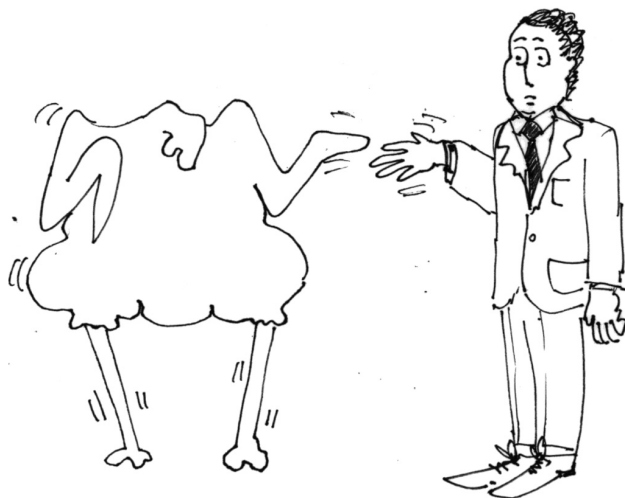


"Meet Your Meat"



OTHER TITLE OPTION:

"Modern Animal Agriculture & Diet"

GRADES: 8-College

TIME: from 45 minutes up to 3 hours

MINIMUM REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Apple & knife
- Large posters of factory farms
- 2 plastic milk crates
- Green fields boards and food cards
- USDA or dairy council posters (e.g. healthy school lunch program)
- Materials, posters, brochures, etc. from meat & dairy industry
- Video

Part One: Engaging Your Audience with Critical Thinking

A. Option 1: Alien Visiting Earth

(See description under *Perspectives on Animals*, page 25.)

B. Option 2: Who do you eat? Ask your audience members to raise their hands if they eat animals, and count the number of hands that go up. Then ask them how many of them eat hamburgers, hot dogs, and fried chicken. Note whether the number of hands raised for the sec-

ond question is greater than for the first, and if so, ask the students why. Next, ask for a show of hands of people who think it would be gross to eat a dog? a cat? an insect? a bear? a pig? a chicken? a cow? a turkey? Ask students why they responded in the ways that they did. Explain that in other countries and in other cultures, some people eat dogs and cats, while in India, many people believe that eating cows is immoral. In some cultures, people routinely eat insects. Remind students that we tend to eat, and believe that it is ethical and good to eat, the foods that we were raised with, and that our culture promotes. Explain that your program will look at modern animal agriculture in the United States, and ask students to think about what is and is not ethical in our modern agribusiness approach to agriculture.

Part Two: Facts and Information - The Milk/Chicken Crate Activity

See part two of *Perspectives on Animals*, page 26, and complete this section with a discussion about factory farming of cows, pigs, and turkeys. Provide details and show posters or photos of the forms of mutilation, confinement, transportation and slaughtering procedures for all these species. Contrast the information you are sharing with the information that comes from animal agriculture industries. Ask them how they can decide whom to believe. Ideally, you will share your own direct experience with factory farms. It is worth the time and effort to visit these facilities whenever possible.

Part Three: Video - *Diet for a New America* or *A Cow at My Table*

It is great if you have time to show the entire video *Diet for a New America* (60 minutes) or *A Cow at My Table* (90 minutes). If not, you can show excerpts, specifically the last 30 minutes of *Diet for a New America* which covers the animal suffering as well as the environmental issues involved in animal agriculture. If you do not have time to show either of these videos, you can

use a variety of other, short videos, such as *Humane Slaughter?* and *Downed Animals*, and, if the group is warned that it is a pro-vegetarian film, *Food Without Fear*.

Part Four: Activities - Making Environmental Connections

A. Green Fields: the purpose of this activity is to show visually the extraordinary difference in land use necessary to produce food for a vegan diet versus a meat-centered diet.

- Bring two foam boards (you can go to a frame shop and request their foam board scraps, rather than buy them), painted green, 21 push pins, and 21 1” square pieces of paper with the names of a food on each. 20 of the foods must be plant based while one is a hamburger or steak. It is preferable to draw the foods in addition to writing their names on the pieces of paper, as it is more visually appealing and easy to see from farther away. Some choices are: spaghetti with tomato sauce, vegetarian chili, salads, peanut butter and jelly sandwich, mushroom-barley soup, bean burritos, falafel in pita, etc. (See “Resource Materials” for our versions which you can copy and color in yourself.)
- Pass out the pieces of paper and push pins, and ask for two volunteers to hold the boards up in the front of the classroom.
- Ask all the students with a plant-based food on their piece of paper to come up and pin the paper into the green field on your right, and ask them to stand next to the field when they’re done.
- Ask all the students with an animal-based food on their piece of paper to come and pin theirs into the green field on your left, and then stand by the field. (Only one person will come up.)

- Explain that the fields represent the same amount of land, and that the exercise demonstrates how much food you can grow on a plant-based diet versus a meat-based diet. Ask the students to count how many people are on either side. This represents the number of people who can be fed on a complete vegetarian diet versus a meat-based diet: about 20 to 1.



- Ask the students what it means if most of us choose a meat-based diet. What does it take to make extra fields for growing crops to feed animals? (Usually, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, water, deforestation, etc.)

B. Apple: the purpose of this activity is to demonstrate just how much topsoil we have to grow our food.

- Tell students that the apple you are holding represents the Earth, and that you are looking at the Earth to discover how much land is available to grow crops to eat.
- Ask for a volunteer to cut the apple into four pieces. Take 3 of the pieces away and ask the students why you can’t farm on these 3 pieces of the Earth (someone is likely to guess the right answer: because it’s water).

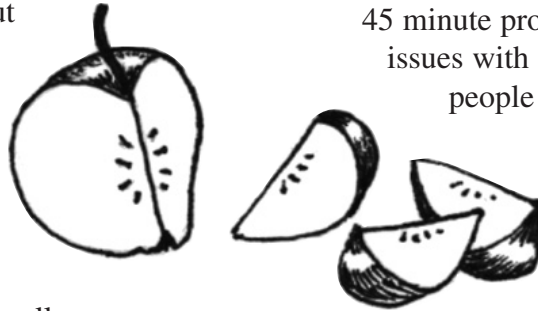
- Ask the student to cut the apple into four more pieces, and remove 3 of these. Ask the audience why. (These pieces represent deserts, marshlands, tundra, etc. that are unsuitable for growing crops.)

- Ask the student to cut the apple into four more pieces, and remove 3 of these.

- Ask the audience why. (These pieces represent all human development, from cities and suburbs, to malls and theme parks, to prisons and industrial sites.)

- Finally ask the student to peel the remaining tiny piece of land and explain that this peel represents the little bit of fertile topsoil with which we can grow food.

- Discuss animal agriculture's effect on topsoil.



Part Five - Health Concerns

If you wish to cover health issues related to meat-eating in detail, you can show the first 25 minutes of *Diet for a New America*. If, however, you do not have enough time to show the video and do a 45 minute program, then you can cover the health issues with the students yourself. Most young people are more concerned about animals and the environment than with their health, which is why we've devoted most of this outline to these issues, however health issues should not be neglected.

A. Critical thinking: What's killing most people? Ask students to name the primary causes of death in the U.S. (heart disease, cancer, strokes). Ask them what causes these diseases (smoking causes 33% of cancer deaths, and contributes significantly to heart disease and strokes, however, it is estimated that approximately 30-50% of cancers can be prevented through a healthy, low fat, vegetarian diet, while 80-90% of heart attacks can be prevented through such a diet). Facts to share:

- Vegetarians live several years longer than meat-eaters on average.
- In countries where people eat a plant-based diet, heart disease, colon, prostate, and breast cancer (3 of the 4 most common cancers in the U.S.) are relatively rare.
- In addition, a plant-based diet can prevent or cure: diabetes, kidney disease, osteoporosis, obesity, etc.

Continue to acquaint yourself with facts and statistics about the health benefits of a plant-based diet and share these with your students. Remember to bring your sources of information. (See "Resources," page 79 for books and videos that you can use to educate yourself on these issues.)

C. Environmental problems associated with animal agriculture

- Invite students to raise their hands and name any significant environmental problems that they can think of. It is likely that some of the following will be mentioned (in addition to other concerns): air & water pollution, nuclear & other toxic waste, resource depletion (including water, oil, minerals, etc.), garbage accumulation, habitat destruction, topsoil depletion, oil spills, endangered species, hole in the ozone, etc.

- Write all their concerns on the board and then analyze each in terms of the effects animal agriculture has on each. This is an eye-opening exercise in which students realize how huge a role animal agribusiness plays in environmental problems. (Read **Diet for A New America**, **Mad Cowboy** and other books for information on this subject.)

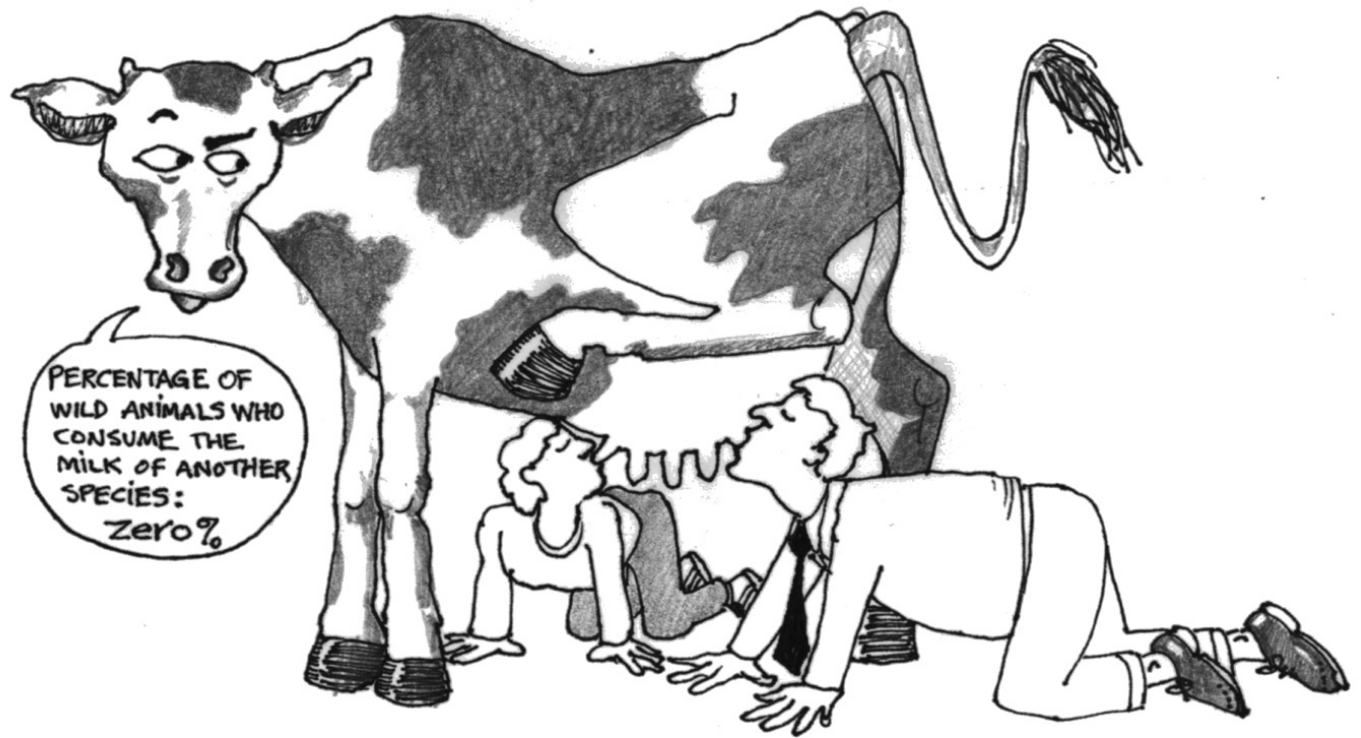
B. Ask students what they would think if their younger siblings went to school and at recess and lunch were given cigarettes to smoke. Consider how horrified they would be, yet we do give young children substances which eventually can make them sick or kill them and which form life-long habits that are difficult to change. Explain that a high-fat, animal food-based diet kills as many people each year as cigarettes. Show the students the posters you have for the Healthy School Lunch Program or other government or dairy council produced materials, and ask them to consider whether these foods really are healthy. Explain that the USDA buys surplus animal foods that are high in fat to provide to low income students in schools around the country. Explain the even higher prevalence of diet-related disease among low income communities which are targeted by the marketers of high fat foods.

C. Milk is for baby cows:

If you do not consume dairy products, students may be shocked to learn this because it is so radical in our culture not to consume milk, cheese and ice cream. It is useful to “shock” them instead by saying the following:

“You know, milk is one of those foods that we all grew up thinking was natural and healthy and even necessary for our health. I started to realize, though, that it’s really somewhat strange to be drinking the mammary secretions of another species, especially after weaning. After all, do you ever see other mammals nursing on a different species? An elephant nursing on a kangaroo? A cheetah nursing on a rhino? Not only that, but we are the only species to keep nursing after childhood! Every other species stops nursing, but we keep right on drinking milk into adulthood. Yet, do any of you ever go home and say ‘Mom, can I have some of your milk?!’ So, why do we keep nursing on cows?” You can also remind students that most people in the world do not drink cow’s milk, and cannot even digest it after infancy and early childhood.





Part Six: Choices

Your closing should remind students that you are not trying to tell them what to eat, but rather to invite them to continue to learn more and to recognize that what they eat has a profound effect on animals, the environment and their health. It is up to them to decide what food they want to eat and what foods they don't want to eat (with younger students, it is not entirely up to them, since their parents make the primary food decisions for them). It is likely that students will ask you what you eat. Instead of saying "Well, I *don't* eat hamburgers, or fried chicken, or pepperoni pizza," you can share all the wonderful foods you *do* eat! If you are able, bring some samples of delicious foods that you can share with the classroom.

Part Seven: Questions & Answers

There are always lots of questions after this program, so be sure to provide a variety of written materials that the students can take home, including recipes. Even if you run out of time, and cannot answer all the questions, you can direct the students to the handouts you've brought.