

Lesson 4: Animal Identification

Grade Level: 2nd Grade

Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, Agriculture

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 4 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 explore animal identification, an important way farmers and ranchers keep track of and care for their animals, through a short video, explicit vowel team and compound word instruction, and a hands-on Find My Match and ear tag project framed around an authentic ranch problem. Students learn the correspondences for less common vowel team patterns, including a vowel flexing strategy for trying an alternate sound when the first attempt does not form a known word, and apply that knowledge to decode two-syllable compound farm words. Students also generalize the compound word spelling pattern and practice expanding simple sentences with additional detail.

Skillset: Connecting prior knowledge to new content, understanding animal identification as a form of animal care, correspondences for additional common vowel teams, applying the vowel flexing strategy, applying vowel team knowledge to decode two-syllable words with long vowels, generalizing the compound word spelling pattern, expanding simple sentences with additional detail, and recalling information to support writing.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

RF.2.3.b Know correspondences for additional common vowel teams (e.g., steak).

RF.2.3.c Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.

W.2.10.f Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences. *This lesson addresses expanding sentences.*

W.2.11.d Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words, including compound words, the doubling rule, and e-drop rule. *This lesson addresses compound words.*

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

Agriculture Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain that farmers and ranchers use ear tags to identify individual animals.

- Describe why identifying individual animals helps farmers and ranchers provide proper care and keep accurate records.

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Know the correspondences for additional common vowel teams, including vowel teams that can make more than one sound.
- Apply the vowel flexing strategy to try an alternate vowel sound when the first attempt does not form a known word.
- Apply vowel team knowledge to decode regularly spelled two-syllable farm words containing long vowels.
- Generalize the compound word spelling pattern when writing.
- Produce and expand a simple sentence by adding descriptive or location detail.
- Recall information from the video and today's activities to support their writing.

Materials Needed

Whole Class:

- Book: *Farmers and Ranchers Care about their Animals!* by Dan Yunk, illustrated by Michelle Johnson (physical copy or author read-aloud on the unit landing page)
- YouTube Video: Clover Meadows Beef: Cattle Ear Tags and Why We Use Them: <https://youtu.be/10mfWQuoCyl?si=gG1Ep-l4ByjmpiWm>
- Smartboard or display screen
- Chart paper and markers

Find My Match — Word Edition Activity:

- Twelve “mother” ear tag cards, each showing a picture only: haystack, hayfield, beehive, feedlot, rainfall, oatmeal, scarecrow, roadside, sheepdog, soybean, greenhouse, cornfield
- Twelve “calf” ear tag cards, each showing the printed word only: haystack, hayfield, beehive, feedlot, rainfall, oatmeal, scarecrow, roadside, sheepdog, soybean, greenhouse, cornfield
- Velcro dots, clothespins, magnets, or laminated pieces to attach and remove ear tags
- Ear tag templates (small rounded rectangles with a pointed end)

Ear Tag Activity:

- Pre-cut ear tag templates (two per student)
- Pencils
- Markers or crayons (for coloring cutouts and drawing a picture only)
- Paper mother cow and calf cutouts (one pair per student)
- Glue sticks

Word Building & Writing:

- Chart paper for word modeling
- Find My Animal writing sheet — companion document (one per student)
- Pencils and crayons

Note: Before the lesson, prepare the twelve mother picture cards and twelve calf word cards for the Find My Match activity. Attach ear tags with Velcro or paper fasteners so they can be removed and reused. Spread the mother picture cards around the whole-group meeting area to represent “the pasture” before the lesson begins, and keep the calf word cards together to distribute to students.

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know
 - a. Explain to students: “We have learned that farmers and ranchers care for their animals by providing shelter, feeding them, and making sure they have water. Today we are going to learn about another important job farmers and ranchers do: identifying their animals. That means knowing exactly which animal is which, and letters and words help them do it!”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “If a farmer has 100 cows, how do you think he knows which cow is which?”
 - “Have you ever seen an animal with a tag on its ear? What do you think that tag is for?”
 - c. Explain to students: “Let’s watch a short video to find out how ranchers identify their cattle.”
2. Video — Ear Tags in Cattle
 - a. Explain to students: “As you watch, think about why ranchers might want to identify each individual animal.”
 - b. Play the YouTube video. Clover Meadows Beef: Cattle Ear Tags and Why We Use Them <https://youtu.be/10mfWQuoCyl?si=gG1Ep-l4ByimpiWm>.
 - c. After the video, ask students:
 - “What did you see the rancher put in the animal’s ear?”
 - “Why do you think ranchers give every animal its own tag instead of leaving them unmarked?”
 - “How might an ear tag help a rancher take better care of a sick or hurt animal?”
 - d. Explain to students: “Ear tags help ranchers identify each animal, almost like a name tag helps people know who someone is. This is especially important when many animals look alike. Ear tags also help ranchers keep important records, like which calf belongs to which mother, which animals have been given medicine, and which animals need extra care. It is one more way ranchers show they care for every single animal, not just the herd as a whole.”
3. Vowel Teams and Compound Words: Beyond the Basics
 - a. Explain to students: “Today we are going to solve a problem on the ranch. A storm came through the pasture last night, and now some of the mother cows and their calves have gotten separated and mixed up. The only way to match each calf back to its mother is by reading the words on their ear tags. Before we can help, we need to look closely at some of the letters in those words, because a few of them are tricky. In Lesson 2, we learned that vowel teams, two vowels working together, can make a long vowel sound, like oo in coop or ai in rain. Today we are going to learn that some vowel teams are tricky: the very same two letters can make more than one sound.”
 - b. Teach each pattern explicitly, writing examples on chart paper:
 - “Most of the time, when we see ea together, like in wheat, it says its long E sound. But sometimes ea says a different sound, its short E sound, like in bread. And sometimes ea surprises us even more and says long A, like in steak. Three different sounds from the very same two letters: wheat, bread, steak!”

- “The vowel team ow can also surprise us. Sometimes it says long O, like in grow. But sometimes it says a completely different sound, like in cow. Listen: grow, cow. Same letters, different sound!”
 - “The vowel team oo can also make two different sounds. Sometimes it says a long OO sound, like in rooster. Sometimes it says a shorter sound, like in wool. Rooster, wool. Wool is the thick coat we get from a sheep.”
- c. Explain to students why this happens: “You might be wondering why the very same two letters can make different sounds in different words. Here is why: English words come from many different languages, and they were spelled a long, long time ago, before everyone agreed on one way to say every sound. That is why the same spelling, like ea, ow, or oo, does not always match the same sound today. There is no rule that tells us for certain which sound a tricky vowel team will make just by looking at it.”
 - d. Teach the vowel flexing strategy: “Since we cannot always guess the sound just by looking at the letters, good readers use a strategy called vowel flexing. Here is how it works: try the most common sound first. Read the whole word with that sound. Does it sound like a real word you know? If yes, you are done! If it does not sound right, flex to try the other sound instead.”
 - e. Model vowel flexing with a new word: “Let’s try this with the word great. I will try the most common ea sound first, long E: g-r-eet. Greet? That does not sound like the word I am thinking of. Let me flex and try the other ea sound, long A: g-r-ate. Great! Flexing helped me find the right sound.”
 - f. Explain to students: “This same flexing strategy works for ow and oo too. If the first sound you try does not make a word you know, just flex to the other sound and try again.”
 - g. Ask students:
 - “What sound does ea usually make in wheat? What are the two surprising sounds it makes in bread and in steak?”
 - “What are the two sounds ow can make? Can you think of a word for each one?”
 - “What should you do if you try a vowel sound and the word does not sound right?”
 - h. Explain to students how to split compound words: “Many agriculture words are compound words: two smaller words joined together to make one new word with its own meaning. When we split a compound word into its two syllables, that same split usually shows us both of the smaller words inside it, and often a vowel team hiding inside one of them too. Let’s look at a few together.”
 - i. Model decoding several two-syllable compound words on chart paper, breaking each into syllables and naming both the vowel team and the two smaller words together:
 - “Haystack: hay-stack. That same split gives us our two smaller words: hay plus stack, a large stack of hay. Hay uses the ay team, saying long A, just like grow’s ow team says long O.”
 - “Rainfall: rain-fall. Rain plus fall makes rainfall, the rain that falls during a storm. Rain uses the ai team, saying long A, from Lesson 2. Fall is a short, closed syllable.”
 - “Beehive: bee-hive. Bee plus hive makes beehive, a hive where bees live. Bee uses the ee team for long E. Hive has a silent e at the end, which makes the i say its own name, long I.”

- j. Ask students: “What two smaller words do you see inside sheepdog? What do you think a sheepdog does?”
 - k. Ask students: “Can you think of the two smaller words inside cornfield? How does knowing both smaller words help you understand what cornfield means?”
 - l. Provide additional practice: work through the remaining words from today’s Find My Match list as a class, identifying both the vowel team and the two smaller words inside hayfield, feedlot, oatmeal, roadside, soybean, and greenhouse.
 - m. Ask individual students to decode feedlot and sheepdog aloud without teacher support, naming both the vowel team and the two smaller words inside each, to check for independent understanding before the matching activity.
 - n. Explain to students: “When we help match calves to their mothers, every word on their tags is a compound word with a vowel team hiding inside it. If your first try does not make a word you know, remember to flex to the other sound!”
 Differentiation: For students who need additional support, provide a small reference card listing each tricky vowel team with both of its sounds and an example word for each, along with today’s twelve compound words already split into their two smaller words. For students ready for a challenge, ask them to think of another word with a tricky vowel team and explain both possible sounds, or to think of a new compound word of their own using two smaller words they already know how to spell.
4. Find My Match — Word Edition
- a. Explain to students: “Now it is time to solve our ranch problem. You are going to decode a two-syllable word and find the picture it matches.”
 - b. Spread the twelve mother picture cards (haystack, hayfield, beehive, feedlot, rainfall, oatmeal, scarecrow, roadside, sheepdog, soybean, greenhouse, cornfield — pictures only, no words) around the room to represent the pasture. Keep the twelve calf word cards (same twelve words) together to distribute.
 - c. Explain the directions:
 - Pick up one calf word card and decode the word on it, syllable by syllable.
 - Search the pasture for the picture that matches the word you just decoded.
 - Place your word card beside its matching picture once you find it.
 - d. Model the process once with a sample word card before releasing students: “My word card says scarecrow. Let me decode it: scare-crow. Scare has a silent e, so the a says its own name, long A. Crow uses the ow team, saying long O, just like grow. Scarecrow! Now I search the pasture for a picture of a scarecrow. Here it is! I place my word card next to the picture.”
 - e. Remind students before they search: “As you search, listen to others with care and speak one at a time. If two people reach for the same picture, wait your turn to check whether your word really matches.”
 - f. Distribute one calf word card to each student. Teachers may print multiple sets of the cards so every student has a card to decode and match, and so students get plenty of practice — this also makes it easy to run a second or third round for additional repetition. Students search the room, decode as needed, and match their word to the correct picture.
 - g. While students search, prompt decoding and discussion:
 - “What word is on your card? Can you decode it, syllable by syllable?”
 - “Is there a vowel team in your word? Does it make the sound you expected, or a surprising one?”
 - “How do you know that picture matches your word?”

- h. Once all words are matched, gather students back together and ask: "Which word had a tricky vowel team? How did you figure out the right sound?"
5. Make the Ear Tags
 - a. Explain to students: "Now it is your turn to become the rancher and make your own ear tags."
 - b. Assign each student one of the twelve farm words from today's activity, making sure a good mix of different vowel teams (ay, ee, ai, oa, oy, and silent-e patterns) are distributed across the class.
 - c. Explain to students: "On one ear tag, write your assigned word. On the other ear tag, draw a small picture of that word. Before you write, say your word out loud and break it into its two syllables. Then glue one tag to your mother cow cutout and the other to her calf, just like a real rancher would label an animal."
 - d. Students write their assigned word on one ear tag template with pencil and draw a matching picture on the other, then cut out the tags and glue one onto their paper cow and one onto her calf.
 - e. Circulate and support:
 - "Say your word. How many syllables does it have?"
 - "Does your word have a vowel team? What sound does it make?"
 - "Does your picture match the word you wrote? How do you know?"
6. Producing, Expanding, and Rearranging Sentences
 - a. Explain to students: "Now let's build some sentences about the words we matched today. Good writers can take a simple sentence and make it stronger, adding more detail. We are going to use our new compound words and vowel teams while we do it."
 - b. Model starting with a simple sentence and expanding it, calling back to today's vowel team and compound word knowledge:
 - "I will start simple: I found a haystack. That is a complete simple sentence. Remember, haystack is one of our compound words from today, hay plus stack, and hay uses the ay vowel team, saying long A."
 - "Now I will expand it by adding a describing word: I found a huge haystack."
 - "I can expand it even more by adding where it happened: I found a huge haystack in the pasture."
 - c. Ask students: "What is one word or phrase we could add to this sentence to make it stronger: I found a beehive? Before you answer, can you tell me the two smaller words inside beehive, and the vowel team in the first one?"
 - d. Model expanding a second sentence, again naming the vowel team and compound structure: "Let's try one more: I found a scarecrow. Scarecrow is a compound word too, scare plus crow, and crow uses the ow vowel team, saying long O. Now let me expand it: I found a tall scarecrow in the cornfield."
 - e. Ask students: "Choose one word from today's Find My Match list. Can you name the two smaller words inside it and the vowel team you hear? Now use it in a simple sentence, and then expand your sentence with at least one more detail."
Differentiation: For students who need additional support, provide a sentence frame for expanding, such as "I found a ____," with a blank for a describing word, along with a reference card showing today's words already split into their smaller words and vowel teams. For students ready for a challenge, ask them to expand their sentence with two additional details instead of one, and to name the vowel team in every word they use.
7. Independent Practice — Find My Animal Writing Sheet

- a. Distribute the Find My Animal writing sheet.
 - b. Explain to students: “Your sheet has pictures of today’s words. Decode each word and write it, breaking it into syllables if that helps. Then write a simple sentence about one of your matches. See if you can expand your sentence by adding a describing word or a detail about where or how something happened. If you use a compound word, see if you can name the two smaller words inside it.”
 - c. Students complete the sheet independently.
 - d. Circulate and support:
 - Support for vowel teams: “What sound does that vowel team make? Try the other sound if the first one does not make a word you know.”
 - Support for syllables: “Clap the syllables in your word. How many beats do you hear?”
 - Support for spelling patterns: “Is this a compound word? What two smaller words do you see inside it?”
 - Support for sentence building: “Can you add a word to make your sentence stronger? Can you name the two smaller words and the vowel team inside your compound word?”

Differentiation: Students who need additional support may dictate their sentence while the teacher or a classroom helper scribes. Students ready for a challenge can be prompted to expand their sentence with a second or third detail, or to write a second expanded sentence about a different match.
8. Closing Discussion and Kansas Connection
- a. Gather students together with their ear tags and writing sheets.
 - b. Ask students:
 - “Why do farmers and ranchers use ear tags on their animals?”
 - “What two-syllable word did you decode today that you are proud of? What made it tricky or interesting?”
 - “Did you find a vowel team today that surprised you with its sound? Which one?”
 - c. Kansas Connection: Explain to students: “Across Kansas, ranchers use ear tags on their cattle every day to keep track of each animal, which ones have seen the veterinarian, which ones have been vaccinated, and which calves belong to which mothers. It is a simple tool, but it helps ranchers give every single animal the care it needs, just like our book taught us.”
 - d. Ask students:
 - “Have you ever seen an animal with a tag, collar, or brand that helps identify it? What was it?”
 - “Do you know anyone who raises cattle or other animals that need to be identified? How do they keep track of their animals?”

Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through teacher observation during the video discussion, vowel team instruction, Find My Match activity, ear tag project, spelling pattern instruction, shared writing, and independent practice. The teacher should note whether students can know the correspondences for additional common vowel teams, including vowel teams that can make more than one sound, apply the vowel flexing strategy when a first attempt does not form a known word, apply that knowledge to decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels, generalize the compound word spelling pattern, expand a simple sentence by adding descriptive or location detail, and recall information from the video and activities to

support their writing. The completed ear tags and Find My Animal writing sheet serve as the primary artifacts for this lesson.

Supplemental Activities: Display the completed paper mother cows and calves with their matching ear tags along a classroom wall or bulletin board titled "Our Ranch." Add the Find My Animal writing sheets nearby. For an extension activity, place the Find My Match word and picture cards in a classroom literacy center so students can continue decoding and matching practice throughout the week. Add a compound word center where students match two smaller word cards together (such as barn + yard, hay + stack, cow + bell) to build new compound words and illustrate what each one means. Gradually add more "surprising" vowel team words, such as break, snow, or wood, to the word wall for continued phonics practice.

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Find My Calf/Cow



Find My Calf/Cow



Find My Calf/Cow



Find My Calf/Cow



Find My Calf/Cow

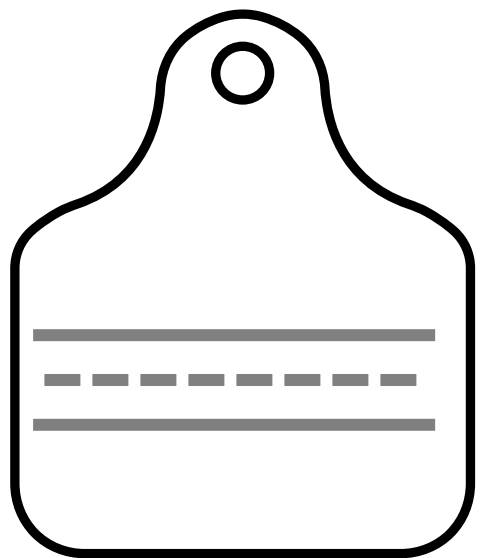
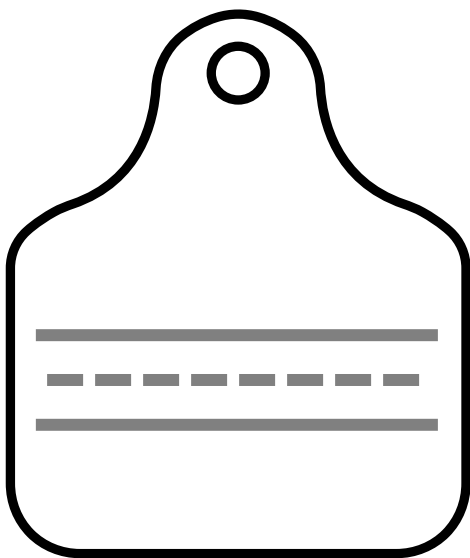
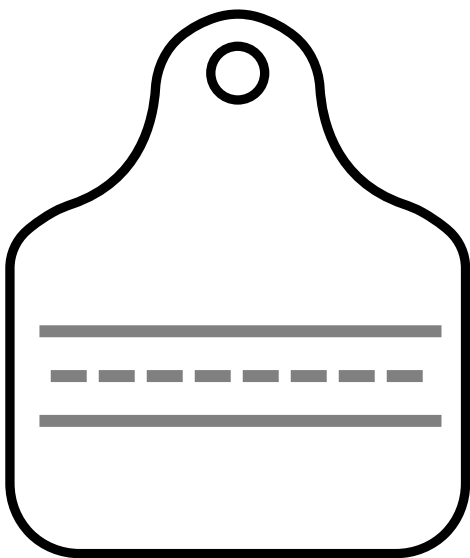
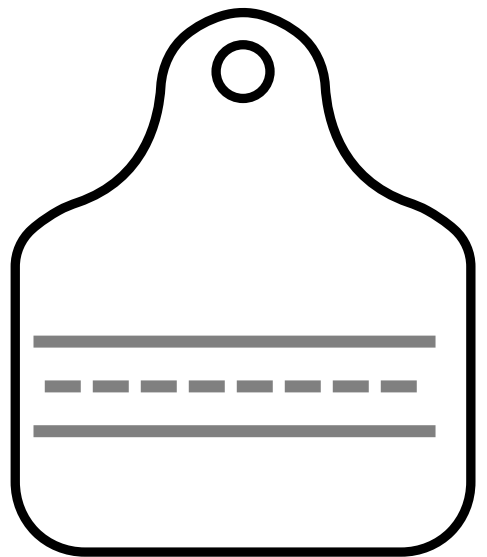
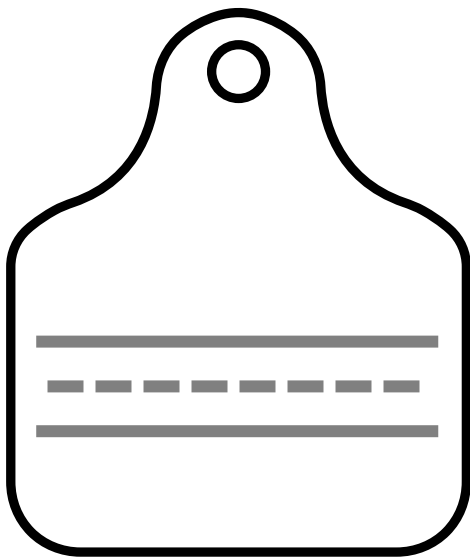
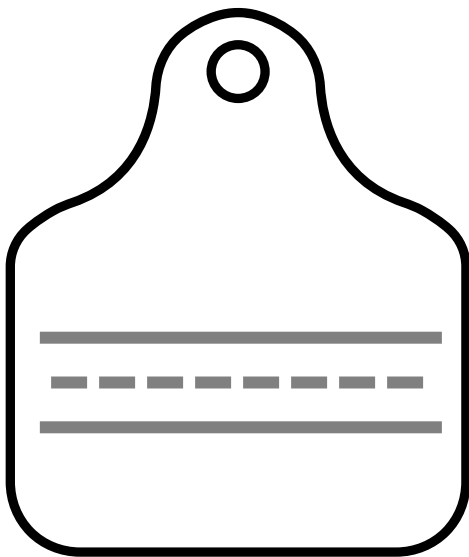
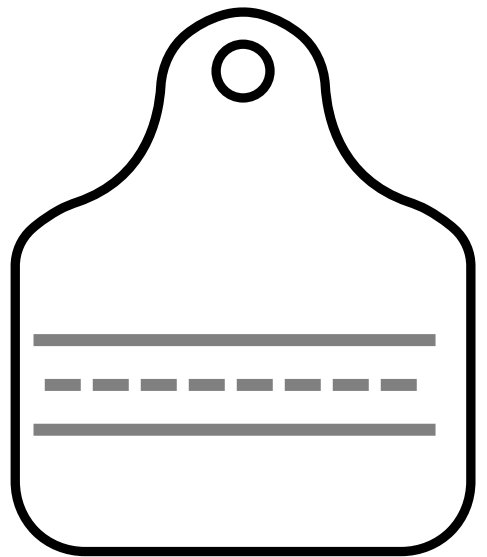
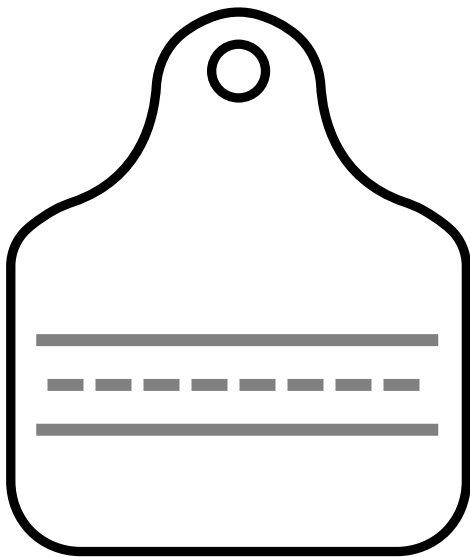
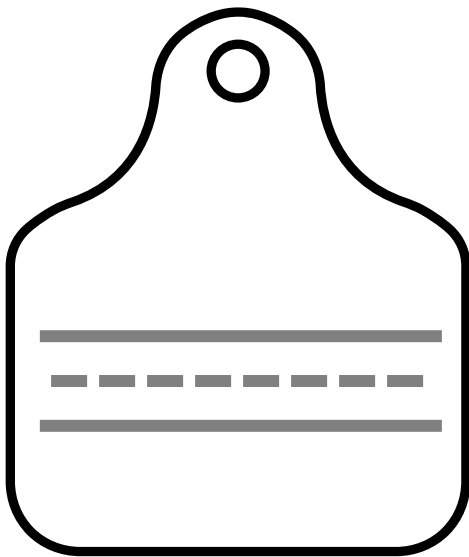


Find My Calf/Cow



Cow and Calf Cutouts

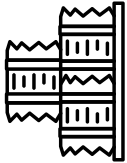
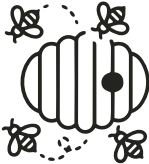
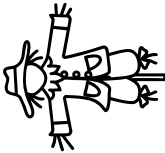
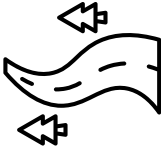
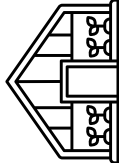




Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Find My Animal

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