Where Are You In The Food Chain?

Every living organism is either a producer or a consumer.

Producers make their own food. They do this by using light energy from the sun, carbon dioxide from the air, and water from the soil to produce food. This process is called photosynthesis.

Write the name of a producer: ________________________

Consumers cannot make their own food, so they eat plants and/or animals. There are three types of consumers: Herbivores only eat plants, Carnivores only eat animals, and Omnivores eat plants and animals.

Write the name of a consumer: ________________________

and what type of consumer it is: ____________

Meet A Farmer

My cousin, Bryce Nasty and I (Bluey Airlines) love to ride in the combine with our family who grow corn, soybeans, and wheat in Van Buren County in Indiana. Joe Ponton is Bryce’s grandfather and my great uncle and Bill Ponton is one of his cousins. Popper Ponton has been farming for over 60 years. He planted his first crop of wheat in 1958 and started helping his dad till the acres and farm when he was only 8 years old. Joe rented his first farm when he was only 13 years old in 1965. They both love farming and now farm over 2,000 acres and cultivate farm another 1,000 acres. Joe was in 4-H and showed pigs and Bryce and I both showed pigs this past year in mini 4-H. Taking care of the soil and being good stewards of the land is important to them both. Being a farmer, they say is a lot of fun and it depends on good weather to be able to have crops. They both love farming. Their crops provide for us all over the world and we are very proud of them.

ASK Maxine

Maxine was elected to NACD in 1978. They say it was never easy.

Can I grow food at home like farmers do?

You can plant a garden and follow the same steps that farmers do: till the soil, plant the seeds, nurture the plants, and finally harvest. As farmers go through the steps of crop production they are careful to take care of the soil and water on their land by following Best Management Practices (BMPs). You also should conserve and protect the natural resources around your home as you garden. Gardening is fun and easy!

Contact your local SWCD for tips on gardening in your community.
The food you eat comes from plants and animals that use the earth's natural resources to live and grow. It takes many people and a lot of work to bring food from the soil to your spoon.

**Fruit**

Fruits like apples, oranges, strawberries, blueberries, and many more are grown in the United States. Fruits are a great source of Vitamins A and C. Most fruits grow on trees, bushes, or vines and get all of the nutrients they need from the soil.

**Vegetables**

Vegetables come in many colors and they all grow in soil. Dark green vegetables are one of the healthiest foods to eat. They supply our bodies with minerals like iron, calcium, potassium, and magnesium. They also provide vitamins K, C, E, and B.

**Grains**

Whole grain bread, corn, pasta, and crackers are made with wheat. Over 3 million bushels of wheat are grown every year in the United States on nearly 50 million acres of soil. It is a fact of life that taking the steps it takes to bring grains and other foods you eat from the soil to our spoon.

**Dairy**

Ranches raise cows on dairy farms. In one year just one cow can eat 90 pounds of food and produces enough milk to fill 100 glasses. Milk delivered today was in a cow only two days ago!

**Protein**

Chicken and eggs are lean proteins. An average American eats over 80 pounds of chicken and 240 eggs every year! That's a lot of chickens to raise and feed! The poultry and egg industry uses 100 billion pounds of feed every year. That means millions of acres of soil are used by farmers to grow grain. Ranchers raise the chickens; workers process the poultry so that we can eat it; and refrigerated trucks deliver it to the store.

**Make Your Own Butter**

You will need 1 cup of heavy cream, 1 marble and 1 plastic container with a tight lid. Any empty mayonnaise or peanut butter jar works well.

1. Put the cream jar and marble in the freezer for a few minutes to chill.
2. Put the marble and cream in the jar and screw lid tightly.
3. Shake the jar until the cream thickens and butter forms.
4. Drain off the buttermilk; remove the marble and rinse the jar.
5. Store your butter in the refrigerator and enjoy!
Using Earth To Feed The World

When the first Pilgrims arrived in 1620, they might have died during that first winter from starvation if they hadn’t been given some corn to eat by the Native Indians. We’ve been eating it ever since!

Corn, hay, soybeans and wheat are some of the crops grown in the U.S. Farmers in the U.S. grow more corn than those from any other country in the world. The extra corn is sent to other countries to help with their food supply. We also eat hay, the only ones eating the corn grown in the U.S. — cattle, hogs and poultry eat even more corn than we do!

Word Bank
- Dairy
- Fruits
- Conservation
- Corn
- Grain
- Soy
- Vegetables
- Hay
- Herbivore
- Minerals
- Nuts
- Protein
- Rancher
- Resources
- Roots
- Water
- Vegetables
- Vitamins
- Wheat

1. The grain-bearing part at the top of the stalk of a plant such as wheat, corn, or barley.
2. A single grain that contains a seed and hull.
3. The green part that grows from the stems or branches of a plant or tree. It uses the sun, water, and air to make food for the plant by photosynthesis.
4. The part of a plant that grows underground, holds the plant in the soil and absorbs water and nutrients.
5. The top layer of the earth’s surface. It is made of very small rocks and mineral particles from erosion, organic materials, bacteria and fungi.
6. The main stem of a plant that holds up the leaves, flowers or ears.

Dairy, ________, and ________ are food groups in the food plate.
Plants absorb ________ and other ________ from the ________ through their ________.
________ and ________ are major crops grown in the United States.
________ and ________ grow crops and raise livestock to provide us with food to eat.
It is important to practice ________ habits to protect our natural ________.
Dark green vegetables supply our bodies with ________ and ________ and ________.
Sometimes a farmer has to ________ the soil to grow a ________ ________.
A ________ eats only plants, a ________ eats only animals, and a ________ eats both plants and animals.
Meats, beans, and milk foods are good sources of ________.
Eat Right... Exercise... Feel Better... Have FUN!

Your body needs healthy food from all five food groups every day.

Dairy Foods provide calcium for strong bones and teeth. You should have 3 cups of dairy foods like milk, yogurt, and cheese each day.

Protein Foods help your muscles grow. You need 5 ounces of lean meats, beans, eggs, or peanut butter every day.

Fruits & Vegetables are two very important food groups from which most people do not eat enough of. Fruits and vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that your body must have. You should eat 2/1-2 cups of vegetables and 1-1/2 cups of fruit every day. To get the most benefit from fruits and vegetables... think color! Eat as many different colors as you can. Try to eat at least one leafy green vegetable daily. Then add some red, orange, yellow and people to your daily diet. Strawberries, blueberries, bananas, oranges, sweet potato, corn, carrots, and broccoli are tasty choices.

Grains are a good source of energy and help build carbohydrates. Eat 6 ounces of grains every day. Try to make sure that at least half of those are whole grain foods like whole grain cereal, bread and oatmeal.

Find Your Way To Good Nutrition

Find the way out of the maze below by following the paths with healthy food choices. Start in the center of the maze. Draw a line through the path from the center of the maze to the exit. For every healthy food you go through give yourself 5 points. For every unhealthy food you go through subtract 2 points.

Healthy Food Choices

Unhealthy Food Choices

Number of Healthy Food choices _______ x 5 = _______ Healthy Points

Number of Unhealthy Food choices _______ x 2 = _______ Unhealthy Points

Your Score! Healthy Points Unhealthy Points = _______ Total Score

How did you do?
We read all healthy food choices and got a total score of 35 points. Then we got the score of 20 points. We scored a total score of 55 points.

Your score of 55 points is great! Keep it up!