



Get the Facts Straight

Middle School Food and Agricultural Literacy Curriculum

Precepts

- A. Action
 - A8. Evaluate and reflect on action taken.
- H. Social Growth
 - H1. Acknowledge that differences exist among people.

National Standards

- AS.06.01.02.a. Explain the implications of animal welfare and animal rights for animal agriculture.
- NL-ENG.K-12.4 – Communication Skills
- NL-ENG.K-12.12 – Applying Language Skills

Student Learning Objectives

- As a result of this **unit** students will...
- Discuss animal issues.
- As a result of this **lesson** the students will...
- Explain the implications of animal welfare and animal rights for animal agriculture.

Content Outline

Objective 1. Explain the implications of **animal welfare** and **animal rights** for animal agriculture.

- I. **Differentiate between beliefs of animal rights and animal welfare supporters.**
 - A. **Animal welfare:** as defined by the American Veterinary Medical Association, is a human responsibility that encompasses all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling, and, when necessary, humane euthanasia
 - B. **Animal rights:** is a philosophical view that animals have rights similar to or the same as humans. True **animal rights** proponents believe that humans do not have the right to use animals at all. **Animal rights** proponents wish to ban all use of animals by humans.

Time

Instruction time for this lesson: 90 minutes.

Resources

California Proposition 2 (2008). (n.d.). Retrieved October 25, 2009, from Ballotpedia: [http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/California_Proposition_2_\(2008\)](http://ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/California_Proposition_2_(2008)) — Create Rubrics for your Project-Based Learning Activities. Retrieved October 25, 2009, from Rubistar Web site: <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?ts=1257726144> — Herren, R. (1997). *Exploring Agriscience*. Albany, New York: Delmar Publishers. — Myths vs. Facts. (n.d.) from Animal Agriculture and the Soybean Checkoff Web site: <http://www.animalag.org/myths.aspx> — National FFA Organization, Team Ag Ed, National Animal Identification System Instructional Materials. — National FFA Organization. (2009). *LifeKnowledge Online*. Retrieved July 9, 2009, from <http://agedlearning.org> — North American Food Animal Well-being. (2009, August 25). Beef Cattle Health and Husbandry Experts Team up to Promote Cattle Well-being. [Press release]. <http://www.beefusa.org/NEWS/BeefCattleHealthandHusbandryExpertsTeamuptoPromoteCattleWell-Being39325.aspx>

Tools, Equipment, and Supplies

Writing surface
Overhead projector/transparencies
MS.AI.4.3.AS.A-AS.H – one per teacher, cut up and post on walls
MS.AI.4.3.AS.I – one myth per pair of students
MS.AI.4.3.TM.A – one per teacher
MS.AI.4.3.TM.B – one per teacher
MS.AI.4.3.TM.C – one per teacher
MS.AI.4.3.AS.J – one per student
MS.AI.4.3.RUBRIC.A – one per student

Key Terms

The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in **bold italics**:

Animal Welfare

Animal Rights

- II. **Disprove common myths regarding animal agriculture.**
- III. **Explain how animal rights and animal welfare affect livestock production.**



Lesson Number: MS.AI.4.3

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Interest Approach

Before class, tape **MS.AI.4.3.AS.A –AS.H** around the room. Be sure to place A–D on one half of the room and E–H on the other half. Students will browse the statements and select one statement from each half of the room that is true for them by writing their name on the paper. After they have made their selections, they will return to their seats. Lead students in a discussion of what implications staying up late have on their energy level during the next day. Obviously, if we stay up late, we will probably be tired at some point in the day.

Welcome to today's class! It is nice to see everyone. Who is ready to get started? Great!

When I say SLEEP, you will have 90 seconds to travel around the room and write your name on two pieces of paper. On this wall, your choices relate to staying up late, and on the back wall your choices are in regard to when you get tired. You will select ONE statement on each wall by writing your name on the page. After you have identified the two statements that are true for you, return to your seat and wait for further instructions. So how many times will you write your name? Correct –two times. Questions? SLEEP!

As students are marking their selections, be sure to monitor the students and direct them back to their seats after they have finished.

Great work. Show your hand if you stay up late on the phone. What about on the Internet or Facebook? And finally, how many of you stay up watching TV or movies or doing homework? OK, so now that we have established the fact that we all have our reasons for staying up late, what happens after we stay up late?

Pause for student response.

Right, we get tired. Some of us may not want to get up with our alarms while others may be OK until right after lunch. But we understand that by choosing to stay up late, we will suffer the consequences. We realize that there are consequences when we don't get enough sleep. How might this relate to how we treat animals?

What are the consequences of not feeding or watering an animal?

Pause for students to answer. Hopefully they will mention that there are also consequences when we do not treat animals properly.

That is exactly correct! Let's be active learners and take a look at what some of those consequences may be.

Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective 1. Explain the implications of **animal welfare** and **animal rights** for animal agriculture.

Show **MS.AI.4.3.TM.A** to review the definitions of **animal rights** and **animal welfare**. If students have not previously been exposed to these definitions, please make sure they capture them in their notes.

Today, more than ever it is important for us to understand how the treatment of farm animals can affect the agricultural industry. Because fewer people are involved in raising livestock, there are many misconceptions that we must address. To begin, we must realize there are two main lines of thinking regarding the well-being of animals. Let's take a look at the differences between **animal welfare** and **animal rights** supporters.

Show and discuss **MS.AI.4.3.TM.A**

Break the class into pairs. Each pair will be given a common myth of animal agriculture. The pair will read the myth and then the truth. Give students a piece of poster paper and ask them to create a T-chart; on one side they will illustrate the myth, on the other side they will illustrate the truth.

Any person who is involved in animal agriculture knows that if an animal is not treated properly, there is no opportunity to make money. This is why farmers and ranchers are supporters of **animal welfare**. Take a look at some common myths of animal production.

When I say MYTH, you will arrange yourselves quietly in alphabetical order based upon your first name. You will be given a partner, a myth, and a piece of poster paper. Divide the paper in half. On one half you will illustrate the myth, and on the other half you will illustrate the truth about animal production.



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You will have ten minutes to create your illustrations. What questions do you have? MYTH!

Pair students up accordingly, give them a myth/truth, and a piece of poster paper. Provide markers or colored pencils for their illustrations. As they are working, monitor their progress. You may need to offer some creative support to groups or clarify their questions. While they are working, ask a few groups if they would be willing to share their illustrations with the class in a few minutes. After groups present their illustrations, discuss the myth and the truth ensuring that all students grasp the importance of each myth/truth.

Wow, I have seen some outstanding pictures showing the myths and truths behind animal production. Which groups will be willing to share their illustrations and explain to us the truth behind their myths?

Allow some groups to share and briefly discuss the myths/truths as they are presented

As you can see, there is a lot of incorrect information that is available to the public. As educated students, we must be sure to do our part to share the truth. Sure, there are some controversial issues in regards to livestock production. These issues have a huge impact on the success of livestock producers.

Show **MS.AI.4.3.TM.B**. Reiterate that if a producer doesn't take care of his/her animals they won't make a profit. Lead students to a discussion about laws that have been passed regarding animal agriculture. Examples include the Humane Slaughter Act, making dog fighting illegal, and Prop2 in California. Prop 2 created a new state statute that prohibits the confinement of farm animals in a manner that does not allow them to turn around freely, lie down, stand up, and fully extend their limbs. Voters in other states have voted to eliminate calf and pig crates, but Proposition 2 in California in 2008 is the first time voters were asked to eliminate the practice of confining chickens in battery (small, confining) cages.

We may not all agree on how animals should be treated. Is it okay for us to use them as food and for clothing or work? Should we keep animals as pets? Should we not use animals at all in our lives? These are all questions you will have to answer for yourself. But no one likes to see animals hurting. Dog fighting is illegal. If you don't believe me, ask Michael Vick (professional football player who was sent to jail for being involved with dog fighting).

Animals must be slaughtered in accordance with the Humane Slaughter Act, and most recently, Prop 2 in California.

Students will explain why **animal welfare** and rights are important and the implications they can have on American agriculture using the Me-You-Us e-Moment®. Students will think on their own, then share with a partner, and then the partners will share with the entire class.

Take the next 30 seconds and think about this question, "How do **animal welfare** and **animal rights** affect American agriculture?" Turn to your neighbor and share.

Thank you for your great thoughts. Who would like to share with the class?

Review/Summary

As more and more people are advocating the ethical treatment of animals, agriculturists have to ensure their management practices are meeting the expectations of the public. In addition, producers must make sure the public is educated about how their animals are treated. Perhaps Dr. Dan Thompson of Kansas State University said it best

Display **MS.AI.4.3.TM.C**

With this quote in mind, you will create a wanted poster illustrating how animals would be treated in the "perfect" world. This, of course, is your opinion. But first let's think of what you might see on an old-fashioned Wanted poster. Who will share what is on a Wanted poster?

Pause for student response. Possible answers include:

- Wanted headline
- Picture (illustration of animals being treated properly)
- Location last seen (where they might be located)
- Reward
- Reason they are wanted (what are they doing to uphold the beliefs of the student)
- Contact information (student's name)

Great thoughts! Now, using **MS.AI.4.3.AS.J** your task is to take a spin on the traditional Wanted poster, create a Wanted poster for someone who is treating animals the way you believe they should be treated. Can we use them for food or clothing? What about using them as draft animals or pets?



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You will have the remainder of the class period to complete your Wanted poster. If it is not completed at the end of class, please take it home and complete it as homework. What questions are there?

Give each student a copy of **MS.AI.4.3.AS.J**. They will use this to create their Wanted poster.

Application

Extended classroom activity:

Complete Wanted posters and allow students time to present them.

FFA activity:

Allow students time in the next FFA meeting to share the myths and facts with the whole chapter: **MS.AI.4.3.AS.I**

Students can participate in the livestock judging career development event.

SAE activity:

Have students identify ten possible SAE ideas that would relate to **animal rights** and **animal welfare**.

Evaluation

MS.AI.4.3.AS.J

When making copies of the Wanted poster, copy the rubric (MS.AI.4.3.RUBRIC.A) on the back side so students will know how you will evaluate their project.

Answers to Evaluation

MS.AI.4.3.RUBRIC.A



**Sometimes I stay up late
talking on the phone/texting.**



**Sometimes I stay up late on
Facebook or the Internet.**



**Sometimes I stay up late
working on homework.**



**Sometimes I stay up late
watching TV or movies.**



**Sometimes I don't want to
get up when my alarm goes off.**



Sometimes I get tired after lunch.



Sometimes I get tired during 1st hour.



**Sometimes I am tired by
the end of the school day.**



ANIMAL WELFARE

Animal Welfare, as defined by the American Veterinary Medical Association, is a human responsibility that encompasses all aspects of animal well-being, including proper housing, management, disease prevention and treatment, responsible care, humane handling, and, when necessary, humane euthanasia.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Animal Rights is a philosophical view that animals have rights similar to or the same as humans. True animal rights proponents believe that humans do not have the right to use animals at all. Animal rights proponents wish to ban all use of animals by humans.



Animal Ag Myths

MYTH: Farm animals are routinely raised on “factory farms,” confined in “crowded, unventilated cages and sheds.”

Fact: Animals are generally kept in barns and similar housing, with the exception of beef cattle, to protect the health and welfare of the animal. Housing protects animals from predators, disease, and bad weather or extreme climate. Housing also makes breeding and birth less stressful, protects young animals and makes it easier for farmers to care for both healthy and sick animals. Modern housing is well ventilated, warm, well-lighted, clean and scientifically designed for the specific needs of the animal, such as the regular availability of fresh water and a nutritionally balanced diet. For instance, a hog barn wouldn't be used for cows, any more than an adult would sleep in a child's crib. Housing is designed to allow the farmer to provide the best animal care.

MYTH: A vegetarian diet is healthier than a diet that includes meat, milk, and eggs.

Fact: Both the federal government and the American Heart Association contend that a diet containing meat, milk, and eggs follows their dietary guidelines. Health benefits can be derived by non-vegetarians who follow a prudent diet that is low in fat, sodium, sugar, and alcohol. Just as there are non-vegetarian diets that are unhealthy, so are there poorly planned vegetarian diets. The key to a healthy diet is moderation. One tip from Amy Barr, a registered dietitian in Boulder, Colorado, is “don't eliminate whole food groups. Don't, for example, drop dairy from your diet.” “A lot of people, especially women, give up milk because they think it's fattening,” says Anne Fletcher, a registered dietitian and author of *Thin for Life*. But milk is one of the best sources of calcium in the diet, “which is important for preventing osteoporosis and possibly for warding off colon cancer.”

MYTH: Farm animals in “confinement” are prone to disease, forcing farmers to routinely use antibiotics, hormones and drugs to keep them alive. This jeopardizes animal and human health.

Fact: Animal scientists, veterinarians and on-farm experience show animals kept in housing are no more likely to get sick than animals kept in the open. In fact, they're generally healthier because they are protected. However, farm animals do sometimes get sick. To prevent illness and to ensure that an animal remains healthy all of its life, farmers will take preventive measures, including the use of animal health products. These products are generally given to the animal in a scientifically formulated feed best suited to the animal's needs. This is the simplest way to ensure each animal gets the care it needs. Animal health products include animal drugs and vaccines, in addition to vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients the animal needs in a balanced diet. All animal health products are approved and regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) prior to being given to animals.



Animal Ag Myths

MYTH: Farmers care less for their animals than they do for the money animals bring them. Agribusiness corporations mislead farmers into using production systems and drugs that mean profits at the cost of animal welfare.

Fact: Farmers and ranchers are neither cruel nor naive. One of the main reasons someone goes into farming or ranching is a desire to work with animals. A farmer would compromise his or her own welfare if animals were mistreated. Agriculture is very competitive in the United States. It's a career that pays the farmer a slim profit on the animals he cares for. Farmers are always looking for ways to improve their farms to ensure animal welfare and the economics of production. It is in the farmer's own best interest to see the animals in his charge treated humanely, guaranteeing him a healthy, high-quality animal, a greater return on his investment, and a wholesome food product. No advertising campaign or salesman can convince a farmer to use a system or product that would harm an animal.

MYTH: Farming in the United States is controlled by large corporations that care about profits and not about animal welfare.

Fact: Of the 2.2 million farms in the United States, 87 percent are owned by an individual or a married couple responsible for operating the farm. If partnerships – typically a parent and one or more children or other close relatives – are added to this total, 97 percent of U.S. farms are family-owned and operated, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Even those farms that are legally corporations are generally family controlled, with USDA reporting only 7,000 non-family-controlled corporate farms in the United States.

MYTH: Farm animals are routinely “mutilated” by beak trimming, tail docking, branding, dehorning, castration, and other practices to make it easier for the farmer.

Fact: To the inexperienced viewer, some routine farm animal handling practices necessary to the welfare and health of the animal and the insurance of quality food may appear brutal, just as some lifesaving human surgical and medical practices may seem brutal to the casual observer. All of these practices are done in a professional manner to ensure the welfare of the animal.

MYTH: Cage-free and free-range hens are healthier and require little or no drugs or medicines.

Fact: Cage-free and free-range hens require continuous medicated feed for some diseases and often require more drugs than caged hens because of their constant exposure and contact with litter and waste on barn floors. Hens in cage systems seldom require drugs and only receive medicines or drugs for therapeutic reasons. In fact, hens kept in cage-free, organic, or free-range systems have higher rates of mortality than those kept in cage production systems.



Confinement operations: operating systems where animals are confined to buildings or cages.

Some animal welfare supports say:

- Pigs spend their entire lives in cages
- Sows are kept in farrowing crates
- Laying hens are kept in cages

Animal producers say:

- Facilities are designed for animal safety
 - They consider needed animal space
 - Farrowing crates are designed to prevent sows from laying on piglets
 - Easier to monitor animal health and treat animals accordingly



“Animal well-being is the foundation for the performance, health , and profitability of cattle raised for beef, and as an industry, we take great pride in our responsibility to properly care for animals. We’re constantly looking for new and innovative ways to build upon existing science to ensure healthy animals and safe, quality products to feed the world’s population.”

– Dr. Dan Thompson,
Kansas State University

WANTED





CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Required Elements	The poster includes all required elements as well as additional information.	All required elements are included on the poster.	All but 1 of the required elements are included on the poster.	Several required elements were missing.
Use of Class Time	Used time well during each class period. Focused on getting the project done. Never distracted others.	Used time well during each class period. Usually focused on getting the project done and never distracted others.	Used some of the time well during each class period. There was some focus on getting the project done but occasionally distracted others.	Did not use class time to focus on the project OR often distracted others.
Knowledge Gained	Student can accurately answer all questions related to facts in the poster and processes used to create the poster.	Student can accurately answer most questions related to facts in the poster and processes used to create the poster.	Student can accurately answer about 75% of questions related to facts in the poster and processes used to create the poster.	Student appears to have insufficient knowledge about the facts or processes used in the poster.
Attractiveness	The poster is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness.	The poster is attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness.	The poster is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy.	The poster is distractingly messy or very poorly designed. It is not attractive.