Getting Acquainted with an Iowa Farmer

Anne Hoeper

Wood Intermediate School, Davenport School District

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# Getting Acquainted with an Iowa Farmer

**Created by:** Anne Hoeper  
**Wood Intermediate School, Davenport School District**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level (Req.): 6th-8th grade</th>
<th>Content Area (Req.): Human Geography</th>
<th>Unit (Opt.):</th>
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</thead>
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**Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.):**  
-  
-  

**Time Frame (Req.): 1-3 class periods**  
**Goal (Req.):** To help students to become aware of farm life in the past and present.  
**Objective (Req.):** Students will compare and contrast past and present life on Iowa farms.  

**Materials Needed (Req.):**  
- Interview questions  
- Farmers to interview or websites describing life on farms  
- Video camera  
- Computer  
- Microsoft Movie Maker or another video editing program  
-  

**New Vocabulary (Opt.):**  
-  
-  
-  

**Anticipatory Set/Introduction (Req.):**  
**Inquiry Question is required** (Req.): What is life like on an Iowa farm? How has it changed in the last 50 years?

**Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.):**  
1. Discuss the importance of obtaining oral history.  
2. Discuss with students what can be learned about groups of people by exploring their daily life.  
3. Create a list of questions to use when interviewing farmers. Students may use the questions that are included with this lesson plan, modify the questions, or create their own.  
4. Schedule a time to interview a farmer.  
5. Interviews may be videotaped and edited using Microsoft Movie Maker.  
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<tr>
<th>Formative Evaluation (Req.): Class discussion</th>
<th>Assessment (Req.): 1) Students can share their results in small groups; they can discuss the similarities and differences that they see. 2) Using a Venn diagram students can compare and contrast life past and present life on Iowa farms. 3) Movies can be shared with other classes. 4) Analyze how the loss of family owned farms has affected the economy.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):</td>
<td>• Geography, grade 6-8: Understand how geographic and human characteristics create culture and define regions. • Geography, grade 6-8: Understand how physical processes and human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):</td>
<td>• Speaking and Listening, grade 6-12: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on specific grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGS Standards Used (Req.):</td>
<td>• The physical and human characteristics of places • How human actions modify the physical environment</td>
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<td>Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):</td>
<td>School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Location • Place • Human-Environmental Interaction • Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Century Universal Constructs (Opt.):</td>
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<td>Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):</td>
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<td>Other Essential Information (Opt.):</td>
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<td>Other Resources (Opt.):</td>
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Interview Questions for an Iowa Farmer

1. Describe the nature of your farm (crop, livestock, combination): __________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. Type of business: □ Sole Proprietorship □ Partnership □ Corporation

3. How many acres of property do you farm? __________________________________________

4. How long has this land been a farm? __________________________________________

5. Years at present business: __________________________________________

6. Number of employees: ___________________. □ Salaried □ Hourly
   If paid hourly, how much do the employees earn per hour? ______________________

7. Approximate hours you work per week: __________________________________________

8. Do you have seasonal employees? □ Yes □ No. If so, how many? ________________

9. Do you have more full-time or seasonal employees? □ Full-time □ Seasonal

10. What qualities do you look for when hiring employees? _________________________

11. Have you found owners of similar farms to be friendly? Competitive? Explain. ______
   ___________________________________________________________________

12. Why did you select to become a farmer? ________________________________________

13. How did you determine the location of your farm? _________________________________

14. What would you do differently if you were to start a new farm this year? ____________
   __________________________________________________________________________

15. What impacts the decisions you make with regards to what and how much to grow or
    produce? ___________________________________________________________________

16. How do you promote your products? (circle all that apply)
   A) Brochure                     D) Newspaper                     G) Special events
   B) Online directories          E) Television                     H) Other
   C) Personal websites           F) Signs
17. What impacts your decisions with regards to where and how you sell your products?
___________________________________________________________________________

18. Discuss the sale of your commodities. Who do you sell to? How is the price determined?
___________________________________________________________________________

19. What do you do to make your profit margin the best it can be?
___________________________________________________________________________

20. Using the following scale, how profitable are the following methods in selling your products (if they do not apply leave blank):

   1             2       3      4                5
   Very Ineffective   Neutral    Very Effective

   CSA ___     Farmers’ Market ___    Local Distributors ___
   Road/ Farm Stand ___   Local Restaurant / Stores ___   Wholesalers ___

21. Of the products that you sell, what percentage do you sell locally?
A) 0-20%  B) 21-40%  C) 41-60%  D) 61-80%  E) 81-100%

22. Of the products that you sell locally, what percentage do you sell directly to the consumer?
A) 0-20%  B) 21-40%  C) 41-60%  D) 61-80%  E) 81-100%

23. What is your annual value of total sales? __________________________________________

24. What is your annual value of local sales? __________________________________________

25. In general, how do you feel about subsidies for farmers? What government subsidies are you receiving?
___________________________________________________________________________

26. Discuss the use of various chemicals in your operation. Why are they used? What precautions are taken? What regulations must be followed?
___________________________________________________________________________

27. What kind of sustainable agricultural practices do you incorporate into your work?
___________________________________________________________________________

28. Describe two unique features of your business:
   a. ___________________________________________________________________
   b. ___________________________________________________________________

29. What is most rewarding about your career?
___________________________________________________________________________

30. What is the biggest challenge in operating your business?
___________________________________________________________________________
31. What prepared you to be a farmer, owner or employee of an agricultural-related business? ______________________________________________________________

32. What are some political issues you are concerned about? _____________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

33. Where do you see farming in the future? __________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

34. Describe some of the things you do as a farmer. ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________