

# GREAT READS

## ABOUT

# Agriculture

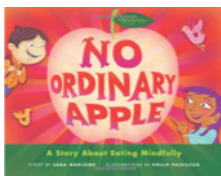
For Elementary, Middle School &  
High School Students



[LearnAboutAg.org](http://LearnAboutAg.org)



# Books About Agriculture for elementary students



**No Ordinary Apple: A Story About Eating Mindfully** written by Sarah Marlowe, illustrated by Phil Pascuzzo

On an otherwise ordinary day, Elliot discovers something extraordinary: the power of mindfulness. Elliot is disappointed by his afternoon snack, but when encouraged to carefully and attentively look, feel, smell, taste, and even listen to the apple, Elliot discovers that this apple is not ordinary at all.



**'Til the Cows Come Home** written by Jodi Icenogge, illustrated by Normand Chartier

A delightful cowboy interpretation of the old Jewish folktale, "The Button." In this book, a resourceful cowboy finds a way to use one beautiful piece of leather in a variety of situations, making the piece last 'til the cows come home. This book has strong themes of caring for livestock, family belonging, and Western living.



**When Grandma Gives You a Lemon Tree** written by Jamie L.B. Deenihan, illustrated by Lorraine Rocha

When grandma gives a lemon tree for her birthday, a young girl tries to hide her disappointment. But when she follows the narrators careful—and humorous—instructions, she discovers the tree was exactly what she wanted after all. This story celebrates the patience, hard work, and community required to grow your own food.



**Right This Very Minute** written by Lisl H. Detlefsen, illustrated by Renée Kurilla

Framed around children's mealtimes, this brightly illustrated picture book answers the essential question, "Where does my food come from?" Showcasing farmers producing a variety of agricultural commodities, children learn facts about crop rotation, soil sensors, and how produce gets to market.



**The Seagoing Cowboy** written by Peggy Reiff Miller, illustrated by Claire Ewart

By 1945, Poland had been ravaged. Its cities and farmland had been bombed badly, the people who had survived were in need of food. This fictional picture book expands on the true story of seagoing cowboys who delivered livestock to countries in desperate need of rebuilding after the war's devastation.



**How Did That Get in My Lunchbox? The Story of Food** written by Chris Butterworth, illustrated by Lucia Gaggiotti

From planting wheat to mixing dough, climbing trees to machine-squeezing fruit, picking cocoa pods to stirring a vat of melted bliss, this book features the steps involved in producing popular kid foods. Vibrant illustrations and diagrams highlight the complex processes that result in food production.



**Who Grew My Soup?** written by Tom Darbyshire, illustrated by C.F. Payne

Phineas Quinn will only agree to eat vegetable soup if his mother can tell him who grew it. Enter Mr. Mattoo, chief soup supervisor, and his tomato-shaped balloon. Phin spends the day flying from farm to farm, learning how the vegetables in soup are grown, and vastly increasing his love for vegetable soup.



**The Midnight Farm** written by Reeve Lindbergh, illustrated by Susan Jeffers

A lyrical book that reveals what happens on the farm after the sun goes down. Detailed illustrations capture each mystery as it is uncovered—in the orchard, barnyard, stable, and home. This is a rare depiction of the midnight hour not only as a safe, snug place, but as a celebration of life, hope, and wonder.



**The Tree Farmer** written by Chuck Leavell and Nicholas Cravotta, illustrated by Rebecca Bleau

Through the interactions of a grandfather and his grandson, this story explains the vital role trees play in our lives—providing us with the wood for our homes, furniture, and other products. The Tree Farmer educates readers about timber, while celebrating a farmer's love of the land and the wise use of its resources.

## Books About Agriculture for middle school students



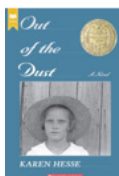
### **Hattie Big Sky** by Kirby Lawson

After inheriting her uncle's homesteading claim in Montana, 16-year-old orphan Hattie Brooks travels from Iowa to "prove up" his claim and make permanent home for herself. Hattie is quickly acquainted with the many hardships facing a young homesteader, but finds a family of loyal friends along the way.



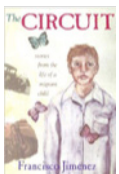
### **Squashed** by Joan Bauer

Ellie Morgan's life would be almost perfect if she could get her potentially prize-winning pumpkin to put on about 200 pounds before the Rock River Pumpkin Weigh-In. Sprinkled with humor, agriculture wisdom, and a bit of teenage romance, *Squashed* is a novel that celebrates rural life and the unwavering devotion of a young farmer.



### **Out of the Dust** by Karen Hesse

Told in free-verse poetry of dated entries that span the winter of 1934 to the winter of 1935, 5-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl years of the Depression. The quiet strength displayed by young Billie Jo while dealing with unspeakable loss is as surprising as it is inspiring.



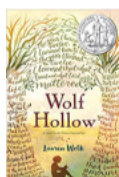
### **The Circuit** by Francisco Jimenez

This series of short stories about the life of a migrant child follows a family through their circuit of work over the year as they move from one labor camp to the next. From picking cotton and strawberries to topping carrots—this book captures the complexity of agriculture production and introduces readers to the people behind the product.



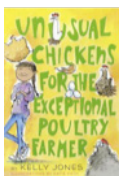
### **Crosswire** by Dotti Enderle

The cruel Texas drought of 1883 has Jesse and his family in turmoil. Crops are drying out, and desperate free-range cattlemen are cutting fences and trespassing with their thirsty herds, threatening the family's precious water supply. When a lone drifter is hired to help around the farm, Jesse becomes determined to uncover his mysterious secret.



### **Wolf Hollow** by Lauren Wolk

Annabelle and her family have lived a mostly quiet, steady life on their small Pennsylvania farm. When Annabelle encounters Betty, a new student who proves to be both cruel and manipulative, she must face injustice with courage and kindness. This novel introduces readers to rural living in 1943—harvesting apples, fetching eggs, and raising livestock.



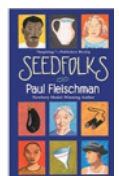
### **Unusual Chickens for the Exceptional Poultry Farmer** by Kelly Jones

After inheriting her great uncle's farm (and his most unusual chickens), Sophia and her family move from Los Angeles to rural Northern California. Part instructional manual and part tall tale, this humorous book chronicles the adventures of Sophia as she learns to care for her newly-inherited flock.



### **Becoming Felix** by Nancy Hope Wilson

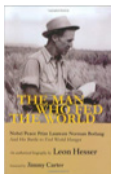
JJ's family has been in the dairy business for generations, yet all around them other small farms are going bankrupt. With themes of family and friendship, *Becoming Felix* examines what it means to choose between two competing dreams. JJ is torn between spending his time playing his grandfather's clarinet, or helping to save the family farm that once belonged to his grandfather.



### **Seedfolks** by Paul Fleischman

In an inner-city neighborhood, a young girl plants a handful of lima beans in an empty lot which soon blossoms into a community garden, tended by a notably diverse group of local residents. Readers may not gain a greater appreciation for gardening, but they will come away understanding that people can work side by side despite different attitudes, skills, and cultural backgrounds.

# Books About Agriculture for high school students



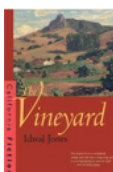
## **The Man Who Fed the World** by Leon Hesser

Dr. Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize recipient for averting hunger and famine, is credited with saving hundreds of millions of lives from starvation. Beginning with his fieldwork in Mexico during the 1940s, developing strains of disease-resistant wheat, and continuing to transform grain production in Mexico, Pakistan, India, Asia, and Africa.



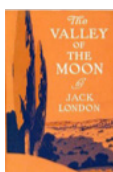
## **Bloodvine** by Aris Janigian

A dramatic tale of two half-brothers, second generation Armenians, who make decisions about the 40 acres of prime vineyard they inherit. Based on a true story, the author skillfully captures the history of genocide, the migration to the U.S., the embracing of agriculture, and the deep scars that eventually tear the family apart.



## **The Vineyard** by Idwal Jones

Set in the Napa Valley at the turn of the century, this novel provides a vivid history of winemaking in California. Plucky Alda Pendle is the daughter of a viticulturist. When he dies, leaving her without property, her skills make her indispensable to one of the oldest vineyards in the valley.



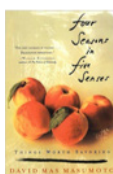
## **The Valley of the Moon** by Jack London

Set in the troubled economic times and labor strikes at the turn of the century, Billy and Saxon Roberts struggle to find success. After much hardship, they leave Oakland and travel through Central and Northern California in search of land they can farm independently. They find land, contentment, and many friends along the way.



## **Epitaph for a Peach** by David Mas Masumoto

Masumoto is a third-generation Japanese-American peach and grape farmer in California. In this book, he takes readers on a quiet journey through a year in the farming life, including the grueling off-season work of preparing the fields and the near-despair of losing a raisin crop to heavy September rainfall.



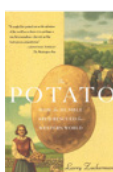
## **Four Seasons in Five Senses** by David Mas Masumoto

In this collection of essays, the author, a peach and raisin farmer, invites readers to consider the farmer behind each piece of food you eat. Masumoto chronicles his life and work on the farm through the seasons as experienced by each of the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.



## **Big Cotton** by Stephen Yafa

A novel that discusses how the cultivation and production of cotton profoundly helped shape human history and impacts the way we live. From the exploitations of Christopher Columbus to impoverished cotton farmers in Mali, Yafa helps readers understand the significance of cotton in the past, present, and future.



## **Potato: How the Humble Spud Rescued the Western World** by Larry Zuckerman

The Potato tells the story of how a humble vegetable, once regarded as trash food, had as revolutionary an impact on Western history. Using Ireland, England, France, and the United States as examples, Zuckerman shows how daily life from the 1770s until World War I would have been unrecognizable—perhaps impossible—without the potato.