

The Amazing Beef Cow!

TOPIC:

Beef

TARGET GRADE LEVEL:

K-2nd grade

TIME:

30 minutes (2 visits)

Purpose:

Students will explore the lifecycle of beef cows, demonstrate the importance of calf identification and learn about different beef products.

Materials:Book

- "Can-Do Cow Kids," by Amanda Radke or pre-recorded video link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WuvR2ij9u4>

Important links

- Ball FarmChat
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMOhN22VgDg&feature=youtu.be>
- Feedlot FarmChat
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_wHnTsUHc4&feature=youtu.be

Ear tags

- Real ear tags (1 per student) if we can take a kit into schools or downloadable ear tag PDF.

Additional materials

- True and False cards
- Beef lifecycle worksheet
- Products that come from beef activity
- Take home-sheet with beef pizza snack

Vocabulary words from Can-Do Cow Kids book:

1. *Cattle*: a group of cows, also called a "cow herd"
2. *Calf*: baby cow
3. *Cow*: female cow
4. *Bull*: male cow
5. *Pasture*: land suitable for grazing
6. *Stocker*: a person who purchases weaned calves to graze on pasture
7. *Feeder*: a person who manages a feedlot where cattle are fed a balanced ration of corn, hay and other feedstuffs to help them grow
8. *Veterinarian*: a person who specializes in animal health.

Interest Approach- engagement:

True and false

Questions:

1. **True** or false, beef cows give us meat?
2. **True** or false, dairy cows give us milk?
3. True or **false**, boy and girl cows give us milk?
4. True or **false**, cows cannot eat grass?
5. **True** or false, cows can drink a bathtub full of water a day?
6. **True** or false, beef is a good source of protein to build strong and lean muscles?
7. True or **false**, cows only eat corn?
8. **True** or false, a baby cow is called a calf?
9. **True** or false, meat from cows is called beef?
10. True or **false**, a group of cows is called a flock?

Background- agricultural connections:

Iowa is a great place to raise beef. According to the 2019 Ag Census, there are currently 905,000 beef cows and 1,290,000 calves on feed here in Iowa. Beef is a great source of protein and provides us with essential nutrients including zinc, iron and B vitamins. Cattle of course provide beef, but did you know they also provide important byproducts including gelatin, leather, medicine, makeup, etc.?

There are many stages in the lifecycle of a beef cow. Many farmers only raise one or two stages before selling to a farmer who specializes in the next stage. The life of a beef cow begins on a 1) cow-calf farm, where the mother gives birth to a calf. The calf is weaned around six months. Farmers may choose to keep back heifers (young females) or sell all their calves to the next stage. 2) Stocking (raising calves on pasture) is in between weaning and the feed yard. Heifers that are being raised to breed will often stay in this stage until they are mature enough to begin calving. Grass-fed steers (castrated male) also stay in this stage. 3) Many calves will move on to be sold at an auction where they will be bought and raised at a feed yard until they are at market weight. The last stage, 4) is the meat packing plant.

Farmers check their calves daily; providing fresh water, high quality feed or grass and taking additional preventative measures- calling a veterinarian for their expertise when necessary. Additional preventative measures might include but are not limited to; identification (ear tags), vaccines, administering a pour-on (decreases pests), and conducting pregnancy checks.

Many farmers in Iowa use ear tags to help identify the animal. This helps the farmer keep record and provide care to animals when needed.

Procedures:

1. Read or listen to the story Can-Do Cow Kids, ask the students to review what happened.

- Who was the story about?
- What happened in the story?
- Where were the calves?
- How did the kids solve the mystery?

Pass out the beef by-product pictures or worksheets (for virtual) and ask students to place the beef products in one pile and the non-beef products in a second pile. *all of the products come from beef!* Explain to the class what a by-product is and how all of the pictured items are by-products of beef cattle.

2. Watch the Ball FarmChat
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aM0hN22VgDg&feature=youtu.be>
 Optional** watch the feedlot FarmChat
3. Ask the students to work on the lifecycle activity.
4. Why do we ear tag? Create your own ear tag with your initials (real ear tag or craft for virtual learning).

Additional activities/resources

- Cow vocab coloring sheet
- Beef cow matching game
- Beef Ag Mag
http://www.agintheclassroom.org/TeacherResources/AgMags/Beef%20Ag%20Mag%20for%20Web_FINAL.PDF

Organization Affiliation:

Morgan Hibbs, Linn County Farm Bureau

Credits:

- 2019 Census:
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=IA
 OWA
- Iowa Beef: <https://www.iabeef.org/raising-beef>

Agriculture Literacy Outcomes:

T2.K-2.a Explain how farmers and ranchers work with the lifecycle of plants and animals (planting/breeding) to harvest a crop.

T1.K-2.a Describe how farmers/ranchers use land to grow crops and support livestock.

T3.K-2.b Recognize that agriculture provides our most basic necessities: food, fiber, energy and shelter.

T5.K-2.a Discuss what a farmer does.

Iowa Core Standards:

RI.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why,* and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

2-LS4-1 Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

2-LS2-2 Develop a simple model that mimics the function of an animal in dispersing seeds or pollinating plants.

SS.2.12. Identify how people use natural resources to produce goods and services.