



# National Farmers Union

## *“Growing Good Taste”*

### Section 5: Adults

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# Lesson 1: Returning to Our Roots

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**Unit Objective:** Students will learn more about the growing “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” culture.

**Level:** Collegiate and Adults

**Length:** 1 hour: 20 minutes for the introduction and opening activities, 10 minutes for the group discussion, 20 minutes for additional examples including the co-op products, 10 minutes for concluding remarks and the final comment session.

**Materials Needed:** Two hamburger sandwiches from a fast food place, skewers, the flag graphics, two tomatoes, Sun-Maid raisins, Land O’ Lakes yogurt, Tillamook cheese, either orange, grape, or cranberry juice from a farmer-owned cooperative (see examples in lesson below), milk or ice cream from a local or regional dairy co-op, cheese cutter, disposable spoons, bowls and cups.

**Preparation Needed:** Attach the American flag to one skewer and the international flag montage to a second skewer.

## Background:

Michelle Obama’s White House kitchen garden was a visible sign that Americans are returning to their roots, so to speak. Partly because we want to know where our food comes from, more and more Americans are growing their own groceries in backyard gardens. In increasing numbers, we are shopping at farmers’ markets and demanding source-verified products in grocery stores. In business, relationship building is popular. Consumers too want to know more about the farmers and ranchers who produce their food. Country-of-origin labeling (COOL) helps consumers make informed decisions about the foods they buy. That kind of relationship building goes both ways. Farmers are paying attention to consumer preferences. The “culture” in “agriculture” is returning.

## Teaching Strategy:

1. This session will begin with you setting down two different tomatoes. Ask your students, If you saw these in a store and one was labeled “Product of USA” while the other one said “Product of Morocco,” which would you be more likely to buy? Most will, without thinking, choose the American product. Now ask them why, and write down their answers. Responses might include “to buy American,” “a fresher product,” and “safety.”
2. You can make this choice because of a law known as country-of-origin labeling, or COOL. Country-of-origin food labeling was put in place to better inform consumers where their food products were grown, raised, and processed. Your state Farmers Union organization along with National Farmers Union was an advocate for COOL. *You know, there was a time when you knew more about the source of the clothes you were wearing than the food you were eating. Consider a clothing label. It tells you where the item came from and what it is made of. Isn’t food as important as clothing?*
3. *Many countries take pride in their food products. Think about Italian olive oil, Swiss chocolate, Columbian coffee, and French wine, to name a few. Farmers Union members were concerned that some food items were being imported into the U.S. and being sold as if they were grown or raised here. We do know some Americans have gotten sick eating foods from other nations that were not grown to the same standards we require of our own farmers. These growing practices have included the use of unsanitary water and chemicals not approved for use in the United States. COOL is a law that was long overdue and was supported by the majority of consumers. It really is no different that the nutritional labels on food.*
4. Place the two hamburgers in front of you so they are visible to your students. *Under the old rules, you could buy the meat for this hamburger in a package that said, “USDA inspected” and believe it was American. In fact, it could contain ground beef imported from more than 50 other countries. Put the American flag in one hamburger, and the multi-national flag in the other. Thanks to country-of-origin food labeling, you can make a better-informed decision about the food you buy.*
5. What are other reasons consumers feel disconnected from America’s family farmers and ranchers? *There are thousands of grocery stores, and there are nearly 50,000 items for sale in each grocery*

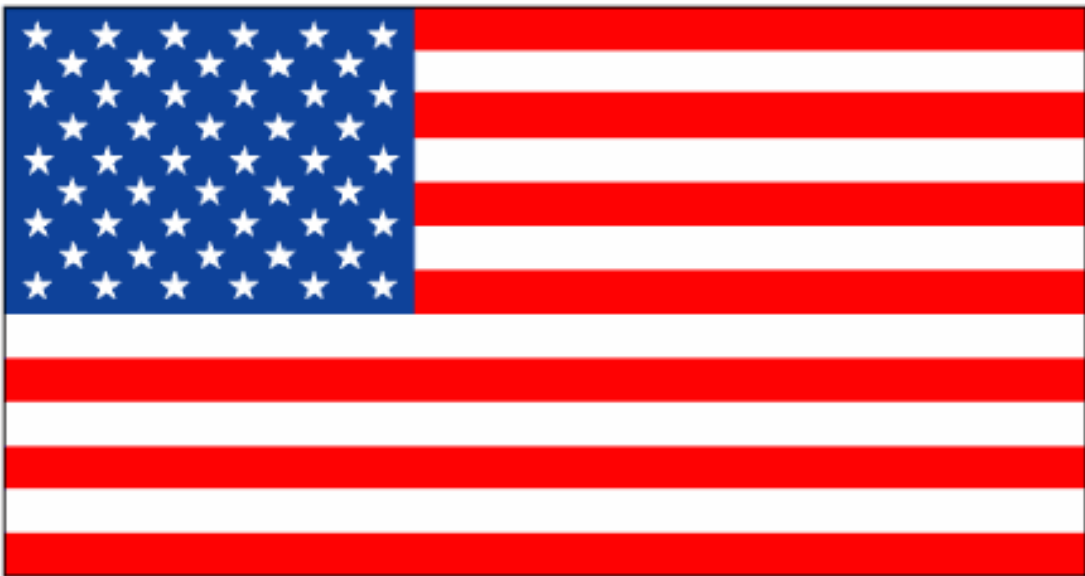
store. In food production, there are just a few companies. If I mention Kraft Foods, you may think of Macaroni and Cheese. But Kraft Foods has more than 50 different brands ranging from A1 Steak Sauce and Oreos to Oscar Mayer meats and Wheat Thins. Kraft Foods has 97,000 employees. Think about this. What does Pepsi sell? Soda pop, right? Did you know last year of Pepsi's total sales, 37 percent came from beverages and 63 percent came from food? Because it owns many companies, Pepsi sells such foods as Cap'n Crunch cereal and Doritos snack chips. A few incredibly large companies dominate food processing, packaging and marketing. Is it any wonder farmers and consumers believe they have lost touch with each other?

6. Just a few companies own most stores. These companies may sound familiar: Walmart, Kroger, Costco, Supervalu, and Safeway. Several of these companies operate numerous grocery store chains under other names such names as City Market, County Market, Cub Foods, and King's Food. When your grandparents grew up, there may have been one or more locally-owned grocery stores along the main streets in their hometowns. Retail shopping has changed over the years. Larger stores and shopping centers became popular. Small stores could not compete, or were bought out by larger chains. Today, many of the grocery stores you see are, in reality, owned by just a few companies. This is called **concentration**. Concentration is not new and farmers have seen it occur among equipment manufacturers, meat packers, and grain buyers. Fewer companies can mean less competition and give the larger companies more ability to set higher prices for greater profits. Farmers Union believes more competition results in better products and lower prices. Concentration is a situation in which very few companies control most of the market share. Another type of concentration is called vertical integration. This is when one company effectively controls the **food supply chain**. For example, a company may contract with farmers to raise chickens, process and package chicken, and then market and sell the food products. One company controls every step of the supply chain from the producer to the consumer. This is known as **vertical integration**. Food is big business and it can crowd out consumers and farmers at either end.
7. Break the students into groups of about five to a group and ask them to consider different examples of concentration. Ask them to have one person take notes. Here are the questions I would like you to consider: When you think of companies that are dominant in their industries, which ones come to mind by name? How does that affect you as a consumer? How does that affect your communities? Is this good for society as a whole? Do you think big companies are concerned that farmers and consumers know each other?
8. Following the discussion, ask each group to comment on their discussions and conclusions. This discussion may engage the other groups so facilitate the flow of interaction accordingly.
9. Another reason farmers and consumers don't know each other is so many Americans live and work in cities and careers that are far removed from the "heartland." There are fewer than 2 million Americans living on farms today, which is less than 2 percent of the population. Not that long ago, more than half of all Americans were farmers. The good news is American farmers are so good at producing food that we never go hungry. We need far fewer people growing food than is required in other nations.
10. Farmers do want to know their true customers, the consumers who buy the products grown or raised across the United States. One way they are doing this by being members of cooperative businesses that produce food products. A cooperative is a business owned by the members who use the business. Some of the best-known cooperative brands of food items include Land O' Lakes, Sunkist, Ocean Spray, Organic Valley, Florida Natural, Welch's, Sun-Maid, and Tillamook. Show examples of these products, and then provide samples for your audience. A farmer-owned cooperative buys crops, milk, or livestock from its members and processes it into food products. Farmers have invested money in this business, and the farmers who are members of the co-op meet to discuss the business operations. They hire a manager to run the business. By processing and selling food items, cooperatives can return the profits to farmers as additional income. They also put added emphasis on quality because their business depends on selling the best. Choosing products from cooperatives is one way consumers can make a direct connection to the source of their food.
11. In 2002 the Community Alliance with Family Farmers kicked off the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" campaign. Here are five reasons to buy local. **Local produce tastes better and it's**

**better for you.** A recent study showed that fresh produce loses nutrients quickly. In a week-long (or more) delay from harvest to dinner table, sugars turn to starches, plant cells shrink, and produce loses its vitality. Food grown in your own community was probably picked within the past day or two. **Local food supports local farm families.** Local farmers who sell directly to consumers cut out the many middlemen and get full retail price for their food -- which means farm families can afford to stay on the farm. **Local food protects genetic diversity.** In the modern industrial agriculture system, produce varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen simultaneously and withstand harvesting equipment. Shippers demand produce with a tough skin that can survive packing, transport, and a long shelf life in the store. In contrast, local farmers that sell direct to you or direct to your local restaurants and grocery stores grow a huge number of varieties selected because they have the best flavors and provide a long harvest season. **Local food preserves open space, and supports a clean environment.** A well-managed family farm is a place where the resources of fertile soil and clean water are valued. Good stewards of the land grow cover crops that prevent erosion and replace nutrients used by their crops. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive about preserving the agricultural landscape. **Local food is about the future.** By supporting local farmers today, you can help ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow, and that future generations will have access to nourishing, flavorful, and abundant food.

12. While many Americans have started backyard gardens, and people in crowded urban areas have community gardens, many people have neither the time nor space to garden at all. They have found a solution in seeking out the thousands of farmers' markets in small towns and big cities across the United States. *In fact, you can find farmers' markets in front of farms along rural roads. Farmers' markets provide locally-grown vegetables and fruits for sale.* Many of these items are **organic**, meaning they were grown using recognized procedures that avoid the use of pesticides, herbicides and insecticides, all of which are chemicals that many people do not want on their food items.
13. Because locally-grown food is becoming more popular, some large grocery stores such as Walmart are featuring organic and locally-grown selections of fruits and vegetables in special displays or using signs to let customers know the food is being grown locally. *There are a few grocery stores that specialize in stocking groceries that can be traced back to the farms and ranches that grew or raised the items available. The next time you are in a store that sells groceries, look for labels or signs that tell you something comes from a local source.*
14. *Farmers Union is sponsoring this lesson today. As an organization of family farmers and ranchers, Farmers Union supports the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" programs.* Consumer demand for fresh, source-verified, direct from the farm food is the fastest growing segment of the food business. Consumers want to know where the food they feed their families comes from. *In fact, Farmers Union owns and operates two restaurants in Washington, D.C., that use food items directly supplied by American farmers and ranchers.*
15. Close the activity by asking each participant to make one recommendation of what they think can be done to better connect farmers and consumers.

**Sources:** USDA, The White House, National Farmers Union, Supermarket News, Food Processing, National Cooperative Business Association, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, Community Alliance with Family Farmers



# Lesson 2: Putting Nutrition on the Table

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- Unit Objective:** Students will learn what they can do to promote healthy nutritional habits in their children.
- Level:** Collegiate and adults
- Length:** 1 hour: 10 minutes for the introduction and first activity, 10 minutes for additional lecture, 15 minutes for a guest speaker, 10 minutes for the activity on dips and dressings, 15 minutes for brainstorming activity and closing discussion.
- Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart and markers; a bowl of sugar and a teaspoon; a bag of potato chips; a bag of miniature candy bars (thumbnail-size Three Musketeers work well); a nutritionist from a local hospital, Extension Service, or other qualified source as a guest speaker; unopened bottles of low-fat and regular salad dressing; potato chip dip, salsa, ketchup, barbeque sauce and sweet and sour sauce; measuring spoons, and small, clear disposable cups.
- Preparation Needed:** Book a speaker and call one day in advance to verify he or she will attend.
- Background:**

According to government data, almost 32 percent of children 6 to 19 years of age are overweight or obese; the number of obese children in this age range has tripled in the last few decades. These children are more likely to have risk factors associated with chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes. In the United States, children on average get 40 percent of their daily calories from fat and sugar, mainly from just five foods: soda pop, fruit drinks, desserts, pizzas, and whole milk. Experts in nutrition agree parents do have a significant influence in instilling healthier eating habits in their children in these ways: setting the priority for healthy eating, making healthy snacks available and convenient, and setting a good example.

## Teaching Strategy:

1. Open the lesson with the background information above. *It isn't just children. Adults are adding more and more weight every year. Americans have several problems when it comes to our weight: we don't exercise enough, we eat too much, and we eat the wrong kinds of foods. Diets are incredibly popular, yet they are losing ground to poor eating habits. You can go on a diet, meaning you are choosing a menu of food items that you hope will lead to weight loss. You can eat or drink diet foods, which promise to reduce the fat and calories you consume. The long-standing meaning of the word diet is the kind of foods a person habitually eats. If we all had balanced and intelligent diets, we would not have to resort to dieting to control our weight, our blood pressure, or our diabetes.*
2. Hold up the bowl of sugar and the teaspoon. *How many of you are ready to eat 33 teaspoons of sugar right now?* Expect a few smiles or laughs. *If you drink two and one-half 20 ounce soda pops every day, you are getting the equivalent of 33 teaspoons of sugar. And for adults who get that much sugar daily, 77 percent will have a greater risk of high blood pressure. Too much sugar in any form can lead to weight gain, diabetes, and more visits to the dentist.* Pause to let them consider those facts. *If you buy soda pop, your kids will drink it. We know that. Our children copy our examples. Children absorb all kinds of habits -- consciously and subconsciously -- from their parents. Did you know more than half of all 8-year-olds drink at least one soda pop per day?*
2. *Do you like potato chips? What is a serving of potato chips? For many of us, it is the entire bag, whatever size it is. Yet if you look at the nutritional label on the side, you will find it is about "19 chips."* We compound the problem if we are loading up those chips with dip.
3. *Hold up the bag of miniature candy bars. Is this a single serving? No? How many little candy bars equal a single serving? About seven (check the nutritional label to verify this for your selection). Yet when a bag like this is open, do we keep returning to it until it is empty? Watch for nodding heads. Junk food is packed with fats, sugars, and salts. They have few nutrients. And sometimes we don't count them because they are small like*

*the candy bars, light in weight like the potato chips, or we think because they are not solid like soda pop they don't have calories.*

4. *When most people grew their own food, or bought food from farms, they had a more simple and natural source of nutrient rich foods that provided carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and other things we need to be healthy, and to heal when we are ill. They did not have junk food and they were not couch potatoes. They worked hard (what we would call exercise) and they ate unprocessed food in moderation (what we would call a sensible diet). As parents, you will want to know the four worst eating habits your children are likely to have at this point in their lives.*
5. **Skipping breakfast.** According to the American Dietetic Association, more than half of male teens and more than two-thirds of female teens do not eat breakfast on a regular basis. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. *Eating breakfast gets a person's metabolism up and running early in the day. This can help with weight control, mood, and academic performance in school. Breakfast does not mean a can of Mountain Dew and a donut. It means a glass of orange juice or milk, a granola bar, or peanut butter toast. Use common sense when choosing your breakfast, and make breakfast a habit.* As parents you need to be sure your children understand the importance of having a healthy breakfast. And, you can do much to make sure you have a bowl of fruit or granola bars and small containers of juice on the table as they pass every morning.
6. **Too many high-fat and high-calorie snack foods.** *The United States Department of Agriculture has a food pyramid that shows the number of servings you need from the five food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk, and meat and proteins. There are no food groups that tell you to load up on snack foods high in sugars, salts, and fats. Nutritionists will urge you to get Five A Day, meaning five servings of fruits and vegetables. That does not mean potato chips and orange pop qualify as a vegetable and a fruit. Apples, bananas, oranges, tomatoes, garden salads, and similar choices are nutrient-rich foods that are good for your children, and just good to eat if you think about it. These foods may not be as convenient or cool. But imagine the outcome if you could get your children, and yourselves, to cut down on junk food by half.*
7. **Fast Food.** *Because we, and our children, have busy lives, and because our social lives can revolve around food, it is easier than ever to meet at McDonald's or order in pizza for movie night. Some fast food places are trying to offer healthier choices, and a few such as Subway have made healthier eating a part of their marketing. You can limit the impact of fast food in three ways. One, simply reduce the opportunities to order fast food. Two, when your children eat fast food, do not encourage them to supersize the fries, get the three-patty burger, or order the 44-ounce drink. Three, take time to consider the healthier choices on the menu. Most restaurants have nutritional guides to let you know such things as fat grams, calories, and what is considered heart healthy. Finally, eat healthier at home. Serve more fruit and veggies as snacks as a healthy option to fast food.*
8. **Too much soda pop.** *A study looking at American youths aged 6-17 found an increase in soft drink consumption from 37 percent in 1978 to 56 percent in 1998. Fruit juice and water are terrific choices. Or, try fruit-flavored carbonated water instead of soda pop. Many people do not consider pop as a source of calories because they are liquid like water. The sugar and caffeine some drinks contain are much more than a person needs. Specialty coffees, both regular and diet soft drinks, juices and energy drinks can be loaded with calories, caffeine, sugar in various forms, and fat. They offer little nutritional value. The cumulative impact can negatively affect a person's concentration as well as weight. Fortunately, drinking water has become cool.*
9. *Today we have a nutritionist to speak to us about healthy -- and unhealthy -- eating. Please welcome NAME.* Be sure to lead the applause. After your guest speaker is done, allow the group to ask questions.
10. *We have one final activity today. I want you to gather into groups of two or three and determine what the actual serving size is for the dressings or dips I give you. Use the measuring tools and small cups to measure out a single serving, and then write down how many calories, how much sodium, how much sugar (which includes high fructose corn syrup), and how many fat grams are in each serving. Provide your students with one or more regular and low-fat salad dressings, potato chip dip and salsa, barbecue, ketchup, sweet and sour dips, and any other selections of your own choosing. Give the students time to read the labels and measure out the serving sizes into the clear containers. Have each group of students report on their findings and show the actual serving size. Talk about how these items are seldom consciously counted as calories in our daily diets. Just as with a bag of potato chips, we may think of a*

*container of chip dip as a single serving, or think of the serving sizes as how much dip you get on each chip or how much sauce you can get on each chicken nugget. Even if you make good choices about healthy foods, it is easy to consume hidden calories. Moderation remains a key tool in reducing the number of calories you and your children consume.*

11. Both USDA and Health and Human Services are updating the official Dietary Guidelines. Among the new recommendations are these common sense recommendations: enjoy your food, but eat less; avoid oversized portions; make half your plate fruits and vegetables; switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk; compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and choose the foods with lower numbers; and drink water instead of sugary drinks.
12. Ask the students to gather in groups of about five and brainstorm to think of things parents can do to instill better eating habits in children. Ask them to develop three specific recommendations. When they have completed this assignment, have one representative from each group step forward and write that group's three ideas on a flipchart or whiteboard. Once they are done, ask them if these are practical ideas, and ask them which ones they are most likely to try at home.

**Sources:** Parenting Teens, Lance Armstrong Foundation, USDA, Department of Health and Human Services, American Dietetic Association



# Lesson 3: A Safe, Secure, and Super Bargain

**Unit Objective:** Students will realize the U.S. has a safe, abundant and affordable food supply. This lesson can be taught to consumers or farmers. If taught to the latter group, it will give them reassurance in the contributions of their industry and confidence to be better spokespeople for their profession.

**Level:** Collegiate and Adults

**Length:** 1 hour: 15 minutes for the opening activities and lecture, 20 minutes for a guest speaker to talk about cost of production and hours involved, 15 minutes for additional lecture and activities, 10 minutes for the concluding discussion.

**Materials Needed:** A whiteboard or flipchart and markers, a 1-pound loaf of bread, an 18-ounce box of dry breakfast cereal (Cheerios will work well), an 11-ounce bag of potato chips, enough “Farmer’s Share of the Retail Food Dollar” handouts for your students, a farmer to be a guest speaker.

**Preparation Needed** Invite Farmers Union member who can provide an entertaining yet sobering sense of the cost of production of crops or livestock and also the 24/7 year-round job of farming. Go to [nfu.org](http://nfu.org) and download the latest “Farmer’s Share of the Retail Food Dollar” poster and make enough copies for all your students.

## **Background:**

Some large, eastern newspapers have editorialized against “subsidizing” agricultural producers. The truth is the Farm Bill provides a safety net for producers who take on enormous personal and financial risks every year to grow our food. Americans spend just 9.8 percent of their disposable income on food. This is the lowest percentage anywhere in the world. In Japan, consumers spent nearly twice as much disposable income on food as compared to Americans; in India, consumers spend over half their income on food. In effect, the low-cost and abundant supply of food in America has freed up economic resources allowing this nation’s economic growth in other industries. America’s family farmers and ranchers deliver much more than we appreciate and they make much less than we realize.

## **Teaching Strategy:**

1. Hold up a box of Cheerio’s breakfast cereal and tell your students this item sells for, on average, \$3.79. Ask them to guess how much of that money goes back to the farmer who grew the oats that were needed to make the cereal. Write down their guesses on a whiteboard or flipchart. *On average, the farmer received just seven cents for the oats that went into this box of Cheerios. Seven cents. The box costs more than seven cents to make. Where did the rest of the money go?* Let them guess and write down their answers on a whiteboard or flipchart. *In the food supply chain, everyone gets a share of the retail food dollar spent by consumers. This kind of economic activity generates lots of jobs for Americans. To begin with, the farmer gets paid for his crop, but as you learned, a lot less than you might have believed. A company will get paid to store or sell the grain. The cereal company makes a profit processing and packaging the cereal. The grocery store that sells the cereal has to mark it up to pay its employees. Advertising companies are paid to make you want to buy the product. Transportation companies are paid to move the crop from the farms to the processing plant, and then to the grocery stores. When you buy a box of cereal, a lot of people make money. But the real reason for buying the cereal is to eat it. And the food inside that was grown by a farmer represents just seven cents. Think about that.*
2. Hold up a loaf of bread. Tell your students the bread sells for \$3.79. Of that amount, how much money is returned to the farmer for the wheat that was needed to make the bread? Let them guess and write down their answers. *The farmer received 15 cents for the wheat that went into this bread. Farmers borrow huge amounts of money every year to put in a crop. Farming is both capital- and labor-intensive. Sometimes the returns are far less that you would guess. The money a farmer receives for his or her wheat has to make land payments, buy seed and fuel, repair or replace equipment, and feed his or her own family.*

3. *Let's try one more.* Hold up the bag of potato chips. *This bag of potato chips sells for \$3.99. What do you think is the farmer's share of this product? Write down the guesses. Actually, it is eight cents. That's not a lot, is it? Farmers grow food, but most of the money made in the food industry goes to the companies that process and package food. We sometimes call these the middlemen.*
4. *On average, farmers get 20 cents of each dollar consumers spend on food. That amount has been shrinking for decades. Just 50 years ago, farmers received 50 cents of every food dollar.* Because we can look at the entire food supply chain, we know farmers are being squeezed out of income for growing and raising the food we eat. More of the money is going to the businesses in the middle of the food chain, and less to the farmers and grocery stores. Food is big business, and many of the Fortune 500 companies are food companies. *If I mention Kraft Foods, you may think of Macaroni and Cheese. But Kraft Foods has more than 50 different brands ranging from A1 Steak Sauce and Oreos to Oscar Mayer meats and Wheat Thins. Kraft Foods has 97,000 employees. When a few companies control most of the market share, we call it **concentration**. When one company can control the entire food chain from production and processing to marketing, we call it **vertical integration**. What does Pepsi sell? Soda pop, right? Did you know last year of Pepsi's total sales, 37 percent came from beverages and 63 percent came from food. Because it owns many companies, Pepsi sells such foods as Cap'n Crunch cereal and Doritos snack chips.*
5. *Does that mean food is expensive? It can be. The more processed food is, or the more popular the name brand, the more expensive it becomes per serving. It can also be less healthy per serving. But consider this: in the United States, consumers spend less than 10 percent of their disposable income on food, and almost half of that amount is spent on food at restaurants. We have the least expensive food of any nation on the planet. And we have the most selection of food items anywhere in the world. The average grocery store has nearly 50,000 items. We really have it good. In Japan, the cost of food is nearly double that in the U.S. based on the percentage of disposable income. In India, consumers spend over half of their income just to feed themselves.*
6. *Farmers have struggled for years to make enough money growing food for America. Today we have a guest speaker who will talk to you about how difficult it is – and how rewarding it can be – to be a farmer.* Introduce your guest speaker and lead the applause. Be sure to pay attention to him or her during the presentation.
7. Following the presentation, encourage your students to ask questions. If they do not have any questions, at least ask a couple of questions yourself, such as, *How often to you lose crops to weather, insects, disease or other things that you cannot control?* and, *What is the best thing you like about being a farmer?* Thank your speaker and resume your lesson.
8. *Farmers do not get as much money as you might think for growing and raising our food. They do not get much credit for being the first step in the food supply chain that provides millions of jobs for Americans. Farmers not only provide safe and affordable food for us, they provide **food security**. We can feed ourselves as a nation. We do not have to import food. Why is this important? Wait for any answers and write down what they say. Raise this question. Right now, we import about 65 percent of the oil we need. It comes from other countries. Why has that caused problems for America?* The discussion points to raise include: what happens if other countries have problems with oil production; what happens if hurricanes, terrorists, or other events occur to disrupt the transportation of oil; what happens if another country such as China is willing to pay more for oil than us? *Now imagine if we had to import our food. Could we be at risk of running out or paying more because another nation controls the supply? Could another nation attempt to influence our policies based on food supplies?*
9. *Here is one more thing to think about. Because we spend so little on food compared to any other nations, we have more money to spend on consumer goods including computers, cars, vacations, cell phones, and much, much more. I wonder if Americans realize that by having an affordable and abundant supply of food, the Farm Bill effectively subsidizes our consumer way of life. Because farmers and ranchers are so productive, it has freed an entire workforce to develop other industries. Today, less than two percent of Americans are farmers and ranchers. There was a time when over half of all Americans were farmers. The entire economic way of life in the United States is built on a foundation of agriculture.*
10. Hand out the “Farmer’s Share of the Retail Dollar” worksheet to your students. *I want you to take a few minutes to look at this sheet. When you are done, we are going to see if we can find the answers to these questions: Why do farmers and ranchers get so little for their crops and livestock? Would we have as many*

*different product choices if we had to import our food? Would our food be more expensive if we had to import most of it from other nations?*

11. Ask your students to share their answers to the questions you posed. Allow this dialogue to continue until you believe no one has anything new to add. *One reason farmers are paid so little is that they have become so good at production. They produce more food than we need so we never have shortages. If we had to import our food, we would have far few choices determined by the countries that would sell us food. Transportation costs alone would probably make imported food more expensive, and it might not be as fresh or raised using our standards for safety. Because we are so good at producing food, we export billions of dollars in agricultural products annually. Everyone knows we have a serious trade deficit. Without farmers, it would be a lot worse.*
12. Conclude the lesson by saying Americans really do have the safest, most secure, and affordable supply of food of any nation in the world. *For that you can thank a farmer.*

NOTE: An optional activity that could be used as a public demonstration would be to make sandwiches using bread, turkey, lettuce, tomatoes, and other appropriate ingredients. After each sandwich is done, cut a small corner out of it to represent the farmer's share of the food dollar. Use the handout to show farmers get as little as 15 cents for every \$3.79 cent loaf of bread. This demonstration could be the basis of public educational activity for a county Farmers Union organization that would educate consumers and attract media attention.

**Sources:** Department of Energy, Economic Research Service, National Farmers Union

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# Farmer's Share of Retail Food Dollar

Did you know that farmers and ranchers receive only 20 cents of every food dollar that consumers spend on food at home and away from home?

According to USDA, off farm costs including marketing, processing, wholesaling, distribution and retailing account for 80 cents of every food dollar spent in the United States.

**Bacon**  
1 Pound



Retail: \$3.99  
Farmer: \$0.52

**Top Sirloin Steak**  
1 Pound



Retail: \$4.49  
Farmer: \$0.98

**Bread**  
1 Pound



Retail: \$3.79  
Farmer: \$0.15

**Fresh Carrots**  
3 Pounds



Retail: \$2.99  
Farmer: \$0.89

**Beer**  
6-Pack Cans



Retail: \$5.99  
Farmer: \$0.09

**Cereal**  
18 Ounce Box



Retail: \$3.79  
Farmer: \$0.07

**Cheddar Cheese**  
1 Pound



Retail: \$4.69  
Farmer: \$1.47

**Eggs**  
1 Dozen



Retail: \$2.69  
Farmer: \$1.08

**Flour**  
5 Pounds



Retail: \$2.59  
Farmer: \$0.73

**Boneless Ham**  
Price per Pound



Retail: \$3.99  
Farmer: \$0.52

**Lettuce**  
1 Head (2 Pounds)



Retail: \$2.19  
Farmer: \$0.40

**Milk**  
1 Gallon, Fat Free



Retail: \$4.39  
Farmer: \$1.34

**Potato Chips**  
Lays Classic, 11oz



Retail: \$3.99  
Farmer: \$0.08\*

**Fresh Potatoes**  
Russet, 10 Pounds



Retail: \$4.39  
Farmer: \$0.52\*

**Soda**  
Two Liter Bottle



Retail: \$1.09  
Farmer: \$0.08

Farmer's share derived from USDA, NASS "Agricultural Prices," 2010.

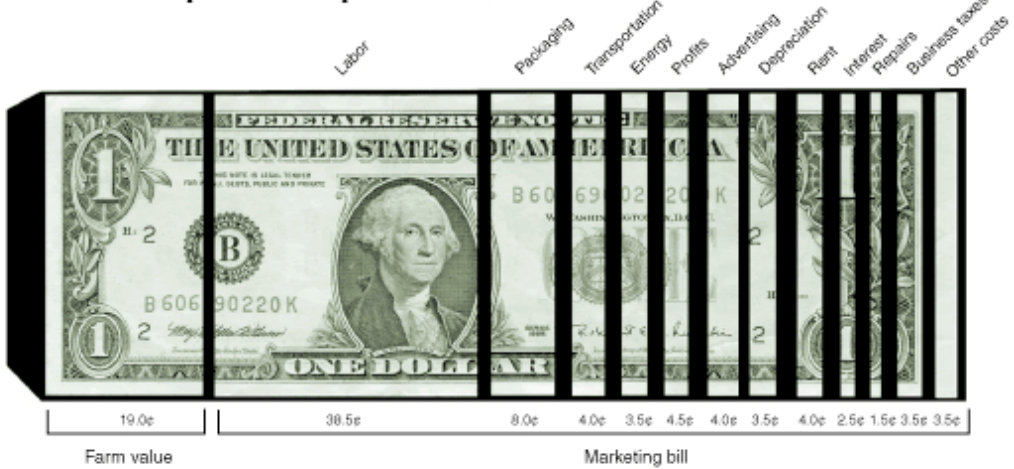
Retail based on Safeway (SE) brand except where noted.

\*Reflects November 2010 prices.



Dec. 30, 2010

**What a dollar spent on food paid for in 2006**



Source: USDA's Economic Research Service.

# Lesson 4: Nutrition in the Farm Bill

**Unit Objective:** To be determined.

**Grades:** Collegiate and Adult

**Length:** 1 hour

**Materials Needed:** Whiteboard or flipchart and markers.

**Preparation Needed:** To be determined.

**Background:**

To be determined.

**Teaching Strategy:**

1. Open the lesson ...