms and comes from plants and animals and needs to be processed before eaten
- Explore how humans and farms are part of Earth's ecosystems
- Learn that different places (such as farms, prairies, wetlands, forests) have different plants and animals living in them

### Program Outline

\*Activities may vary based on group size and length of trip

1. Farm Stations: Students rotate through different stations focused on the importance each place plays on the farm.
  - Animal Barn (pigs, turkeys, chickens, goats)
  - Garden Exploration
  - Farms as an Ecosystem
  - Compost
2. Trail Activities: Students stop and make observations about an ecosystem while on the trail (wetland, forest, prairie).
3. Cider Pressing
4. Group Game

### Vocabulary

- Ecosystem
- Producer
- Decomposer
- Consumer
- Processed

### Quick Facts

Season	Fall: September - November
Grades	3rd - 5th
Program Length	4 hours
Maximum # of Students	80 Students

### Standards Correlations

- 3.LS.2** Plan and conduct an investigation to determine the basic needs of plants to grow, develop and reproduce.
- 4.ESS.4** Develop solutions that could be implemented to reduce the impact of humans on the natural environment and the natural environment on humans.
- 4.LS.3** Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior and reproduction in different ecosystems.
- 5.LS.2** Observe and classify common Indiana organisms as producers, consumers, decomposers, or predator and prey based on their relationships and interactions with other organisms in their ecosystem.

*See Standards Correlations for Exploring Merry Lea Sustainable Farm for more academic connections.*