

Where is Agriculture?

Wyoming Social Studies, Language Arts

Objectives:

- The students will identify many of the things in their lives that come from agriculture.

Background:

“Farming,” or production agriculture, is what most students think of when they hear the word agriculture. It is the actual production of raw commodities. Less than two percent of today’s workforce in the United States is involved in growing food and fiber products. That figure represents the people typically referred to as farmers and ranchers—people who produce food and fiber. However, it doesn’t stop there.

Production of food and fiber also includes people in a wide variety of specialties such as raising fish, timber, herbs, and much more. Many of the products students use every-day come from agriculture. Agriculture provides our food, clothing, and shelter. In fact, agriculture is the only industry people must have to survive.

As we depend on agriculture for survival, agriculture depends on natural resources—air, water, and land. Farmers are good stewards of the land and care about animals. Today’s farmers are some of our nation’s most important environmentalists. They manage about 950 million acres of land in the United States. In 1994, farmers removed 36.4 million acres of land from production to protect the environment and provide habitat for wildlife. Farmers provide food and habitat for 75 percent of the nation’s wildlife.

Activity Procedures:

1. Read “Where is Agriculture?” to the students.
2. Relate how Michelle was surprised about all the things in her life that come from agriculture. Have the students suggest things from the story that Michelle found out were agricultural products or had agricultural origins.
3. Ask the students if they know where the products came from. (Students probably will answer farms or farmers and ranchers.) What do students think of when they hear the word farmer?
4. Relate to the class that farmers and ranchers raise other animals besides cows, sheep, hogs, and chickens. Others include farmers who raise fish and trees. Because there are so many different kinds of things that come from agriculture, we will use the word producer to include anyone who produces any of the agricultural products that go



Standards

Social Studies

Production, Consumption,
& Distribution: 3.1, 3.2
People, Places &
Environments: 5.4

Language Arts

Kindergarten

Reading: 1.1G, 1.3

Writing: 2.2

Speaking & Listening:
3.1, 3.3, 3.4

1st Grade:

Reading: 1.1B, 1.1C, 1.1D,

Speaking & Listening:
3.1, 3.3, 3.4

Materials

- “Where is Agriculture”
A Story
- “Where is Agriculture”
drawing sheet (one for
each student)

Estimated Time

30 Minutes

Grades K-2

vocabulary:

- *industry*
- *environment*
- *farmer*
- *rancher*
- *products*
- *agriculture*

into the food we eat, the clothes we wear, or the products we use.

5. As you write these words on the board, tell students that for people to survive, they need three things: food, clothing and shelter. Ask students to give examples of agricultural products in each category.
6. Hand out the Activity Sheet “Where Is Agriculture?” Ask students to draw a picture of something from agriculture that is important in their lives.

Additional Activities:

- See if someone involved in production agriculture will “adopt” your class. Students can correspond with the farmer or rancher’s family. This will allow students to practice their writing skills and learn more about the day-to-day operation of a farm or ranch. *The family might send photographs or videotapes, grain or feed samples and other items from the farm. In turn, students can write to the family to ask questions about what they have learned. They might even draw pictures of how they imagine the farm or ranch, then send these and other creations to the family.

****Before involving your students, you should work with the family to set clear goals for the exchange. Set up a schedule for when you will write letters. Perhaps the family could visit your classroom. At the end of the year, your students might be able to visit the farm or ranch.**

- Contact the office of your county Extension Service, your state Department of Agriculture 777- 7321 or your state’s Agriculture in the Classroom program 777-6618 to see how your class might be adopted.
- Play “A is for Agriculture.” This activity works well in the class or as a home assignment students can do with their families. Take an alphabet walk. On it, you’ll look for things that start with each letter of the alphabet. Everything you choose must have something to do with agriculture. Collect as many items as you can. Make a display of the things you’ve collected.

Questions for Investigation

1. Have the students discuss the different types of agriculture producers.
2. What are the five “F’s” of agriculture?

Materials Adapted from Food for America, National FFA Organization.

Where is Agriculture

-A Story-

Michelle was sitting at the kitchen table, feeling very frustrated. Her paper on Agriculture was due tomorrow and so far she hadn't written a word. "The teacher wants us to write about how agriculture affects our lives," she grumbled to her dad. "But I can't think of a single thing to write."

"You're missing the real story," said her dad. "Agriculture is all around you."

"What do you mean, agriculture is all around me? We don't live on a farm!" Michelle said.

"No, we don't live on a farm Michelle, but look around; agriculture is everywhere," her dad said.

"We live in a city. How does agriculture apply to us?"

"Well," said her dad. "What about those blue jeans you're wearing?"

"What about them?" Michelle asked.

"Blue jeans are made from the fibers of cotton plants and that is agriculture, isn't it?"

"I guess so," said Michelle.

"Did you take a shower this morning?" her dad continued.

"Of course," Michelle replied.

"Well, the soap comes from agriculture too. It's made out of oil from corn and soybeans and fat from cattle. And I suppose you're getting hungry for dinner? You have agriculture to thank for that too. Everything from the meat in your meatballs to the wheat in your spaghetti to the strawberries on your shortcake comes from agriculture."

Michelle was still a little doubtful. "I can see how all those things are important," she admitted. "But I spend most of my day in school. Agriculture isn't important there."

"I wouldn't be so sure. Do you write your lessons on paper? That comes from trees, another agricultural crop. And the books you read may have been printed with ink made from soybeans. How do you get to school?" her dad asked. "The tires on your school bus are made from rubber and rubber comes from trees. It's possible that even the gas that powers the bus might come partly from corn alcohol."

"Gee, Dad." Michelle said. "I guess agriculture is pretty important in my life. Thanks for helping me get started with my paper."

Then Michelle looked at the clock. It was almost dinner time. Her dad started setting the table. "But you forgot to mention one of my favorite agricultural products — milk!"

Her dad smiled. "Now you're on the right track. I think that after dinner you will be able to write that paper Michelle."

Name _____

Where is Agriculture?

Draw a picture showing something from agriculture that is important in your life.

