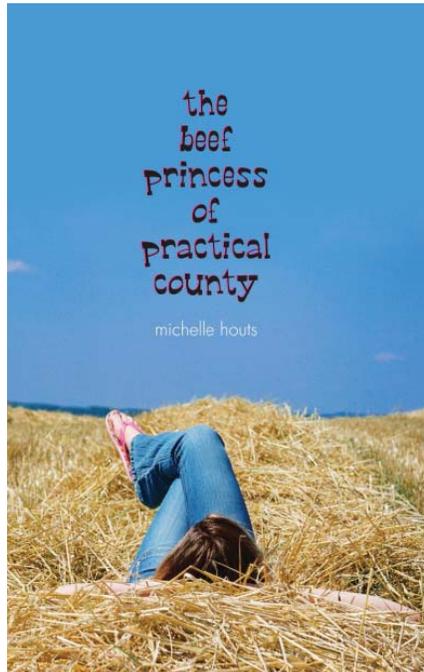


# The Beef Princess of Practical County



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Companion Guide From



MICHIGAN'S VOICE OF AGRICULTURE



Adopted From



When paired with this 5th grade reading novel, this lesson plan will address the following standards for Common Core for 5th grade:

Key Ideas and Details:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7

Fluency:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4a

This lesson plan will also address the following standards for Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations for 5th grade:

Organization of Living Things:

- L.OL.05.41
- L.OL.05.42

Evolution:

- L.E.V.05.11
- L.E.V.05.12

## **Introduction**

The *Beef Princess of Practical County* tackles some unique issues facing agriculture today from the perspective of a 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl and her first time showing cattle at the county fair.

In this companion guide you will find:

**“Power Words”** and **“Vo-Cow-Bulary”** - These are words from each chapter that may be unfamiliar to students. Students could define each, use them in sentences or work to use them in writing.

- **“Power Words”** are more traditional vocabulary words.
- **“Vo-Cow-Bulary”** are words associated with agriculture.

Not all chapters have unusual vocabulary words, so in some cases there is not a vocabulary section included.

- “Questions” to use as discussion starters or as reading checks.
- Writing prompts called “Write Away” to encourage students to write more about a specific topic.
- “Art-Wise” encourages students to use the art portion of Language Arts to research and integrate art into reading time.
- An “Extension Activity” has been added to some chapters with links to other Agriculture in the Classroom activities.

Some questions, writing prompts and art activities build on previous examples. Consider having students use special notebooks or folders to store all materials for this book, to make referencing information easier.

## Prologue

### Power Words

Prologue

Arena

Comprehend

Inevitable

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Steer*- a male bovine castrated when young, which has not begun to develop the secondary physical characteristics of a bull

*Lead Rope*- the rope used to lead the animal

*Straw*- dried stalk of grain used for bedding of an animal

*Shorthorn*- a breed of cattle that is meant for both dairy and beef production, and is either red, white or roan in color

## *Questions*

1. What purpose does the prologue serve?
2. After reading the prologue, name and describe the main characters.
3. Skim ahead and notice the chapter names. What name would you give this chapter?

## *Write Away*

- \* After reading the prologue, skimming the chapter titles and examining the front cover, write your version of the story. What do you think will happen through the novel?

## *Extension Activity*

- \* Order the Beef Ag Mag at [www.miagclassroom.org](http://www.miagclassroom.org). This informational magazine will inform the students about cattle and the environment that they live in. Talk to the students about what this teaches them about beef that they didn't already know.

## Chapter 1: Granddad's Pasture

### Power Words

Teetering  
Sweltering

County Seat  
Exhibitors

Doubt  
Skittish

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Pasture*- land covered with grass and other low plants suitable for grazing animals

*Acres*- a measurement of land that is slightly smaller than a football field

*Herdmates*- cattle that are in the same herd or animals grouped together

*Grange*- a national family, community organization which has a local focus

*Hay*- grasses, clover, alfalfa and other legumes that is cut and dried to feed animals

### **Questions**

1. Define foreshadowing.
2. After reading the Prologue, what could be the outcome of the Practical County Fair Beef Contest?
3. Why is there so little pasture ground in northern Indiana?
4. Practical County is a fictitious location. Given the description of its location, what area would you think it could be located near?

### **Write Away**

- \* Describe the differences between Libby and Frannie
- \* Page 7 describes the fair food. Have you ever had fair food? How would you describe it?
- \* Hay can be baled in round or square bales—discuss why it might be baled in different forms.
- \* Why do you think farmers keep such accurate measurement of rainfall? It frustrates Libby why do you think it is important?

### **Art-Wise**

- \* Libby describes the old home place like a folk art painting. Research folk art painting and style and draw your interpretation of this location.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Go to the Michigan Farm Bureau webpage to learn facts about Michigan's agriculture and what it brings to the state.

## Chapter 2: Fair Calves Don't Need Names

### Power Words

Bellowing  
Gusto

Scowl  
Vehemence

Panache

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Calf*- the young of cattle

*Corncrib*- an area for storing and drying corn

*Granary*- a storage place for threshed grain

*Chicken House*- a house for chickens to live in

*Pipe Gate*- a gate made out of pipe

*Bucket Babies*- calves fed out of a bucket, needing more attention than pasture calves

*Crop Rotation*- the changing of crops that are planted on a field to give proper nutrients to the soil and maximize the yields

*Bovine*- an animal of the cattle group

### **Questions**

1. Carol Ann's dog has a unique name---Phydeaux. How would you pronounce this? How would you typically spell this?
2. Carol Ann and Libby are very different---describe how they are different and how they are alike and how they make their friendship work.
3. When deciding names what Presidents do you think Carol Ann was describing? According to this chapter, why don't calves need names?

### **Write Away**

- \* Frannie has an active imagination and powerful vocabulary. Give examples of each and describe why you think this is the case.
- \* Mom and Dad have different physical characteristics. Describe these characteristics and who each child resembles.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Learn more about crops in your county and the information about them on Michigan Farm Bureau's page. See what other crops are produced around the state. <https://www.michfb.com/MI/Treasures/>
- \* On the Michigan Farm Bureau website, meet a Michigan beef cattle farmer and learn about their everyday duties. Compare what they say to what Libby has said about her duties on the farm so far. [https://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn\\_from\\_a\\_farmer/](https://www.michfb.com/MI/Learn_from_a_farmer/)

### **Art- Wise**

- \* Libby didn't know what panache was, do you? Draw a picture of Libby and Carol Ann in the barn during that discussion, be sure to include the eyeroll!

## Chapter 3: Meet the Darlings

### Power Words

Precious  
Manicured

Indestructible  
Perennial

Scrawny

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Dualies*- a truck with two wheels on each side in the rear; used to add more towing power to the vehicle

*Pitchfork*- a large, long-handled fork used for manual lifting

### **Questions**

1. Why did Mr. and Mrs. Jim Darling choose the names they did for their daughters?
2. How does the Ryans' farm differ from the Darlings' farm?
3. What would it be like to live in a small town where everyone knows each other so well?
4. What vocabulary makes it obvious that the Darling Girls don't spend much time in the barn?
5. Define alliteration.
6. The author uses several examples of alliteration. Describe some of these.

### **Write Away**

- \* "Ohma was definitely a different Darling." Describe Ohma and how Libby knows her so well.

### **Art-Wise**

- \* Make sure you have included the description of your porch on your 'folk art' style painting from Chapter 1.

## Chapter 4: Stubborn As A Mule

### Power Words

Startle

Stubborn

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Mow*- a storage area which is normally on the top level of a barn to keep the hay or straw dry

*Halter*- a rope or strap that helps with leading of animals

### *Questions*

1. Describe what Mom does for a living and what she does around the farm.
2. What does it mean when Libby says this calf thing would be a 'Dad thing' not a 'Mom thing'?
3. Libby seems to help out a lot on the farm. What are some of her responsibilities?

### *Write Away*

- \* Piggy and Mule are developing distinct personalities. Describe each.

### *Extension Activity*

- \* Cattle are different than pigs. Learn more about pigs from our friends in Illinois and their Pork Ag Mag. <http://www.agintheclassroom.org/TeacherResources/AgMags.shtml>
- \* Granddad said you could always judge a farm by its barn. Look online at the Michigan Barn Preservation Network to see barns. Are any of them preservation winners near you? [http://www.mibarn.net/MBPN%20BOY%20View/output/barn\\_of\\_year\\_list.php](http://www.mibarn.net/MBPN%20BOY%20View/output/barn_of_year_list.php)

### *Art-Wise*

- \* The author paints pictures with words---she describes Mule's eyes as having the color of a dark blue summer night. How would that look on a black calf?

## Chapter 5: Autumn Surprise

### Power Words

Technology  
Ambled

Vocational  
Self-Absorbed

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Harvest*- the time of gathering crops

*Corn*- a plant with large kernels that are set in rows on a cob

*Soybeans*- a species of legume widely grown for its edible mean which has numerous uses

*Barn Clothes*- clothes that a person would wear when working in the barn; clothes that can get dirty

### **Questions**

1. What is comfort food? What is comfort food for you?
2. What does it mean to 'bring in' the corn?
3. How many chores are there associated with keeping an animal on the farm? How is this different than a house pet?
4. Libby says 'technology that made farming more efficient had also changed the face of the family farm.' What does she mean?

### **Write Away**

- \* The chapter is called the 'Autumn Surprise,' what was the Autumn Surprise? Be sure to include all details about that surprise!
- \* Some say that our current school calendars were set up to help support agriculture, because children could be home to help on the farm during planting and harvest. Would you support moving to a full year school calendar since you are likely not involved in planting and harvest? What changes would need to be made to your school to allow this to happen?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Ronnie is home from Purdue, a Land Grant university which offers agricultural programming. The Land Grant university in Michigan is Michigan State University (MSU). Learn more about MSU and its agricultural offerings at [www.canr.msu.edu](http://www.canr.msu.edu). What other degree programs does MSU offer? Learn more at [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).

## Chapter 6: Soup for Thanksgiving

### Power Words

Voracious	Bustling	Enormous	Emphasizing
Frail	Sarcasm	Intensely	Teetered
Inevitable	Screeching	Deceit	Ornery

### *Questions*

1. What is a 'hopper' that Mom makes Frannie?
2. Why is everyone shocked to see the Darlings in a soup kitchen?
3. Why were the Darlings serving at Thanksgiving?

### *Write Away*

- \* The Ryan's have several traditions; sitting in a specific pew at church, how they open their Christmas presents and working in a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving. Write about traditions you have as a family!

## Chapter 7 and 8: Christmas at Ryansmeade and Learning to Walk

### Power Words

Emphatic  
Resentment  
Contaminated

Precocious  
Insidious  
Reluctant

Boilermaker  
Cantankerous  
Obstinate

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Bellow*- a deep loud roar, typically in pain or anger

*BSE*- (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) a fatal disease of cattle affecting their central nervous system

### **Questions**

1. In a discussion with Frannie, Libby tells herself to “Pick your battles.” What does that mean?
2. Why does Ronnie worry about Libby naming her calves?
3. Carol Ann is familiar with the farm, but where does she get most of her information about BSE?
4. What does Libby know about BSE?
5. Describe the barn clothes of both Carol Ann and Libby.
6. How does dad get Mule to move when Carol Ann can't?
7. Dad has a list of qualities it takes to be a champion. How is his list different than Libby's?

### **Write Away**

- \* Libby considers Mule as champion material for a brief moment. Describe why she is confident that Piggy is the best show animal.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Learn more about the beef industry. Check out [www.explorebeef.org/](http://www.explorebeef.org/) and [www.beefusa.org/](http://www.beefusa.org/)
- \* Learn more about different cattle breeds. Check out [www.thebeefsite.com/breeds/](http://www.thebeefsite.com/breeds/)
- \* Carol Ann is very worried about BSE and if Libby's cattle have this disease. Learn more about BSE and why Carol Ann was so concerned by checking out [http://www.bestfoodfacts.org/food-for-thought/madcow\\_notatrisk](http://www.bestfoodfacts.org/food-for-thought/madcow_notatrisk)

## Chapter 9 and 10: Jung Chows and a Really Bad Idea and The Day that Never Should Have Happened

### Power Words

Unpredictable

Pathetic

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Premium*- the money that will be received for selling an animal

*Vet*- (veterinarian) a person who practices medicine or surgery on animals

*Flank*- the side of an animal between the ribs and hips

*Rice Brush*- a brush used to comb the cattle's hair

### **Questions**

1. Why are farm prices unpredictable?
2. Why does Mom want Libby to enter the Beef Princess contest?
3. Describe the spring weather in Indiana.
4. What does it mean that Susan Hansen is one of the three vets at the local practice?

### **Write Away**

- \* What do you think Libby really thinks of the idea of entering the Beef Princess contest?
- \* Chapter 10 is filled with activity. Libby has a harsh reaction to her mother when she suggests shopping. Describe why you think she is so strong in her words. Be sure to include with\whom she shares her true feelings.
- \* Predict what you think will happen to Piggy and with Mule after this incident. Will Libby be able to show Piggy? Will Mule help Piggy to get better?
- \* Predict what you think Libby will do about the pageant. Will she enter? Why do you feel this way?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* The beef industry looks for ways to promote their product with specialty breed royalty programs, like a "Beef Princess." Have students complete the application below with their information, or with Libby's information. [www.shorthorn.org/Images/breedinfo/lassies/pdfs/National%20Lassie%20Queen%20Contestant%20Application\\_update2010.pdf](http://www.shorthorn.org/Images/breedinfo/lassies/pdfs/National%20Lassie%20Queen%20Contestant%20Application_update2010.pdf)

## Chapter 11: Thinking Practically

### Power Words

Antics

Forte

Logical

Disposition

Travesty

Mockery

Insensitive

Atrocious

Vicious

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Freezer Beef*- cattle that are being raised by the farmer to be butchered and eaten; the meat goes to the family raising the animal and distributed accordingly if purchased from another individual

### **Questions**

1. Why does Susan think Piggy won't gain much more weight?
2. How does Carol Ann reach her decision that Piggy should be sold?
3. How does Carol Ann react to the suggestion of entering the Beef Princess contest?

### **Write Away**

- \* In this chapter, Libby refers to Piggy as her "pet" but her dad talks about how the farm raise good quality beef. How do you distinguish between pets and livestock?
- \* Carol Ann doesn't react to Libby about Piggy or the Princess contests the way Libby thinks she will. Describe how she reacts and why you think she reacts the way she does.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* The Michigan Cattlemen's Association discusses how to raise beef properly and have good quality beef. Look up more about the association and what it does for beef and Michigan. <http://www.micattlemen.org/michiganraisedbeef.aspx>

## Chapter 12 and 13: This Little Piggy Went to Market and Feathers and Fluffy Stuff

### Power Words

Boutique  
Coaxed

Robust  
Exasperated

Cooed  
Technique

Tulle

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Slaughter*- the killing or butchering an animal for food

*Show Stick*- a stick used when showing cattle to help move their feet or comfort them

### **Questions**

1. Libby thinks Mom gives a ‘typical mother answer.’ What does this mean?
2. Describe how Libby says goodbye to Piggy.
3. At the end of Chapter 12, Mule acts like Piggy. Why is this so surprising to Libby?
4. Why does Libby wish the store owner wouldn’t refer to her as “darling” and “precious”?
5. What is wrong with the way Libby is showing Mule? Who helps her with how she is showing? How does he help her?

### **Write Away**

- \* Libby replays a conversation with Dad about why cows don’t need names. Describe how this conversation comes to Libby and what she is thinking about now.
- \* Ronnie discusses how it is important to remain calm and in control. Why do you think it is important to remain calm and in control when showing an animal?

### **Art-Wise**

- \* Page 107 describes the pile on the floor of the dressing room looking like a clown had melted on the floor. Take a minute and draw the scene of Libby and her dresses.

## Chapter 14 and 15: The Clock Started Ticking and A Girl Thing

### Power Words

Anticipation

Contender

Sustain

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Show Soap*- soap used to wash the animal

### **Questions**

1. How does the way Libby views the Princess contest differ from the Darling Sisters view?
2. Describe how Mule has developed a personality.
3. What does Dad think the reason really is for raising cattle?

### **Write Away**

- What do you think; can Libby part with Mule?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* What does it take to get a cow in show condition? Check out [www.sullivansupply.com](http://www.sullivansupply.com) for cattle grooming supplies!
- \* Libby and her dad talk about the life cycle and purpose of a steer. Learn more about the life cycle at <http://www.explorebeef.org/raisingbeef.aspx>

## Chapter 16 and 17: Independence Day and Avocado and Alfalfa Sprouts

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Vegetarian*- a person who does not eat or believe in eating meat, fish, fowl, or in some cases, any food derived from animals

*Vegan*- a vegetarian who omits all animal products from their diet

*Lacto-vegetarian*- a vegetarian whose diet includes dairy produce and eggs

*Lacto-ovo vegetarian*- a vegetarian who does not eat meat or dairy products but does eat eggs

### *Questions*

1. Why does Carol Ann say Libby becomes a vegetarian?
2. What is Libby talking about when she says there isn't a spider in the barn weaving messages over Mule's head?
3. Why did Libby set Mule free?

### *Write Away*

- \* Describe how Independence Day is "America's Hamburger Holiday".
- \* List and describe all the ways you use animal products and by-products in your daily life.
- \* Try a taste test and write about your exposure to new and unusual food products, or the dietary choices Carol Ann described.

## Chapter 18 and 19: Granddad's Secret and Another Man's Treasure

### Power Words

Self Sufficiency  
Confrontation

Legacy  
Pathetic

Intentions

### **Questions**

1. How does Libby adapt to her new eating lifestyle?
2. How does Libby get water from the pump?
3. Another Man's Treasure is a 'second-hand store'. What is the beginning of that saying and how does it fit to describe this store?
4. Describe how Libby feels about finding a dress.
5. What does Libby mean when she says her enthusiasm has been 'zapped'?

### **Write Away**

- \* Granddad is proud of his heritage. Describe what he is talking about. What is your heritage? Is there something in your family's heritage that you are proud of?
- \* These two chapters might be the most important in the book—Libby finds out things about her family and herself. Does Granddad's reaction surprise you? Describe what you think in detail.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Create your own family tree and research your heritage with help from [http://grandparents-day.com/family\\_tree.htm](http://grandparents-day.com/family_tree.htm).

## Chapter 20 and 21: Off to the Fair and A Very Long Day

### Power Words

Bloated  
Cohabiting

Gondola  
Scenarios

Multitude  
Commotion

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Show Box*- a box used to hold equipment and items needed to show the animal

### **Questions**

1. Describe how the Darlings participate in the fair.
2. What do you think Ohma's problem really is? Why is she so cross all the time?
3. What does Libby notice about the Darling steer?
4. How does Carol Ann defend Libby and help her mother?
5. Why does Libby feel sorry for Ohma and her steer?

### **Write Away**

- \* Dad asks Libby if she has any doubts. Of course she has doubts. Describe her doubts and think back to the beginning of the book for other examples. You might refer to Chapter 8 (page 72) for Libby's thoughts of Mule at the fair.
- \* The author completely describes the bumper car ride. Write about your favorite amusementpark, fair or festival ride. Try to use as many adjectives as possible.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Michigan has a proud heritage of County Fairs. Find more information about our fairs at these sites:

[www.michigan.org/fairs-festivals/](http://www.michigan.org/fairs-festivals/)

[www.countyfairgrounds.net/michigan/michigan.php](http://www.countyfairgrounds.net/michigan/michigan.php)

## Chapter 22 and 23: A Strange Encounter and Chaos in the Ring

### Power Words

Allegedly

Chaos

Unsympathetic

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Underbelly*- the lower abdomen on an animal

*Cattle Prod*- any instrument used to get the cattle to move

*Class Winner*- the person who received first place in the class

*Hereford*- a breed of cattle that is red with white face and body markings

### **Questions**

1. What really happened to Ohma's steer?
2. Why does Ohma feel she can't live up to her sisters?
3. How did Ohma and Libby become friendly?
4. Lil Darling doesn't have much control in the ring. Describe the reaction of her mom, dad, and sisters to her predicament in the ring. How does Libby react?
5. How does Libby handle winning her class with Mule?

### **Write Away**

- \* The fair was unnaturally silent at night. Write about an experience you have had in a situation similar to Libby's fair encounter, or one of deafening silence.
- \* In Chapter 19 (page 150) Precious accuses Libby of poisoning Piggy by giving him the wrong feed. Describe the irony in this twist of the plot.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* Bloat is a real problem with cattle. Check out more information on bloat at [www.thecattlesite.com/diseaseinfo/199/bloat-in-cattle](http://www.thecattlesite.com/diseaseinfo/199/bloat-in-cattle)

## Chapter 24 and 25: A Fair Fight and The Final Drive

### Power Words

Massive  
Triumphant

Counterfeit  
Fidget

### Vo-Cow-Bulary

*Grand Champion*- the one person and animal that wins over the entire show and is seen as a representative of that show

*Reserve Champion*- the second place person and animal that wins over the entire show and is seen as an alternate representative of that show

*Rosette*- a rose-shaped arrangement of ribbons and/or flowers

### **Questions**

1. Libby catches Precious and her family cheating. How does Precious threaten Libby if she tells the truth?
2. Why do you think Ohma turned her sister in?
3. Although Josh wins Grand Champion, how does Libby feel about being Reserve?
4. What does Dad mean when he says showing cattle can indeed be a girl thing?
5. What is going to happen on Saturday to all the cattle shown in the fair?

### **Write Away**

- \* Write about how much things have changed between Mule and Libby. In Chapter 25 she calls them “a team, a super duo.” How different is that from the beginning of the book?
- \* Look back at your predictions from chapters 9 and 10. Were you correct about Piggy and Mule? What was similar? What was different?

## Chapter 26: The End of An Era

### Power Words

Poise

### **Questions**

1. Why is Libby so nervous with the pageant but not in the show ring?
2. How does Lil Darling answer her question about the beef industry?
3. How does Lil Darling accept not winning the pageant contest?
4. Mom says “Libby, we are family. Win or lose, we support you.” Who else has shown that support for Libby?
5. How does Libby decide to honor Mule and Piggy?
6. Chapter 26 ends with the hardest part was yet to come. What is the hardest part?

### **Write Away**

- \* Libby is nervous with her answer about Corn and Beef. Take some time and write your answer to the question listed below. Use research from [https://www.michfb.com/MI/Ag\\_Mags/](https://www.michfb.com/MI/Ag_Mags/) to support your argument. More and more corn being raised by American farmers is going to manufacturing rather than to feed livestock. What are these new uses for corn, and what can farmers do to keep their feed costs at an acceptable level?
- \* Look back at your predictions in chapters 9 and 10 about Libby and the pageant. Were you correct in your thinking? Why or why not?

### **Extension Activity**

- \* For more information about the Beef Industry, go to [www.explorebeef.org](http://www.explorebeef.org). Also check out <http://www.micorn.org> for more info on Michigan Corn and its uses!

## Chapter 27: Going, Going...

### Power Words

Inevitable

Instinctively

### **Questions**

1. Describe a chattery buzz.
2. What does an auctioneer's voice sound like?
3. What is a "seller's song"?
4. Why is Libby so impatient with the auctioneer?
5. Why was Lil Darling trying to cry?
6. What surprise did Libby learn about her mom?

### **Write Away**

- \* When Piggy went away, Libby couldn't bring herself to take him to the trailer. She is able to with Mule. Describe the change in Libby.
- \* Mom describes what Libby learned from the steers and what the steers learned from Libby.
- \* Write about something that has taught you a lesson, and where you might have taught a lesson to someone else.

### **Extension Activity**

- \* This video features Ralph Wade at the 2011 Michigan Auctioneers Championship:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGtN50mH-aQ>
- \* This video features multiple Michigan auctioneers at a fair auctioning animals:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeSN6agFC0Y>

## **Chapter 28: The Future of Ryansmeade**

### ***Questions***

1. Explain what Libby meant when she said “Ohma Darling was proof positive that a little kindness could go along way.”
2. How did Mule make a contribution to Libby’s education fund?

### ***Write Away***

- \* At the end of the story, as Libby picks out two new calves, she tells her mother that show cattle don’t need names. Describe how this is different from the beginning, and also what has changed in Libby.
- \* Do you think that Libby will name the animals? Why or why not?
- \* Did you think that this was how the story was going to end? Why or why not? Write a paper explaining details about what you think is happening in Libby’s life six months after this story.