

My Virginia Plate

Teacher Resource Guide



My Virginia Plate

Meet the Virginia farmers who fill your plate.

"Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables."



In operation since 1946, Miller Farms was run as a dairy farm until 2003. Miller Farms Market now grows and sells a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries to eggplants, tomatoes, and cabbage. They also offer pick-your-own berries, pumpkins, and Christmas trees. This farm family is passionate about farming and wants to sustain their land for future generations so they practice farming methods such as companion planting, no till, and plasticulture.

Jo Ann Miller and son, Ben Miller -
Miller Farms
Spotsylvania

"At least half of all the grains you eat should be whole grains."



Billy Dawson has grown corn, wheat, and other grains on his farm for years.

In addition to selling feed to local stores, he also provides his food-grade crops for manufacturers nationwide.

In fact, his corn is used to make the tortilla strips in Campbell's Tortilla soup.

Billy Dawson -
Grain Farmer and owner
Bay's Best Feed
Northumberland

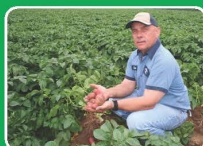
"Try to get 3 servings of dairy each day."

Dairy farming is a 365-day-a-year job, because the cows have to be milked twice a day, every day. The 3 generations of Eastview Farm believe in cow comfort, because "the more comfortable the cow, the more productive that cow is."

Cousins Taylor and Matt Nuckols -
Eastview Farm, Hanover



"Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables."



Dublin Farms is a leader in the Virginia potato industry and traces its origins to the mid-1870s. Potatoes have been grown on various parts of this farm each year since 1876. In addition to potatoes, Dublin Farms produces corn, soybeans, wheat, and green beans. Innovative measures are used to produce the best possible product while maintaining healthy land. Auto-steer technology is used to maximize field production and reduce the overuse of pesticides and fertilizers.

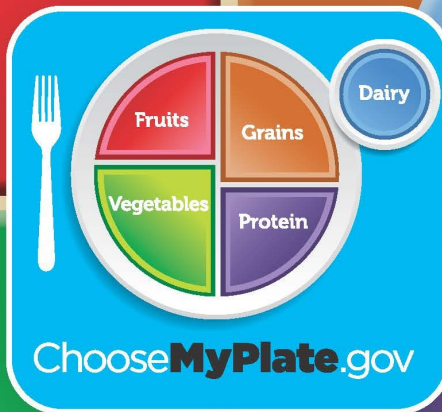
David Hickman -
Dublin Farms
Accomack

"Protein is an essential building block for growth."



Margaret Ann is a 6th generation cattle farmer in Rockbridge County. Her family's farm, Smith Farms, is family owned and operated, just like 98% of the farms in Virginia. While on the farm, the cattle graze on grass, receive supplemental grains to balance their diets, have unlimited water, and plenty of natural shelter from bad weather.

Margaret Ann Smith -
Smith Farms
Rockbridge



Farmers produce a wide variety of nutritious foods. One American farmer produces enough food for 155 people annually.

Fill a Healthy Basket

A healthy diet will include items from each of the five food groups. Nutritious foods provide the body with vitamins, minerals and energy necessary for students to grow healthy and strong. Non-nutritious foods should be enjoyed in smaller quantities less often. These foods are lacking in vitamins and often contain too much sugar or fat.

Standards of Learning:

Health: K.1, 1.2, 2.2

Objective:

The student will be able to identify components of a healthy diet.

Materials:

- Pictures of healthy food as well as junk food
- Brown paper lunch bags

Adaptation:

Younger students may identify and sort edible/inedible items.

Procedure:

1. Prior to the lesson place various cards with food items on them around the classroom. On some of the cards include healthy, nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, milk, yogurt, and lean proteins. On other cards include less nutritious foods such as candy, soda, and fried items.
2. Discuss with students the difference between nutritious foods that they should frequently fill their plates with and less nutritious foods that they should enjoy less often.
3. Give each student a brown paper bag to decorate as their basket. Tell them that they will be going on a healthy foods scavenger hunt.
4. Allow them to search around the room to find the cards representing healthy foods and to fill their bags with them.
5. Have students share the items that they collected, and then sort into the appropriate food groups.



Agriculture is Virginia's largest industry by far, contributing about \$55 billion to the economy each year.

Graphing My Plate

It is important for students to understand how to read food labels. Oftentimes food that appears healthy is not. By reading labels and sorting the foods that they eat regularly, students will be able to determine if changes need to be made to their diet. The MyPlate graphic reminds students that half of their plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables.

Standards of Learning:

Math: 2.17, 2.19, 3.17, 4.14

Health: 2.2, 3.1, 4.1

Objective:

The student will be able to create a bar graph of food groups using food labels and draw conclusions from the graph.

Materials:

- Graph paper
- Markers/crayons
- Food labels

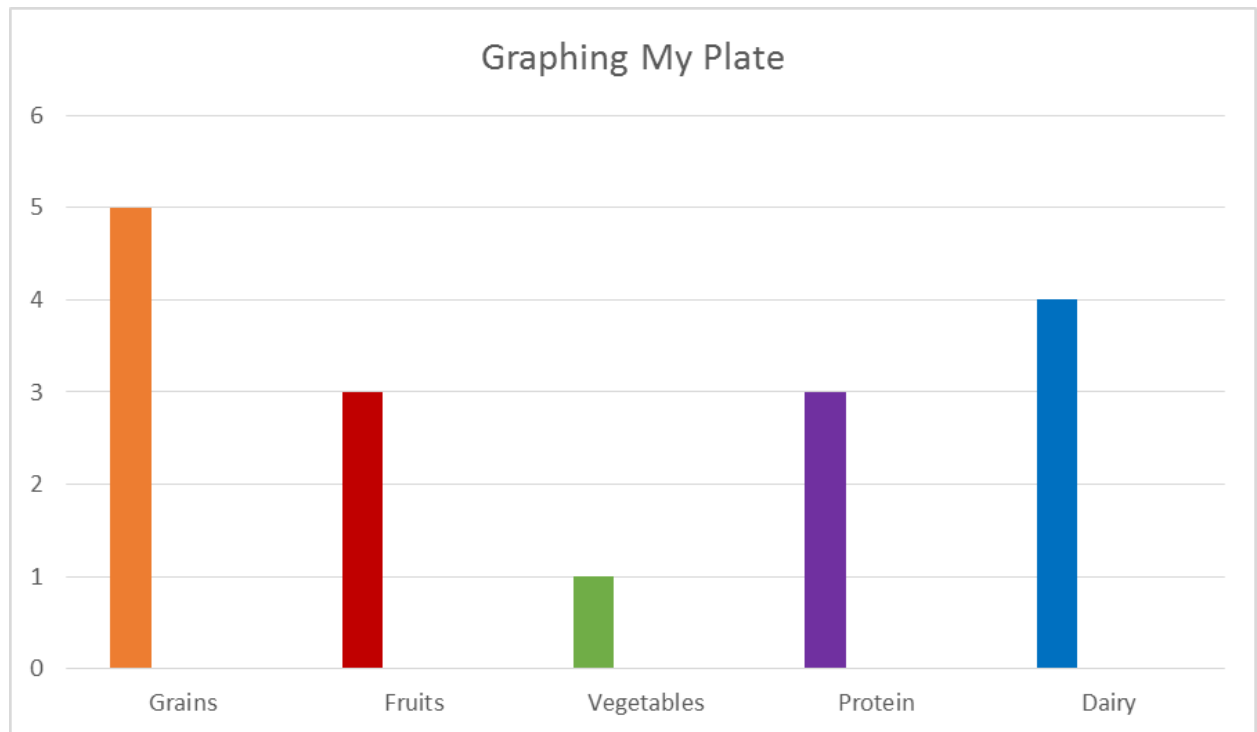
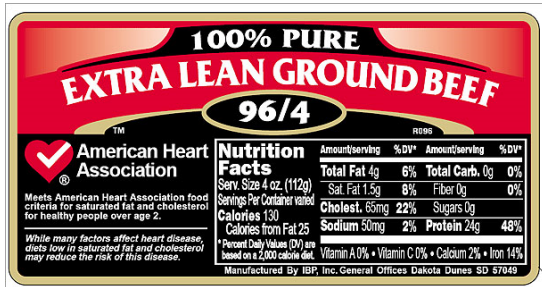
Extension:

Have students cut their graphs apart in strips and combine to create a class graph to analyze.

Procedure:

1. One week before the lesson, have students collect and bring in food labels from items at home. Be sure that if they are cutting the food label off of an item that they right the name of it on the back.
2. Organize students into “family” groups of 3-4. Give each group a random assortment of food labels.
3. Have students use the first ingredient listed to sort their labels according to food group. You may decide to include a 5th, miscellaneous, group for items like junk food or soda.
4. Next have students create a bar graph showing the different foods eaten by their “family” group. Have the colors on the graph match the food group colors on MyPlate.
5. Lastly, have students write a summary statement about their graph and their “family” group’s diet. Was it balanced? Did it have too much or too little of certain types of food?

Graphing My Plate



*Remember to fill
half your plate
with fruits and
vegetables!*

Shopping for a Balanced Meal

Standards of Learning:

Health: 2.2, 3.1, 4.1
Math: 3.8

Objective:

The student will be able to sort food products into the correct food groups.

The student will be able to grocery “shop” using a budget.

Materials:

- Grocery store ads
- Markers/crayons
- Paper plates

Adaptation:

Depending on the ability of your students you may skip the budget portion of the lesson.

Virginia farmers grow or raise food that belongs in each section of the MyPlate. In “Protein” there is poultry, eggs, beef, and hogs as well as soybeans and peanuts. Additionally, Virginia farmers produce many dairy items for the “Dairy” sections. In fact, there are more than 100,000 head of dairy cattle in Virginia, making it the state’s third largest commodity (behind chickens and beef, respectively). For the “Fruit” group Virginia growers produce an average of 8-10 million bushels of apples a year, as well as strawberries, grapes, peaches, cantaloupes and watermelons. Next, in “Vegetables,” Virginia is the nation’s third largest producer of fresh tomatoes. You will also find potatoes, green peppers, and snap beans, as well as many other fresh vegetables. Lastly, in the “Grains” group Virginia farmers produce corn as well as wheat.

Procedure:

1. Prior to beginning the lesson collect an assortment of grocery store advertisements.
2. Discuss with students the importance of a healthy diet and “eating the rainbow.” Explain that one way to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into their meals while still maintaining a budget is by shopping for fresh produce that is in season. They might also look for frozen fruits or vegetables or reduced sodium canned items.
3. Organize students into groups of 3-4. Give each group at least 1-2 ads and assign each a grocery shopping budget.

Shopping for a Balanced Meal

4. Have students begin by circling all of the food items in the ad with the color that coordinates with the food group on MyPlate. For example, they will circle the milk, yogurt, and cheese in blue.
5. Next have them used their assigned budget to decide which items they will buy in order to build a balanced meal. Once they have decided what to buy they will cut those items out and glue them onto a paper plate. *Note: This may be an opportunity to discuss the economic term “opportunity cost” with students.*
6. Also on their plate have them include the total cost of their items.
7. Have students share their meals with the class and discuss how they made their buying decisions.



About 90% of Virginia farms are owned and operated by individuals or families.

Wanted: Virginia's Finest

Eating a varied diet ensures that students are getting the proper amount of vitamins, protein, and minerals to fuel them for their day. Virginia farmers produce a diverse array of products, and many rank in the top 10 nationally. These include: fresh market tomatoes, summer potatoes, apples, grapes, peanuts, fresh market cucumbers, turkeys, and broiler chickens (those raised for their meat).

Procedure:

1. Virginia farmers produce a wide variety of healthy foods. Some examples are: apples, poultry, wheat, beef, potatoes, tomatoes, eggs, pork, peanuts, peaches, sweet potatoes, watermelon, and milk.
2. Assign each student, or pair of students, one of the Virginia agricultural products listed above. Students will then research their assigned item. Key questions to answer are: Where is it grown/raised in Virginia? What food group does it belong in? How does it fit into a healthy diet? What vitamins or minerals does it provide you with?
3. After collecting their research, students will create "Wanted" posters for their items. Posters will include pictures as well as facts from their research.

Standards of Learning:

Health: 4.1

Objective:

The student will be able to conduct research on a particular topic and relate their findings.

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Markers/crayons
- Computers and internet access

Extension:

Encourage healthy eating school-wide by displaying the posters in the cafeteria.



Additional Resources

Find more resources to incorporate agriculture and healthy eating into your curriculum at these helpful sites:



www.agintheclass.org

Search over 150 different lesson plans covering math, science, language arts, and social studies. Be sure to download “The Garden Chef” curriculum on the Lesson Plan page for fun, classroom-appropriate recipes.

www.myamericanfarm.org

Take a trip to the farm at this fun and interactive site full of online games and activities.

www.agclassroom.org/rainbow

Check out “The Farmer Grows a Rainbow” curriculum featuring—

The Farmer Grows a Rainbow Song

To the tune of “Following the Leader” from Peter Pan

Credit: North Carolina Agriculture in the Classroom

The farmer grows a rainbow, a rainbow, a
rainbow,

The farmer grows a rainbow
For me to eat each day!

A bright and healthy rainbow, a rainbow, a
rainbow,

A bright and healthy rainbow
To fuel my work and play!

The farmer grows the grassy grains, the
grassy grains, the grassy grains

The farmer grows the grassy grains
To give me energy!

The farmer grows the vegetables, the vegeta-
bles, the vegetables,

The farmer grows the vegetables
With vitamins, you see!

The farmer grows the fresh fruits, the fresh
fruits, the fresh fruits,

The farmer grows the fresh fruits
To keep away disease!

The farmer cares for dairy cows, for dairy
cows, for dairy cows

The farmer care for dairy cows
To give me milk and cheese!

The farmer raises beef cows, and swine for
pork, and poultry,

The farmer raises catfish
For protein so I’ll grow.

I want to thank the farmer, the farmer, the
farmer,

I want to thank the farmer
For growing my rainbow.

Tell Us What You Think!

Thank you for participating in the My Virginia Plate project. Please take a moment to provide us with feedback by taking our brief survey. You can email your responses to aitc@vafb.com or follow the link below and answer online.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MyVirginiaPlate>

Teacher Survey

1. Which lesson(s) did you use?

2. I was able to easily integrate these materials.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. My students gained a greater knowledge and understanding of healthy eating habits.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. My students gained a greater awareness and understanding of agriculture.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Please describe your experience using the materials.

Win more resources for your classroom by entering the
My Virginia Plate Poster Contest.

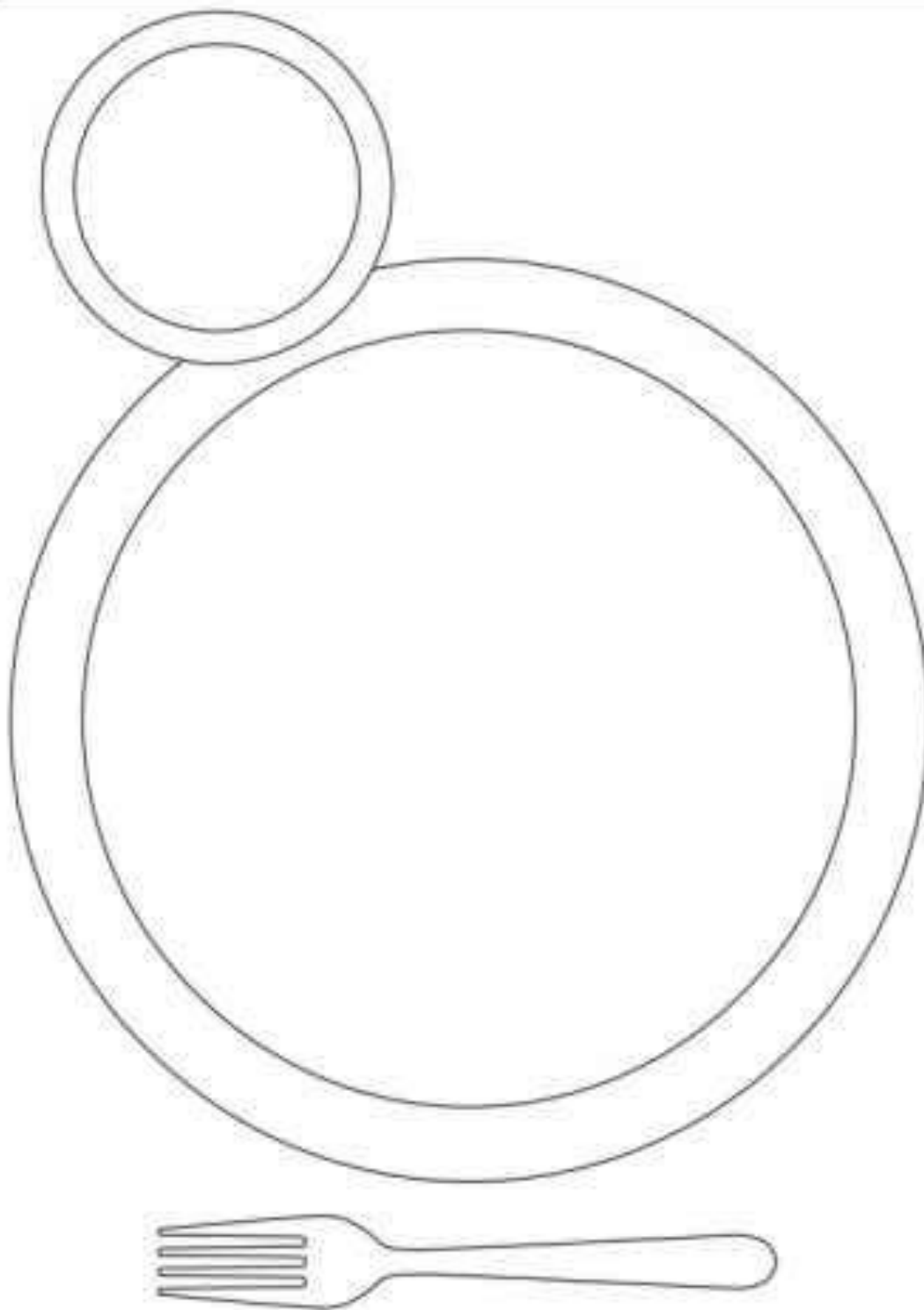
Mail your students' completed artwork to AITC to be entered in the contest. AITC will choose one winner per grade and that teacher will receive a resource kit for their classroom.

Directions: On the following page have students complete the poster to show what a healthy meal should look like. Be sure to include foods that are grown in Virginia. Students may use crayons, markers, paint, or collage to complete their posters. When submitting your class' artwork, please be sure to include the teacher's name and contact information on the back. Submissions will not be returned and become property of AITC.

Agriculture in the Classroom

Attn: My Virginia Plate Poster Contest
12850 West Creek Parkway
Richmond, VA 23228

Student Poster Contest



Agriculture in the Classroom is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that provides agriculturally themed lessons and resources to teachers through the generosity of our donors. This project was made possible through the generous support of the
Bon Secours Foundation.

To learn more about how you can support
Agriculture in the Classroom, please visit us online at
AgInTheClass.org.

