

# Lesson F2 Agriculture

## What is Agriculture?

Agriculture is the practice of farming, which includes cultivating soil to raise plants and animals. It sounds like a simple definition but agriculture is a broad term that covers a great deal - growing potatoes, raising chickens and managing fish ponds to name a few.

## Farms come in all shapes and sizes

When you imagine a farm, what do you picture? You might think of a red barn or a farmer in overalls, but modern farms do not always match this picture.

**Industrial Farm:** These large farms produce a great deal of food in the United States. Industrial farms usually grow one or two crops or raise animals. They are called industrial farms because they are run somewhat like factories. Much of the work is done by machines or a large labor force and many chemical inputs are used to improve plant growth and kill pests.

**Family Farm:** Medium-sized farms are usually run by one family who makes most of their money from farming. Some grow one crop or animal, while others cultivate several crops mixed with different animals.

**Hobby Farm:** Small farm run by one family, but the farm is not the only source of income. They usually grow multiple small crops.

## Types of Farms

*Let's take a look at some types of farming*  
**Grain** farms are typically the largest farms and grow crops that can be kept in dry storage like corn, wheat and rice.

**Produce** farming is very demanding because of the fact that the vegetables must be fresh when going to the market. Some vegetable farms grow large amounts of only a few crops to to make managing and harvesting faster and easier.

**Orchards** grow either fruit or nuts for commercial use. Orchards may contain all of one plant such as an orange or apple grove or a mixture of fruits such as mixed berry production.

**Livestock** Farming (Ranching) is the practice of raising animals like cows, chickens, goats and turkeys for meat. The animals are fed until they are old enough or large enough to be made into food. However, not all farm animals are raised for meat. Some animals are raised for eggs (chickens), wool (sheep, alpaca) and leather (cows) to name a few.

**Dairy** Farms raise cows, goats and sheep for their milk and dairy products. Milk can be made into yogurt, butter, ice cream and other foods.

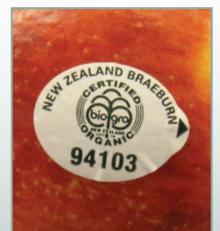
**Aquaculture** refers to the cultivation of fish and other edible aquatic life, like shrimp. The fish are usually raised in large tanks or managed ponds. Species of farmed fish include catfish, salmon and tilapia.

## Hard Travelin'

Transporting food uses a lot of fossil fuel. Most Americans' food travels, on average, about 1,500 miles from farm to plate. Some of our food is imported from other countries, traveling by airplane and cargo ship. Your food may have visited more countries than you have!

## Why is food coming from so far away?

Foods like cocoa, bananas, sugar cane, coffee and many spices do not grow very well in most climates in the United States, so we must import them from other countries. Foods like strawberries and asparagus can only grow during certain seasons. If someone in New York wants to eat asparagus in December, it must be imported from places like Chile or Peru, where asparagus grows at that time of year. Also, large industrial farms need a lot of room, and often these big farms are not located near the people who buy and eat the food.



# Activity F2a Build a Farm

## Objectives: Students will...

- Design a layout for a multi-use farm.

*Time:* 40 minutes

*Location:* Classroom

## Materials:

- Markers
- Pencils

- Crayons
- Worksheets

1. Give students markers, crayons and a worksheet.
2. Tell the class that they will design a farm and they must decide where everything will go. Their farm must include the following:
  - Tomatoes
  - Fish
  - Pumpkins
  - Cows
  - Corn
  - Chickens
  - Blueberries
  - Apples
3. They should use a different color to indicate each crop on their worksheet. They can put more than one crop in the same area, but tell the class to plan their farms carefully.

## For Grades K-2

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Have students draw a farm using the worksheet. Tell them to think where they would put animals and plants on their farms and draw them in the corresponding areas.

# Worksheet **F2a** Build a Farm

