A Day Without Ag

Background

“Ag” is short for agriculture. When you think of agriculture you probably think of people growing crops or raising cows, pigs, sheep and chickens on a farm. But agriculture means much more than that. The people who work in factories to build tractors and other farm machinery play an important role in agriculture. People in universities who research new agricultural products and new ways to grow food and fiber are involved in agriculture, too.

The grocer must buy agricultural products to fill the grocery shelves. The restaurant owner must buy agricultural products to prepare and serve his or her customers. The clothes you wear and the furniture on which you sit were probably made from agricultural products. You may already know that hamburgers and fried chicken come from agricultural products, but what about fish? In Oklahoma catfish farming has become popular. Fish farming, or aquaculture, is a new kind of agriculture.

One of the fastest growing kinds of agriculture in Oklahoma is growing and selling greenhouse and nursery plants. Forestry is another growing form of agriculture. Tree farmers plant, nurture and harvest trees. Then they sell the trees to companies that make paper products. The people who work in factories where they make paper and the people who sell it in stores are as much a part of agriculture as the farmer who plants the tree.

Think of all the ways in which agriculture touches your life. When you wake up in the morning, you might be lying on cotton sheets. Your pillow could be filled with down feather from a goose. The frame of your bed is probably made of wood. These are all ag products, and you aren’t even out of bed yet. When you do get out of bed, you may put your feet onto a rug made from the wool of a sheep or a linoleum floor made from soybean oil. The soap you use in the shower might contain cottonseed oil or lanolin, a kind of oil from the sheep’s wool. The handle of your hairbrush might be made from the bones and horns of a beef animal, and the bristles might be the bristles, or hair, of a pig. The towel you dry off with and the jeans and T-shirt you put on are made from cotton. Once you get to school you might pick up a crayon made from pig fat or soybeans. You’ve already used dozens of agricultural products, and you haven’t even started eating yet. Just imagine a day without agriculture. Do you think you could survive?

Language Arts

1. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
   — Discuss the meaning of the word “agriculture.”
2. Hand out student worksheets.
   — Students will use the worksheets to list all the agricultural products
that touch their lives in a day.
—Students will share their lists.
3. Practice spelling “agriculture” as a class by stomping, whispering and yelling the letters.
4. Students will look up the word “agriculture” in a dictionary.
   —What page is it on in the dictionary?
   —Is it in the front, middle or end of the dictionary?
   —Is it in the right or left column?
   —Is it at the top or bottom of the page?
   —Have students write the definition.
   —How many vowels are in the word “agriculture”? How many consonants? How many syllables?
   —What part of speech is the word “agriculture?”
   —Have students use the word “agriculture” in a sentence and tell what kind of sentence it is (declarative, etc.)
   —Have students name some synonyms, antonyms and homonyms for the word “agriculture.”

Social Studies
1. Students will bring agricultural products from home and pile them all in one area.
   —Invite another class, parents or the principal to view the display.
   —Students will explain the importance of agriculture.
2. Discuss the concepts of “want” and “need.”
   —Divide students into groups.
   —Students will go through their lists of ag products and decide which are needs and which are wants.
   —Students share their findings during a class discussion.

Math
1. Students will divide the items on their lists into categories (animal products/plant products, things to eat/things to wear).
   —Students will create their own categories.
2. Younger students will sort the pile according to the beginning sound of each item.
3. Students will count the number of letters in the word “agriculture.”
   —Students will write the numeral and spell the number word.
   —Students will use tally marks to count the number of letters.
   —Students will dot out odds and evens as they count the number of letters.
   —Students will review the family facts in the number of letters (e.g., 5+6=11).

Extra Reading
Chitwood, Suzanne Tanner, Wake Up, Big Barn, Cartwheel, 2002.
Elliott, David, and Holly Meade, On the Farm, Candlewick
Hill, Lee Sullivan, Farms Feed the World, Carolrhoda, 1997
A Day Without Ag

Make a list of all the agricultural products you use in a day. If you run out of space, use the back of this page.

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Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.
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Make a list of everything you can find in your home that has something to do with agriculture.

beans  jeans  soap  chair  rug
bread  shirt  sheets  meat  grass
eggs  shoes  bat  gum  bed
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