

Lesson 1: Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Time: 45–50 minutes

Subject: ELA

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 1 of 5 in the *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* unit of the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on the book series by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Serving as the ELA anchor lesson for the unit, students are introduced to the returning characters, Kailey and Grandma, through a first read of the text while learning about book features, the roles of the author and illustrator, and key ideas from the story. As students engage with informational text and participate in structured discussions, they strengthen foundational literacy skills while connecting their learning from *Milk Comes From a Cow?* to the broader understanding that farmers and ranchers care for the health and well-being of all the animals they raise.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across units, identifying book features, naming the author and illustrator and defining their roles, engaging with informational text with purpose and understanding, asking and answering questions about key details and unknown words with prompting and support, participating in collaborative discussion following agreed-upon rules, asking questions to seek help or clarify understanding, and Kansas connections through farming and ranching.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

RI.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RI.K.4 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

RI.K.5 Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

RI.K.6 Name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

RI.K.13 Actively engage in individual or group readings of informational text with purpose and understanding.

SL.K.1.a Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).

SL.K.3 Ask and answer questions to seek help, get information, or clarify what is not understood.

Objectives

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!*

- Name the author of the book and explain that the author writes the words.
- Ask and answer questions about key details in the text with prompting and support.
- Ask and answer questions about unknown words encountered in the text with prompting and support.
- State at least one reason farmers and ranchers care for their animals from the read-aloud.
- Participate in discussion by listening to others and taking turns speaking.
- Ask questions to seek help or clarify what they do not understand.
- Explain one connection between what they learned about farming in *Milk Comes From a Cow?* and what they are learning about animal care in this book.

Materials Needed

- Book: *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* by Dan Yunk, physical copy or author read aloud on the unit landing page
- Chart paper titled: “Why Do Farmers and Ranchers Care for their Animals?”
- Markers
- *Milk Comes From a Cow?* Anchor chart or unit materials from the previous unit (for reference)

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know
 - a. Explain to students: “In our last unit, we learned that milk comes from a cow. We followed Kailey as she visited Farmer George’s dairy farm and learned how milk gets from a cow all the way to our refrigerator. We also made butter and ice cream from cream that started on a dairy farm. Who remembers what dairy farmers do to take care of their cows?”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “What did Farmer George’s cows need every day to stay healthy and produce milk?”
 - “Kailey learned something important from Farmer George. What do you think Kailey knows now about farmers and animals that she did not know before?”
 - c. Explain to students: “Today, we are going to read a brand new book. Guess who is in it — Kailey is back! And this time she is learning with Grandma about something very important: why farmers and ranchers take such good care of their animals. This book is going to connect to everything we already know about farming and ranching.”
 - d. Kansas Connection: Explain to students:

“Kansas is known for its farms and ranches. All across Kansas, farmers and ranchers wake up every single day — rain or shine, hot or cold — to take care of their animals. Whether you live near a farm or ranch, or in a town or city, many of the foods we eat, like milk, eggs, and meat, come from animals cared for by farmers and ranchers. Today we are going to find out why they take such good care of their animals.”
2. Book Orientation: Hold up the physical copy of *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!*

- a. Explain to students: "Before we read, let's look at the parts of our book. Every book has important features that give us information before we even begin reading."
 - b. Hold up the front cover and explain: "This is the front cover. The front cover shows us the title of the book and gives us a picture that tells us what the book might be about. The title of this book is *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* What do you see on the cover? What do you think this book will be about?"
 - c. Hold up the back cover and explain: "This is the back cover. The back cover is at the very end of the book. Sometimes it gives us more information about the book or who wrote it."
 - d. Open to the title page and explain: "This is the title page. It is one of the first pages inside the book. It tells us the title of the book again and gives us the name of the person who wrote it."
 - e. Ask students:
 - "Which part of the book do we look at first — the front cover or the back cover?"
 - "What information do we find on the title page?"
 - "If you wanted to find out who wrote this book, where would you look?"
 - f. Explain to students: "Every book has an author. The author is the person who writes the words. The words in this book were written by Dan Yunk. Dan Yunk is a Kansas author who writes books about farming and agriculture because he wants children to understand where their food comes from and how important farmers are. Without the author, there would be no words in the book — no story, no information, nothing to read."
 - g. Ask students:
 - "What is the name of the author of this book?"
 - "What does the author do?"
 - "Dan Yunk also wrote our last book, *Milk Comes From a Cow?* Why do you think he keeps writing books about farming and ranching?"
 - h. Explain to students: "This book also has an illustrator. The illustrator is the person who creates the pictures. The illustrations in this book were created by Michelle Johnson. Without the illustrator, we would have no pictures to help us understand what the words are describing. The author and the illustrator work together — one gives us the words, and the other gives us the pictures."
 - i. Ask students:
 - "What is the name of the illustrator of this book?"
 - "What does the illustrator do?"
 - "How do Michelle Johnson's pictures help us understand what Dan Yunk's words are telling us?"
3. Setting the Purpose for Listening
 - a. Explain to students: "When we read an informational book — a book that teaches us true information — we always read it with a purpose. Our purpose today is to find out: Why do farmers and ranchers care for their animals? As I read, listen for the reasons the book gives us. We are going to write them down together after we finish."

- b. Prompt students to think ahead:
- “What do you already think might be one reason farmers care for their animals? Take a guess before we read.”
 - “Kaylee and Grandma are in this book. What do you think Grandma might teach Kaylee about farmers and animals?”
(RI.K.13 — actively engaging with purpose means students have a listening goal before the read-aloud begins. Recording pre-reading predictions honors student thinking and creates a reason to listen carefully.)
4. First Read: Author Read-Aloud
- a. Read *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* aloud from the physical copy. Read expressively and hold the book so students can see the illustrations. Stopping Point Suggestions (3 total, brief stops to maintain flow. Keep stops short to maintain the flow of the story. Encourage students to ask their own questions during Stop #2 and Stop #3 to build SL.K.3.):
- Stop #1: Page 3 — After Grandma introduces the word agriculture, ask students:
 - “Grandma used a big word — agriculture. That is a word we might not know. Let’s think about it: Grandma said agriculture is about growing crops and raising animals. What do you think agriculture means?”
 - “Who is teaching in this book? Who is learning?”
 - “What is today’s lesson going to be about, according to Grandma?”
 - Stop #2: Pages 7–8 — After the vet and hay hauling pages, ask students:
 - “The book says farmers make sure their animals have food, water, and proper medical care. What does medical care mean? What did the picture show us?”
“Veterinary care means medical care provided by animal doctors called veterinarians.”
 - “Page 8 says farmers care for animals every day of the year, rain or shine, hot or cold. Why do you think it matters that they do it every single day?”
 - “Do you have any questions so far about what you have heard? Is there anything you want to know more about?”
 - Stop #3: Pages 11-12 — After the safe food connection, ask students:
 - “The book says that when farmers take care of their animals, people like us have safe food to eat. What food from an animal do you eat?”
 - “Page 12 says farmers and their families eat the same animal products we do. Why do you think that matters?”
 - “Does that remind you of anything we learned in *Milk Comes From a Cow*?”
5. Discussion Rules: Explain to students: “Before we talk about our book, let’s remember our discussion rules. When we talk together as a class, there are two very important rules: we listen to each other with care, and we take turns speaking. Let’s practice both right now.”

- a. Model listening with care:
 - “Listening with care means: your eyes are on the person speaking, your hands are still, and you are thinking about what they are saying — not about what you want to say next. Watch me show you.” (Model attentive listening with a student.)
 - b. Model taking turns:
 - “Taking turns means: you wait until the other person is finished before you speak. If you have something to say, you can raise your hand or wait for a pause. We do not talk over each other. Watch: I am going to ask a question, and I will wait until one person finishes before I call on the next person.”
 - c. Practice with a low-stakes question:
 - “Let’s practice our rules. I am going to ask: What is one animal you saw in our book today? When I call on you, say your answer. Everyone else — listen with care and wait your turn.”
(SL.K.1.a — discussion rules are most effective when explicitly modeled and practiced before the substantive discussion begins, not just named. This brief practice step gives students a concrete experience of the rules before they are asked to apply them in the comprehension discussion that follows.)
6. Comprehension Discussion & Chart Building: Display the chart paper: “Why Do Farmers and Ranchers Care for Their Animals?”
- a. Explain to students: “Now we are going to use our discussion rules as we talk about what we learned. I am going to ask you questions about the book, and we are going to build a chart together with the reasons the author gave us.”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “What was the first reason the book gave for why farmers care for their animals?” (They enjoy it and it is the right thing to do.)
 - “What was the second reason?” (The safety and well-being of their animals is important to them.)
 - “What was the third reason?” (Proper care means safe food for everyone.)
 - “What was the fourth reason?” (Farmers eat the same products, so they want them to be the best quality.)
 - c. Record each reason on the chart as students share. Read each one back together after writing it.
 - d. Encourage student questions; ask students:
 - “Does anyone have a question about one of the reasons on our chart? Is there something you want to understand better?”
 - “Does anyone want to add something we missed?”
 - e. Cross-unit connection:
 - “In *Milk Comes From a Cow?*, Farmer George took care of his Holstein dairy cows every day. Which reason on our chart do you think best describes why Farmer George did that?”
7. Closing Discussion & Kailey’s Conversation
- a. Return to pages 15–17 and reread the closing conversation between Kailey and Grandma.

- b. Explain to students: “At the end of our book, Kailey asks Grandma if Addie — who is younger than Kailey — will ever know as much about agriculture as they do. Grandma says she will — because she will learn, just like Kailey has.”
- c. Ask students:
 - “Grandma says Addie will learn that agriculture is important to everyone no matter where they live. What do you think that means? Does agriculture matter to people who don’t live on a farm or ranch?”
 - “Grandma says Addie will also come to understand how much farmers care about their land, water, and animals. Why do you think all three of those things — land, water, and animals — are important to a farmer or rancher?”
 - “Have you ever seen a farmer or rancher taking care of animals? What did you notice?”
 - “Kaylee learned a lot from Grandma today. What is one thing YOU learned from this book?”
- d. Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “Just like Kailey and Grandma, we are learning that agriculture matters to everyone — no matter where we live. The farmers and ranchers of Kansas take care of their animals every single day so that all of us — in small towns, on ranches, and in cities — have safe, healthy food. In our next lessons, we are going to learn even more about how farmers and ranchers care for different kinds of animals.”

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through ongoing formative and observational measures embedded throughout the lesson, including participation in the book orientation discussion, ability to identify the front cover, back cover, and title page, ability to name the author and explain the author’s role, engagement during the read-aloud at each stopping point, participation in the comprehension discussion following agreed-upon rules, willingness to ask questions to seek help or clarify understanding, ability to answer questions about key details and unknown words with prompting and support, and contributions to the chart of reasons. The teacher should note whether students can articulate at least one reason why farmers and ranchers care for their animals and whether they make unprompted connections between this book and *Milk Comes From a Cow?* from the previous unit, as these cross-unit connections indicate developing schema and meaningful learning transfer.

Supplemental Activities: Display the completed “Why Do Farmers and Ranchers Care for Their Animals?” chart alongside the “What Do We Know About Milk?” chart from the *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit. Guide students to notice that caring for animals was part of dairy farming too — Farmer George cared for his cows in the same ways this book describes. Invite students to draw a picture of one reason a farmer or rancher cares for their animals and share it during morning meeting. These drawings can be displayed alongside the chart as a visual representation of student thinking and will serve as a reference throughout the unit.

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