

Activity: Truth or Hogwash?

Activity Level: Intermediate

Source: *Oklahoma Agriculture in the Classroom and Nebraska Pork Producers Association*

PURPOSE

Students will work in teams to play a game in which they will answer true/false questions about swine.

EXAMPLE TOPICS IT SUPPLEMENTS

Vocabulary; Environment; Animal Life Cycles; Reduce, Reuse & Recycle.

ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

1. Organize and Prepare Supplies
2. Read Background Information
3. Interest Approach
4. Conduct Activity
Explain the meaning of the word “hogwash.” Have students play a game to help them understand how pig farmers care for their pigs.
5. Ask follow-up questions and make the connection to agriculture
 - Who provides care for pigs?
 - Where do pigs live?
 - How do pig farmers care for the environment?
 - Name two ways pig farmers care for the pigs?

STATE STANDARDS IT SUPPORTS

SC 4.6.3—Gather and analyze data to communicate an understanding of structure, function, and information processing of living things.

LA 4.1.5.e—Determine meaning using reference materials.

LA 4.2.2.a—Demonstrate active and attentive listening skills (e.g., eye contact, non-verbal cues, recalling, questioning) for multiple situations and modalities.

MATERIALS

- Truth or Hogwash Sheet
- Pig A to Z Poster

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION TO AGRICULTURE?

Agriculture Literacy Outcomes

Food, Health, and Lifestyle

- Describe the necessary food components of a healthy diet using the current dietary guidelines.
- Diagram the path of production for a processed product, from farm to table.

Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber & Energy

- Provide examples of specific ways farmers meet the needs of animals.

VOLUNTEER ENRICHING ACTIVITY

PROCEDURES:

1. Organize and Prepare Supplies
See “Materials” on cover page.
2. Read Background Information

Pigs were among the first animals to be domesticated, probably as early as 7000 B.C. Forty million years ago, hog like animals roamed forests and swamps in what is now Europe and Asia. By 4900 B.C. **hogs** were domesticated in China. By 1500 B.C. they were being raised in Europe.

Colonists in Pennsylvania developed the practice of “finishing” the hogs on corn (feeding them nothing but corn in the few weeks before butchering them). This practice improved the quality of the **pork** and laid the foundation for the modern pork industry. In the colonial U.S., hogs were driven to market in large droves over trails that later became routes used by the railroads.

Hog raising became an important commercial enterprise during the 1800s when the Midwest farm regions were settled. The new Erie Canal system gave farmers a way to get their hogs to the cities back east. Farmers started calling their hogs “mortgage lifters” because the profits from their sales helped pay for the new homesteads.

The hogs would eat corn, grass, clover or even table scraps that would have otherwise become garbage. The word “**hogwash**,” meaning something that is worthless, came from this practice. In some areas, hogs would be turned out to find their own food. Hogs would roam freely, eating what they could find. This included acorns from the ground or roots, which they dug up with their **snouts**. On Manhattan Island, New York, the hogs rampaged through grain fields until farmers were forced to build a wall to keep them out. The street running along this wall became Wall Street.

Most people had pig pens near their homes and fed the hogs just enough to keep them returning home from their daily forage for food. Everybody had a different hog call so that only their pigs responded to their call. These calls might be a high pitched “sooie,” a low pitched “wark,” or a simple “here pig here.”

Lard was in high demand for baking, so pork producers grew pigs that were very fat. People could eat foods that were higher in fat then because most were involved in vigorous physical labor that caused their bodies to burn large amounts of fat and calories. Today, most people are not as active as they were back then and health conscious consumers want leaner meat. To meet this demand pork producers have changed the way they feed and raise their **swine**. Most cuts of pork today are as **lean** or leaner than similar cuts of beef and chicken. Pork has a high nutrient density (a high level of nutrients for the level of calories). It provides protein, iron, zinc and B Vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and Vitamin B12).

Many people picture a hog farm as a smelly, muddy place where pigs wallow in muddy pens. Years ago, pigs would lie in the mud to protect themselves from overheating and biting insects. Today most hogs are kept indoors in buildings where producers can control temperature, humidity and other environmental factors. These buildings are well-lit and clean, so the producer can better monitor and promote the health of the hogs. Some operations use indoor and outdoor facilities. Healthy, unstressed animals are more profitable, so producers try to keep their hogs comfortable and happy.

Byproducts made from swine include adhesives, plastics, shoes, paint, glue, crayons, chalk, and chewing gum. Pig heart valves are used to replace diseased or damaged human heart valves. Hog skin is used as a dressing in treating serious burns, and hog pancreas glands can provide insulin to treat diabetes.

3. Interest Approach

Tell students that pig farmers in Nebraska care for their pigs to keep them comfortable and safe inside and outside. Pigs are a farm animal raised to make food for people.

Pig farmers have a certain vocabulary they use to describe the pigs they take care of.

Have students listen as you say a vocabulary word. Then have students repeat the vocabulary word together. After repeating the word, share the definition.

- Pig—A farm animal raised to make food for people.
- Gilt—A gilt is a young girl pig.
- Barrow—A barrow is a young boy pig.
- Boar—A boar is an adult male pig.
- Sow—A sow is an adult female pig who gives birth to the newborn pigs.
- Piglet—A piglet is a newborn pig.
- Farrowing—Farrowing is the process of a sow giving birth to a group of piglets.
- Litter—A litter is a group of about 10-12 piglets born to one sow.

4. Conduct Activity

- Use the Background Connection to share 2-3 minutes of information with the students about pigs. *Farmers take care of their pigs to help them grow to make food for people. They make sure they are safe inside and outside and provide for their most basic necessities. Every pig farm is different, but each pig farmer has the same goal: protect the pigs, people and planet.*
- To learn more about what pig farmers do, play the game “Truth or Hogwash?” Explain the meaning of the word “hogwash” (nonsense or speech that is worthless.)
- Split students into groups of 4-5 students. Choose a “Team Captain” for each group.
- Choose questions from the Truth or Hogwash sheet and ask them to the class. *You could do this by reading them from the sheet, or by putting them in a hat and having students draw them out randomly.*
- Explain that the first Team Captain that raises their hand can answer the question. If they are correct, the point goes to their team. If they are incorrect, the point goes to the person reading the questions. Whoever has the most points at the end wins.

5. Ask Follow-Up Questions and Make the Connection to Agriculture

Pig farmers care for pigs, people and the environment. Raising pigs involves help from many people and creates careers to strengthen strong communities in Nebraska. Many pig farmers care for their pigs inside barns to keep them safe and comfortable. Pig Farmers care for the environment by using the nutrient cycle to give fertilizer to the plants and food to the pigs. Pigs are raised for meat to help feed people all over the world.

- Who provides care for pigs?

Pig farmers

VOLUNTEER ENRICHING ACTIVITY

- Where do pigs live?
On farms, mostly inside barns. They can also live outside on farms.
- How do pig farmers care for the environment?
Farmers use the nutrient cycle to give back to the environment by applying their pigs manure as a fertilizer. The crops in turn are fed to the pigs to keep the nutrient cycle going.
- Name two ways pig farmers care for the pigs.
Provide sprinklers inside buildings to help the pigs cool off.
Provide heaters or heat lamps to keep pigs warm.
Provide fresh, clean water to pigs always.
Mix healthy feed for pigs to eat that include corn, soybeans, minerals and vitamins.
Wear coveralls and boot covers in the barn to keep germs out.
Keep pig barns clean, where there is no mud.

Truth or Hogwash? - Sheet

Pigs can be pink.

Pigs cannot sweat.

Pigs can provide medicine for people.

There are many careers to help care for pigs.

Many farmers care for their pigs inside barns.

Pigs eat leftover, junk food.

A pig is full grown in approximately six months.

The manure from a pig barn is injected into the soil to help plants grow.

About 75% of the pig is meat, which is about 200 pounds.

When born, a piglet weighs 3-4 pounds.

Truth or Hogwash? - AnswerSheet

Pigs can be pink.

- *Hogwash*
- *Pigs are actually white, black, brown, or red. Why are they like this? There are many breeds of pigs that give them the traits they have. Yorkshire, Landrace, and Chester White are all breeds of pigs that are white. Duroc pigs are red. Hampshire, Berkshire, and Poland China are all examples of black and white pigs. Pig farmers can select traits that they want in pigs. Some of those traits can be for muscle quality, length of body, and producing lean muscle. The most common breed of pig is a Yorkshire.*

Pigs cannot sweat.

- *Truth*
- *Pigs cannot sweat. Farmers use a special sprinkler system inside of their barn to drop water on the pigs to lower the pig's body temperature and cool them off.*

Pigs can provide medicine for people.

- *Truth*
- *Only 75% of the pig can be used for meat. The remaining 25% of what is left is called a by-product. Pigs can provide medicine such as, coating for gelatin pills, insulin, and valves for human hearts. Many by-products can come from a pig! (Look at the Pig A to Z poster to see more by-products that come from a pig.)*

There are many careers to help care for pigs.

- *Truth*
- *It takes a team to care for pigs. Examples of a pig team include: Veterinarian, to care for the pig's health. A nutritionist helps the farmer decide what is best to feed the pig. A truck driver to move the pigs to different buildings.*

Many farmers care for their pigs inside barns.

- *Truth*
- *Barns keep pigs comfortable. Inside of the barns, farmers can control the temperatures as pigs grow. If it is too warm, a special sprinkler system is used to cool the pigs and fans can help circulate fresh air. If the barn gets too cold, heat lamps are used to keep smaller pigs warm and a heater to keep bigger pigs warm. Many farmers wear coveralls and boot covers into the barns to keep germs out. Farmers keep their pig barns clean so there is no mud. Barns protect pigs from changes in weather, from predators, and from germs that might make them sick.*

Pigs eat leftover, junk food.

- *Hogwash*
- *Most of the food pigs eat, are crops grown right here in Nebraska. Pigs eat corn to provide them with energy to grow and soybean meal to provide protein to build strong muscles. Pig farmers also add extra vitamins and minerals to provide specific nutrients pigs need as they grow. As pigs grow over six months, the mix of corn and soy in their diet can change up to ten times!*

A pig is full grown in approximately six months.

- *Truth*
- *Pigs grow in a really unique and fast way. It's a combination of the care pig farmers give, keeping the pigs comfortable, and providing plenty of good water. A pig is full grown in just six months and will weigh approximately 275 pounds.*

The manure from a pig barn is injected into the soil to help plants grow.

- *Truth*
- *Pig farmers take care of their pigs every day, and they take care of the environment. For example, they use the nutrient cycle. First, crops like corn and soybeans grow in the fields. Second, pig feed is made from the grain. The grain is fed to the pigs to help them grow. Then, pigs can't convert all of their food to energy, so manure is produced. Next, the manure from the pig barn is injected into the soil as a fertilizer to help the crops grow. Finally, the nutrient cycle is repeated.*

About 75% of the pig is meat, which is about 200 pounds.

- *Truth*
- *Pigs are raised for meat to help feed people all over the world. About 75% of the pig is meat. Meat from a pig is called pork. Examples of pork include bacon, ham, pork chops, pepperoni and even sausage!*

When born, a piglet weighs 3-4 pounds.

- *Truth*
- *A sow (mother pig) farrows (gives birth to) 10-12 piglets in a litter. The piglets are born inside to keep them safe. The sow can care for the piglets and have access to fresh food and water, plus the piglets can drink milk from the sow and be kept warm and safe from injury.*