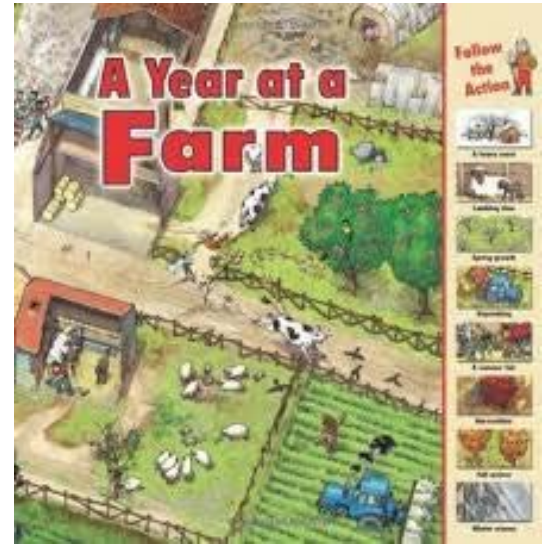


June 2016 Book of the Month

A Year At A Farm

By: Nicholas Harris

Horses! Ducks! Cows! Would you like to see what happens during a year at a farm? Then come spend the next twelve months at this farm. Check out eight action-packed scenes from a bird's-eye view of spring planting, a summer festival, and an autumn harvest. Look out for an escaped cow and a surprise landing by a hot air balloon. Keep your eye on the calendar too. By spending a whole year at a farm, you can watch events unfold as the seasons change.



Fun Farm Facts:

- Farming is an important occupation, because everyone needs food and clothing to survive.
- Farms produce all kinds of plants, animals, wool and cotton that people eat and utilize throughout the world.
- Before the twentieth century, the typical American family lived on a small farm. They raised almost everything they ate and sold their remaining crops and/or animals.
- Farmers work long, hard hours.
- There are less farms in the United States today than there were in the early 1900's, but working farms produce more than they did in the early 1900's.
- Scientific methods and labor-saving machinery have made farming increasingly productive.
- The development of improved plant varieties and fertilizers has helped to significantly increase the yields of some major crops such as corn, soybeans and wheat.
- Scientific studies on livestock care and breeding have helped increase the amount of meat and products that animals produce.
- The use of tractors and other modern farm equipment has reduced the need for farm workers.
- Today's farmer is not just an expert in agriculture and livestock, but they also need to be successful businessmen.

Activities

A Day in the Life of Ag:

Agriculture is part of your daily life. Have you ever thought about where you get your toothbrush, blue jeans, school supplies, or ingredients for a pizza? The answer is agriculture!

Not only are they results of agriculture, they are brought to you by people involved in agriculturally-related jobs and careers! Here's how agriculture plays a role in your life each day:

7:00 AM Rise, shine, and baa – brush your teeth – Sheep helped make that toothbrush!

7:05 AM Put on your tennis shoes made from cattle or sheep, and blue jeans and a shirt made from cotton.

8:15 AM Read the newspaper printed with ink made from soybeans!

9:00 AM Art class with paints from cattle, sheep and soybeans, paintbrushes from cattle, pigs and sheep and glue from pigs, cattle, corn and soybeans.

12:00 PM Enjoy a cheeseburger, potato chips, an apple and milk for lunch, from dairy cattle, beef cattle, wheat, corn, fruit and vegetables.

3:30 PM Soccer practice – kick that cowhide!

6:00 PM Family pizza night-cheese, tomato sauce, wheat crust, onions, peppers and mushrooms! All of these ingredients are produced on farms!

7:15 PM Play board games using dice made from sheep.

9:00 PM Curl up under a wool blanket with cotton pajamas. You guessed it – from sheep and cotton!

Can you imagine – all of these items are made with the products of agriculture! Now take a moment to talk about all the people it takes to make these items and bring them to you! Have students sketch out his/her day and create a timeline. Research and identify what farm products are used to create what is done at each time listed on their timeline.

What We Know About Farms:

After reading and discussing the book, create an 'anchor' chart with the students. Label the chart "What We Know about Farms."

List the following questions on the chart:

1. What animals live on a farm?
2. Why do we have farms?
3. What are some jobs on the farm?

Brainstorm and list answers for each category. Have students work in small groups to create a poster with an advertisement for each category explaining why it is important.

A Year on the Farm Timeline:

After reading the story, divide students up and give each group/student a month of the year to research. Have them research the weather for each month (temperature, rain, etc.). Also have them research the different crops planted during that month. Students can choose a crop specific to their region, and research what is happening to that crop during their specific month. What is the best month to plant? What month acquires the most rainfall? What does the farmer do on the

farm when it's raining or when crops cannot be planted because of weather? Have students create a poster for each month and display them in the classroom.

Thanksgiving for Farmers:

Make the connection between farms and the food we eat each day, emphasizing the importance of community farms. Introduce letter writing, specifically thank you letters, and guide students in writing thank you letters to farmers in your county or region. For this activity you will need to choose a local farmer in your community to give thanks to – perhaps from a farm you have visited, a farmer who sells products at the local market, or a farmer who has visited your school or classroom. Prepare a brief description of the farmer and their farm to read to the students and share information about the farmer and their farm with the students. Lead a conversation with your students and ask them to brainstorm all of the jobs the farmer has in the community. What activities do they do on their farms? Why are they an important part of your town or region? Why are the students thankful for the farmer? Write the answers on the board. Give each student a blank folded card. Students will write thank you notes or another phrase of gratitude on the outside of the card and can add drawings as well. On the inside pages, students will write sentences to the farmer, thanking them for the role they play or activity they do in the community. Collect the thank you notes and mail to the local farmer.

Links:

<https://www.kfb.org/page/file?path=Files%2Fpage-262%2Fhandouts%2FA%20Day%20in%20the%20Life%20of%20Ag.pdf>

Sources:

<https://kidskonnnect.com/science/farms/>

<http://growing-minds.org/documents/thanksgiving-for-farmers-lesson-plan.pdf>