During our Farm Theme, we identified farm animals, their sounds and their jobs on the farm. We learned about the food grown on a farm, the jobs of farmers, and the unique equipment and buildings on a farm. We finished the theme by delving deeper to learn details about some specific farm animals.

**Our Favorite Theme Books**

Circle time is a great time to hear stories that help friends learn more about our theme. This month our favorite books were:

- *Ragweed’s Farm Dog Handbook*, by Anne Vittur Kennedy
- *A Home in The Barn*, by Jerry Pinkney
- *Blue Chicken*, by Deborah Freedman
- *The Scarecrow’s Hat*, by Ken Brown
- *On the Farm at The Market*, by G. Brian Karas

**Mango Monkey Says…**

Our wise puppet friend visited the friends this month with his friend Shy Squirrel, to talk about saying “No, Thank You.” We shared the book, *The Story of Ferdinand*, by Munro Leaf to remind the friends that if they do not want to do something, they can say, “No, thank you.” In the story, Ferdinand does not want to be rough like the other bulls. He just wants to sit under the cork tree and smell the flowers. Ferdinand is able to show that being brave was about letting others know what he needs. The friends helped Mango Monkey teach his puppet pals when and how to use their words and bodies when they want to play or if someone is too close to them. They discussed how Shy Squirrel was able to put her paws up and say, “No, thank you” and “Stop” when she did not want Andy Alligator to hug her so tight.
During the first week of our “Farm” theme, we began by asking the friends what they know about farms. Most of the responses focused on the animals on the farm. During circle time, we read a variety of books about farm animals and books such as *Barn Yard Banter*, by Denise Fleming, to learn facts about the animals, their families, and their sounds and jobs on a farm. We sorted farm/zoo/pet animals, made a barn scene for our locker tags, and began our Farm Mural Project by painting land and sky. Some friends made pretend mud from cocoa, water and cornstarch for our pig figures to enjoy! Puzzles, Loose Parts, Singing Time and the books in the Library Center all helped to reinforce the content and added to the fun!

We explored the different shelters on a farm, such as a barn, silo, chicken coop, stables, and farm house. Farm equipment was added to our classroom as we learned about the machines that work on a farm. *Fantastic Farm Machines*, by Chris Peterson and *Farming*, by Gail Gibbons gave us the opportunity to look at photographs of farm equipment, learn the names of the equipment and understand how each machine works. We cut out and added a barn and some ink stamped animals to the Farm Murals, painted with toy tractors, and made working silos. The books *On The Farm*, *At the Market* by G. Brian Karas and *The Year at Maple Hill Farm* by Alice Provenson, gave us a look into what a harvest is, where our food comes from, and what happens through the seasons on a farm. Changing our Dramatic Play Center into the Green Room’s Farmer’s Market allowed us to practice buying, sorting and working as a farmer selling the crops grown. The area was guarded by the scarecrow we helped build.
Our focus animals for this week were Sheep, Horses, Cows, Chickens and Bees. The Dramatic Play Center became a Sheep Pen, and the area to explore some wool sweaters, blankets, scarves and mittens. The wonderful photographs in *From Sheep to Sweater* by Robin Nelson showed the step by step process of making a sweater. The friends used real wool wrapped around a popsicle stick to make a sheep in the Make Shop. After reading *The Milk Makers*, by Gail Gibbons, the friends pretended to be a farmer and experimented “milking a cow” using rubber glove “udder” full of a water and white paint mixture. We also experimented with shaking and then shaking more whipping cream in a glass jar to make butter. It tasted so good on crackers at snack! Laurie Berkner’s song “I Know a Chicken” reminded us that chickens give us eggs as we practiced shaking musical instrument eggs to the music. We investigated real honeycomb cells and baby bees to fit in them. An adaptation of the song *Baa Baa Black Sheep* included all the focus animals and the products and services they provide. We finished the Farm Mural Project by adding ink stamped animals and a toothpick picket fence.

Lucy Jo, Shreya and Cornelia glued tissue paper on sheep for our bulletin board. Ryder cut paper to make pretend grass for the hallway mural.

Henry watched as his butter was taken out of his jar.

Luke and Shreya completed their mural by building a picket fence with toothpicks.
Make Shop Experiences

This month in the Make Shop, we focused on sewing and textiles. The children made small holes in wood shims with the hand drills, then practiced beginning sewing skills by weaving different colored craft wire in and out of the holes. We made model sheep from sticks and clothespins, then wrapped them in real wool. As an added bonus, the children had an opportunity to build with the large architecture blocks.

Music Experiences

with Mrs. Hraber

Mrs. Hraber integrated music into our Farm theme this month. We sang songs about the different sounds that those animals make. We used instruments such as castanets for the duck’s quack and cowbells for the cows. We also sang songs relating to the crops that grow on a farm, and the equipment needed to operate a farm.

Center Spotlight:
The Science Center

The Science Center offers the friends opportunities to explore theme-related or seasonal items, experiment with materials on their own or with teacher guidance, and observe the natural processes. It is home to our pet beta fish, Half Moon, and our pet worms. The pet worms help us all by eating and processing food scraps from snack, providing amazing fertilizer for our garden, and being an animal ambassador to help children learn respect for small animals.
Special Visitors and Birthday Celebrations

Ms. Debbie from the Carnegie Library led us in the farm animal Hokey Pokey.

Lucy Jo’s mother read a favorite book for Lucy Jo’s birthday.

To celebrate Ryder’s birthday his mother read to the friends.

Shreya celebrated her birthday with her mother by reading a book together.

Zeynep’s mom read to us at circle time to celebrate her birthday.
Our Month in Photos