

Toy Farm Animals

A century ago, many families lived on small farms or had small plots of land near their home. There they raised animals for food and transportation. Children liked to play with model animals and tools that could let them dramatize their family life. Sometimes grownups made toy farm animals of carved wood or other materials so that their children could play and dramatize work and fun on the farm.

What would you have to know about farm chores and the way farm animals grow and behave to have fun with these toys?

Children who had no money to buy toys made their own farm toys from things they found in the woods and fields. They used corncobs, cornhusks, acorns, nuts, and other seeds, cattails, twigs, leaves, feathers, and galls from which the insects had emerged. The kind of plastic used today had not been invented.



Think like a historian.

- Why do you think there are very few toy farm animals in toy catalogs today?
- How would making their own toys have helped children learn to be better observers and thinkers?
- How could you use toy animals to dramatize some of the stories about animals in the Little House books?
- How would closely observing real farm animals or pictures of them help you make your own toy animals from natural materials?

