

FARM TO PLATE:

A HOG'S JOURNEY



Photo courtesy of Pork Checkoff

A lesson based on the book, Kailey's Pig 'Tales,' by Dan Yunk.

This book was written to educate young people, parents and teachers about where our food comes from.

America's food supply is safe, affordable and abundant but also vastly misunderstood by the consuming public. It is the intention of Kansas Farm Bureau to improve the public's knowledge about the importance farming and ranching plays in our quality of life.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

After reading *Kailey's Pig 'Tales'*, students should gain a better understanding of the hog industry in the United States. The book's intent and focus is to inform young minds of modern pork production.

Lesson Objectives:

- While reading *Kailey's Pig 'Tales'*, students will learn about the hog industry in order to further their understanding of daily life on a farm.
- Students will learn about the duties of farmers who raise pigs. Students will complete cross-curricular learning activities related to pigs and farms that will further their knowledge of the farm-to-table process.

Materials Needed:

- Suggested props for each life stage:
 - * Baby bottle
 - * Clippers, toy syringe, paper hole punch
 - * Animal feed (corn, soybeans, grain sorghum)
 - * Bundle of straw and/or fan
 - * Pictures for each stage (included in lesson)
- Worksheets 1 and 2 (included in lesson)
- *Kailey's Pig 'Tales' Book*
- Chalk board, dry-erase board, or flip chart and marker for teacher
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils for students

Conclusion:

On a flip chart or board at the front of the room, ask students to help create a pie chart of their favorite pork products they will follow along with Worksheet 2 (included in lesson).

Evaluation/Extension:

At the end of the unit ask students to write a journal entry about pigs. Tell them to list all of the things they learned about farms and pigs. Review the journals to check for comprehension.

LEVEL: K-3rd Grade

SUBJECTS/STANDARDS:

Subject: Math

Standard: Measurement and Data

Benchmark: Represent and interpret data.

Indicators: Draw a graph to represent data.

Subject: Life Science

Standard: From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

Benchmark: Growth and Development of Organisms

Indicators: Chart growth process of animal life cycle.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

Students will learn about the duties of farmers who raise pigs as well as what a typical life for a hog is like. The lesson is a chronological process of the farm to fork concept. It demonstrates how young pigs are raised, cared for, and become market ready.

ACTIVITY:

Introduction:

Begin by reading *Kailey's Pig 'Tales'* book to the class. Have coloring utensils available to students and pass each student Worksheet 1, *Farm to Plate*. Use teacher's guide/script to explain a hog's life on the farm. At each step, send around the corresponding prop (ex. Feeding stage; send grain around). Have the students feel and examine each item and then have them draw a picture for each step on their worksheet.

Teacher's Guide/Script

Aloud: What happens after a litter of piglets are born? Have you ever wondered what the journey of a hog's life was like? Do they go to school like you? Do they eat the same foods as you? Today we are going to learn what goes on in a hog's life from birth until it is ready for market.

Pass out coloring utensils and Farm to Plate worksheet (Worksheet 1) to each student.

Aloud: On the worksheet I just handed out, you will need to draw a picture in each box representing a different life stage for a pig. I will go through the stages with you and give you time to draw your picture. Draw something you think will help you remember the different stages.

Have pictures printed off (provided) and props ready to pass around with each stage.

Aloud: The first stage in a hog's life is birth. When a sow gives birth to piglets, (usually 9-12 in a litter) it is called farrowing. Some farms house the mother hogs in a farrowing pen or stall to keep her from accidentally laying on one of her piglets. Piglets at this stage spend most of their time nursing and sleeping.

Pass around the picture of the farrowing stall and a baby bottle to represent the piglets drinking milk. Give the students a few minutes to draw a picture to remind them of piglets during the farrowing stage.

Aloud: Now let's move on to the next stage. After approximately three days the piglets are processed. During the processing:

- The navel is disinfected
- Needle teeth are clipped so they do not injure other pigs or the sow
- They receive a supplement of iron
- Their tails are docked to prevent damage and infections
- Young males are castrated so they have a more desirable meat product
- Ears are notched for permanent identification

The highest loss of piglets happens from birth until they are 3-4 days old, so several protective measures are taken for the young pigs.

Pass around the piglet processing picture and an item such as a toy syringe, nail clippers, or a paper whole punch to symbolize an ear notcher (explain to the students the ear notcher notches triangles, not circles, on the edge of the ear).

Allow students to draw their picture in the designated box.

Aloud: The next stage in a piglet's life is weaning. Weaning occurs at approximately 21 days old or when the piglets reach 10-15 pounds. At this age, the young pigs are ready to eat grain and no longer need their mother's milk. At this age they get a free choice of feed and get to eat as much as they want. The farmer makes sure the feeder does not get empty.

Pass around the Weaned Piglets picture and also a container of grain for the students to feel. Let them know this is the type of food the pigs will be eating. Allow time for the students to draw their picture.

STUDENT LEARNING

ESTIMATED

TEACHING TIME: 45 MIN

NEW VOCABULARY:

Confinement – modern hog facility where hogs are raised indoors

Farrow – to give birth to piglets

Litter – the group of pigs born to a sow during one

farrowing; normally 8-12 pigs per litter

Market-weight pigs – pigs that have reached 240 to 280 pounds

Piglet – newborn pigs

Wean – to separate young pigs from the sow

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Kailey's Pig 'Tales'

Props for each life stage

Pictures for each stage

(included in lesson)

Worksheets 1 and 2 (included in lesson)

Chalk board, dry-erase board, or flip chart and marker for teacher

Markers/crayons/colored pencils for students

Aloud: After the pigs are weaned, it takes them approximately 120 days to reach their market weight, which is 265 pounds. During this time, the farmer will provide plenty of feed, water and comfortable living conditions. If the hogs are housed in a totally confined space, the building will be heated and cooled. If the hogs have outdoor space, they will be given plenty of straw to keep warm and mud and shade to keep cool. During this time, the farmer will clean the pens and be sure to keep a watchful eye on the hogs so they can administer antibiotics to them if they become sick.

Send around the picture of the Feed and Water. Suggested props include a bundle of straw and/or turn on a fan to show the students how the hogs keep warm or cool. Let the students work on their pictures for a few minutes.

Aloud: The final stage in a hog's life is when it reaches its market weight. Do you remember what I said the market weight was? *Give students a few seconds to recall the answer.* The ideal market weight is 265 pounds. At this point, the hogs are loaded on trucks and sent to a meat processing plant where they are turned into various pork products and then end up on your dinner plate. Can you think of anything that is a pork product? *Have students come up with some answers and write them on the white board at the front of the room. Some examples include: bacon, ham, hot dogs, pork chops, ribs, roasts, etc.*

Have the students draw a picture of a pork product in the final box of the hog life cycle.

While students are drawing, pass out the Favorite Hog Products (Worksheet 2). Once the students are finished with their picture and engaged for learning, explain that the class will be creating a pie chart of their favorite pork products.

Aloud: Everyone needs to have the worksheet I just passed out in front of them. We are going to create a pie chart together to see the most popular pork products in our class. First we need to know how many are in class today. *Get a head count of the class or point to each student and let them count along.* Ok now that we have that number, write that in the first blank. *Write the number on the board so the students can follow along.* Now I am going to take a poll. You can only vote once so make sure you pick your favorite food from the list. Raise your hand when I say the food you like best. *Call out the name of each product and write the number on the board. Have the students keep track on their worksheet as well. When you are finished with the poll, divide the circle equally into the number of the students in the class. Explain to the class what you are doing and have the students do the same. It is easiest if you count out loud the number of lines you need to divide the circle. Color in the portions for the frequency of each pork product. The chart works best if you use a different color or coloring technique for each product. Once the results are in, review them with the class.*

Conclusion:

Aloud: Let's review the hog's life journey. The first stage was the piglets being born, which we call farrowing. They were processed three days later and then weaned after three weeks (21 days). They were then given free choice of all the feed they could eat and it took them approximately 120 days to reach their market weight of 265 pounds. The next stage of their life was being sent to a meat processing plant where they were turned into many different pork products. Finally, they can be taken to the market where they eventually will end up on your dinner plate.

Evaluation/Extension:

At the end of the unit ask students to write a journal entry about pigs. Tell them to list all of the things they learned about farms and pigs. Review the journals to check for comprehension.

UNIQUE FACT

When hot dogs were first sold, street vendors called them "red hots," and they didn't come on a bun. Instead, a pair of white cotton gloves came with each one to keep fingers cool while eating.

Modern hog operation



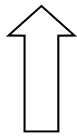
Photo courtesy of Pork Checkoff

Farm to Plate

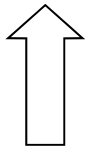
Name _____



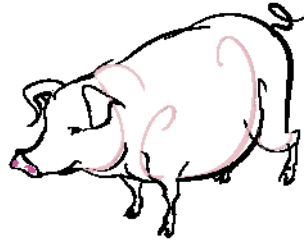
Dinner Plate



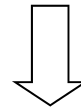
Market Ready– 265 pounds



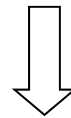
Days on Feed– 120



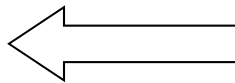
Farrow– Born



Processed– 3 days old



Weaned– 21 days old



Favorite Hog Products

Number of students in the class _____

Poll of favorite product from hogs:

Bacon _____

Ham _____

Hot dog _____

Pork Chop _____

Ribs _____

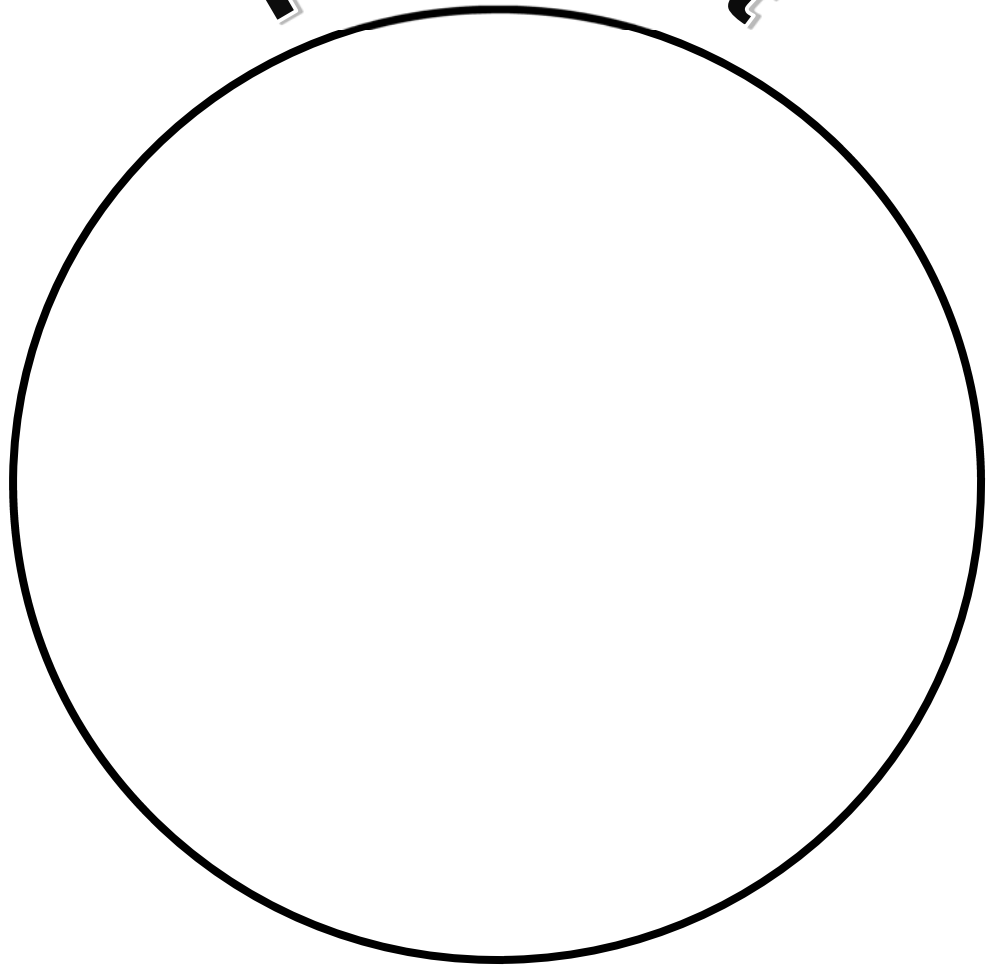
Roast _____

None _____

Other _____



Pie Chart



Farrowing Stall



Photo courtesy of Pork Checkoff

Processing Piglets

(Disinfecting navel, clipping teeth, giving shots of iron, docking tails, castrating and ear notching)



Photo courtesy of Pork Checkoff

Weaned Piglets



Photo courtesy of Pork Checkoff

Feed and Water



Photos courtesy of Pork Checkoff

Dinner Plate



Photo courtesy of Pork Checkoff