



Lesson 5: Dairy vs. Beef

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, Science

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 5 of 5 in the *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit within the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on the book series by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Serving as the culminating lesson, students revisit the text through a purposeful final reread before comparing dairy and beef cattle. Students watch a short video, create a Build-a-Cow craft representing either a Holstein dairy cow, Hereford beef cow, or Angus beef cow, and use a T-chart to sort and compare cattle by their characteristics and purpose. Students then apply their learning by writing an informative paragraph about their cow while practicing correct comma usage in a series. The lesson reinforces that both dairy and beef cattle are raised by Kansas farmers and ranchers to provide food, preparing students to transition into learning about how farmers and ranchers care for all animals.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across the unit, purposeful rereading, retelling key details independently, using illustrations and text details together to describe key ideas, identifying the author's reasons, sorting cattle into categories, defining categories by key attributes, making real-life vocabulary connections, comparing dairy and beef cattle, hands-on craft and fine motor skills, comma use in writing, letter formation, and informative writing with topic/facts/closure.

Kansas Academic Standards

Kansas ELA Standards

RI.1.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

RI.1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

RI.1.8 Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.

RI.1.12.a Sort words into categories to gain a sense of the concepts the categories represent.

RI.1.12.b Define words by category and by one or more key attributes.

RI.1.12.c Identify real-life connections between words and their uses.

W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.

W.1.10.a Correctly produce upper- and lowercase letters.

W.1.11.c Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series.

Science Standards

1-LS1-1 Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs.

1-LS3-1 Make observations to construct an evidence-based account that young plants and animals are like, but not exactly like, their parents.

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.d Identify examples of food and fiber products that come from plants and animals.

T5.K-2.a Identify the ways farmers use land to grow crops and raise animals.

Objectives

Science Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain that dairy cows and beef cattle are both raised on farms but serve different purposes.
- Differentiate between dairy cows and beef cattle based on the products they provide.
- Describe at least one similarity and one difference between dairy cows and beef cattle.
- Sort dairy and beef cattle into categories and define each category by its key attributes.

English Language Arts Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the main topic of *Milk Comes From a Cow?* and retell at least two key details.
- Combine information from illustrations and text details to describe key ideas from the text.
- Explain at least one reason the author gives to support a point in the text.
- Sort dairy and beef cattle into categories and explain what the categories represent.
- Define dairy cow and beef cattle by category and by one or more key attributes.
- Relate dairy and beef vocabulary words to real-life experiences.
- Write an informative response that identifies a topic, provides facts, and offers a sense of closure.
- Form upper- and lowercase letters.
- Use commas to separate single words in a series.

Materials Needed

Final Read-Aloud:

- Book: *Milk Comes From a Cow?* by Dan Yunk, illustrated by Michelle Johnson (physical copy)

Build-a-Cow Craft:

- Exhibit Farm: How do I know if a cow is a beef or dairy cow?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qja-hTYltkk>
- Paper plates (one per student)
- Black and white paint or markers (for Holstein dairy cows)
- Solid black paint or markers (for Angus beef cattle)
- Brown and white paint or markers (for Hereford beef cattle)
- Pre-cut cow ear, horn, tail, leg, and nose pieces — black/white for dairy, brown/white or black for beef (see companion document)
- Googly eyes (2 per student)
- Glue sticks
- Chart paper labeled: “Dairy Cow” | “Beef Cattle” (T-chart, teacher-prepared)
- Markers

Writing:

- Build-a-Cow writing response sheet — companion document (one per student)
- Word Bank written on chart paper next to sentence frames (dairy cow, beef cow, Holstein, Hereford, Angus, milk, meat, farm, ranch).
- Pencils and crayons
- Chart paper for comma instruction

Note: Divide the class into thirds before the lesson. Assign one-third to dairy cows (Holstein), one-third to Hereford beef cattle, and one-third to Angus beef cattle. Prepare pre-cut ear, horn, tail, and leg pieces in the correct colors for each group before the lesson begins.

Lesson Procedures

1. Connecting to What We Know

- Explain to students: “This is our last lesson in the *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit. We have learned that dairy cows produce milk, mapped the journey of milk from farm to home, made butter and ice cream, and discovered how dairy products are made. Today we are going to read our book one final time and then build our own cows.”
- Ask students:
 - “What is the main topic of our book *Milk Comes From a Cow?*”
 - “What is one key detail you remember about dairy cows?”
 - “In our book, Farmer George had black and white cows. What breed were they?”
- Explain to students: “Farmer George had Holstein dairy cows, just like some of the cows we are going to build today. But first, let’s read our book one final time and pay close attention to the illustrations — today we are going to use the pictures and the words together to describe what we know.”

2. Final Read-Aloud of *Milk Comes From a Cow?*

- Hold up the physical copy of *Milk Comes From a Cow?* by Dan Yunk, illustrated by Michelle Johnson. Set a listening purpose: “This is our last time reading this book together. Today, listen for key details about dairy cows and the reasons the author gives for why dairy farming matters. Also pay attention to the illustrations — notice what the pictures show us and how they add to what the words say.”
- Read *Milk Comes From a Cow?* aloud. Pause at two key moments.
Keep stops short to maintain the flow of the story.
Stopping Point Suggestions (2 total):
Stop #1: After Farmer George describes the Holstein cows
Ask students:
 - “What is one key detail we just heard about dairy cows?”
 - “Look at this illustration. What does the picture show us that the words did not fully explain?”
 - “Using both the words and the picture together, what is the key idea on this page?”Stop #2: After the milking parlor and the journey of milk
Ask students:
 - “Why do you think Dan Yunk wrote this book? What reasons does he give for why it is important to know where milk comes from?”

- “How do Michelle Johnson’s illustrations help make the author’s reasons stronger?”
 - “Would this book be as convincing without the pictures? Why or why not?”
3. Retell, Illustrations & Real-Life Vocabulary Connections:
- a. After the read-aloud, ask students:
 - “What is the main topic of this book?”
 - “Can you retell two key details about dairy cows?”
 - b. Display a selected page (recommended: the milking parlor or Holstein cows). Explain to students: “Good readers use both the words and the illustrations together to understand a text fully. Let’s practice. I want you to tell me something you learned from the words, and then something you learned from the picture that the words did not say.”
 - c. Ask students:
 - “What does the text on this page tell us?”
 - “What does the illustration show us that the words do not fully explain?”
 - “Put both together: what is the key idea on this page?”
 - d. Explain to students: “Good readers connect words to real life. Let’s think about where we have seen or used these dairy words outside of school.”
 - e. Ask students:
 - “The word dairy — where have you seen or heard this word in real life?”
 - “The word cattle — have you ever seen cattle in a field? What did they look like?”
 - “The word farm — where have you seen or heard about a farm?”
 - “The word milk — where does milk show up in your life every day?”
 - f. Explain to students: “These are not just book words. They are real-life words that connect to things you see and do every day. That is what makes them important words to know and remember.”
4. Introducing Beef Cattle
- a. Explain to students: “We have learned that milk comes from a cow — but milk is not the only thing we get from cows. There is another kind of cattle that Kansas farmers raise: beef cattle. Beef cattle are raised for meat — the beef we eat in burgers, tacos, and steaks comes from beef cattle. Kansas is one of the biggest beef cattle states in the whole country.”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “Have you ever eaten a hamburger? That beef came from beef cattle on a farm or ranch.”
 - “Do you think dairy cows and beef cattle look the same or different?”
 - “If a dairy cow gives milk and beef cattle give meat, what is the same about both? What do they both need to survive?”
 - c. Explain to students: “In a few minutes, we are going to build our own cows. But first, let’s watch a short video so we know exactly what beef cattle look like before we start building.”
5. Video: Beef or Dairy?
- Explain to students: “As you watch, look closely at what beef cattle look like and how they are different from the Holstein dairy cows we learned about in our book.”

- a. Play this YouTube video. Exhibit Farm: How do I know if a cow is a beef or dairy cow? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qja-hTYltkk>.
 - b. After the video, ask students:
 - “What did you notice about the beef cattle? What did they look like?”
 - “Did you see any black cattle? Those are Angus. Did you see any brown-and-white cattle? Those are Hereford.”
 - “How were the beef cattle different from the Holstein dairy cows in our book?”
 - c. Explain to students: “Now that we have seen real beef cattle, it is time to build our own cows. One group will build a Holstein dairy cow—with black-and-white spots, just like Farmer George’s cows. Another group will build a Hereford beef cow—brown with a white face. The last group will build an Angus beef cow— all black. Then we are going to sort them into categories and define what makes each one different.”
6. Build-a-Cow Craft Activity
- a. Distribute materials based on pre-assigned groups. One group receives black-and-white materials (Holstein dairy cow). One group receives brown-and-white materials (Hereford beef cattle). One group receives solid black materials (Angus beef cattle).
 - b. Explain to students: “Your paper plate is the cow’s body. The markings on your cow will tell us what kind of cattle it is. You are going to add the ears, horns, legs, tail, eyes, and nose to build your cow. Holstein dairy cows have black-and-white spots. Hereford beef cattle are brown with a white face. Angus beef cattle are solid black.”
 - c. Model building the cow step by step before students begin:
 - Add the markings: The Holstein group adds black spots to a white plate. Hereford group colors the plate brown and adds a white circle for the face. Angus group colors the plate solid black.
 - Add ears on the top sides of the plate.
 - Add short horns above the ears.
 - Add four legs along the bottom edge.
 - Add a tail on one side.
 - Glue on two googly eyes.
 - Glue on the pink nose.
 - d. Students build their cows. Circulate and support fine motor skills and gluing.
 - e. While students work, prompt oral language:
 - “What kind of cow are you building? How do you know?”
 - “What does your cow give us?”
 - “How is your cow different from the cow your neighbor is building?”
 - f. Allow approximately 15 minutes for the craft. Have early finishers begin thinking about their writing: “What is one thing you want to say about your cow?”
7. T-Chart Comparison: Sorting & Defining
- a. Gather students in a circle with their finished cows. Display the T-chart: Dairy Cow | Beef Cattle.
 - b. Explain to students: “A category is a group of things that belong together because they share something in common. We are going to sort our cows into two categories: dairy and beef. Let’s fill in our T-chart together.”

- c. Hold up a Holstein craft cow. Ask students:
- “What category does this cow belong in? How do you know?”
 - “What do we know about Holstein dairy cows from our book and from the illustrations?”
- Record on the Dairy Cow side:
- Black and white spots
 - Produces milk
 - Has an udder
 - Most common breed: Holstein
 - Raised on a dairy farm
- d. Hold up a Hereford and Angus craft cow. Ask students:
- “What category do these cows belong in? How do you know?”
 - “How are Hereford and Angus similar to each other? How are they different?”
- Record on the Beef Cattle side:
- Raised for meat
 - Found on ranches and farms
 - Hereford — brown with white face
 - Angus — solid black
- e. Defining by Category and Key Attributes:
Explain to students: “Now let’s go one step further. In first grade, we don’t just sort things into groups — we define them. Defining something means naming the category it belongs to and providing at least one key attribute — one thing that makes it what it is. Watch how I do this.”
- f. Model two definitions on chart paper:
- “A dairy cow is a type of cattle that produces milk for people to drink and use as food.” — “I named the category: cattle. I gave the key attribute: produces milk.”
 - “Beef cattle are a type of cattle that are raised for meat.” — “I named the category: cattle. I gave the key attribute: raised for meat.”
- g. Ask students to try defining orally:
- “Can you define a Holstein in your own words? Name the category and one key attribute.”
 - “Can you define an Angus? Name the category and one key attribute.”
- h. Guide students to identify what both categories share:
- “Both dairy cows and beef cattle are cattle — same kind of animal.”
 - “Both need food, water, and shelter to survive.”
 - “Both are raised by Kansas farmers and ranchers.”
 - “Both give us food — one gives milk, one gives meat.”
- i. Ask students:
- “If both kinds need the same things to survive, what makes them different?”
 - “Why do you think farmers choose to raise one kind or the other?”
8. Writing Response: Build-a-Cow
- a. Distribute the Build-a-Cow writing response sheet.
Explain to students: “You built a cow today. Now you are going to write about it using what you know. In first grade, informative writing has three parts: a topic

sentence that names what you are writing about, at least one fact, and a closing sentence. Your writing sheet will be glued beneath your paper plate cow."

b. Comma use:

Explain to students: "Before we write, we need to talk about the comma. A comma is a punctuation mark that tells the reader to pause briefly – not to stop like a period, just to pause. In our sentence frames today, we will use commas to separate words in a list. Watch: "My dairy cow gives us milk, butter, and cream." When we list three or more items, we use a comma after each item except the last. As you write today, think about whether you can include a list in one of your sentences."

c. Write both sentence frames on chart paper, underlining the comma:

- "My dairy cow gives us ____, ____, and ____."
- "My beef cow gives us ____, ____, and ____."

d. Display the word bank on chart paper alongside the sentence frames:

- Animals: dairy cow, beef cow, Holstein, Hereford, Angus
- Places: farm, ranch
- Foods and Products: milk, butter, cream, steak, hamburger, leather

e. Explain to students: "These words are here to help you spell correctly. The breed names: Holstein, Hereford, and Angus are tricky to spell, so use the word bank. Good writers use references to help them spell; that is exactly what the word bank is for."

f. Explain to students: "When you write your sentence with a list of items, you must include the comma. It is part of the sentence just like the capital letter and the period."

g. Model writing on chart paper and practice thinking aloud:

- "I built a Holstein dairy cow. My topic sentence: "My dairy cow gives us milk, butter, and cream." I say it first, then I write. My — capital M and y. Dairy — d, a, i, r, y. Cow — c, ow. Gives — g, i, v, e, s. Us — u, s. Milk — m, i, l, k. Here comes my comma — I write a comma because I am listing items. Butter — b, u, t, t, e, r, then another comma, the word And — a, n, d, then Cream — c, r, ea, m. Period."
- "My fact sentence: Holstein cows are the most common dairy cow on Kansas farms."
- "My closing sentence: Kansas dairy farmers work hard every day to give us milk."

h. Point to each part and name it:

- Topic sentence: names the cow and what it gives us
- Fact: a detail about that breed or dairy farming
- Closing: a final thought that wraps up the writing

i. Ask students to say their topic sentence aloud to a partner before writing.

j. Students write their topic sentence independently on the writing sheet.

As students write, circulate and support:

- Correct production of uppercase and lowercase letters
- Comma placement in the topic sentence
- Prompt for a fact sentence: "What is one thing you know about your cow?"
- Prompt for closure: "How does your writing end? Write one final thought."

Differentiation note: For students who need additional support, allow the use of the sentence frame for the topic sentence, and prompt the fact and closure orally at the teacher's discretion. For students ready for a challenge, prompt them to provide a second fact using a definition: "A Holstein is a type of dairy cattle that produces milk."

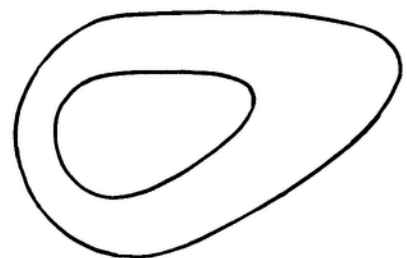
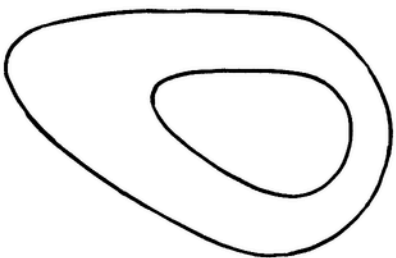
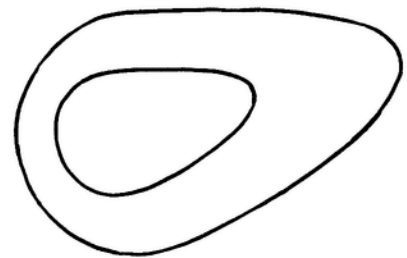
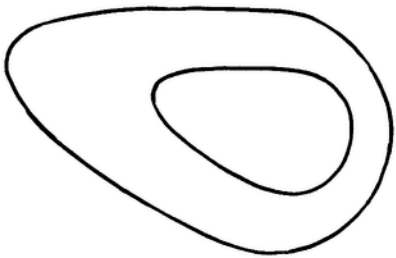
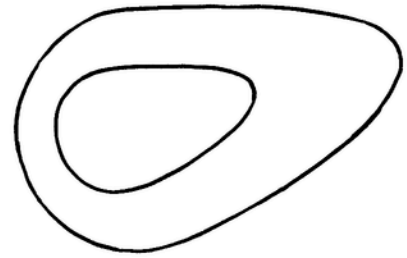
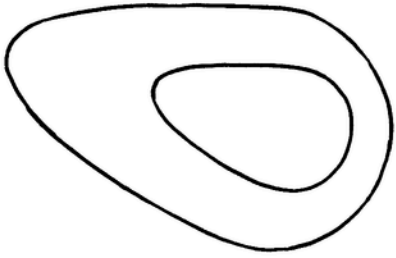
- k. Once their writing is complete, students glue their writing sheet beneath their paper-plate cow.
9. Unit Closing: Gather students with their finished Build-a-Cow crafts.
 - a. Explain to students: "Today we finished our *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit. Let's look back at what we learned."
 - b. Ask students:
 - "What is the main topic of *Milk Comes From a Cow?*"
 - "What is one key detail you will remember from this book?"
 - "What dairy products did we make in this unit?"
 - "What is the difference between a dairy cow and beef cattle? Can you define each one?"
 - c. Invite two or three students to share their writing. After each one, ask the class:
 - "What was the topic sentence? Did you hear the comma?"
 - "What fact did the writer give?"
 - "What was the closing thought?"
 - d. Kansas Connection. Explain to students: "Kansas is known for raising cattle. Most cattle in Kansas are beef cattle, but dairy farms are growing across the state and producing the milk and dairy products we enjoy every day. Whether you live on a ranch and have seen cattle your whole life, or you live in a city and see them only on drives through the country, cattle are part of Kansas. The burger at your favorite restaurant, the milk on your cereal, the cheese on your pizza — there is a very good chance that Kansas cattle were part of that."
 - e. Explain to students: "But cattle are not the only animals that give us meat! Farmers and ranchers raise lots of different animals for food. Chickens give us meat and eggs. Pigs give us meat too — that is where bacon and ham come from. Sheep and goats can provide us with meat, and some also produce wool or milk. Whether it is a cow, a chicken, a pig, a sheep, or a goat, farmers and ranchers work hard every single day to take good care of their animals so that animals stay healthy and families have food to eat."
 - f. Ask students:
 - "What other farm animals can you think of?"
 - "Have you ever seen chickens, pigs, sheep, or goats? Where?"
 - "What is your favorite meat to eat?"

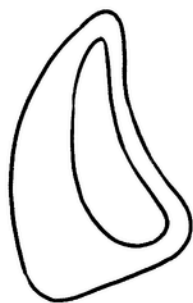
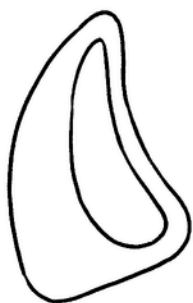
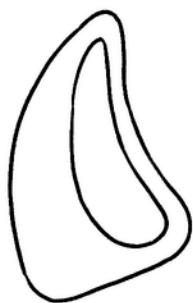
Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through teacher observation during the final read-aloud, a retelling discussion, illustration analysis, real-life vocabulary connections, craft construction, a T-chart comparison, and a written response. Teacher should note whether students can identify the main topic and retell at least two key details independently, use illustrations and details together to describe key ideas, identify at least one reason the author gives to support a point, sort dairy and beef cattle into categories, define dairy cow and beef cattle by category and key attribute, make real-life connections to dairy and beef vocabulary, use a comma correctly in their topic sentence, correctly produce upper- and lowercase letters,

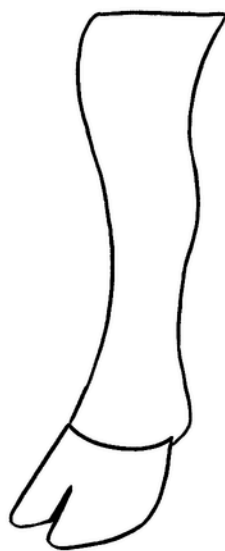
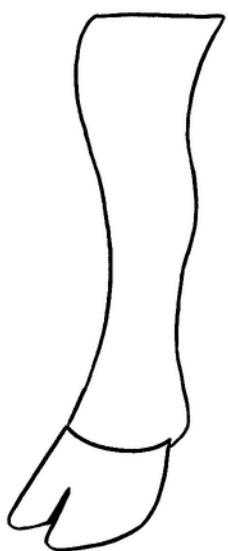
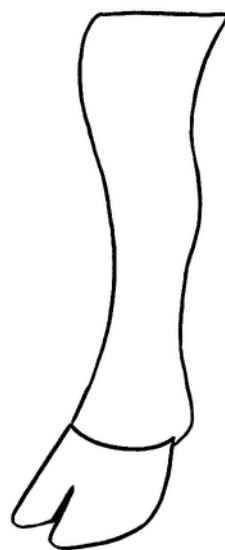
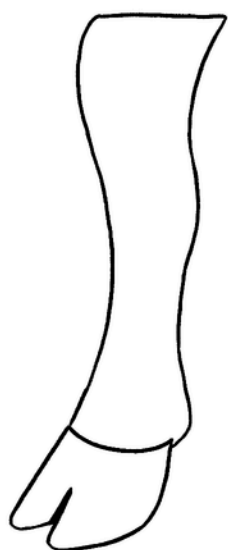
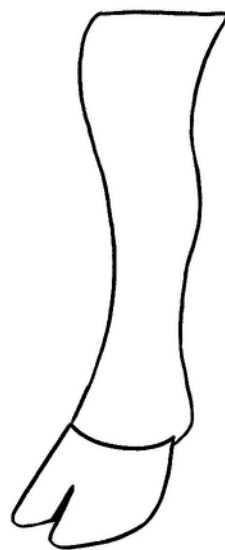
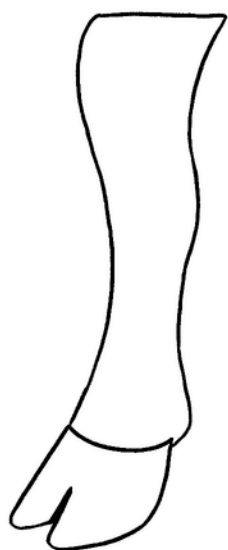
and write an informative response with a topic, at least one fact, and a sense of closure. The Build-a-Cow craft, with the attached writing sheet, serves as the primary take-home artifact for this lesson and the unit.

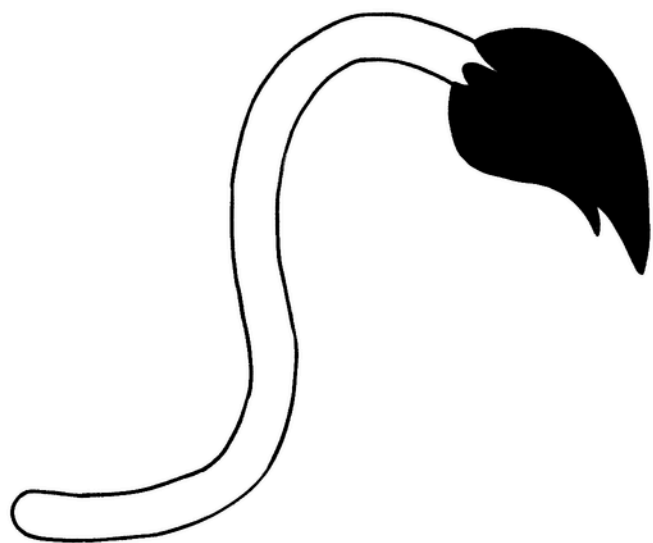
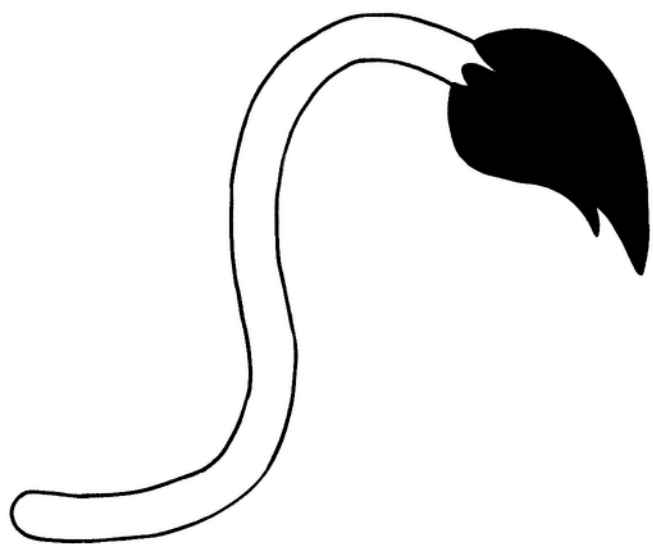
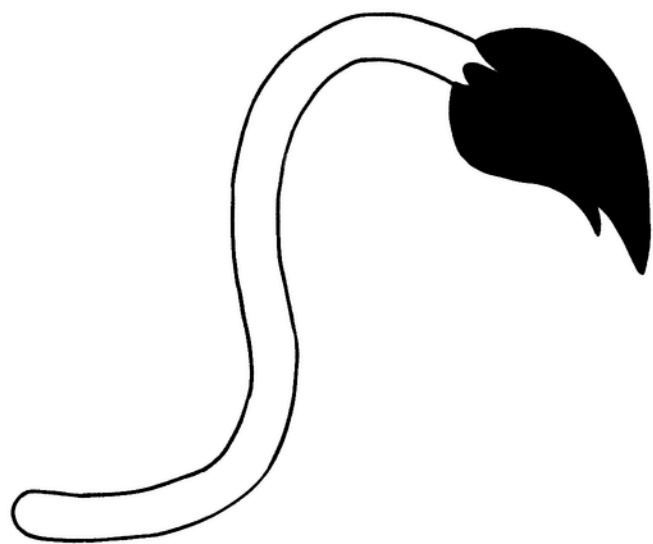
Supplemental Activities: Display the completed Build-a-Cow crafts sorted by category — Holstein dairy cows on one side of the bulletin board, Hereford and Angus beef cattle on the other — mirroring the T-chart students created in class. Place the T-chart between them so students can see their sorting and defining work displayed. Post the definitions generated in class alongside the chart: “A dairy cow is a type of cattle that produces milk. Beef cattle are a type of cattle raised for meat.” Alongside the Build-a-Cow display, post the unit’s collected work: the Map the Journey sequence sheets from Lesson 2, the butter narrative writing from Lesson 3, and the From Cow to Cone writing sheets from Lesson 4. This full display tells the complete story of the unit and serves as a visual bridge into the next unit.

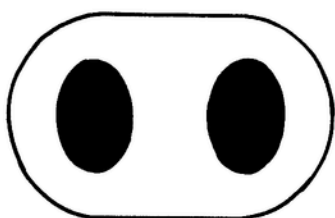
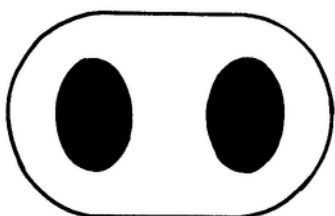
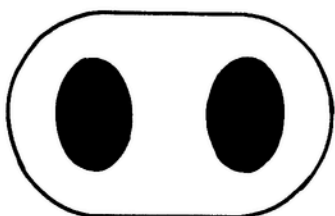
Author: Kelsy Sproul, Literacy Specialist, 2026 KFAC Teacher of the Year, KFAC Curriculum Advisory Council, Former Elementary Teacher. Edited by Marissa Cook, KFAC intern, Kansas State University Secondary Education.











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Beef or Dairy?