

The Secret Life of a French Fry

Life Science, Technology, Food Safety, Environmental Perspectives

Materials

One kid's meal from a fast food restaurant

Overview

Many people do not fully understand where their food comes from. In addition, many do not know that one out of every four people is employed in production agriculture or in an agriculture-related business. This lesson makes the connection between how food is produced and agriculture.

Objectives

1. Students will make the connection between where food comes from and agriculture.

Preparation

Purchase a kid's meal from a fast food restaurant. The meal will be the prop for this lesson.

Instructional Format

1. Using the kids' meal as a prop, students will be led into a discussion about where food comes from.
2. Upon completing the lesson, students will answer conclusion questions.

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking the students the following questions to start them thinking about the topic at hand:
 - How do you think your chicken nuggets or hamburger make it into the kid's meal sack?
 - Did you know there are lots of jobs that go into making your favorite kid's meal?
2. Share with the students how one food item makes its way into a kid's meal sack. As you do this, make a note of how many different jobs can be identified during this process. Have them participate in this process. guiding them with thought-provoking questions when necessary. The following example is for a chicken nugget:
 - Chicken egg is fertilized and a baby chick is born.
 - Baby chick grows into an adult chicken raised on good nutrition and good health program (farmer is one job).
 - Chicken is transported by truck to the packing plant (truck driver is one job). *What happens at the packing plant?*

Grade Level: 3-4

Time: 45 minutes

Standards:

Life Science
Science &
Technology
Personal Experience
& Environmental
Perspectives

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- Chicken is harvested at the plant (plant employee is one job).
 - The chicken is formed into chicken nuggets just the right size (fast food restaurant's quality control inspector is one job).
 - During the formation of chicken nuggets, there is another employee inspecting the food assembly line. *What is this person doing?*
 - Once the chicken nuggets are formed, they are packaged into bags and boxes (another job).
 - The boxes of chicken nuggets are transported to the local fast food restaurant (truck driver is one job).
 - At the restaurant, chicken nuggets are ordered, cooked, and cleaned up after (these are three more jobs).
 - There are also jobs indirectly related to chicken nuggets. For example, people who built the restaurant, designed the advertising, produced the TV and radio advertisements, landscaped the restaurant grounds, installed the playground equipment, etc.
 - As you can see, there are a lot of jobs involved in getting food to us everyday!
3. Encourage students to think about the secret life of a French fry – how it makes its way to the kid's meal sack. Compare and contrast the process of getting a French fry from farm to plate to the process just discussed with the chicken nuggets. Have students lead this discussion, guiding them with thought-provoking questions when necessary.
 4. Continue to do this with as many ingredients (i.e. pickles) or menu items as you wish to ensure students make the connection between where food comes from and production agriculture.
 5. Share with students that agriculture makes this possible. Today, one farmer feeds roughly 144 people. This means that we don't have to worry about where our food comes from. We use 19 cents of our disposable income dollars to pay someone else to grow our food, to process our food and to get it to us so we can eat it! We need to support all the people in agriculture and celebrate them and make sure we support them when public policy or laws come along that could affect our food supply. We need to be especially watchful of what the public does to protect natural resources.