



# We Teach My American Farm

**Intended Audience:** Practicing or pre-service elementary teachers, grades K-5

**Detailed Outline for Facilitators:** 2-Hour Event



<b>Materials:</b> <i>As you review the materials list, consider items you may have on hand that could replace the suggested items below.</i>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
My American Farm Activity Book (1 per teacher)	<a href="http://myamericanfarm.org/fairs_events/marketing_supplies">http://myamericanfarm.org/fairs_events/marketing_supplies</a> *Free download or purchase printed books.
App Download Card (1 per teacher)	<a href="http://myamericanfarm.org/fairs_events/marketing_supplies">http://myamericanfarm.org/fairs_events/marketing_supplies</a> *Free download
Food service gloves (1 per teacher)	
Cotton balls (5 per teacher)	
Seeds (5 per teacher)	
Yarn/Ribbon (24" per teacher)	
Hole Punches (1/10 teachers)	
Spray bottles (1/10 teachers)	
Bulk Rulers (1 per teacher)	
Clear plastic cup (1 per teacher)	
Tape (Approximately 2" per teacher)	
"We Teach My American Farm" PowerPoint	Provided
Projector, screen, presenter laptop, and internet connection	
Promotional Resources: Letter to teachers, suggested email content, social media tips, promo flyer	Zipped Folder Provided

## **Prior to the Event:**

- Review the outline and PowerPoint.
- Download the My American Farm offline kiosk program here: <http://myamericanfarm.org/download/kiosk>
  - Note: If your computer does not automatically install it, you will need to install Adobe Air to run this program.  
<https://get.adobe.com/air/>
- Cut ribbon/yarn into 2' sections, 1 section per participant

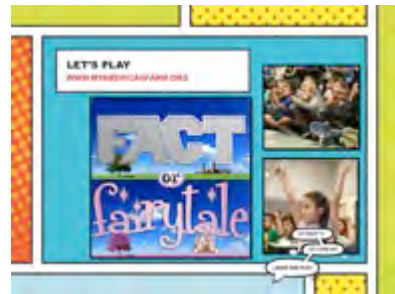
## On Site Set-up at the Event:

- Secure wi-fi log in information for room and post for participants to see.
- Open presentation PowerPoint, as well as a web browser window showing [www.myamericanfarm.org](http://www.myamericanfarm.org).
- At each participant table, set out the following: 1 activity book, 1 app download card
- Set up a lab materials table containing the following: seeds, cotton balls, gloves, ribbon, spray bottles with water, hole punches

Time	Learning Activities
<p>As Participants Enter</p> 	<p>Welcome and complete any logistics for event.</p>
<p>15 Min</p> 	<p><b>Key Concept: Agricultural literacy is important and can make your job easier!</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Needs Assessment <b>(SLIDE 2)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Engagement: Ask participants to try to identify five things they used this morning to get ready that were not related to agriculture.           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In pairs, have participants share and discuss.</li> <li>ii. Ask participants to share, capturing responses on a white board or tear sheet. Listen for items that relate to food, fiber and shelter.</li> <li>iii. Reinforce the importance agriculture plays in our lives every day – even beyond the nutritious food we eat.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Engagement: Ask participants to consider the following: <b>(SLIDE 3)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. What do you think teachers need to meet the needs of students today and in the future? Examples: resources, professional development to meet standards, time to collaborate, etc.</li> <li>ii. Why is it important to teach about agriculture in our schools today?</li> <li>iii. Capture responses on a white board or tear sheet. Listen for examples related to time, standards-based resources, or real-life experiences for students.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>



2. Set context for the need for agricultural literacy. **(SLIDE 4)**
  - a. Agriculture is our most vital industry. Agriculture encompasses all of the industries and processes involved in the production and delivery of food, fiber and fuel that humans need to survive and thrive.
  - b. Acknowledge the challenge teachers have to engage students while meeting rigorous standards.
  - c. Address the value and ease in using agricultural as a method for teaching applied skills and reinforcing required standards. Food and fiber literacy can make your job easier! My American Farm is intended to be used as an integrated resource to support what you are already expected to teach, rather than a new requirement.
  - d. Engagement: Provide teachers an opportunity to make a personal connection and share their motivation for attending.
3. Ask teachers to respond to the following questions:
  - a. What motivated you to attend this workshop?
  - b. What is one thing you hope to take away from this experience?

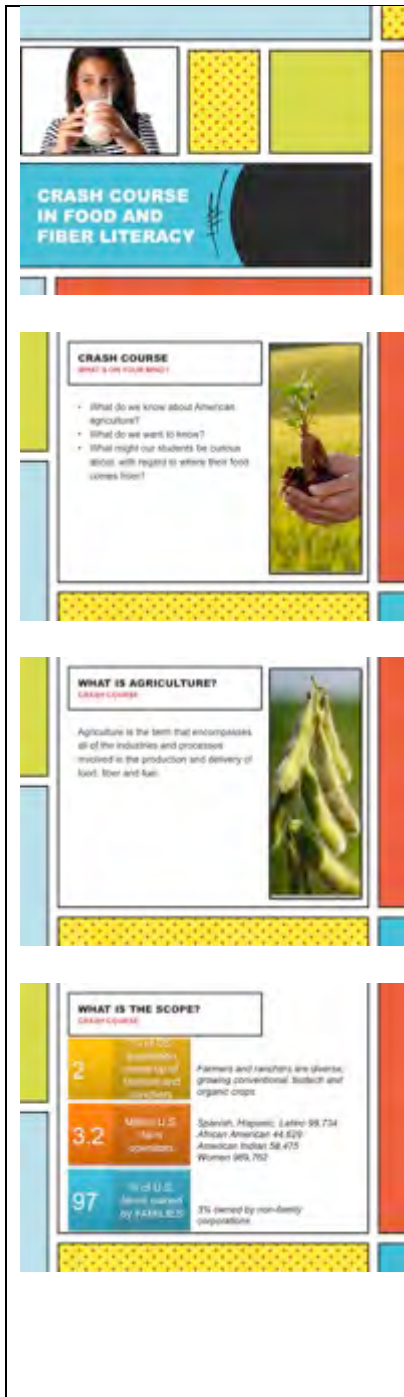


4. Application: Teachers play a short version of “Fact or Fairytale” **(SLIDE 5)**
  - a. Remind teachers that the purpose of this event is to equip them with great free resources to make their job easier while having fun. And it all starts with the joy of playing games!
  - b. Pull up “Fact or Fairytale” on My American Farm. Inform teachers that you are going to play a quick game to show them how easy it can be to integrate My American Farm in the classroom.
    - i. What it sounds like: *Let’s see how easy it is to use My American Farm in the classroom, by meeting my friend Jacob. We’ll help Jacob out just like you might help Jacob with your students. Jacob can’t decide if what he hears is fact (true) or fairytale (untrue). When you hear a statement, give a big thumbs up if you think it is fact. Cross your arms and make a loud buzzer sound if you think the statement is fairytale. Let’s play!*
    - ii. Play a few rounds eliciting teacher responses and selecting the choice most teachers indicated.

15 Min

**Key Concept: Agriculture is a vital industry in the United States.**

5. Provide teachers with a “Crash Course” in American agriculture. **(SLIDE 6)** Many elementary teachers may be unaware of the scope, diversity, and necessity of the industry. Use this as an opportunity to create a base of common knowledge. You may wish to adapt for your local area.
6. Engagement: Ask teachers to consider the following and capture responses on a tear sheet or white board. **(SLIDE 7)**
  - a. What do we know about American agriculture?
  - b. What do we want to know?



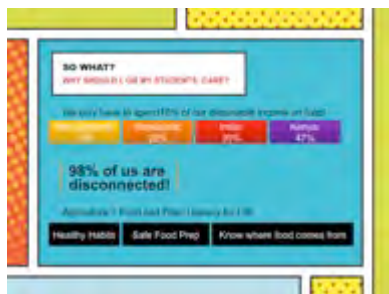
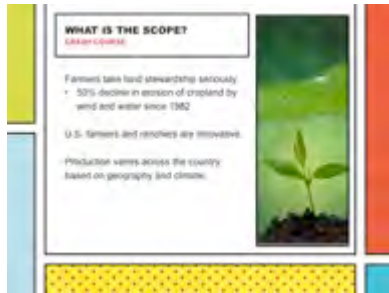
- c. What might our students be curious about, with regard to where their food comes from?
7. Assure teachers that whether they have an extensive background in agriculture, or are generations removed from the farm and ranch, they can confidently engage students in the discovery of food, fiber and natural resources.
  8. Use the PowerPoint presentation to present key information:
    - What is agriculture? **(SLIDE 8)**
      - Agriculture is the term that encompasses all of the industries and processes involved in the production and delivery of food, fiber and fuel.
    - What is the scope of the industry in the US? **(SLIDE 9-11)**
      - Farm and ranch families make up just 2% of the U.S. population.  
Farmers and ranchers are diverse, growing conventional, biotech and organic crops.
      - There are 3.2 million U.S. farm operators in the U.S. In recent years:
        - Spanish, Hispanic or Latino farm operators increased 21% to 99,734
        - African American increased by 12% to 44,629
        - American Indian increased by 5% to 58,475
        - Women farm operators decreased by 2% to 969,672
      - 97% of farms are owned by families, and just 3% are owned by non-family corporations.
      - Farmers and ranchers receive on 17 cents, on average, out of every retail dollar spent on food. 83% goes to off-farm costs, like marketing, distributing and retailing.
      - America's farms and farmers are the world's most productive. Today each farm produces food and fiber for 169 people annually in the U.S. and abroad.
      - 87% of what is produced in the U.S. is crops, 13% is livestock (by lbs.).
      - Farmers take land stewardship seriously. The land is their love and their livelihood. Careful stewardship of America's food producers spurred a nearly 50% decline in erosion of cropland by wind and water since 1982.
      - U.S. farmers and ranchers are innovative- striving continually to improve the food and fiber production process while caring for the environment.
      - Production greatly varies across the U.S. based on geography and climate.
    - So what? **(SLIDE 12)**
      - As a result of innovation by our hard working farmers and ranchers, U.S consumers spend just 10% of their disposable income on food each year, while other countries spend much more. (New Zealand 13%, Venezuela 20%, India 30%, Guatemala 40%, Kenya 47%)
      - 98% of the population is not directly connected to production agriculture, so we have a great opportunity to help them make the farm to fork connection.



- Food and fiber literacy is important for everyone, because it helps students make healthy decisions, safely prepare food, and understand where their food comes from.
- What types of careers are involved in agriculture? **(SLIDE 13)**
  - Agriculture careers are vast, diverse, and purposeful. Students with a wide variety of interests can find engaging careers connected to agriculture.
  - Agriculture careers can be broken down into several pathways: Agribusiness, animal systems, environmental service systems, food products and processing systems, natural resources systems, plant systems, and power, structural and technical systems.
  - According to AgCareers.com (which does not include government jobs), there are more than 7,000 agriculture-related career openings in the U.S. right now!

9. Application: Teachers play “My Little Ag Me” **(SLIDE 14)**

- Introducer teachers to the game “My Little Ag Me” on My American Farm. Inform participants that this is a game for young learners, with the goal of exposing them to the variety of careers in agriculture.
- Have participants play in pairs or small groups on their personal computers. If internet connection is an issue, play as a large group by bringing up volunteers to complete rounds.





20 Min



**Key Concept: Exploring the site and resources!**

Setup: Use a projector and screen connected to the main computer to introduce participants to the layout of My American Farm and key resources available. Participants may follow along on their personal laptops.

10. What is it?

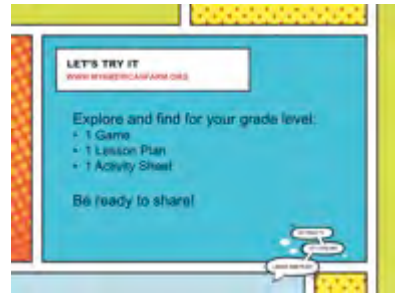
- a. My American Farm is a free educational learning platform featuring more than 20 learning games and hundreds of free classroom resources. The site a special project of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, made possible by title sponsor DuPont Pioneer.

11. What are the underlying messages? **(SLIDE 15)**

- a. All resources communicate one or more of the following key messages:
  - i. Farmers feed the world
  - ii. Farmers care for animals
  - iii. Farmers steward the land
  - iv. Agriculture is everywhere
  - v. Careers in agriculture

12. How is the site organized? **(SLIDE 16-17)**

- a. The home page speaks to our key audiences, and gives you a chance to jump directly to the games. Click “Check out All The Games” in the top section of the page to preview the games section.
- b. From the home page, select “The Classroom”. Here’s what you’ll find:
  - i. **Lesson Plans:** These are instructor-led guides. Search by subject area and/or age. Each lesson plan gives you the option to incorporate a specific My American Farm game. All lessons are aligned to national learning standards. \*Note: We are in the process of re-aligning some resources that were developed before Next Generation Science Standards launched.
  - ii. **Activity Sheets:** These are student-driven stand-alone resources. Search by subject area and/or age.



- iii. **Games:** You can also get to the games from this page. Print a Passport to Sustainability for students to track game completions! Students can print their certificate at the end of a completed game and glue in their passport. As an alternate option, teachers can stamp or sign off on passport game completions.
- iv. **eComics:** These fun student readers are available as PDF downloads and in online eReader format. Feel free to print and use in your classroom.
- v. **Videos:** These videos from the popular TV series America's Heartland support key messages and topics found in the games.
- vi. **Helpful tools:** Find suggested strategies, class-sets of passport stickers, and a standards-matrix to review all resource alignment to national learning standards.

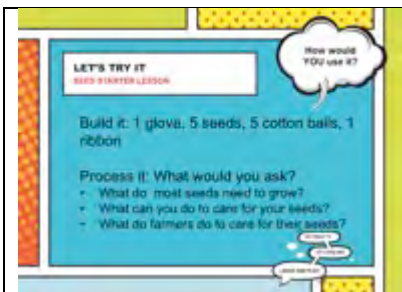
13. Application (**SLIDE 18**): Give teachers approximately 5 minutes to individually find a lesson and activity sheet for their respective grade. Have teachers share one resource they discovered and how they might use this in the classroom. You may wish to have teachers share in pairs, small groups, or as a whole.
- a. Suggested Enrichment: Bring in a box of books that accurately represent agriculture. Ask participants to consider how they might pair select books with games or activities on My American Farm.
  - b. Suggested Enrichment: Challenges teachers to come up with a writing lesson they could use to expand upon the concept in a game or lesson.

30 Min

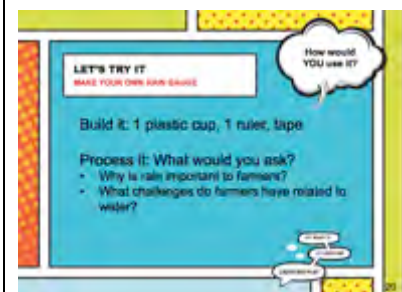
**Key Concept: These lessons are easy and practical!**

Prior to the workshop set up three hands-on learning areas. Based on space, you may wish to have participants complete hands-on lessons at the station, or pick up supplies and return to their seats. In the 30. For larger groups, you may wish to have teachers rotate through stations.

For each activity, have participants complete the activity and then brainstorm processing questions they might use to get students to dig deeper!



14. **“Garden in a Glove/Seed Starter” Lesson Plan:** This lesson is found on My American Farm under Classrooms>Lesson Plans, under the title “Seed Starter”. Each teacher is to **(SLIDE 19):**
- a. Pick up one food service glove, five cotton balls, five seeds, and a piece of ribbon/yarn.
  - b. Dip each cotton ball in water and squeeze out excess.
  - c. Place one cotton ball and one seed in each finger of the glove.
  - d. String ribbon/yarn around the top of the glove to slightly close the glove and create a hook from which they can hang their glove in a sunny area. \*Note: You may wish to poke/punch holes through the top of the glove.
- a. **Debrief:**
- i. What do most seeds need to grow? Listen for water, sunlight, and a growing medium. Growing medium is typically soil, but in this case we are using a cotton ball!
  - ii. What can you do to take good care of your seed? Listen for carefully paying attention to the seed, watering as needed, placing in a warm, sunny area, etc.
  - iii. What do farmers do to care for their seeds? Listen for similar responses – giving the seeds the right amount of water and nutrients, caring for the soil, etc.



15. **“Make Your Own Rain Gauge” Lesson Plan:** This lesson is found on My American Farm under Classrooms>Lesson Plans, under the title “Make Your Own Rain Gauge”. Each teacher is to **(SLIDE 20):**
- a. Take a clear plastic cup.
  - b. Place a plastic ruler on the outside of the cup, flush with the bottom of the cup.
  - c. Using clear tape, secure the ruler to the cup.
- d. **Debrief:**
- i. Why is rain important for farmers? Listen for participants to identify that water is needed to grow crops. Some farmers/crops depend on rainwater only, some irrigate and others use a combination.
  - ii. What challenges do farmers have related to water? Listen for the unique needs each crop has for water use. Farmers must know how much to water, when to water, and how to manage wastewater effectively to protect the environment.

25 Min

**Key Concept: Games can be used to extend learning beyond the classroom.**

16. Set Context: My American Farm games are aligned to national learning standards for Pre-k through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, but the interest level is much broader! Today we’ll have a chance to play with some of the games, and put our creative heads together to brainstorm ways they could be used to support



**EXTENDING LEARNING**  
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Let's Explore – Split the room!

- Pre-k – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Games
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Games

Partner Up and Share:

- What game(s) did you play?
- How could they be used in the class, computer lab, or at home?

21

**TECH TOOLS**  
OFFLINE KIOSK VERSION



**TECH TOOLS**  
MY AMERICAN FARM TABLET APP



**TECH TOOLS**  
ALL ABOUT BEEF SMARTPHONE APP



learning in the classroom, computer lab, and at home.

17. Divide the room into two groups. **(SLIDE 21)** The first group will focus on Pre-k – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade aligned games, the second group will focus on games aligned to 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade standards. If teachers already have teaching assignments, you may wish to have them self-select groups.
- Give participants approximately 10 minutes to individually review and play games for their selected age range. As participants play, ask them to consider how they could see this game being used in the classroom, computer lab, or at home to extend learning.
  - After 10 minutes, have each participant pair up with a participant from the other group. As a pair, the participants should share 1-2 of the games they played and how they could see these games being used.
  - If time allows, invite participants to share aloud as a group.
18. Extend Learning with These Tech Tools
- Using the “kiosk” offline version **(SLIDE 22)**: Show teachers that they can download their own offline version of My American Farm games by clicking “Play Offline” from the games page. The offline version contains all of the games. (Updated each January with new games from the previous year.)
    - This is a great classroom tip, because the kiosk program can be added to classroom computers without having students online.
    - Demonstrate using the kiosk program you have downloaded if available.
  - There are two apps available for My American Farm:
    - My American Farm App **(SLIDE 23)**: Featuring 6 My American Farm games for tablet only. Great if you have a class set of tablets! Available for iPad, Android and Kindle Fire.
    - All About Beef App **(SLIDE 24)**: (COMING SOON!) Featuring 2 beef related games for tablet and smartphone. Available for iPhone, iPad, Android devices and Kindle Fire.

15 min



**Key Concept: We're here for you, let's build a team!**

19. Have participants create a basic action plan by identifying one thing they can do to begin connecting students to the source of their food and fiber **(SLIDE 25)**:
  - a. In the next week
  - b. In the next month
  - c. In the next six months
  - d. In the next year
20. Reference the items generated at the start of the workshop with regard to what teachers wanted to know about agriculture, or learn from this process. Let teachers know that organizations like Farm Bureau and Agriculture in the Classroom are here to help support their efforts to connect young people to the source of their food, fiber and natural resource.
  - a. Have participants add to their action plan by identifying at least 2 people they can invite to be on their ag literacy "team".
21. Communicate ways to stay connected **(SLIDE 26)**:
  - b. Include local contacts as appropriate.
  - c. For questions related to My American Farm, email [educationdirector@fb.org](mailto:educationdirector@fb.org).
22. Express thanks for title sponsor DuPont Pioneer making this special project of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture possible! **(SLIDE 27)**
23. Remind teachers that agriculture is a fun, relevant way to support the key concepts students are expected to learn in the classroom. Challenge teachers to consider creating an agricultural literacy team at their school! Thank teachers for their participation and encourage them to stay connected! **(SLIDE 28)**