

Living Together in Rural Areas
A set of learning activities

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Purpose

To develop a better understanding of the concerns and interests of rural farm and nonfarm residents in order to enhance the quality of life of all rural residents. Both farm and nonfarm residents must understand that all of their interactions cast **a shadow over the future**. In other words, these are neighbors who share a common place and a common future. Social relations between farm and nonfarm neighbors at one point influence social relations at a future time. Since it is unlikely that either the farm or the nonfarm family will move, it is in the best interest of all parties to arrive at an understanding of their concerns and interests so that they can share the same space in relative harmony.

Process

1. Break into smaller groups based on whether nonfarm or farm residents.
2. Have each group discuss and develop a short list of responses to each of the questions in Set A. Each group should place their responses onto flip chart paper.
3. Come back together and have a representative of each group summarize their discussions and their responses to the questions in Set A. Post each group's flip chart pages.
4. Ask the participants to identify similarities and differences in the answers. Develop a listing of similarities and differences. Post these on flip chart paper.
5. Once again break into smaller groups based on whether nonfarm or farm residents.
6. Have each group discuss and develop a short list of responses to each of the questions in Set B. Each group should place their responses onto flip chart paper.
7. Come back together and have a representative of each group summarize their discussions and their responses to the questions in Set B. Post each group's flip chart pages.
8. Ask the participants to identify similarities and differences in how each group perceives the other and understands the concerns of the other. Develop a listing of similarities and differences. Post these on flip chart paper.
9. Ask the participants to think about what may have led to the similarities and differences in how each group perceives the other and understand the concerns of the other.

If a specific incident has occurred or is cited, break back into two groups (farm and nonfarm) and have each group write a brief explanation of the incident. Then have them come back together and share their stories. Identify similarities and differences in the stories and ask what may have led to these. Consider using the following probes to encourage discussion on how we come to learn about events in our communities and how we interpret these events.

*How did you learn about this incident or event? From the newspaper? Radio? Friends?
Persons involved in the incident or event?*

How would you describe the tone or emotional content of the report about the incident or event?

Do you attribute a high level of trustworthiness to the source? Or, do you see the source as being biased for one side or another?

How many times did you hear or read about this incident or event? Did it seem like the facts of what happened were always the same? If not, what was different?

10. Have the group develop a common list of characteristics of a farm using the following questions:

What words come to your mind when you hear the phrase "a working farm"?

PROBES: *How big is a working farm?*
What kinds of activities occur on a farm?
Who lives on a working farm?

The purpose of this discussion is to explore whether we have assumptions or stereotypes about what is a farm that may influence how we feel about different types of farm organizations or farming activities. You might want to conclude this discussion with the following questions:

Can a farm be so big that you would not consider it a farm anymore?
Are there some activities that you would not consider to be farming?

11. Ask the participants to brainstorm ideas on what can be done to help farm families better understand the concerns and interests of nonfarm families and; nonfarm families better understand the concerns and interests of farm families. List these on a flip chart. Rank them in terms of which ideas can be most easily implemented and then rank them in terms of which ideas would be most effective. Some of the following have been suggested or actually used in various communities.

Some suggest that farmers should be the first to recognize the possibility of conflicts with or misunderstandings with nonfarm neighbors. Therefore, farm families should take the first step to open lines of communication with nonfarm neighbors. This includes:

- A. *Introducing themselves;*
- B. *Explaining about their farm operation;*
- C. *Inviting nonfarm neighbors over to visit the farm operation;*
- D. *Notifying neighbors when planning a farm activity or a change in farm operation that may create concerns (e.g, plowing on a dry and windy day, field spraying); and,*
- E. *Being willing to modify a planned farm activity if it is to occur at a time that would be disruptive of a nonfarm neighbors' planned activity (e.g., learning that a nonfarm neighbor is planning an outdoor activity at the same time you are planning to spread manure).*

Distribute the brochures on "Living in the Country." Ask participants if they believe that a brochure such as these for their community would be useful. Have the participants discuss what should be in a brochure for their county.

12. Do a role play. Have the participants discuss what happened and why. Then have them brainstorm ways to make the outcomes of the role plays more satisfactory for all parties. You might consider some of the following probes:

How did the families in this story define the situation they found themselves in?

What are your perceptions of the situation presented in this story?

What were the positions of the families in this story? In other words, what did they say they wanted?

What were the concerns or the underlying interests of the families as they dealt with this situation? In other words, what was important to the families that led them to take the positions or make the demands that they made?

What do you think will be the outcome of this situation as it stands?

If we think about the underlying interests of the families, what might be some creative solutions to the situation?

13. Distribute the article from USA Today entitled "Rural areas rustle up rules for city slickers" and the description of Kentucky's right to farm legislation.

Living Together in Rural Areas Questions for Group Discussions

Questions for Nonfarm Rural Residents

Set A

What do you most like about living in a rural area?

What do you least like about living in a rural area where there are operating farms?

Set B

What do you think farm families in the area where you live think about their nonfarm neighbors?

What do you think are the concerns of farm families in your area about having nonfarm neighbors?

Questions for Farm Rural Residents

Set A

What do you most like about living in a rural area?

What concerns do you have because there are nonfarm neighbors?

Set B

What do you think nonfarm families where you live think about their farm neighbors?

What do you think are the concerns of nonfarm families in your area about having farm neighbors?

Role Play 1
Give Me a Break, I Have to Get Up and Go To Work in the Morning!

The Situation - Bob and Carol

Bob and Carol have always dreamed of having a little place in the country where their boys, 5 and 7, would be safe and have opportunities to grow up in a natural and clean environment. Their dream came true last November when they moved into a new home about 20 miles from Big Town. Their house was built on a 5 acre lot, one of six five acre lots that had been sold off from a larger parcel of land. The rest of the old farm had been bought at auction by their nearest neighbor, Farmer Ted and his wife Alice. Farmer Ted operates a couple hundred of acres, most of which surrounds Bob and Carol's home. When Bob and Carol moved into their new home, Alice came by with a homemade pie to welcome them to the area and explained a bit about their farm and to tell them to always remember they had neighbors just down the road.

It was a pretty hard winter, and the first snow came in late December. It was a heavy wet snow, and when Bob and Carol got up that morning, the driveway was covered with about 8 inches of snow and Bob couldn't get his car out to go to work. Carol knew Bob was worried because he had an important meeting that morning, so she called Ted and Alice to see if they could help. Alice answered the phone and listened to the problem, and said that Ted was out feeding and haying the cattle and when he was done, she would see if he could come over with the tractor to help Bob clear the driveway. Alice told Bob this and he was relieved, he could get to his meeting on time. But it was another hour or so before Ted came over and Bob was a little irritated it had taken so long because he almost missed his meeting. But Bob appreciated the help and offered Ted \$20 for having helped them out. Ted said thanks but that's what neighbors were for and he would feel uncomfortable taking the money. There were two more big snows that winter, and each time Carol would call and Ted would come over and clear the drive. In February, Bob and Carol got an extra pair of tickets for a UK basketball game and asked Ted and Alice to go with them as a way of thanking them for all their help.

Spring came late and wet that year. Ted's fields were under water for a while, and even when the rains finally stopped, you could see the big pools of water and the mud in the fields. Then, in late May the rains finally ended and it got hot quickly and the land dried. Bob was working on a big project for his job and the kids were studying hard for their finals. During that week, Bob and Carol had noticed a lot of dust around the house and they could see and hear Ted on his tractor on the other side of his farm. He seemed to be out there day and night. One morning, Carol saw Ted heading out to the fields across from their home with his tractor and he began to work. It had gotten pretty dry by now, and each time Ted made a pass through his field a cloud of dust would rise and drift toward their place. Carol had to close all the windows, but the fine dust just seemed to drift into the house. When Bob got home he could tell that Carol was irritated and he couldn't sit on the front porch after dinner as he liked to do because the dust, by this time, was pretty thick

Role Play 1
Give Me a Break, I Have to Get Up and Go To Work in the Morning!
Bob and Carol Dialogue

BOB: Well, at least he will stop pretty soon because it's getting dark and then maybe things will settle down.

CAROL: I don't know Bob, you know earlier this week we could hear him until long after dark. I must admit it is really starting to bother me. We have your boss coming for dinner this weekend, and it's going to take me hours to get this place cleaned up. And look, here comes another one of those tractor things.

Three hours pass, it is now 11PM.

CAROL: Bobby Jr., you get back into that bed right now. You have school tomorrow and a big test.

JR: Mom, I can't sleep. The light keeps shining in my window and its so loud.

CAROL: Bob, what are you going to do? You know Bobby Jr. needs a good sleep if he is going to do well on his test tomorrow, and I don't know if I can sleep with all that racket going on.

BOB: Well, it's 11, he should be stopping soon.

It's now 12:30AM. Bob and Carol have been lying awake for nearly an hour and Bobby Jr. has been up and down three more times.

BOB: I can't stand this anymore. Bobby Jr! Get into bed right now! Doesn't he know that some people have to get up and go to work in the morning? I'm going to call them.

Alice, this is Bob. I don't know if you realize it but Ted's still out near our house and the noise and lights are really bothering us. Can you get hold of Ted and tell him that it's 12:30 in the morning and he needs to quit for the night? Yeah, well, I'm real sorry about the weather putting you behind but I can't do anything about that. Ted's got to understand that his machines are loud, the lights are bright, and my family can't get any sleep. Doesn't he understand that some people have to get up and go to work in the morning? Yeah, well, if I have to, I'll call the police. We have a right to some peace and quiet.

Role Play 1
Give Me a Break, I Have to Get Up and Go To Work in the Morning!

The Situation - Ted and Alice

Ted and Alice have a cattle and grain operation on a farm his grandfather had settled. They knew that if they were going to have enough to set aside for their children's college fund they would have to expand their operation. So when they heard the neighboring farm was to be auctioned, they were determined to get at least the 120 acres of good land adjacent to their farm. But the heirs decided to divide the land into two parcels -- one included 25 acres divided into five acres parcels, and the other parcel was 100 acres. They successfully bid for the 100 acres and while they were pleased to get this land, the fact that there were going to be several homes built on the remaining land did worry them a bit. Bob and Carol were the first to build and when they moved into their new home, Alice stopped by to welcome them with a homemade pie.

The winter came early and hard that year. In late December, the first snow came -- wet and heavy and thick. Ted was up by 4AM and spent an exhausting morning hauling food and hay to the cattle. Around 7:15, Carol called to say that they were snowed in and Bob needed to get to Big Town for a meeting and was there anything they could do to help. Alice explained that Ted was taking care of the herd and would come as soon as he could. When Ted got back to the house, Alice said that Bob and Carol needed and help, and without even stopping for coffee, Ted went back out to get the tractor with the scrapper to help clear the driveway. When he was done, Ted felt a bit uncomfortable because Bob offered him \$20 for doing the plowing. Ted said it wasn't right to take money for doing something to help your neighbors. Twice more that winter Ted went to help their neighbors, and he told Alice that sometimes he felt that Bob and Carol just assumed he would come because he had a tractor. But in February, Bob and Carol called to say they had an extra pair of tickets to a college basketball game and asked if they could come. Ted and Alice were excited because they had never had an opportunity to see a college game. It was great fun.

The spring was wet and late. Ted couldn't get into the fields to begin planting until mid-May. Ted knew that every day that passed without getting his crop into the field was costing him, and after the last few years and buying the land, he had to make a good profit this year. So, as soon as the rains stopped he began planting. He was running day and night to try and catch up. Ted was worried because it had gotten so dry so quick, but he just kept working because if it was planted it couldn't grown. Today, he had started on the new land and it was so dry that every pass raised a cloud of dust. But the weather forecast said it might rain tomorrow or the next day, and if he could get these last fields planted, he had a chance to make it. Alice had brought him dinner about 7PM.

Role Play 1
Give Me a Break, I Have to Get Up and Go To Work in the Morning!
Ted and Alice Dialogue

ALICE: Ted, take a break, I've brought you a hot dinner.

TED: Thanks. It sure smells good and I'm really hungry.

ALICE: When do you think you'll get done?

TED: I don't know. It's going to take a couple more hours. But you know, I can't stop. I've got to get this crop in before it rains. This year has got to be a good one or we're going to have to think about maybe selling off some of this land just to meet the mortgage payment and the expenses on the rest of the place. You go on home with the kids.

It is now nearly 1AM and Ted sees the pickup coming from the house. Alice gets out and waves him to a stop.

ALICE: Ted, Bob and Carol just called the house. Bob was pretty upset. He said they didn't like all the dust and the noise and he wanted you to stop.

TED: Stop? What do you mean? I've got to keep going until I get these last fields planted. If I can do it before the rains start again...

ALICE: I know Ted, I understand. But Bob, well, he was pretty angry. He said they couldn't sleep for all the noise and lights. He said that he had to get up and go to work in the morning. Ted, he said he'd call the police if you didn't stop.

TED: He said what? What does he think I'm doing out here? Playing around? I can't go to bed until I get my work done!

Role Play 2
“If you don’t keep your dogs out of my flock, I’ll shoot them”

The Situation - Tom and Mary Martin

Tom and Mary operate a 150 acre farm about 7 miles from Little Town, a growing community 20 miles from Big City. Tom and Mary have about 85 acres in corn, 25 acres in hay, and the rest in pasture. They have a flock of 100 ewes and a large pond. Over the years they have had some problems with coyotes and dogs, but with careful management their flock has thrived.

Last year the farm just down the road was sold and 15 new homes were built. Tom and Mary, like many of their farm neighbors, are a bit concerned about the subdivisions that are popping up around Little town, but they don’t see what they can do about it. And, its true that for some of the older farmers in their area, the chance to sell their land to developers has meant an opportunity to retire and live comfortably.

One early spring morning when Tom went out to feed the sheep, he found several lambs dead and three ewes so badly injured that he had to put them down. That night, Tom sat up, and when he heard some noise out by the barn, he grabbed his gun and a flashlight and ran out. As he ran around the corner of the barn, he saw a pack of dogs in his flock just as they pulled down one of his ewes. He raised his rifle and shot, and one dog yelped and the whole pack turned and ran.

MARY: Tom, what was it? I heard you shooting, is everything alright?

TOM: No it isn’t. We lost two more lambs and I had to shoot one of the ewes, she was torn up so bad. It was dogs! I think I got one, or at least winged it because I heard a yelp after I fired.

MARY: Tom, I’m scared by this. We can’t afford to keep losing stock like this, at this rate, we won’t have any of our flock left in a couple of weeks.

TOM: That’s not going to happen. I am going to call the sheriff tomorrow. I got a pretty good look at some of those dogs and I am going to find out who they belong to and they are going to pay us for our losses.

The next morning, Tom called the local vet and asked if anyone had brought a dog in with a gun shot. The vet said yes and gave him the name of the owner. Tom then called the sheriff and told him what had happened that night. The sheriff said that someone had already called to complain that their dog had been shot and demanding action. Tom asked the sheriff to go with him to the owner of the dog. As they drove into the new subdivision, Tom saw at least two more dogs that looked like those he’d seen the night before. When they got to the home of the people who owned the dog he had shot, he and the sheriff got out to talk.

Role Play 2
“If you don’t keep your dogs out of my flock, I’ll shoot them”

The Situation - Dick and Jane Williams

Dick and Jane had both grown up in large cities. When they met in college, they often talked about their dream of living in the country where their kids could be safe and have the freedom to play and run and shout. And the kids could have a dog because neither felt it was really fair to keep a dog cooped up in the city. When they first married, they lived in a small apartment, and always felt crowded by neighbors who were too loud and right next door. After their first child was born they managed to move into a small house in a subdivision, but the lots were small and felt even smaller because everyone had fences around their property.

As their financial situation improved, they began to seriously think about making their dream of living in the country come true. Dick’s company had just moved its offices to the outskirts of Big City, so they began looking for a new home near Little Town. They found a new subdivision going up about 7 miles outside of Little Town. It was everything they had dreamed of -- a small cluster of 15 homes on one acre lots surrounded by farms, and only 10 miles from Dick’s company. They moved in and bought the dog they and their children had always wanted. It was the cutest puppy and their two boys spent hours playing with Buster. The only problem was that their youngest son was allergic to dog hair, and so Buster couldn’t stay in the house at night. At first they worried about leaving him out, but several of the other neighbors had dogs that spent the night outside, and every morning Buster would be lying on the back porch, waiting for his morning meal and his warm welcome from the children.

The children loved Buster and so did Dick and Jane, especially after Buster jumped into a lake on a vacation, and pulled their youngest son out when he got a cramp and couldn’t make it to shore. But one morning, Dick heard his youngest son scream when he opened the back door. Rushing to the door, Dick found Buster covered in blood, panting heavily and barely moving. Dick scooped Buster up and ran to the car and took him to the vet. After about an hour, the vet came out and said that Buster would be alright. He’d been shot, but the bullet hadn’t hit any vital organs and with a couple of days rest, he’s be back to his old self. Dick gently carried his dog home to find Ann and children waiting with tear stained faces.

DICK: It’s alright, he’s going to be ok. He just needs to rest for a few days. Why don’t you boys make him up a bed in the kitchen and we’ll let him rest there.

ANN: What happened to Buster? What did the vet say?

DICK: Somebody shot him! Can you believe it? I’m going to call the sheriff. Who is crazy enough to go around shooting at dogs at night? Don’t people realize there are kids around here? What if one of the boys had been out with Buster?

ANN: Oh Dick, this really worries me. Did you see the boys? They cried their hearts out when you left. I don’t know what they’d do if something happened to Buster.

Role Play 2
“If you don’t keep your dogs out of my flock, I’ll shoot them”
Final Group Dialogue

- SHERIFF: Mr. Williams, I’m Sheriff Brown. I’m here about your dog.
- WILLIAMS: Thank you for coming so soon. I really hope you can do something about this. My kids are really upset about our dog being shot. I can’t believe this happened. We thought this was a safe community.
- SHERIFF: Well, Mr. Williams, this is Tom Martin, he owns a farm down the road, and he’s the one who shot your dog.
- WILLIAMS: He what? I hope you are going to arrest him, and you, I want you to know that I’m thinking of suing you for shooting my dog.
- TOM: Sue me? Listen mister, you are going to owe me a lot of money for the sheep your dog has killed over the last two nights. You and at least two other people around here, because I saw two other dogs in the pack that attacked my sheep last night as we drove in.
- WILLIAMS: What are you saying? I don’t owe you anything. My dog wouldn’t do anything like that, he’s as gentle as they come. He saved my son’s life. I can’t believe you would say this.
- SHERIFF: Mr. Williams, calm down. Now tell me, do you keep your dog in at night?
- WILLIAMS: No, he’s an outside dog. But he always stays around the house. He’s always here in the morning.
- SHERIFF: Well Mr. Williams, let me explain something to you. Dogs don’t stay around, they roam, and they roam in packs, and when they do, they get into trouble. Now Tom here is perfectly in his right to shoot any dog that attacks his sheep and you are responsible for paying him for the sheep he has lost. That’s the law.
- WILLIAMS: I can’t believe this. He shoots my dog and you tell me its my fault and that I owe him money? This is crazy!
- TOM: No, what’s crazy is you letting your dog run loose and not caring what might happen if he gets in with my sheep or my neighbor’s cattle.

Role Play 3
“My Child Almost Died Because of Your Animals”

The Situation - Paul and Mary

Paul and Mary had always dreamed of living in the country and having a place for their children to play and be free. After years of saving, they found the perfect home. It was in a brand new “rural residential cluster,” a group of 12 homes on 20 acres surrounded by farms. The farm directly behind their new home was a horse farm and standing in the kitchen Ann could look across to mares and foals grazing in a field with a large pond. Paul and Mary’s children, Peter age 7 and Annie age 9, loved their new home. There were five other children about their own age and Peter was positively fascinated with the horses and the open fields and the pond.

Throughout the rest of the summer, the kids would roam the subdivision, riding bikes and playing games. Mary tried to keep an eye on the kids, but she was busy decorating the house and getting ready for her new job as a teacher in the local elementary school. One day as she came into the kitchen she saw the kids on the other side of the fence, walking toward the group of mares and foals. Mary ran out of the house and yelled at the kids to get out of there. As the kids started walking back to the fence, Mary saw a jeep coming across the field and a man jumped out and started talking to the kids. When they finally got back to the house, Mary asked them who the man was and what he’d said. They said he was the man who owned the horses and he’d yelled at them for crossing the fence. He’d said that the horses weren’t used to people walking in the fields with them and they could get hurt. Later that afternoon, Mary saw the jeep pull up and a man began posting “No Trespassing” signs on the fence. She walked over to talk with him. He asked her if she knew whose kids had been in his field. She said two had been hers. He then told her that he didn’t want the kids in the field with the mares and foals; the horses were easily spooked and the mares were very protective of their foals.

A week later, workers appeared and put up a chain link fence all along the horse field that bordered the subdivision. Mary figured this would solve the problem, but she often found Peter sitting on the back porch looking at the field of horses. In September school started. Several times each week, Mary had to stay at school and Peter and Annie would be home for an hour or two by themselves. Paul and Mary talked to the kids about what the rules were when they were alone, the most important being they were forbidden to go near the horses.

In October, Mary was still at school, when she got a call to come to the local hospital. She rushed out and when she got to the hospital, Paul was waiting for her, fighting back tears.

Role Play 3
“My Child Almost Died Because of Your Animals”
Paul and Mary Dialogue

- PAUL: Mary, its Annie, she’s been hurt, they are operating on her now.
- MARY: Oh my baby! What happened? Was she hit by a car, did she fall down?
- PAUL: Well, it seems that a bunch of the kids decided to go into that field with those horses. Peter said that he and one of the other boys were going to ride one of the horses and that he told Annie to stay in the yard, but she apparently climbed the fence and followed them.
- MARY: I still don’t understand, how did Annie get hurt?
- PAUL: From what I can figure out, the boys got pretty close to the horses and then something scared them and the horses started coming toward them and the kids started yelling and then, I’m not sure. Apparently Annie got kicked in the head.
- MARY: Oh no. Paul, what did the doctor say?
- PAUL: He’s not sure, but he says its pretty serious.
- MARY: Its his fault. That man should never have dangerous animals that close to a subdivision with children. He should know that kids love horses and just can’t resist going near them and trying to play with them.

Role Play 3
“My Child Almost Died Because of Your Animals”

The Situation - Hank and Judy

Hank and Judy have operated a 60 acre horse farm for nearly 25 years. It is a breeding operation with 25 mares. At any one time, besides their mares, they have 20 to 25 weanlings and 20 to 25 yearlings getting ready to be sold in Lexington at the September sales. Hank and Judy carefully manage their land because their farm is just large enough to handle their horses. A year or so ago, the farm adjacent to theirs had gone up for auction. Hank and Judy had gone to the auction to try and buy a 25 acre parcel, but the farm sold as a single lot to a local developer who promptly began subdividing the land for homes.

As they watched the new homes being built, Hank and Judy did worry about what this would mean. They were concerned about kids and dogs getting into the fields with their horses and either their horses or the kids getting hurt. A few months after the first set of homes were built, Hank was checking on his horses when he saw some children in the field with his mares and foals. He managed to catch up with the kids who had turned to run back to the subdivision when they saw his truck. He yelled at them for trespassing on private property, and warned them that the horses could be dangerous. Later that day after talking with Judy about what had happened, they decided it was necessary to post some “No Trespassing” signs along the border fence line. While Hank was doing this, a woman came out of one of the houses and Hank warned her about the potential dangers to children in a field of mares and foals.

Although he never saw children in his field again, Hank occasionally found evidence that they had been there: a couple of times he found candy wrappers and soft drink cans around his pond. Hank and Judy talked about the problem and decided to borrow some money to put in a five foot chain link fence along the line that bordered the new subdivision. As they saw it, this was their only option. The field next to the subdivision was their best field for pregnant mares and foals because it had a large pond that provided water through the summer as well as a stand of trees good for both shade in the summer and a windbreak in the winter. And, it wasn't like their farm was big enough for them to decide not to use one of their pastures.

They weaned their foals in early September and only their pregnant mares remained in the pasture. One afternoon in October, Hank heard some noise and saw his pregnant mares running around their field and a group of kids standing in corner of the field. Hank jumped the fence and went running toward the kids, most of whom scattered and climbed back over the chain link fence. Two remained and when Hank got to them he realized there was a third child lying still on the ground. It was a little girl and her head was covered with blood. Hank ran back to the house, shouting for Judy to call an ambulance.

Role Play 3
“My Child Almost Died Because of Your Animals”
Hank and Judy Dialogue

This dialogue occurs just after the ambulance pulls out of their farm.

JUDY: Oh Hank, do you think she's going to be alright? There was so much blood and she was so still.

HANK: I don't know but we better hope so. I've got a bad feeling about this. I think we need to call Mark.

JUDY: Mark? Why should we call our lawyer?

HANK: Well, the sheriff said he thought we should call because we might be sued by her parents.

JUDY: Sued? Us? Why is this our fault? We've done everything we could do to keep those kids out of the pastures We put up the signs, put up the fence, and you've talked to the kids and some of the parents to warn them. How can we be blamed for this terrible accident?

HANK: Well, the sheriff said that they could claim our horses and the pond are attractive nuisances, you know, they attract the attention of kids to things that might be dangerous.

JUDY: That's ridiculous. That would mean we couldn't have horses on a horse farm! Its the parents fault, they should be able to keep control of their kids. Where were they when their kids were climbing over a five foot chain link fence?

Role Play Discussion Guide

1. “Give me a break, I have to get up and go to work in the morning”

How did the families in this story define the situation they found themselves in?

What are your perceptions of the situation presented in this story?

What were the positions of the families in this story? In other words, what did they say they wanted?

What were the concerns of the underlying interests of the families as they dealt with this situation? In other words, what was important to the families that led them to take the positions or make the demands that they made?

What do you think will be the outcome of this situation as it stands?

Bob and Carol will call the sheriff to complain. In all likelihood the sheriff will respond and talk to Ted. In Kentucky, the state's right to farm legislation provides legal protection to farm operators. No commonly practiced farm activity can be defined as a nuisance by neighbors if it is in use prior to residential use of adjacent lands.

If we think about the underlying interests of the families, what might be some creative solutions to the situation?

Ted could work the fields near Bob and Carol's house during daylight hours if his production schedule permits

Bob and Carol could put up blinds on the windows of their bedrooms

Ted and Alice could invite Bob and Carol to sit down with them and talk about what it takes for them to have a successful year

2. “If you don't keep your dogs out of my flock, I'll shoot them”

How did the families in this story define the situation they found themselves in?

What are your perceptions of the situation presented in this story?

What were the positions of the families in this story? In other words, what did they say they wanted?

What were the concerns of the underlying interests of the families as they dealt with this situation? In other words, what was important to the families that led them to take the positions or make the demands that they made?

What do you think will be the outcome of this situation as it stands?

Tom and Mary will sue to recover their losses due to the dog attacks. They may also sue to have the dogs that Tom can identify destroyed as “dangerous animals.” Hank and Judy may sue Tom for shooting their dog. In most states, a farm owner has the right to shoot any animal that attacks their livestock.

If we think about the underlying interests of the families, what might be some creative solutions to the situation?

Tom and Mary could get guard animals for their flocks

Dick and Jane could put a fence around their yard

Tom and Mary could invite the residents of the subdivision to visit their farm and see their animals

Dick and Jane could have their dog sleep in the garage at night

3. **“My child almost died because of your animals”**

How did the families in this story define the situation they found themselves in?

What are your perceptions of the situation presented in this story?

What were the positions of the families in this story? In other words, what did they say they wanted?

What were the concerns of the underlying interests of the families as they dealt with this situation? In other words, what was important to the families that led them to take the positions or make the demands that they made?

What do you think will be the outcome of this situation as it stands now?

Hank and Judy may sue Paul and Mary for the injuries to their daughter. Farms have many “attractive nuisances,” that is animals, buildings (e.g., barns, silos), equipment (e.g., tractors) and physical features (e.g., ponds) that are very attractive to young children. In a Kentucky court case on which this story is based, the parents of a young child injured by a horse sued the farm owner. The lower court ruled in favor of the parents. On appeal, the Appeals Court reversed the lower court ruling arguing that in putting up no trespassing signs and a chain link fence the farmer had taken all reasonable efforts to limit access to his horse farms. Moreover, the Appeals Court said, since the horse farm pre-existed the subdivision, those who purchased a home in the subdivision knew that they were locating near a farm that had potential hazards.

If we think about the underlying interests of the families, what might be some creative solutions to the situation?

Paul and Mary could invite the families of the subdivision to the farm and show them their horses and how to act around them

Hank and Judy could hire a babysitter to stay with their children after school

Paul and Mary could increase the height of their boundary fence

Hank and Judy could arrange for some type of sponsored activity for their children after school