



Ag Literacy Program 2015 Lesson Plans

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc.

Amazing! Maryland Agriculture

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Book Summary:

Amazing! Maryland Agriculture begins with the definition of agriculture and then describes the different kinds of geography in Maryland while showing the agricultural products of each county. Throughout the book, equipment used by farmers and ways farmers protect the environment are highlighted. Information about plant crops such as corn, wheat, and soybeans are followed with details about animals raised in Maryland such as dairy and beef cows, pigs, and chickens. Other important aspects included are Nursery & Greenhouse products, fruits & vegetables, aquaculture, and the Homegrown School Lunch Week.

Vocabulary:

Agriculture: the use of land for growing crops or raising livestock

Aerate: the process in which air is circulated into a solid surface like soil (by roots, worms or mechanical devices)

Aquaculture: breeding, raising, and harvesting of plants and animals in water environments

Broiler: a chicken raised to produce meat

Buffer Zones: an area of trees, shrubs, or grasses designed to protect waterways and wetlands from runoff, contamination, and erosion

By-product: something produced as a secondary result of the manufacture or production of something else

Combine: a piece of equipment that both cuts the plant and removes the grain

Commodity: something that can be bought and sold; article of trade such as wheat or corn

Crop Rotation: a practice used by farmers to replenish soil nutrients, conserve soil, and control disease and pests without chemicals

Erosion: a gradual wearing or washing away of soil or rock by water and wind

Ethanol: a renewable, domestically produced alcohol fuel made from plant material, such as corn, sugar cane, or grasses

Grazer: an animal that feeds on plants, grasses and hay

Irrigation: the act of providing water to land when rain isn't adequate to support good plant growth

Layer: a chicken that is raised to produce eggs

Orchard: a piece of land containing many trees that produce fruit such as apples or peaches

Soybeans: a plant cultivated around the world for its nutritious seeds, for soil improvement, and for animal feed

Swine: another name for a pig or hog

Turf: a layer of matted earth formed by grass and plant roots; also referred to as sod

Note: This book contains a DVD with a 24 minute video *Take Me Out to the Cornfield* highlighting the importance of agriculture in our lives using a baseball theme. Consider using it as a follow-up to the book.

The DVD also contains excerpts from the MPT series *Farm & Harvest* that correlate with the text. When possible, use these short 3-5 minute clips to “bring to life” the content of the text. See the description of the clips and the corresponding text pages at the end of the lesson.

Sharing the Book

1. Begin the session by introducing the word **AGRICULTURE**.
Ask, “What do you think this word means?” Accept answers and show the cover. Ask, “How does the cover give you a clue about the book’s contents?”
Do you think this book is fiction or nonfiction? Why?
2. Read pages 1-3 and have students discover which are the TOP agricultural products grown in their county.
3. Ask, “What plants might a farmer grow?” *Accept suggestions.*
Ask, “What are some animals a farmer might raise on a farm?” *Accept suggestions.*
4. Turn to the table of contents and share how the book has been divided into sections about grains grown in Maryland and animals raised in Maryland. Point out that there are also sections about the Nursery and Greenhouse industry (ask what that might be) and fruits and vegetables grown in Maryland. Ask, “What fruits and vegetables do think farmers can grow in Maryland?” *Accept suggestions.* Ask, “Can farmers grow pineapples, lemons, oranges, etc. in Maryland?” Why or why not?
5. At this point, you need to decide if the entire book will be read in one session or if part will be read now and other parts later. If only reading one part, stop at page 17 and review the grains grown and livestock raised in Maryland. At

a second reading, the Nursery and Greenhouse, Fruits and Vegetable (pages 18-23) can be read. The final section of the book which talks about aquaculture and the Homegrown School Lunch program (pages 24-27) can be read.

6. Whether the entire book is read at one sitting or if it is read in parts, here are some questions that review the important parts of the book:

- a. *What does agriculture mean?*
- b. *Was this a fiction or nonfiction book?*
- c. *What was the author's purpose in writing this book?*
- d. *What are some grains grown in Maryland? What products do we get from the grains?*
- e. *What are some animals raised in Maryland? What products do we get from these animals?*
- f. *What is the Nursery and Greenhouse industry? What products does this industry provide? How do these products affect our lives?*
- g. *What are some fruits and vegetables and vegetables grown in Maryland? Which ones have you eaten? What is your favorite? Why are fruits and vegetables good for you?*
- h. *What is aquaculture? Why are oysters important to our Bay?*
- i. *What is the Homegrown School Lunch program? Does your school have this program? Do you think this program is helpful?*

7. Use the following set of questions to determine what students remember from the book. Use some or all questions depending on which sections of the book were shared.



Amazing! Maryland Agriculture



1. What does the word **agriculture** mean? _____

2. What three kinds of **grain** are grown in Maryland?

3. What are three kinds of **animals** raised on Maryland farms?

4. What is the difference between a **broiler chicken** and **layer chicken**?

5. What does the Nursery and Greenhouse industry provide?

6. Put a circle around any of the fruits that are grown in an orchard. Put a square around any fruits that grow on bushes or on the ground. Put an **X** on anything that is not a fruit.

strawberries apples blueberries cantaloupes peaches corn
watermelon cherries

6. Look at the list of vegetables and mark which part of it you eat. Use **L** for leaf, use **S** for stem, use **R** for root, use **F** for fruit, and use **SEEDS** for seeds.

asparagus _____ lettuce _____ radish _____ carrot _____ tomatoes _____
cucumbers _____ celery _____ cabbage _____

8. What is aquaculture? _____
Why is it important? _____

9. The last page of the book says to THANK A FARMER. Describe what you would have to do without if there weren't farmers.

Farm & Harvest MPT Series Connections

Segment 101

Then and Now Flour Milling (text pages 8-9)

Segment 102

Using computer system to grow better snapdragons (text pages 18-19)

Environment and Chickens (text pages 4-7 and pages 12-13)

Segment 103

Precision Farming – cutting edge farming technology saves time and money (text pages 4-7)

Segment 104

Dairymen reduce nutrient runoff using BMPs (text pages 4-7 and pages 14-15)

Segment 105

Plant nurseries raising unusual, aquatic and native plants (pages 18-19)

Segment 107

Manure management on dairy farm (pages 4-7 and pages 14-15)

Watermelon farming on the Eastern Shore (pages 20-21)

Segment 108

Crop duster pilot helps keep the Bay clean by dropping cover crop seeds that prevent runoff from polluting waterways. (pages 4-7)

Segment 109

Corn harvest with combine at work (pages 4-7 and pages 8-9)

Segment 110

Farmers plant fields of cheery sunflowers (pages 18-19)

Raising of beef cattle (pages 14-15)

Silage Now and Then (pages 14-17)

Segment 111

Harvesting, processing, and storage of apples (pages 20-21)

Segment 113

Modern technology allows farmers to continue their harvesting work even after nightfall (pages 4-7)

Harvesting of soybeans (pages 10-11)

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation **Ag Literacy Program 2015**

For questions or information contact: Jeanne Mueller at jmueller@maefonline.com or 410-848-4745



www.maefonline.com

