

For those generations growing up and growing older out of earshot of a rooster's good morning, there is Macomber Farm, a blend of working farm, petting zoo and state-of-the-art educational facility. The two-year-old complex, set on 46 acres not far from the Massachusetts Turnpike in Framingham (22 miles west of Boston) was designed by the New York firm of Edwin Schlossberg for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Not surprisingly, then, what distinguishes Macomber (pronounced MAY-kumber) from other farm-cum-museum-cum-schools is that visitors may appreciate not only farming from the farmer's point of view, but also *being farmed* from the animal's point of view. At Macomber, it is not enough to cultivate the acquaintance of a thoroughbred horse, a Holstein cow or a 2½-year-old, 450-pound Yorkshire sow. One may see the world as the animal sees it; the farm supplies the mechanical and electronic means to do so.

Just outside the swine barn, for instance, are sets of binoculars, some at adult height, some at child height. Look through them and see the way a pig does. The vision is remarkably like our own: binocular, in full color and in three dimensions.

Across the way is a ramp labeled, "Can You Walk Like a Pig?" To try "Pig Walking," begin at "Start" and carefully place hands and feet in the bronzed pig footprints in the sequence indicated — RF for right front foot, LH for left hind, and so forth.

Nearby, a visitor is invited into a grove of colored pipes to try out "Pig Smelling." In each pipe, set upright in the ground, are three sets of perforations, at levels corresponding to various human heights. The trick is to keep sniffing at the pipes until you identify five emitting the same scent.

Having thus seen, walked and smelled in the way that a pig does, a visitor can continue to learn about pigs.

Just inside the swine barn is a corridor labeled "Pig Tales," lined with poster-size color slides of pig life and a series of large video screens. Push the proper button and each screen lights up with a multiple-choice question about the slide above it. The slide above the first screen shows a row of piglets nursing from a sow. "The boss of this litter of piglets is . . .," the screen prompts, and then offers three possible answers: "1. The piglet who was born first; 2. The piglet nursing closest to the sow's head; 3. None of them. Piglets don't care who's boss."

If a visitor answers by pushing buttons 1 or 3, the screen flashes: "No — Try Again." If he or she pushes 2, the

machine gives an explanation: "Yes," it says. "Piglets struggle to be boss so they can get the most milk, so the piglet nursing there is boss while the litter stays together."

At the barn's exit are two more special displays. A computer terminal will answer pre-programmed basic questions about pigs on various levels — primary reader, adult or "in-depth" — depending upon the inquirer's choice.

In the main part of the barn are the subjects of all this begadged interest. Well within petting distance are the 450-pound sow named Big Mama, snoozing stonelike, and nearby a Yorkshire boar named Hot Shot or a Duroc sow named Cherry.

The barn, like all those on the farm, is a nice place to live in, not to mention visit: It has high ceilings, skylights and exhaust fans; its concrete floors are immaculate and its pig bedding retains the heady, sweet scent of fresh hay.

Except for the 200-year-old New England barn, almost every exhibit has binoculars and a ramp to encourage seeing and walking like each animal, the computer terminal question-and-answer machine, a population of representative breeds, and many other games that up to 12 at a time can play.

The fowl barn, for example, houses chickens, turkeys and a computer game that challenges visitors to interpret animal body language, thus drawing their own conclusions about the meaning of "pecking order." In one sequence, cartoon chickens named Red and Chick stage an episodic fight; between rounds, the onlooker is asked what the action means, particularly in its effect on status within the flock.

The horse barn is home to a similar game, based upon the relationship between horse and rider. And just outside the barn entrance is the "I'm Working Like a Horse" game, in which visitors, usually in groups of three or four, try to move miniature vehicles — a log skid, a milk wagon and a Conestoga wagon — anchored to simulate the weight of their full-sized counterparts. Such, one discovers, is the meaning of horsepower.

The sheep and cattle barn is home to two of the farm's current stars, Marie and Spike, a shaggy-coated, long-horned Scottish Highland cow and her calf. Just behind the barn is a cattle-handling facility with fenced pens and narrow, walled chutes, leading to a metal cage for veterinary care.

There are also less spectacular exhibits, such as a mechanical egg weigher. Everywhere, too, are farm guides, helpful presences in royal blue shirts and white trousers and tennis shoes.

Then there are the demonstrations — five or more a day, the number

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