



Lesson 5: Dairy vs. Beef

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Time: 60 minutes

Subjects: ELA, Science

Overview: This lesson is Lesson 5 of 5 — the closing lesson of the *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit within the *Growing Readers* micro-curriculum, based on a series of books written by Kansas author Dan Yunk. Lesson 5 brings the unit full circle through a final purposeful reread of *Milk Comes From a Cow?*, a hands-on Build-a-Cow craft activity, and a structured comparison of dairy and beef cattle. Students retell key details and identify the author's reasons while reinforcing vocabulary through real-life connections. Students create either a Holstein dairy cow, a Hereford beef cow, or an Angus beef cow — the teacher assigns one of the three breeds to each student. The finished cows are compared using a T-chart, giving students experience sorting animals into categories and discussing how two animals that look similar can serve very different purposes on a Kansas farm. The lesson closes with a one-sentence writing response using a sentence frame, glued beneath the craft as a display piece. Connections to *Celebrate Wheat* are maintained as students see that Kansas farms raise both crops and animals — and that both are part of the food on our tables.

Skillset: Activating and connecting prior knowledge across the unit, purposeful rereading, retelling key details, identifying author and illustrator roles, identifying the author's reasons, real-life vocabulary connections, sorting animals into categories, comparing dairy and beef cattle, hands-on craft and fine motor skills, sentence frame writing, and Kansas connections through dairy and beef farming.

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.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.8 With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.

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.12.c Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are colorful).

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

W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

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

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.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.
- Identify that dairy cows produce milk and beef cattle are raised for meat.
- Describe at least one way dairy cows and beef cattle look the same and one way they look different.
- Sort dairy and beef cattle into categories and explain the difference between the two.

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 with prompting and support.
- Name the author and illustrator of *Milk Comes From a Cow?* and explain the role of each.
- Explain at least one reason the author gives to support a point in the text with prompting and support.
- Sort dairy and beef cattle into categories and explain what the categories represent.
- Relate dairy vocabulary to real-life experiences.
- Participate in the final read-aloud by listening for specific information.
- Write an informative sentence about the cow they created using a sentence frame.
- Compose an informative response by naming the topic and providing information through drawing, dictating, and writing.
- Capitalize the first word of their sentence.

Materials Needed

Final Read-Aloud:

- Book: *Milk Comes From a Cow?* by Dan Yunk, illustrated by Michelle Johnson, physical copy or author read-aloud on the unit landing page

Build-a-Cow Craft:

- YouTube: 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)
- Pencils and crayons

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
 - a. Explain to students: “This is our last lesson in the *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit. In this unit, we learned so much — we learned that dairy cows produce milk, made butter, mapped the journey of milk from farm to home, and made ice cream. Today we are going to read our book one final time and then do something special: we are going to build our own cows.”
 - b. 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?”
 - c. 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 finish learning everything we can from our book one more time.”
2. Final Read-Aloud of *Milk Comes From a Cow?* Hold up the physical copy of *Milk Comes From a Cow?*
 - a. Explain to students: “Before we read, let’s talk about the people who made this book. Every book has two very important jobs. The author writes the words. The illustrator creates the pictures. In this book, Dan Yunk is the author — he decided what information to share and how to say it. Michelle Johnson is the illustrator — she created the images that helped us understand the story. Both the author and illustrator work together to give us information in two different ways — through words and through pictures.”
 - b. Ask students:
 - “Who is the author of this book?”
 - “What does the author do?”
 - “What does the illustrator do? What is her name?”
 - “If there were no illustrations, what would be harder to understand about dairy farming?”
 - c. Set a listening purpose: “This is our last time reading this book together. Today, listen for two things: the key details about dairy cows, and the reasons the author gives for why dairy farming matters.”

- d. Read *Milk Comes From a Cow?* aloud. Pause at two key moments:
Stopping Point Suggestions (2 total, brief):
- Stop #1: After Farmer George describes the Holstein cows.
Ask students:
 - “What is one key detail we just heard about dairy cows?”
 - “Farmer George said Holsteins are the most common breed of dairy cows. What does that mean in real life? Have you seen black and white cows before?”
 - 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 the illustrations help make his reasons stronger?”
3. Retell & Real-Life Vocabulary Connections
- After the read-aloud, ask students:
 - “What is the main topic of this book?”
 - “Can you tell me two key details about dairy cows?”
 - Explain to students: “We have learned a lot of dairy words in this unit. Good readers connect words to real life — they think about where they have seen or used that word outside of school. Let’s practice.”
 - Ask students:
 - “The word dairy — where have you seen or heard this word in real life? Think about the grocery store, a restaurant, or at home.”
 - “The word farm — where have you seen a farm? On a drive? On TV? Near your home?”
 - “The word milk — where does milk show up in your life every day?”
 - “The word cattle — have you ever seen cattle in a field? What did they look like?”
 - Explain to students: “These words 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.”
4. Introducing Beef Cattle
- Explain to students: “In our book, we learned all about dairy cows — cows that are raised to produce milk. But there is another type 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.”
 - Ask students:
 - “Have you ever eaten a hamburger? That beef came from beef cattle on a 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 of them? What do they both need to survive?”
 - Explain to students: “In a few minutes, we are going to build our own cows. Some of you will build a dairy cow, and some of you will build beef cattle. But first, let’s watch a short video to see real beef cattle, so we know exactly what they look like before we start building.”

5. Video: Beef or Dairy?

- a. Explain to students: “Before we build our cows, we are going to watch a short video about beef cattle. As you watch, look closely at what beef cattle look like, how farmers care for them, and how they are different from the dairy cows we learned about in our book.”
- b. 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-hTYItkk>.
- c. After the video, ask students:
 - “What did you notice about the beef cattle in the video? 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 in the video different from the Holstein dairy cows in our book?”
 - “What do you think beef cattle are used for on a farm?”
- d. Explain to students: “Now that we have seen real beef cattle in the video, it is time to build our own cows. Today, one group is going to build a Holstein dairy cow — black and white spots, just like Farmer George’s cows. Another group is going to build a Hereford beef cow — brown with a white face. And the last group is going to build an Angus beef cow — all black. Then we are going to compare them and sort them into two categories: dairy and beef.”
- e. Kansas Connection:
Explain to students: “Kansas is a cattle state through and through. 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.”

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. You are going to add the ears, horns, legs, tail, eyes, and nose to build your cow. The markings on your cow will tell us what kind of cattle it is. 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 while students watch before they begin:
 - Add the markings: The Holstein group adds black spots to a white plate. Hereford group colors the plate brown and leaves or adds a white circle for the face. Angus group colors the plate solid black — no spots or white markings.
 - 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?”
 Allow approximately 15 minutes for the craft. Have early finishers begin thinking about their sentence: “What is one thing you want to say about your cow?”
7. T-Chart Comparison: Sorting Dairy and Beef
- a. Gather students in a circle with their finished cows. Display the teacher-prepared 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. Sorting helps us understand how things are alike and different. 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?”
 - d. Record student responses on the Dairy Cow side of the T-chart:
 - Black and white spots
 - Produces milk
 - Most common breed: Holstein
 - Raised on a dairy farm
 - e. Hold up a Hereford craft cow. Ask students:
 - “What category does this cow belong in? How do you know?”
 - “What do we know about beef cattle?”
 - f. Record student responses on the Beef Cattle side of the T-chart:
 - Brown with a white face
 - Raised for meat
 - Found on ranches and farms
 - Example breeds: Hereford (brown with white face), Angus (solid black)
 - g. Guide students to identify what both categories share:
 - “Both dairy cows and beef cows are cattle — they are the same kind of animal.”
 - “Both need food, water, and shelter to survive.”
 - “Kansas farmers raise both.”
 - “Both give us food — one gives milk, one gives meat.”
 - h. Ask students:
 - “If dairy cows and beef cattle both need the same things to survive, what makes them different?”
 - “Why do you think farmers choose to raise one kind or the other?”
 - “Have you ever seen either kind of cattle in Kansas? Where?”
8. Writing Response: Build-a-Cow Sentence
- a. Distribute the Build-a-Cow writing response sheet.
 - b. Explain to students: “You built a cow today. Now you are going to write one sentence about your cow using a sentence frame. Your writing sheet will be

glued beneath your paper plate cow so that everyone who looks at your cow can read what you know about it.”

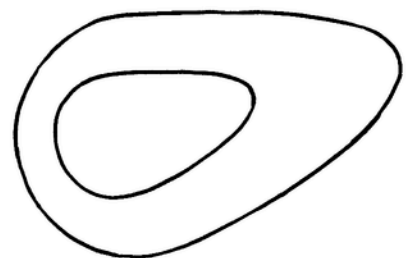
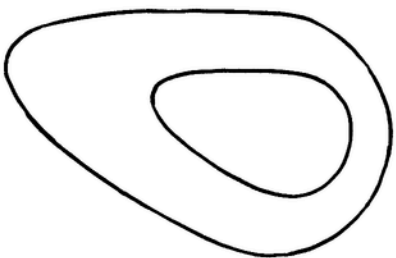
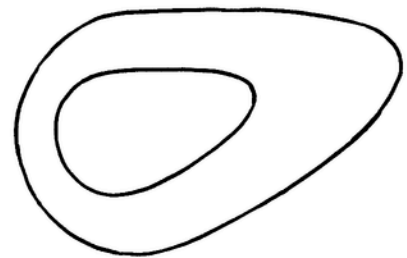
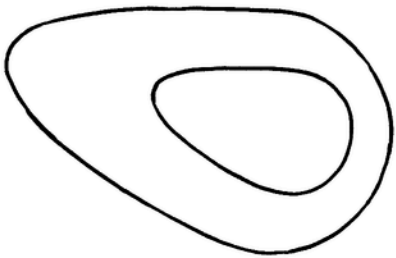
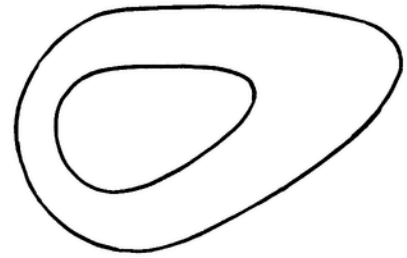
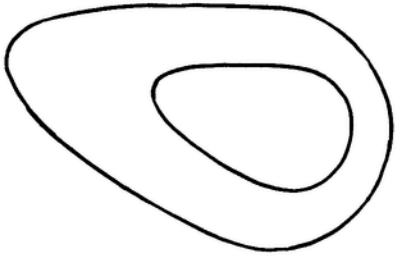
- c. Display the sentence frames on chart paper and point to each one:
 - “My dairy cow gives us _____.”
 - “My beef cow gives us _____.”
 - d. Model writing on chart paper, thinking aloud:
 - “I built a Holstein cow. I learned that Holsteins are dairy cattle, so I will use the first frame. Watch me write my first sentence. First, I will say the whole sentence. ‘My dairy cow gives us milk.’ Now I will write one word at a time. My — capital M, because it is the first word, and y for the /ī/. Dairy — d, a, i, r, y. — d says /d/. Cow — c says /k/, ow. Gives — g, i, v, e, s. Us — u, s. Milk — m, i, l, k. Period at the end.”
 - “Now I check: capital at the start? Yes. Spaces between words? Let me point and check. Period at the end? Yes.”
 - e. Students write their sentence independently on the writing sheet. As students write, teacher circulates and supports:
 - Support proper letter formation and spacing between words
 - Help students sound out and spell words phonetically
 - Support capitalization of the first word
 - Prompt students to point to each word as they reread
 - f. Once their writing is complete, students glue their writing sheet beneath their paper-plate cow. (Differentiation note: For students who need additional support, allow dictation at teacher discretion — write their sentence while naming each letter aloud. For students ready for a challenge, prompt a second sentence: “Kansas farmers raise _____ cattle.”)
9. Unit Closing: Gather students with their finished Build-a-Cow crafts. Explain to students: “Today we finished our *Milk Comes From a Cow?* unit. Let’s look back at what we learned.”
- a. 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?”
 - b. Explain to students: “We learned that dairy cows give us milk, and beef cattle give us meat. 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.”
 - c. 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?”

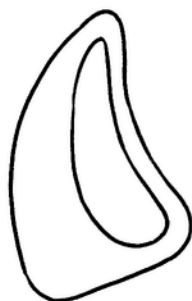
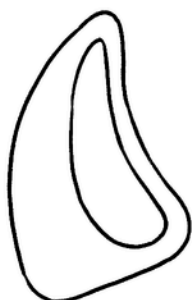
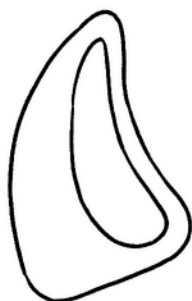
Assessment: Student understanding is assessed through teacher observation during the final read-aloud, a retelling discussion, a real-life vocabulary connection activity, craft construction, a

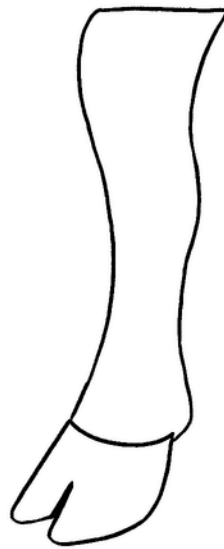
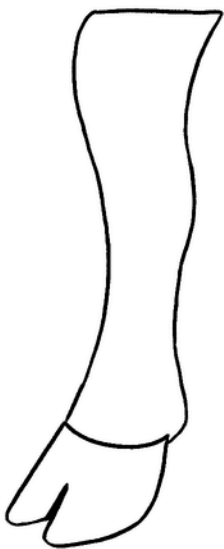
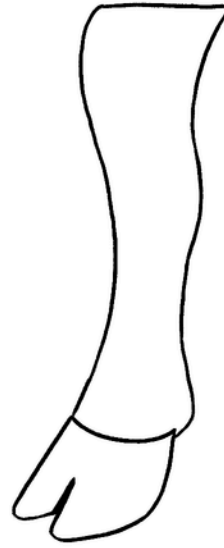
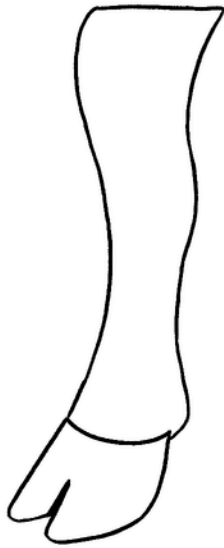
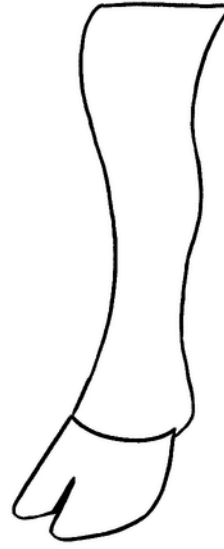
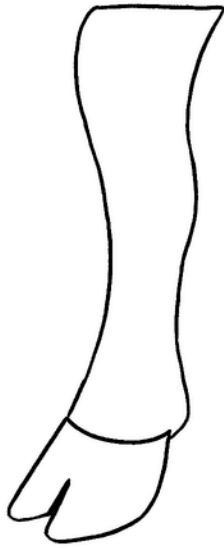
T-chart comparison, and a written response. Teacher should note whether students can identify the main topic and at least two key details, name the author and illustrator and define their roles, identify at least one reason the author gives to support a point, sort dairy and beef cattle into categories and explain what the categories represent, make real-life connections to dairy vocabulary words, and write a sentence using a sentence frame with a capital letter at the start. The Build-a-Cow craft, with the attached writing sheet, serves as the primary take-home artifact for this lesson and the unit.

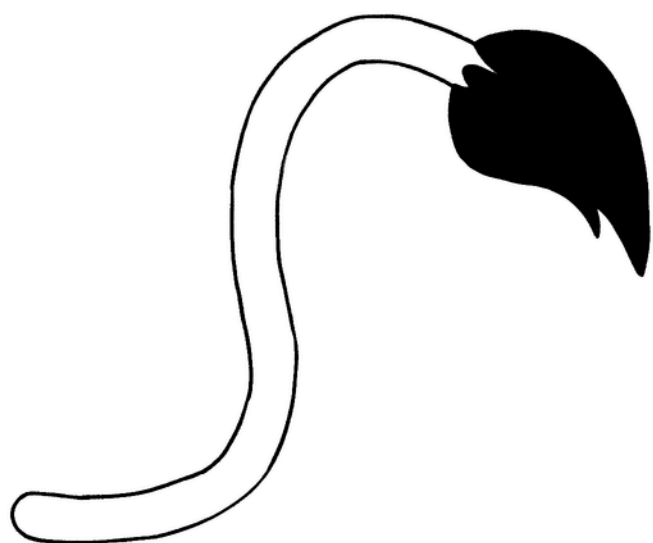
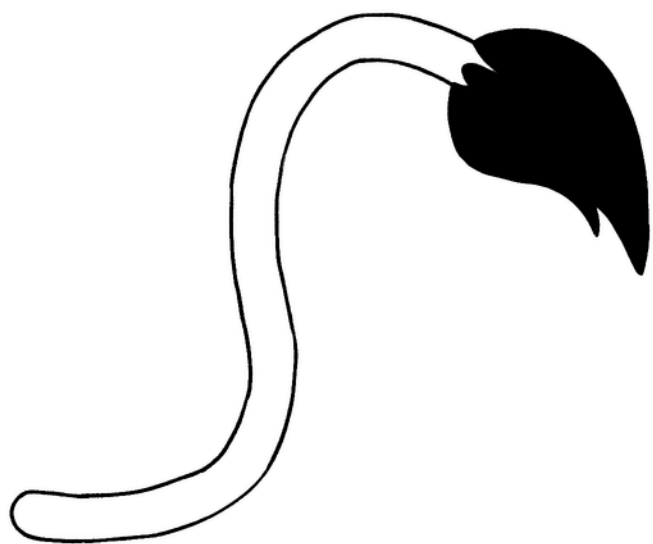
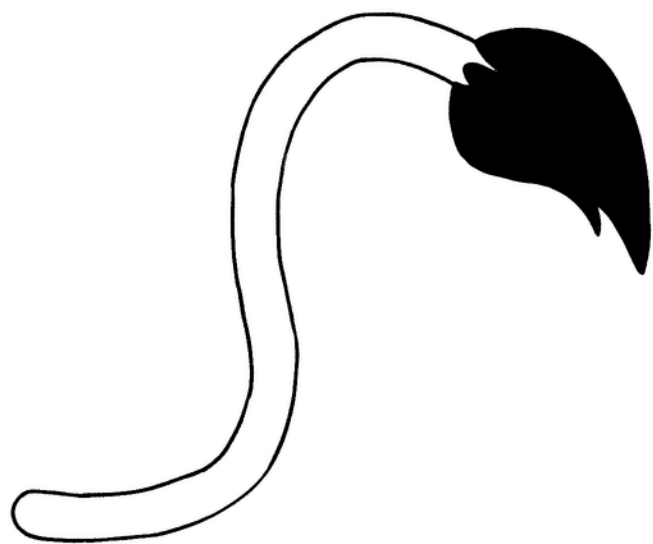
Supplemental Activities: Display the completed Build-a-Cow crafts sorted by category — Holstein dairy cows on one side of the bulletin board, Hereford beef cattle on the other — mirroring the T-chart students created in class. Place the T-chart between them so students can see their sorting work displayed. Invite families to read the display when they visit. Alongside the Build-a-Cow display, post the unit's collected work: the Map the Journey sequence sheets from Lesson 2, the butter sequence sheets from Lesson 3, and the From Cow to Cone writing sheets from Lesson 4. This full display tells the complete story of the unit — from the dairy farm to the products milk becomes, to the two kinds of cattle Kansas farmers raise — and serves as a visual bridge into the next unit.

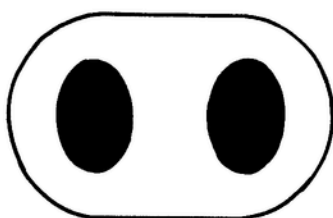
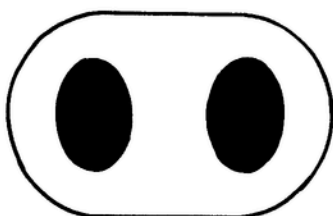
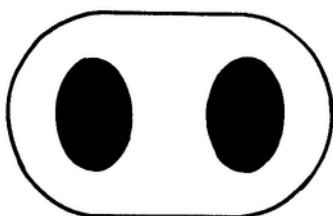
Author: Kelsy Sproul, Literacy Specialist, 2026 KFAC Teacher of the Year, KFAC Curriculum Advisory Council, Former Elementary Teacher. Edited by Marissa Cook, KFAC intern, Kansas State University Secondary Education.











Glue plate here.

Student Name: _____

Beef or Dairy?