

Lesson 3: Animals Need Food and Water

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, Science

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 3 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. Students deepen their understanding that farmers and ranchers intentionally provide animals with the food and water they need to stay healthy through a purposeful second read of the text, a hands-on feed investigation, and guided writing. As they examine and sort common livestock feed ingredients, discuss why different animals need different diets, and complete an informative writing response, students strengthen reading comprehension, vocabulary, and beginning writing skills while building agricultural understanding.

Skillset: Prior knowledge activation, purposeful rereading, identifying main topic and key details, describing illustrations and text relationships, sorting objects into categories, hands-on science observation, connecting feed and water to animal survival needs, question word use, narrative writing from a lived experience, capitalization, end punctuation, letter formation with line awareness, and phonetic spelling.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

RI.K.2 With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

RI.K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing, or idea in the text an illustration depicts).

RI.K.12.a Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

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

W.K.3 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

W.K.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

W.K.10.a Correctly form upper and lowercase letters with line awareness.

W.K.10.c Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).

W.K.11.a Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.

W.K.11.b Recognize and name end punctuation.

W.K.11.c Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short vowel sounds.

W.K.11.d Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

Science Standards

K-LS1-1 Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

National Agriculture Literacy Outcomes

Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber, and Energy

T2.K-2.b Identify animals involved in agricultural production and their uses (i.e., work, meat, dairy, eggs).

T2.K-2.c Recognize that farmers and ranchers are responsible for raising animals that provide food and fiber for people.

Objectives

Science Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Use observations with a magnifying glass to describe the appearance and texture of real farm animal feed ingredients.
- Sort feed ingredients into categories by animal and by nutrient type.
- Explain that farmers choose specific feed for specific animals to meet their nutritional needs.
- Identify that protein, carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins are types of nutrients that help animals stay healthy.
- Explain that water is essential for all farm animals and that farmers ensure animals have access to fresh, clean water every day.

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the main topic of *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* with prompting and support.
- Retell at least two key details from the text with prompting and support.
- Describe the relationship between a selected illustration and the text it accompanies.
- Sort feed ingredients into categories to gain a sense of what each category represents.
- Use question words (who, what, where, when, why, how) in discussion.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate what happened during the feed investigation and provide a reaction.
- Recall information from the investigation and book to respond to the writing prompt.
- Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.
- Recognize and name end punctuation in the shared writing model.
- Form letters correctly with line awareness.
- Write letters for consonant and short vowel sounds when writing independently.
- Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on letter-sound knowledge.

Materials Needed

Read-Aloud:

- Book: *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* by Dan Yunk, illustrated by Michelle Johnson, physical copy or author read-aloud on unit landing page
- Chart paper titled: "What Do Farmers Feed Their Animals?"

- Markers

Feed Investigation:

- Whole wheat kernels (small amount per table — available on Amazon: Sadaf wheat, pearled)
- Cracked corn (small amount per table)
- Oats (small amount per table)
- Hay (small bundle per table)
- Mineral salt block pieces (small amount per table — available in packages of 8 on Amazon)
- Magnifying glasses (one per student or one per pair)
- Small sorting trays or paper plates (one per student)
- Feed Sorting Mat — companion document (one per student)
- Pencils and crayons

Writing:

- What Do Farmers Feed Their Animals? Writing sheet — companion document (one per student)
- Chart paper for shared writing model
- Pencils and crayons

Note: Check for any allergies to wheat, corn, or oats before this lesson. Students should not eat the feed ingredients. Remind students that these are foods for animals, not people, and that we observe them with our eyes and hands only.

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know

- Explain to students: “In our last two lessons, we learned that farmers and ranchers care for their animals every day and that one way they do that is by building shelters to keep animals safe. Today we are going to learn about another very important way farmers care for their animals: feeding them. Farmers don’t just give their animals any food — they think carefully about what each animal needs to stay healthy and strong.”
- Ask students:
 - “What do you eat every day to stay healthy? Does everyone eat the same thing?”
 - “Do you think a cow eats the same food as a chicken? Why or why not?”
 - “In our book, Grandma told Kailey that farmers make sure their animals have enough food and water. Why do you think water is just as important as food for a farm animal?”

2. Purposeful Second Read-Aloud

- Set a listening purpose before reading: “We have already read this book once. Today we are reading it again, but with a new job. Listen for: what is the main thing this book is about, and what details does the author give us about how farmers feed and care for their animals? Also pay attention to the pictures — today we are going to talk about how the pictures and the words go together.”
- Read *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* aloud.
Stopping Point Suggestions (2 total, brief stops to maintain flow. Keep stops brief. After the read-aloud, return to the main topic question before moving to the chart building.):
 - Stop #1: After the vet and medical care page. Ask students:

- “What is the main thing this book has been teaching us so far? What is it mostly about?”
 - “Look at this illustration. A vet is using a stethoscope on a calf. What does the picture show us? How does it connect to what the words just said?”
 - “The words say farmers make sure animals have food, water, and medical care. Which part of that does the picture show?”
 - Stop #2: After the safe food connection. Ask students:
 - “This page says that when farmers take care of their animals, people like us have safe food to eat. That is an important detail. What does the picture on this page show?”
 - “How does the picture help us understand what the words are saying?”
 - “Would we understand this page as well without the picture? What would we miss?”
3. Main Topic & Key Details Chart: After the read-aloud, display chart paper: “What Do Farmers Feed Their Animals?”
- a. Explain to students: “Every informational book has a main topic — the most important thing it is teaching us. In our book, the main topic is why farmers and ranchers care for their animals. All of the details in the book — the shelter, the food, the medical care — those are the key details that support the main topic. Let’s name some key details together.”
 - b. Ask students the following questions and record their responses on the chart:
 - “What is the main topic of our book?”
 - “What is one key detail you remember?”
 - “What did the author tell us about how farmers care for their animals?”
 - c. Explain to students: “Good readers and good thinkers ask questions. There are special words we use to start questions — we call them question words. They are: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Let’s use some of these question words to ask questions about our book.”
 - d. Model each question word with a book-connected example:
 - “Who cares for the animals in our book?”
 - “What do farmers and ranchers give their animals to keep them healthy?”
 - “Where do farm animals live?”
 - “When do farmers and ranchers feed their animals?”
 - “Why do farmers and ranchers make sure their animals have good food?”
 - “How do farmers and ranchers know what to feed each animal?”
 - e. Explain to students: “Today during our investigation and during writing, I want you to use some of these question words in your thinking and talking. When I ask you a question, notice which question word I used.”
4. Farm Animal Feed Investigation. Introduce the investigation:
- a. Explain to students: “Farmers think carefully about what they feed their animals — just like your parents think about what to feed you. Today you are going to look at some real farm animal feed ingredients that farmers use. These are things that go into feed for animals like cows, chickens, horses, sheep, goats, and pigs. Use your magnifying glass to look closely at each one.”

- b. Distribute materials: magnifying glasses, sorting trays or paper plates, and the Feed Sorting Mat. Place a small amount of each ingredient at the center of each table: whole wheat kernels, cracked corn, oats, hay, and a small piece of mineral salt block.

(Remind students that these are animal foods, not people food, and that we use our eyes and hands to observe — we do not taste them.)

- c. Guided observation — examine each ingredient:

- Wheat kernels:

- “What do the wheat kernels look like up close through your magnifying glass? What color are they? Are they smooth or rough?”
- “Wheat kernels come from wheat plants — the same wheat that makes bread and crackers. They give animals carbohydrates, which provide energy. Which animals do you think might eat wheat?”

- Cracked corn:

- “What does the cracked corn look like? How is it different from the wheat kernels?”
- “Corn gives animals carbohydrates too — energy for moving and staying warm. Cows, pigs, and chickens all eat corn. Have you ever seen a farmer feed corn to animals?”

- Oats:

- “Look at the oats. What shape are they? Are they bigger or smaller than the corn?”
- “Oats provide carbohydrates and some protein. Farmers may feed oats to horses— oats help give them energy and keep their muscles strong. Protein is what helps muscles and bodies grow.”

- Hay:

- “What does the hay look like and feel like? Is it soft or scratchy? What does it smell like?”
- “Hay is dried grass. It is one of the most important things cattle, horses, sheep, and goats eat, especially in the winter when there is no fresh grass. It gives animals fiber and energy to stay warm.”

- Mineral salt block:

- “Look at the mineral salt block. What do you notice about it? What does it feel like?”
- “Farmers put mineral salt blocks out for their cattle and other animals to lick. The minerals in the block — things like calcium and phosphorus — help keep animals’ bones and bodies strong. Vitamins and minerals are nutrients that keep animals healthy in ways that grain and hay alone cannot.”

- d. Explain to students: “We looked at five feed ingredients today — but there is one more thing every farm animal needs that is not on our table: water. Just like you need water every single day to stay healthy, farm animals need fresh, clean water every day too. A cow can drink up to 40 gallons of water in a single day. Farmers and ranchers make sure their animals always have access to water — through water troughs, automatic waterers, or even ponds on the ranch. Animals need both food and water to stay healthy.”

- e. Ask students:
 - “Why do you think an animal needs water even if it is eating plenty of hay and grain?”
 - “How do you think a rancher gets water to cattle that are out in a big pasture far from the barn?”
- f. Sorting activity: Explain to students: “Now we are going to sort. Scientists and farmers sort things into categories to understand them better. We are going to sort our feed ingredients into two categories: ingredients that give energy (carbohydrates and protein) and ingredients that keep animals healthy in other ways (minerals and vitamins).”
 - Guide students to sort on their Feed Sorting Mat:
 - Energy category (carbohydrates/protein): wheat kernels, cracked corn, oats, hay
 - Health category (minerals/vitamins): mineral salt block
 - Essential for life (always needed): water — not on the table today, but equally important as any feed ingredient
 - Explain to students: “Farmers often mix several kinds of feed to make a balanced diet for their animals. Just like you eat different kinds of healthy foods, farm animals need different kinds of feed to help them grow, stay healthy, and have energy.”
- g. Ask students:
 - “Why do animals need energy from their food?”
 - “Why do animals need minerals and vitamins even if they are already eating grain and hay?”
 - “How is a farmer choosing what to feed an animal like a parent choosing what to feed you?”

(The nutrient categories should be kept simple for kindergarten. Use accessible language: “energy food” for carbohydrates and protein, and “health food” for minerals and vitamins. The goal is for students to understand that farmers choose feed intentionally, not that they master nutrition science.)

5. Shared Writing

- a. Gather students on the carpet where they can see the chart paper clearly.
- b. Explain to students: “Now we are going to write about what we did today and what we learned. I am going to model how to write first, and then you will write on your own. Today our writing is going to tell about what happened during our investigation and how we felt about it.”
- c. Write the first sentence on chart paper: “Today I looked at animal feed.”
- d. Explain to students: “Look at the first word in my sentence, ‘Today.’ It starts with a capital ‘T.’ The first word in every sentence always starts with a capital letter. Also notice the word ‘I’ — the pronoun ‘I’ is always written as a capital letter, even in the middle of a sentence. Those are two rules we always follow when we write.”
- e. Ask students:
 - “Which word in my sentence is capitalized because it is the first word?”
 - “Where is the pronoun ‘I’? Why is it a capital letter?”
- f. Point to the period at the end of the sentence and explain: “At the end of my sentence, I put a period. A period is end punctuation — it tells the reader that the sentence is finished. There are other kinds of end punctuation too: a question

mark goes at the end of a question, and an exclamation mark goes at the end of something exciting. But most sentences end with a period. Let's find the end punctuation in our sentence."

- g. Ask students:
 - "What is the end punctuation in my sentence?" "If I wrote: What do cows eat? — what end punctuation would I use? Why?"
 - h. Explain to students: "Remember our question words from earlier — who, what, where, when, why, how? Writers use these words too. Watch: I can write a question using a question word: Why do farmers feed their animals different things? I started my question with why. That is a question word. My sentence ends with a question mark because it is a question."
 - i. Explain to students: "Our sentence frames are going to answer some of those question words — what did you see, and why do farmers feed their animals that? Watch how I use what I know to answer those questions in my writing."
 - j. Write the narrative sentence frames on chart paper, thinking aloud:
 - "Today I looked at _____."
 - "I saw _____."
 - "I think farmers feed their animals _____ because _____."
 - k. Model completing each frame, thinking aloud about letter formation and phonetic spelling:
 - "I am going to fill in my first blank. Today I looked at _____. I looked at feed. Let me write feed: f— tall letter, reaches to the top line. e-e — two letters that work together to make one long /ē/ sound, both short letters sitting in the middle. d — tall letter, reaches to the top line. F-e-e-d. I hear three sounds, and I wrote four letters — because two letters make that long e sound together."
 - "Now my second blank. I saw _____. I saw hay. Let me write hay: h — tall letter, reaches to the top line. a — short letter, sits in the middle. y — this letter goes below the line; it has a tail. H-a-y. I hear three sounds, and I wrote three letters."
 - "Now my last blank. I think farmers feed their animals _____ because _____. I will write hay in the first blank — I already know how to spell that. Now for my because blank, I need to think about why farmers feed animals hay. They feed them hay because it keeps them warm. Let me write warm: w — short letter. a — short letter. r — short letter. m — short letter. W-a-r-m. I hear four sounds, and I wrote four letters. Now let me read my whole sentence back: I think farmers feed their animals hay because it keeps them warm. That is what I think after what I learned today."
 - Now I need to check my end punctuation. I finished a sentence, so I add a period at the end. Every sentence needs an end mark — and since these are telling sentences, they each get a period."
6. Independent Writing — What Do Farmers Feed Their Animals?
- a. Have students return to their tables and distribute the writing sheet.
 - b. Explain to students: "Now it is your turn. Draw a picture of one feed ingredient you observed today. Then fill in the blanks on your sentence frames. Write the letters you hear in each blank. When you finish each sentence, add your end punctuation."

- c. Students fill in the blanks on the writing sheet independently using drawing, dictating, and writing.
- d. Circulate and support:
 - Prompt for drawing: “Draw the feed ingredient you found most interesting.”
 - Prompt for blank 1: “What did you look at today? Write that word in your first blank.”
 - Prompt for blank 2: “What did you see during the investigation? Write that word in your second blank.”
 - Prompt for blank 3: “What do you think farmers feed their animals? Write that in the first blank. Now why do you think they feed them that? Write that in the second blank”
 - Support for end punctuation: “You finished your sentence — what goes at the end? Show me where you put it.”
 - Support for capitalization: “Look at what you wrote in your blank. Should that word be capitalized? Why not? Capital letters go at the beginning of a sentence and on the pronoun ‘I’ — not on words in the middle of a sentence.
 - Support for letter formation: “Let your letters sit on the line. Show me where the line is.”
 - Support for phonetic spelling: “Say the word slowly. What sound do you hear first? Write that letter. What comes next?”

(Differentiation note: Students who need additional support may dictate their answers while the teacher or a classroom helper scribes. Students ready for a challenge can be prompted to add a question after they finish their blanks: “Can you write a question about farm animal feed? Use one of our question words and don’t forget your question mark.)

7. Closing Discussion & Kansas Connection

- a. Gather students back together.
- b. Ask students:
 - “What was the main topic of our book? What is the most important thing it is teaching us?”
 - “What key detail do you remember about how farmers feed their animals?”
 - “Which feed ingredient surprised you the most today? Why?”
 - “Why do you think farmers choose specific feed for specific animals instead of just giving all animals the same thing?”
- c. Kansas Connection:
 - Explain to students: “Kansas farmers and ranchers feed their animals every single day of the year — rain or shine, hot or cold, just like our book says. In the Flint Hills of Kansas, cattle graze on native grasses in the spring and summer. In the winter, ranchers haul hay out to feed their herds every morning so the cattle have enough to eat even when the grass is buried under snow and isn’t growing. Farmers who raise chickens, pigs, and horses mix special feed with grain and minerals to make sure those animals get everything they need. Feeding an animal the right food is one of the most important ways a farmer shows they care.”

- Ask students:
 - “Have you ever fed an animal before — a pet, a farm animal at a fair, or an animal at a petting zoo? What did you feed it?”
 - “Do you know anyone who feeds farm animals? What do they do?”

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through teacher observation during the second read-aloud, chart building, feed investigation, sorting activity, shared writing, and independent writing. Teacher should note whether students can identify the main topic of the book with prompting and support, retell at least one key detail from the text, describe the relationship between a selected illustration and the words on that page, sort feed ingredients into categories and explain what each category represents including identifying water as essential for life, use question words in discussion, complete the narrative writing sheet using drawing, dictating, and writing, recall information from the investigation and book to respond to the writing prompt, capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I, recognize and name end punctuation in the shared writing model, form letters with line awareness, and write letters for consonant and short vowel sounds. The completed writing sheet serves as the primary written artifact for this lesson.

Supplemental Activities: Display the completed writing sheets alongside the feed sorting mats and the “What Do Farmers Feed Their Animals?” chart from this lesson. Add the chart to the growing classroom display alongside the “Why Do Farmers and Ranchers Care for Their Animals?” chart from Lesson 1 and the “What Does a Good Shelter Do?” chart from Lesson 2. Guide students to see that feeding, sheltering, and providing medical care are all reasons farmers show they care. For an extension activity, challenge students to draw one feed ingredient and write or dictate one sentence about which animal eats it and why. These can be displayed as a class “Farm Feed Guide” on the classroom wall.

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Student Name: _____

What Do Farmers Feed Their Animals?

Draw one ingredient you observed today.

Then, finish the sentences.

Today I looked at

I saw _____

I think farmers feed their
animals because _____

Check Your Writing!

Aa

Underline capital letters.

I

Capital I.



Period at the end.