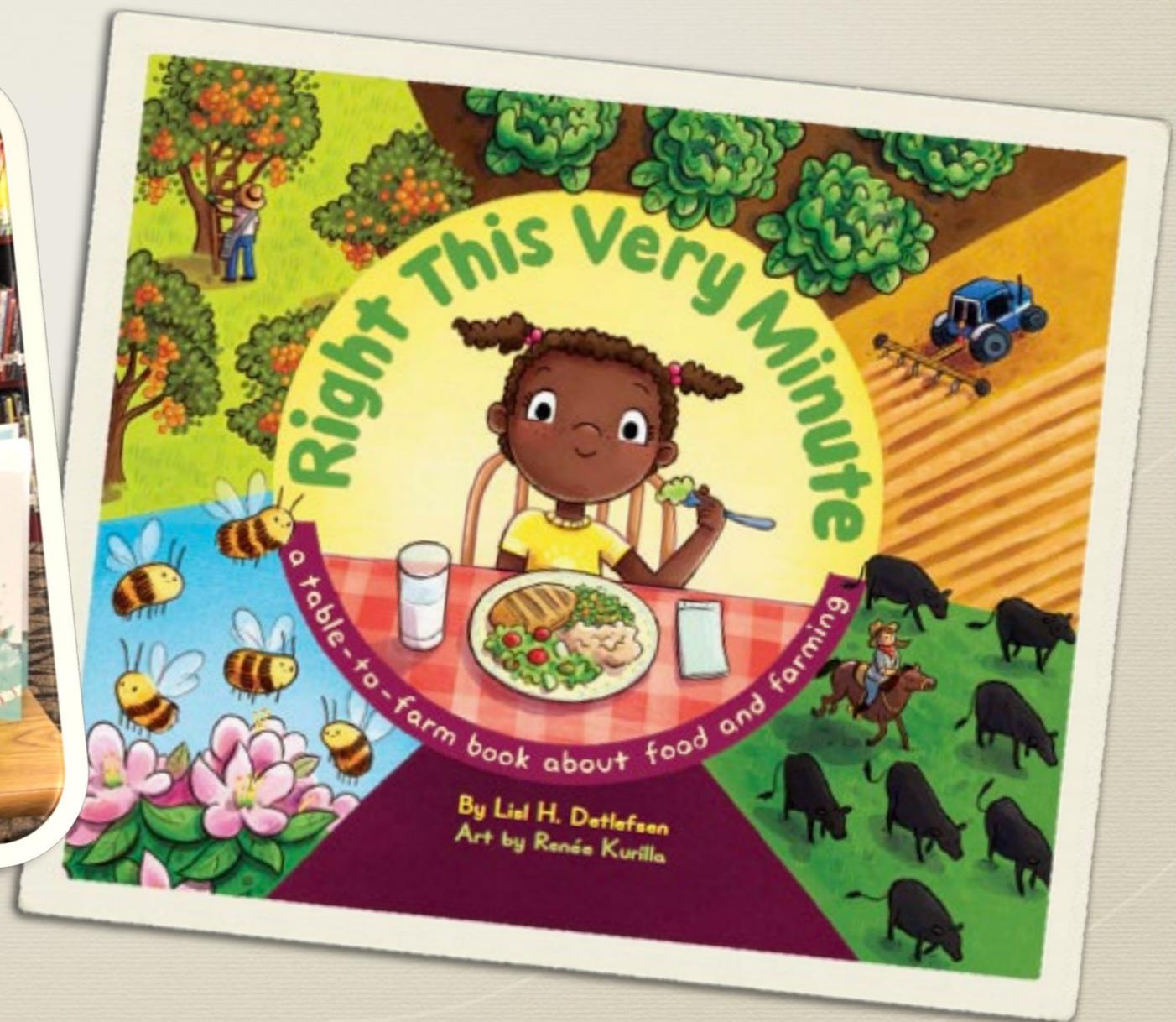


New MacDonald Has a Drone: Technology and Perceptions in Accurate Ag Books

by Lisl H. Detlefsen,
children's book author



“Children are not a distraction from more important work, they are the most important work.”

-C. S. Lewis

“Every one of us that’s not a farmer is not a farmer because we HAVE farmers.”

**-Former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
Vilsack**

[YouTube Clip](#)

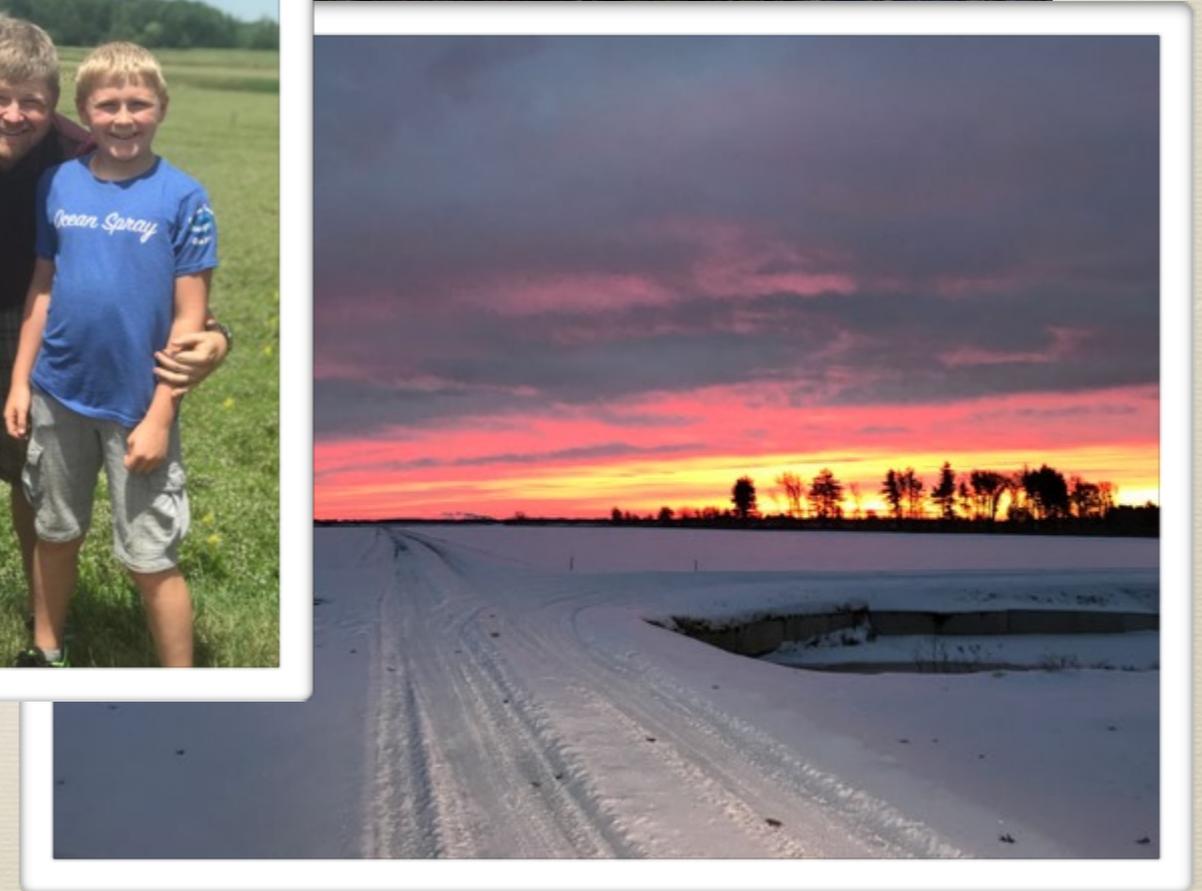
Why write about where food comes from?

I grew up here, drinking cranberry juice every morning, not knowing where it came from...

and thinking my adult life would look like this:



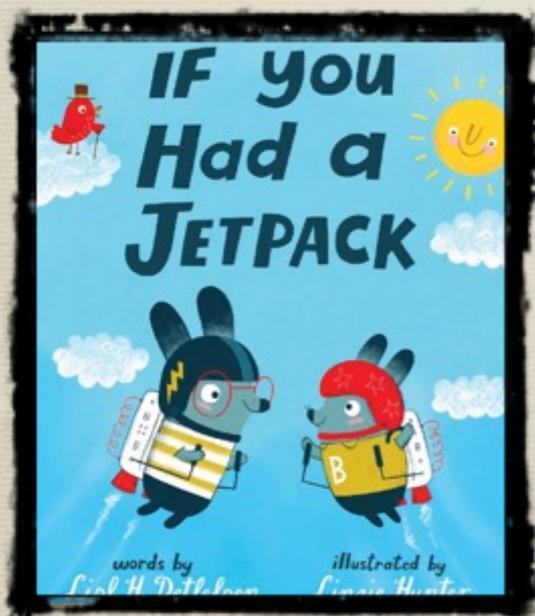
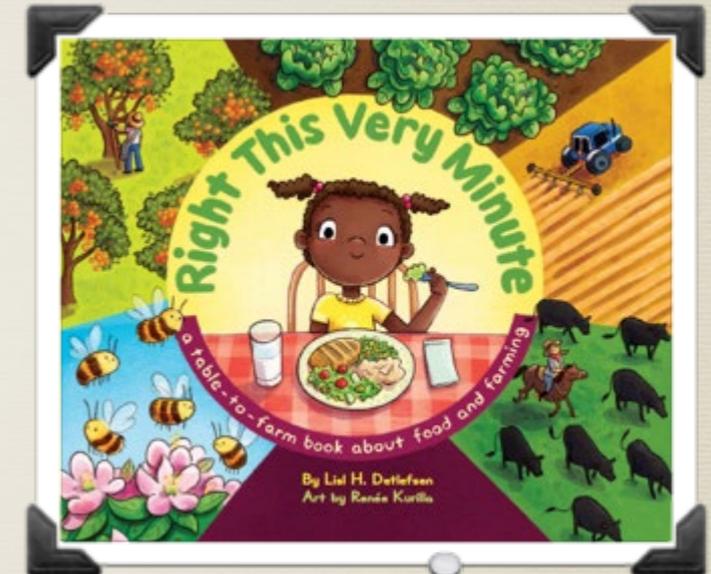
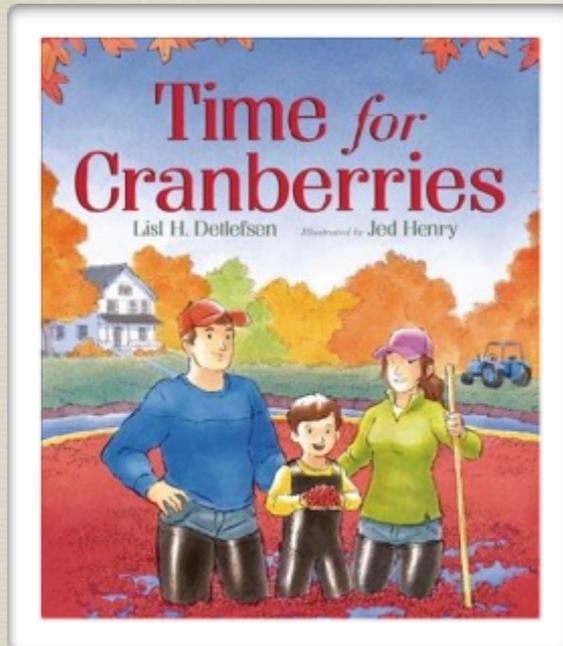
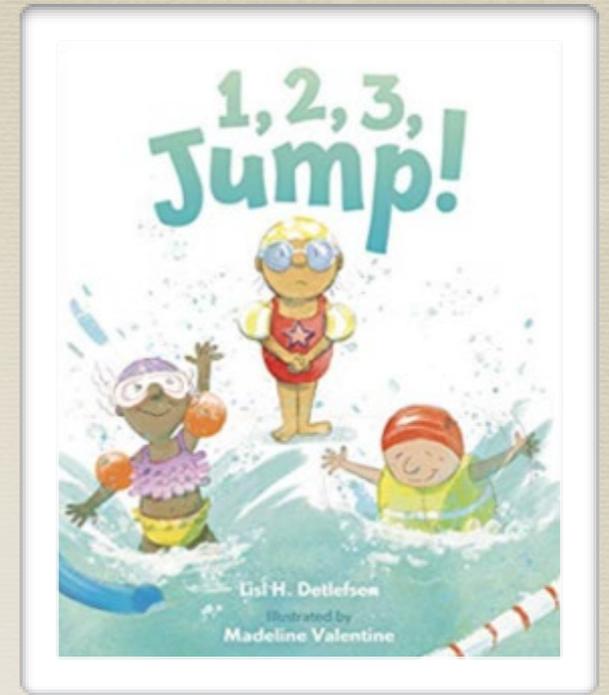
But my life today looks like this:



My road to writing



- I always wanted to be a children's book author.
- My first picture book, TIME FOR CRANBERRIES, came out in 2015.
- IF YOU HAD A JETPACK, my second, came out last April.
- RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE launched in February and is the 2019 AFB Ag Foundation's Book of the Year!
- 1, 2, 3, JUMP! launched on May 14th.



My life as an author



- I live with my husband, two sons, and two cats on a family-owned cranberry marsh near Wisconsin Rapids, WI.
- The office where I work and write is inside our home, which is a renovated farmhouse that is over 140 years old.



- The stairs going up to my office look like favorite books from my childhood.
- My two office “assistants,” Jiggles and Wiggles.

At Whittlesey Cranberry Company, we've been growing cranberries for ~~five~~ SIX generations:



Are printed books still relevant?

YES!



87%

Parents say they read to their kids



50%

Read to them daily



76%

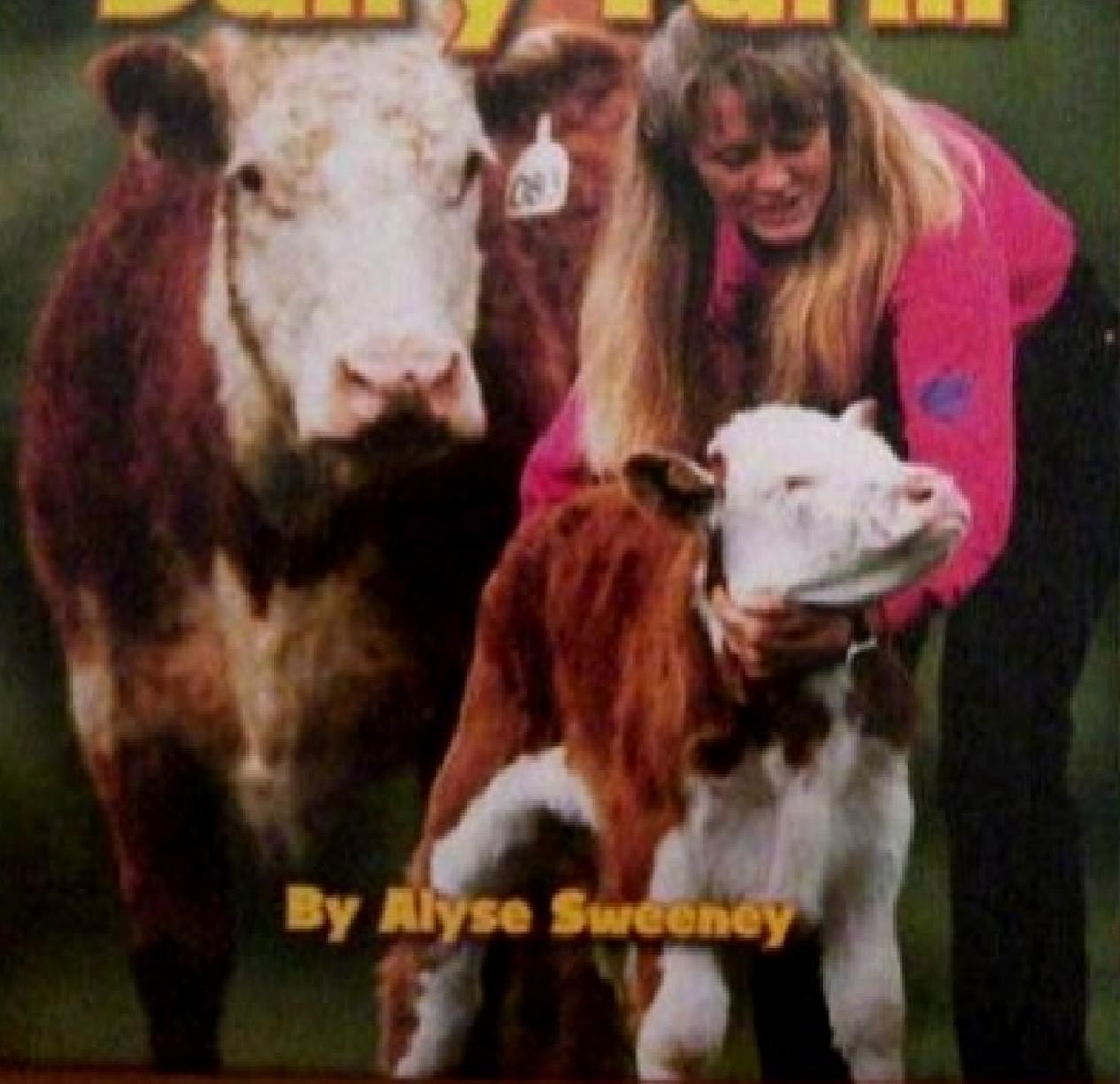
Choose printed books



But aren't print books about agriculture out there already?

SCHOLASTIC
News
Nonfiction Readers

Let's Visit a Dairy Farm

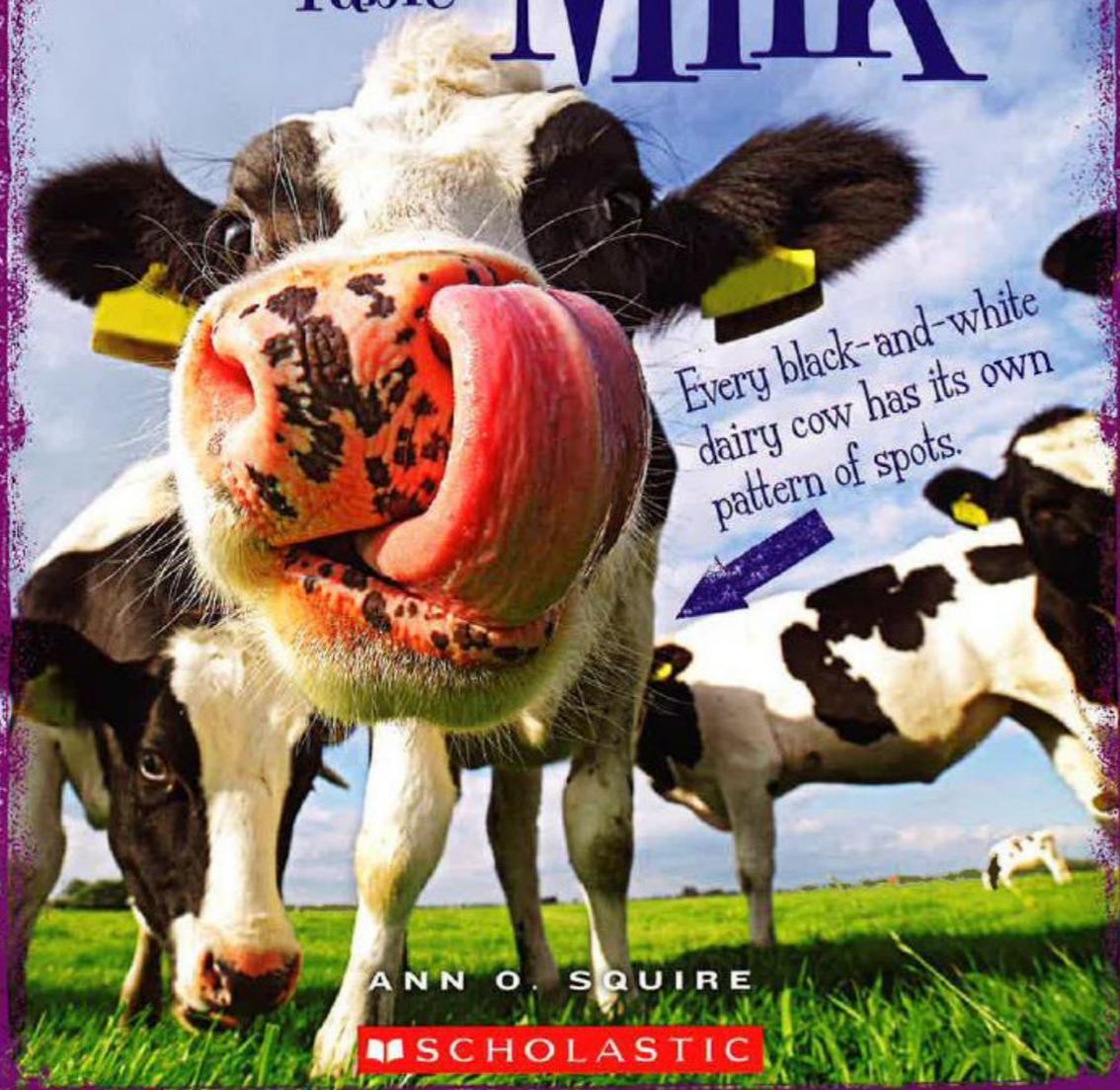


By Alyse Sweeney

A **TRUE** BOOK

Farm to
Table

Milk



Every black-and-white
dairy cow has its own
pattern of spots.

ANN O. SQUIRE

SCHOLASTIC

CHAPTER

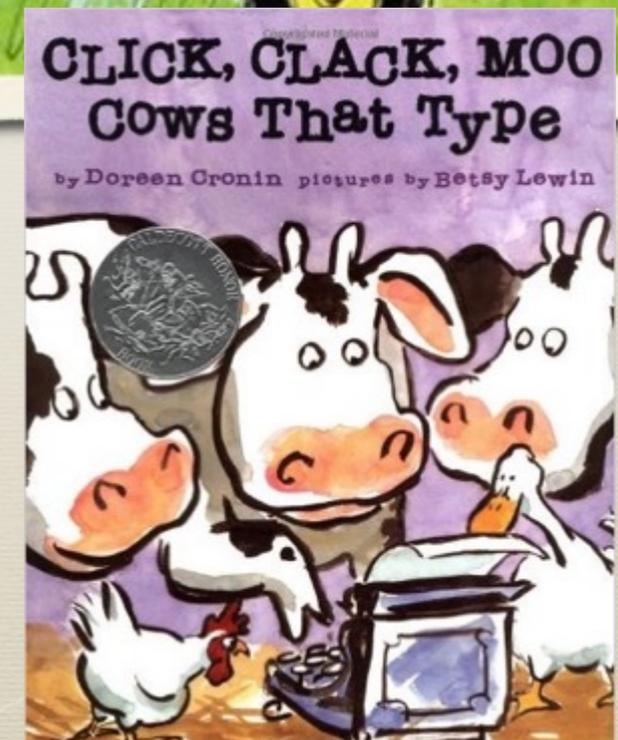
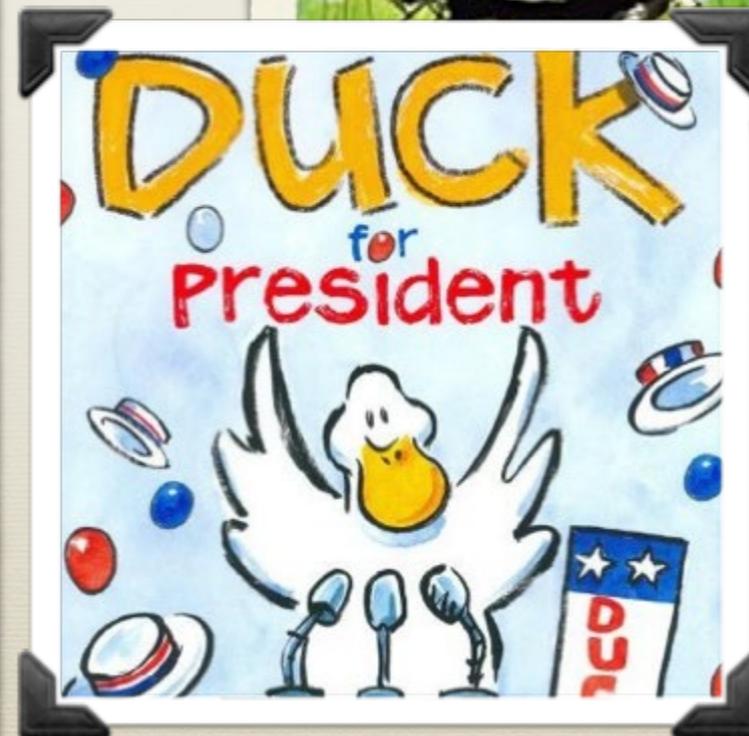
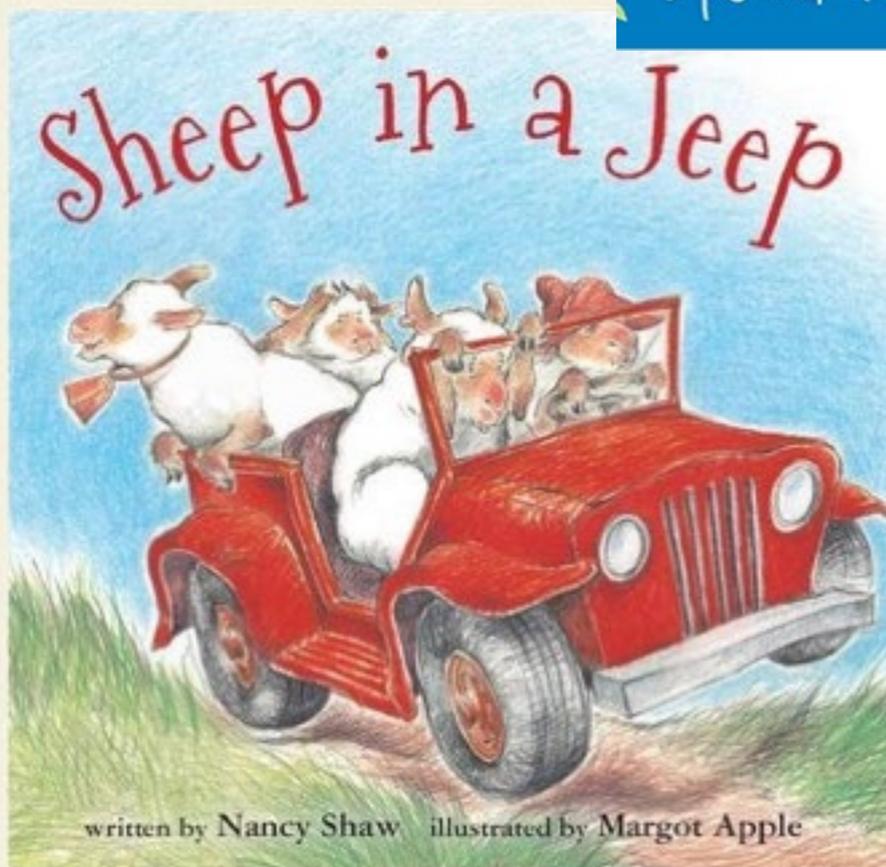
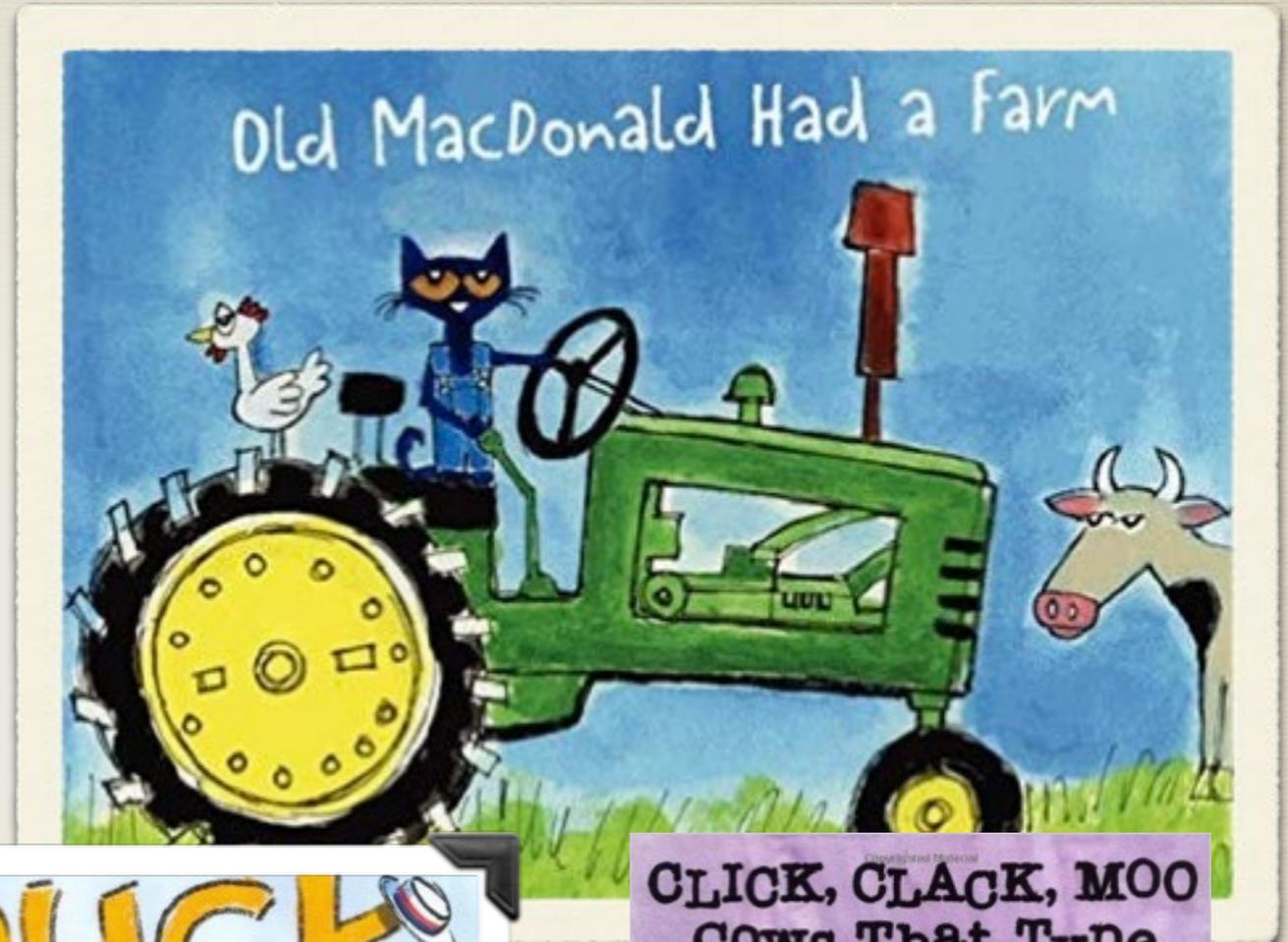
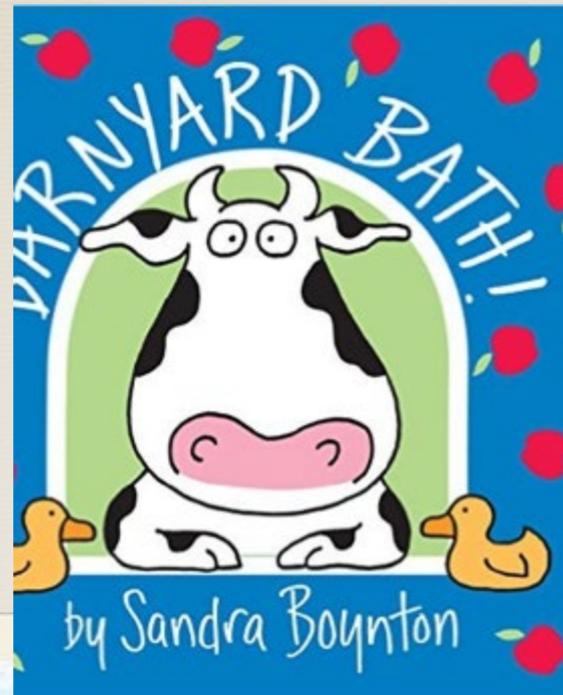
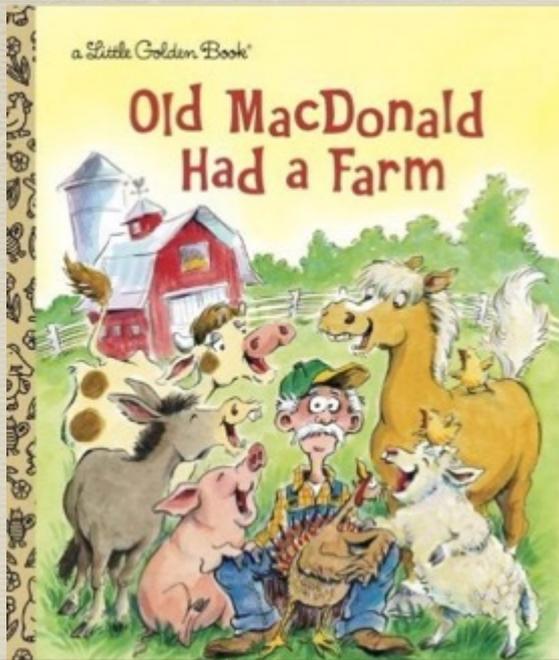
3

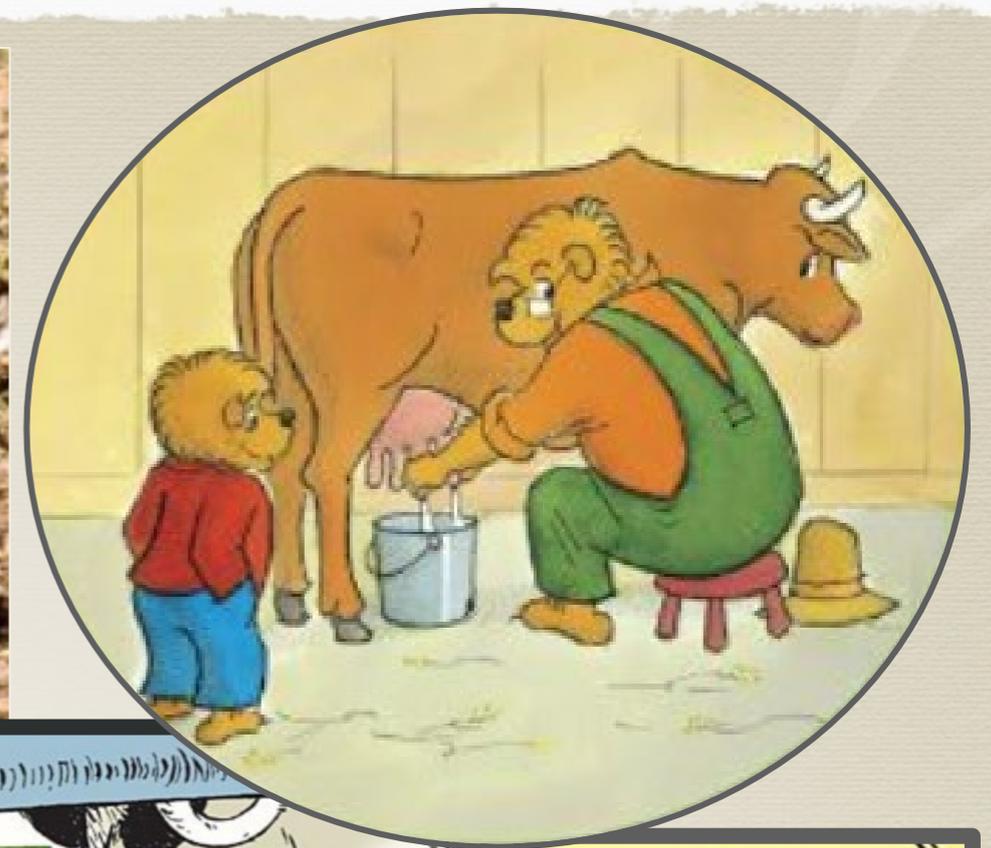
Problems in Dairyland

A dairy cow's life might not be exactly what you had imagined, but at first glance it doesn't seem too bad. The cows have ample food, shelter, and medical care. In return, they give us milk. As it turns out, however, intensive dairy farming can be harmful to the cows, to the people who drink their milk, and even to our planet.

← Between 1983 and 2013,
world milk production increased
by more than 50 percent.

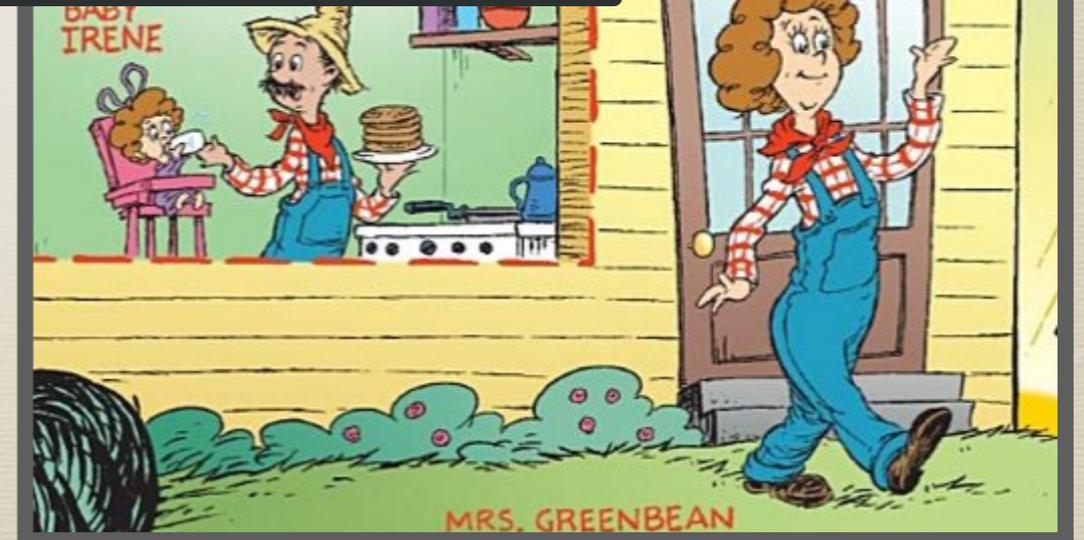
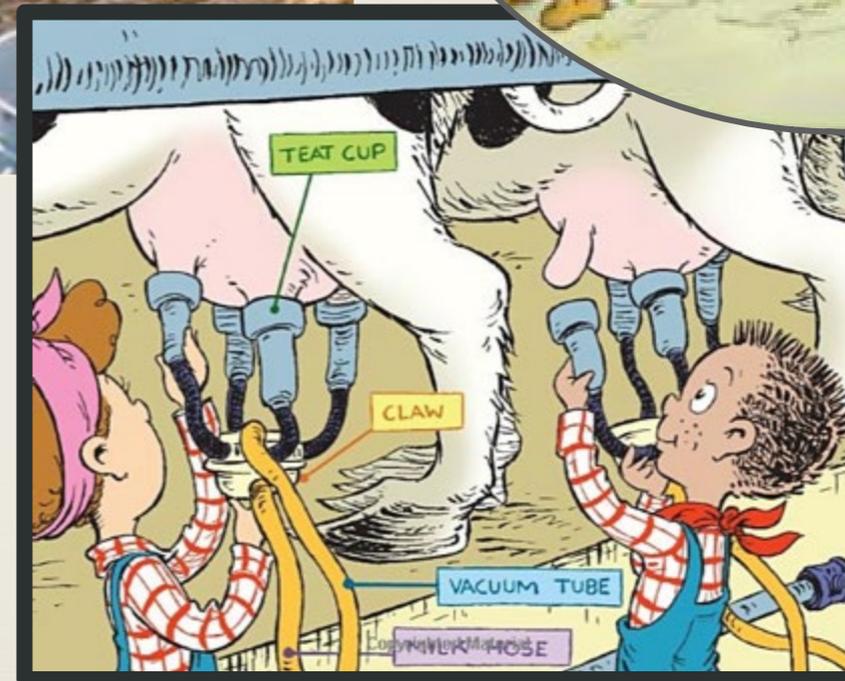
Top search results on Amazon for “Children’s Farm Animal Book”



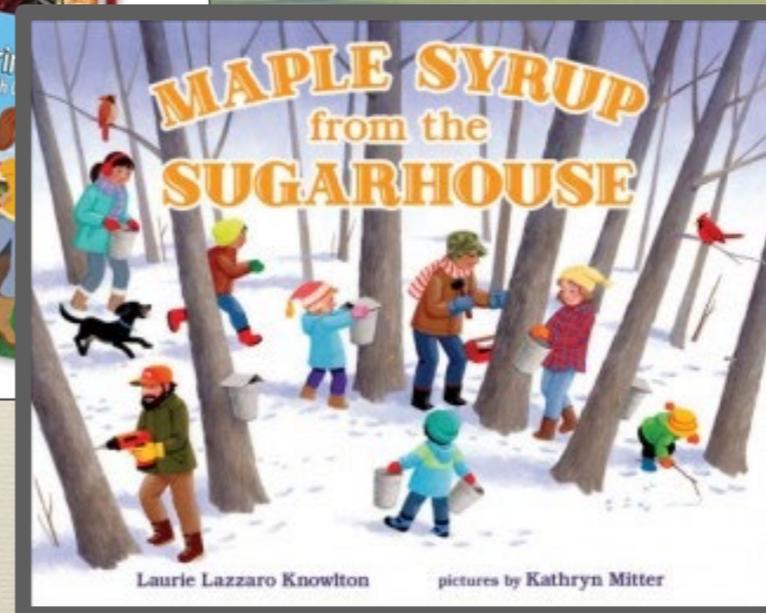
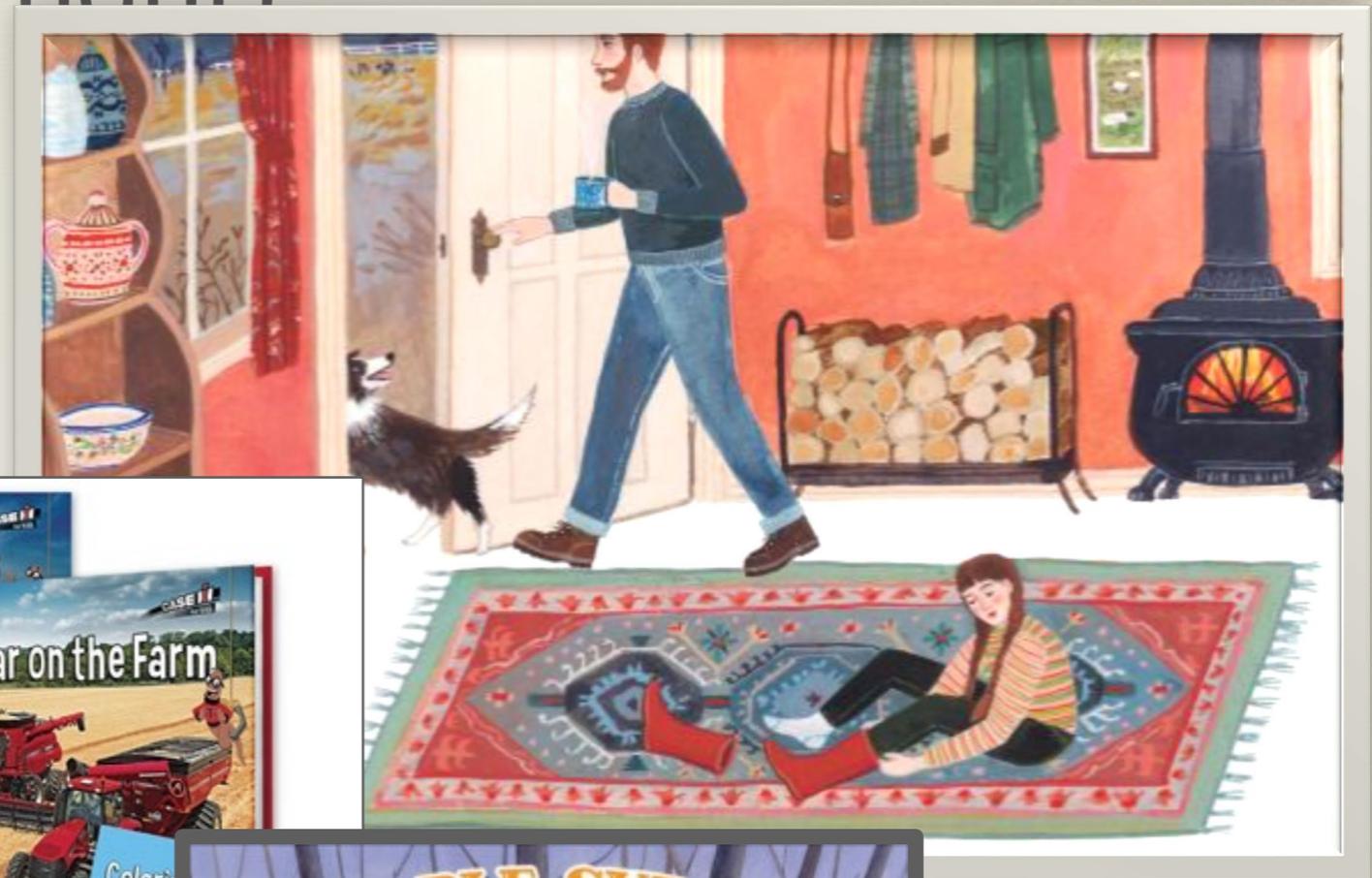
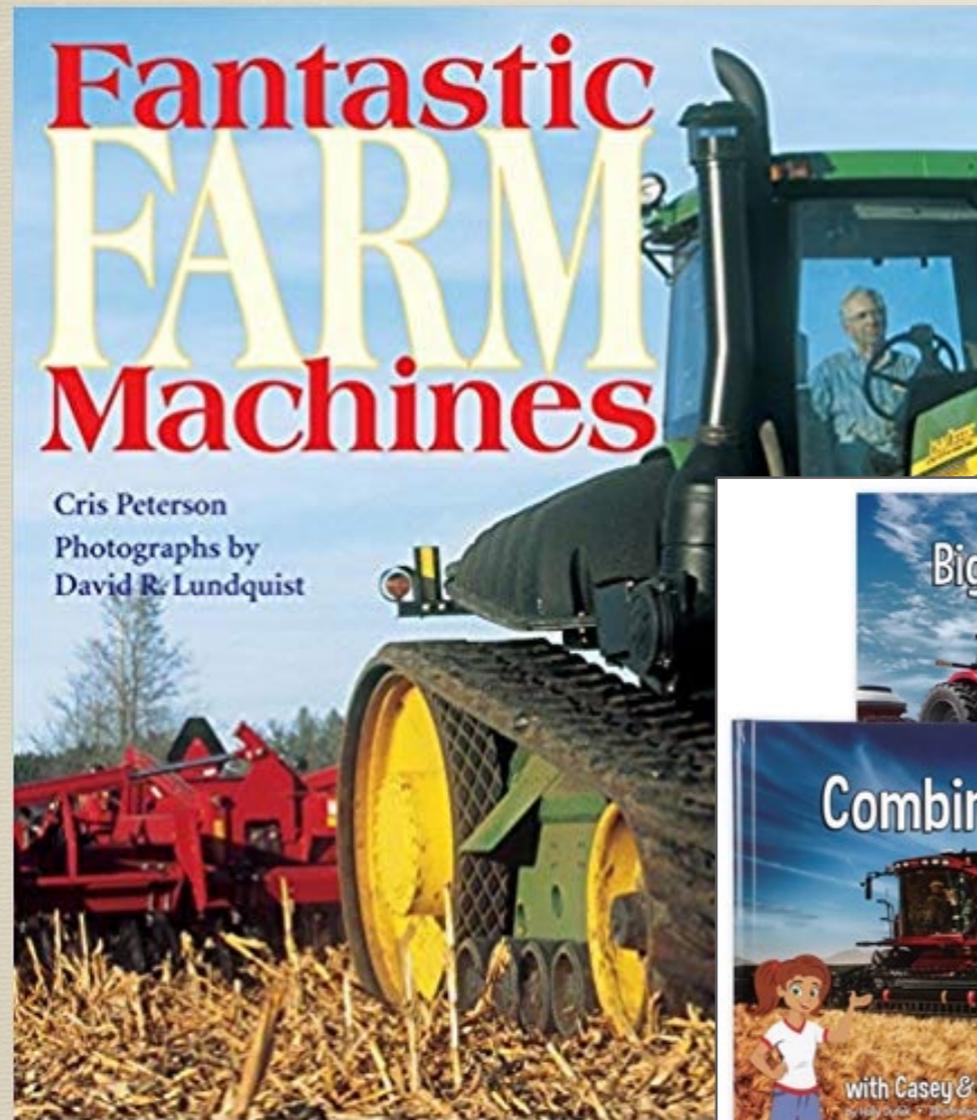


Chronic problems in children's books featuring agriculture:

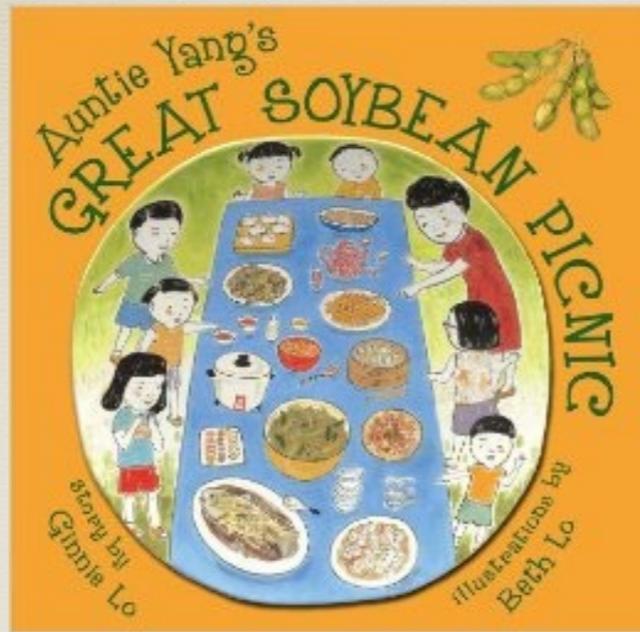
- Talking animals
- Stereotypes about farmers (i.e. overalls and straw hats)
- Outdated technology, such as three-legged milking stools



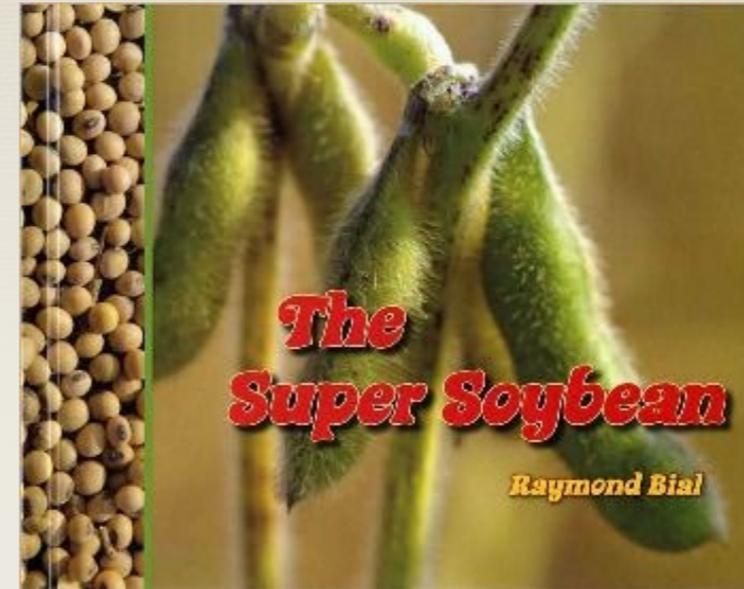
But what about the books that ARE accurate?
Books with good information, current technology
and no farming stereotypes? These must exist,
right?



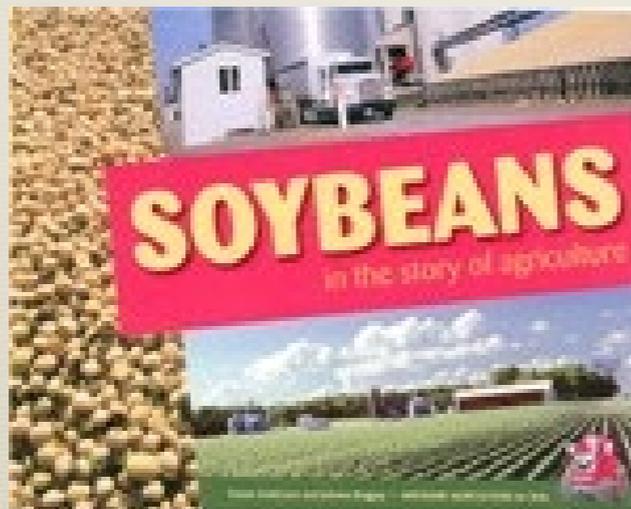
Accurate Books about Soybeans:



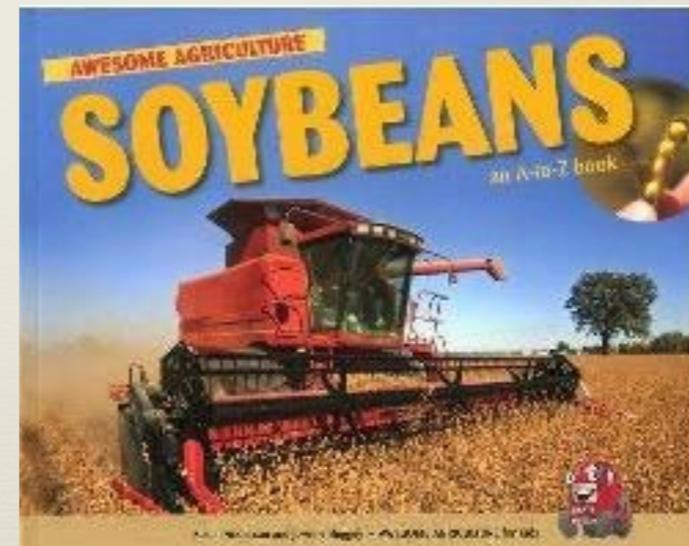
Published in 2012



Out of Print

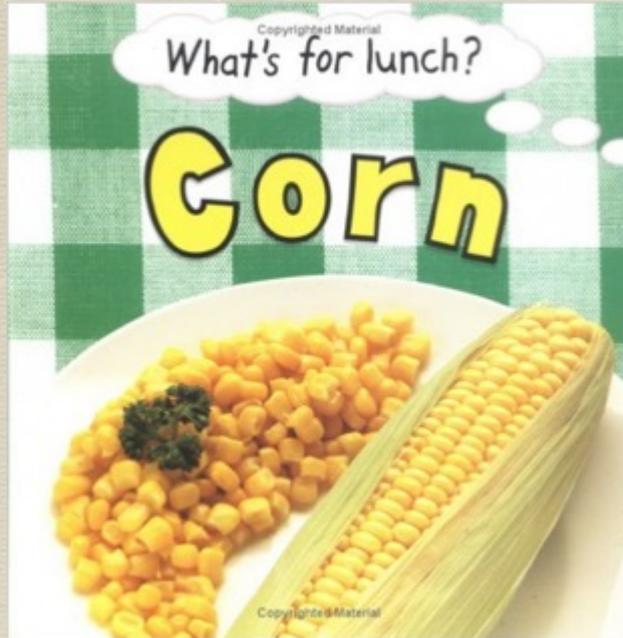


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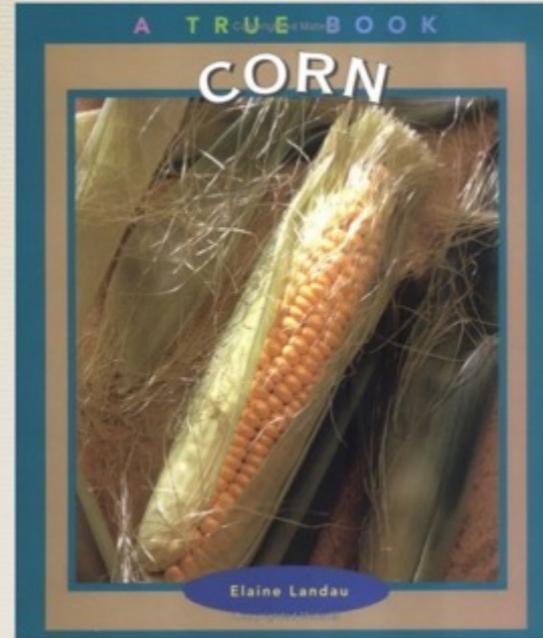


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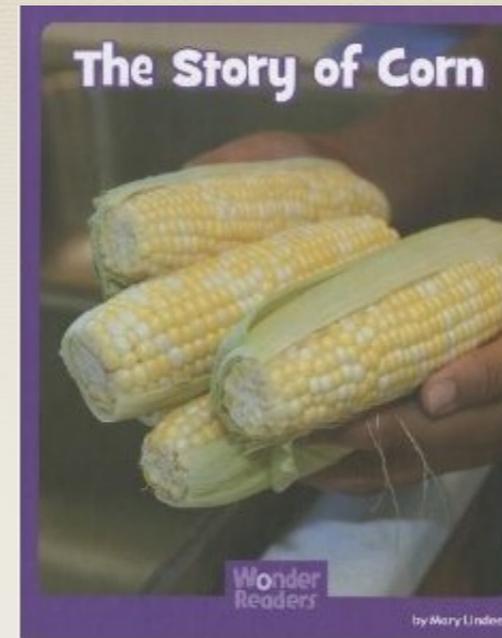
Accurate Books about Corn:



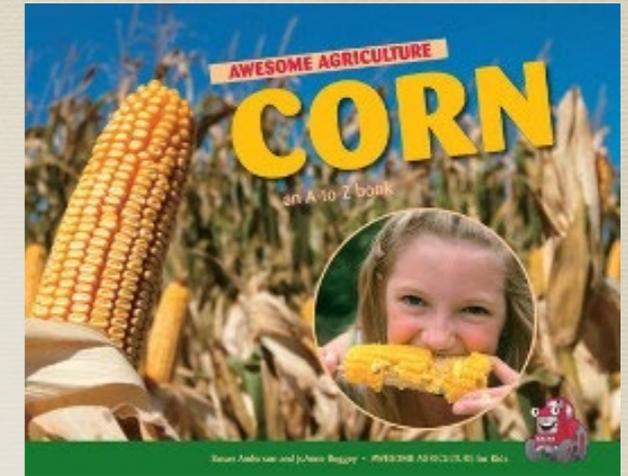
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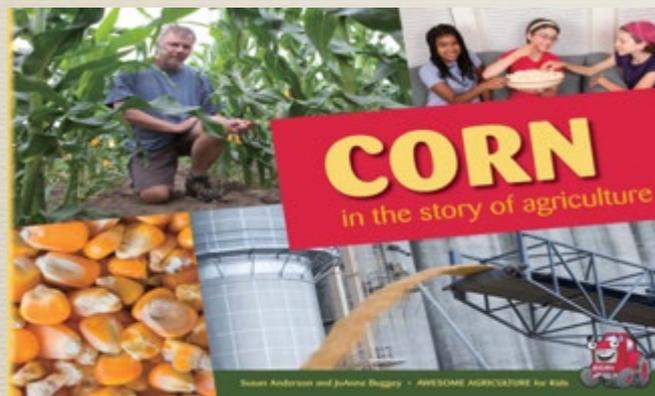
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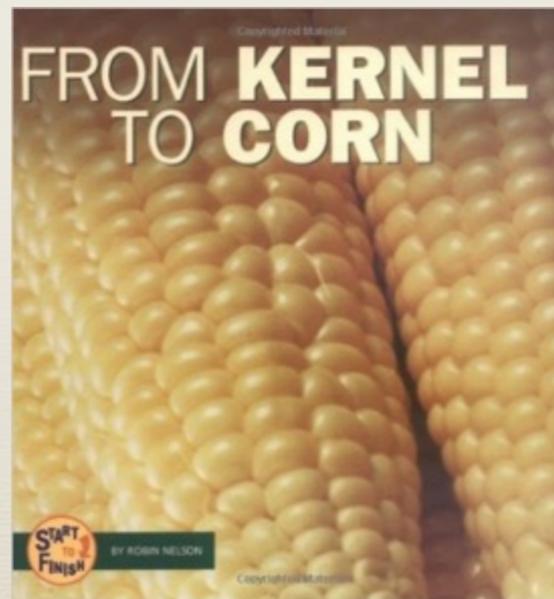
**Not modern ag
published in 2011**



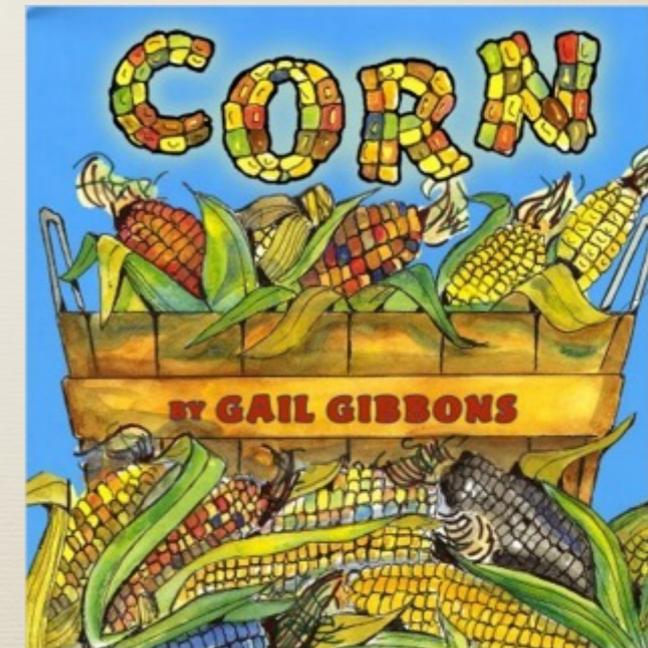
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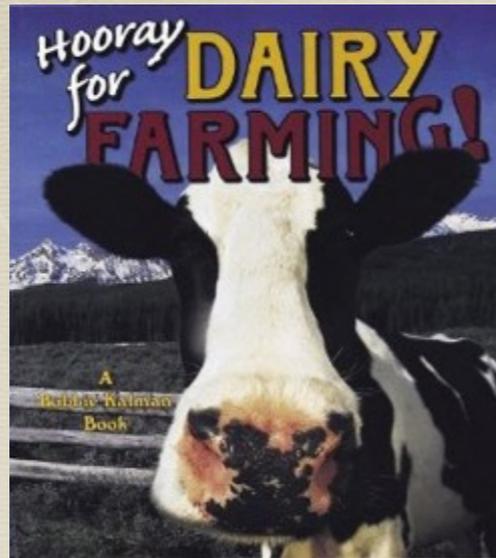
**Dated information
published in 2003**



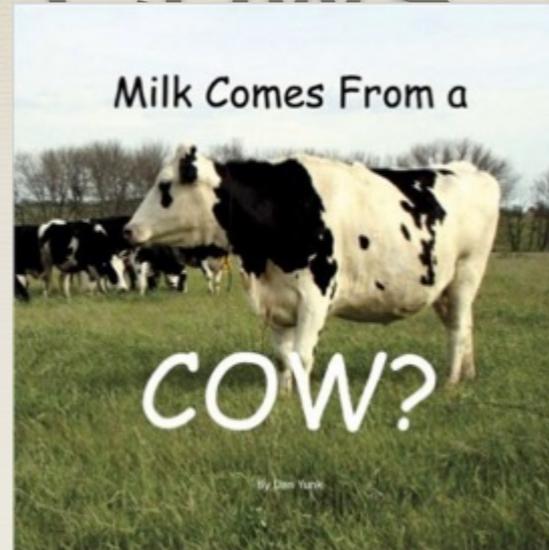
**Current best option
published in 2009**

Accurate Books about Dairy

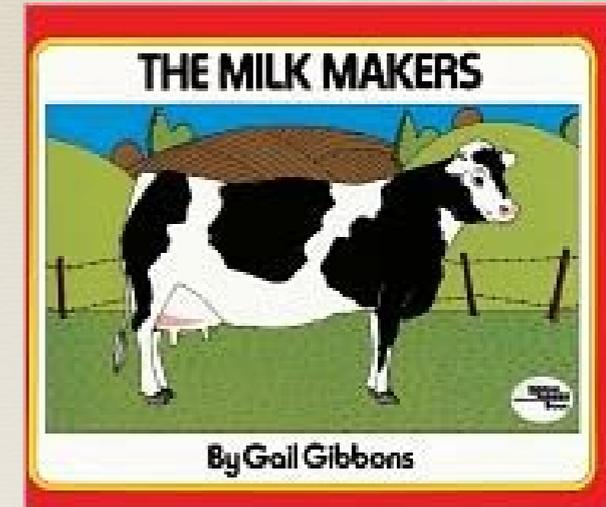
COWS:



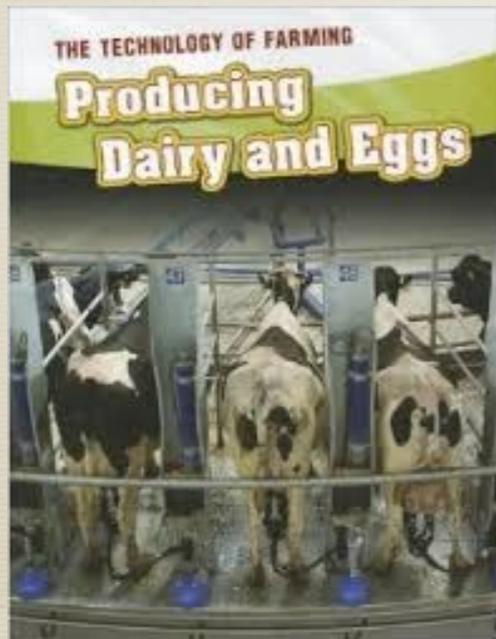
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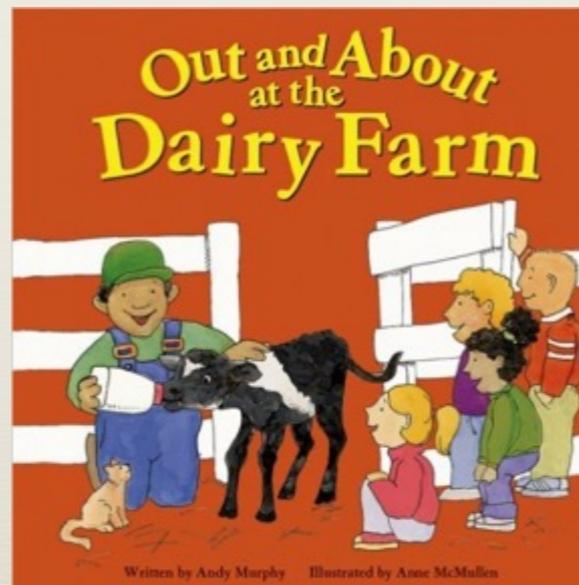
Out of Print



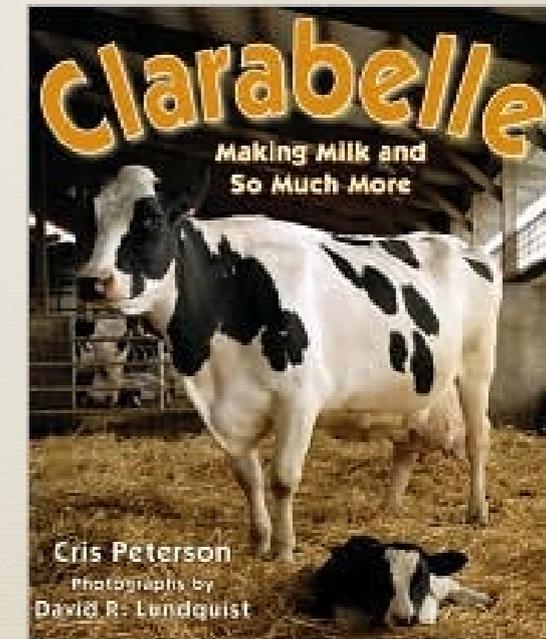
**Published in
1987**



**Published in
2011**

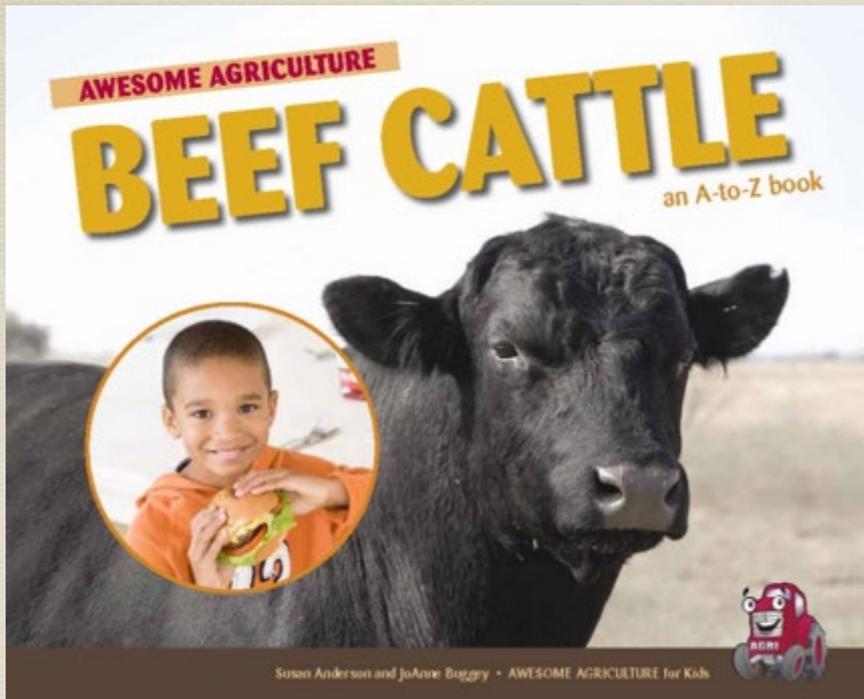


**Some inaccuracies
published in 2002**

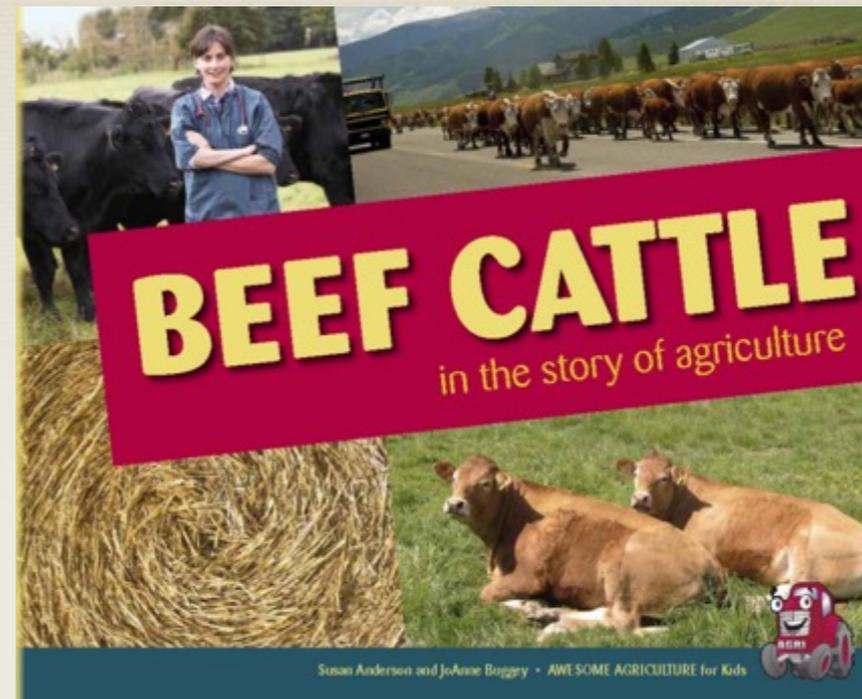


**Current best option
published in 2007**

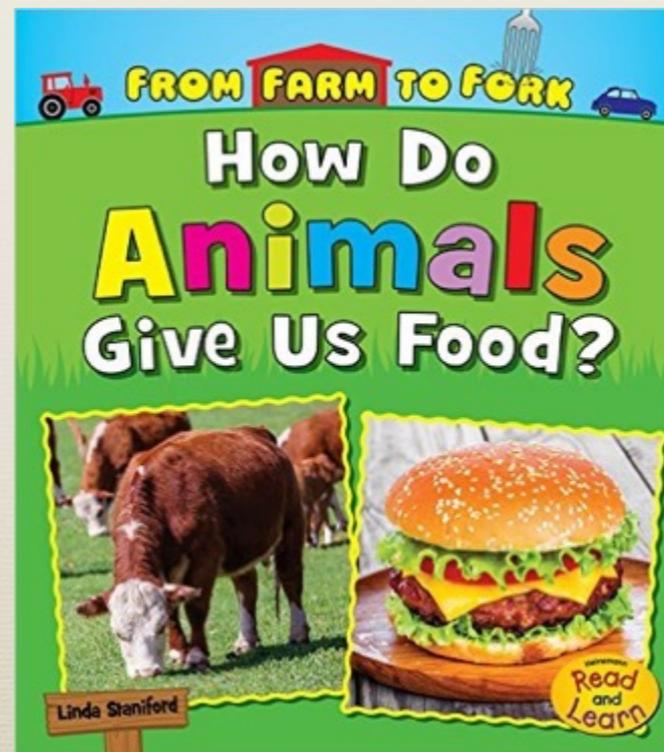
Accurate Books about Beef Cattle:



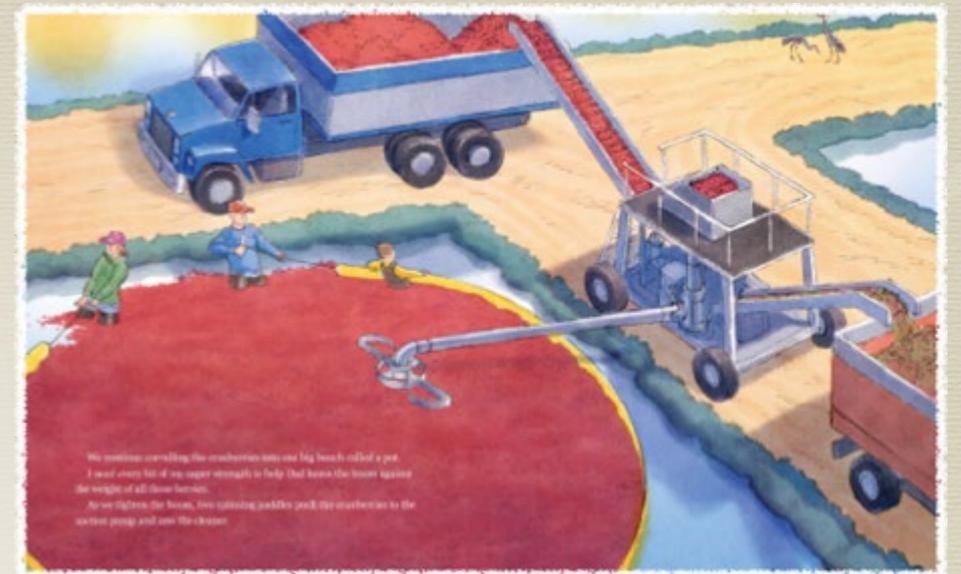
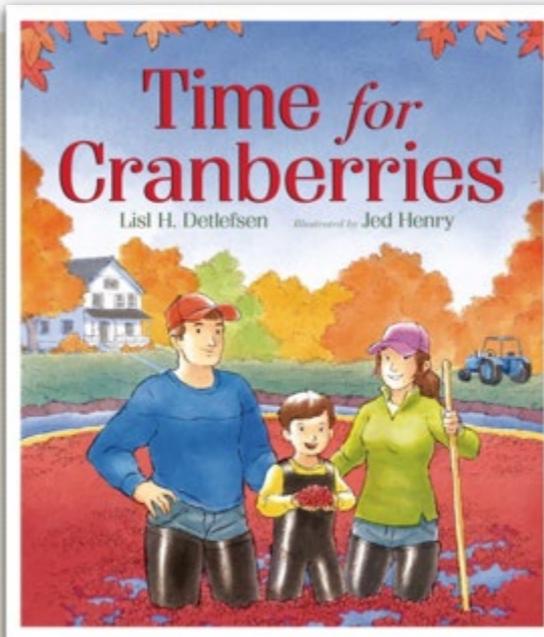
Out of Print



Out of Print



Calls all beef cattle "Cows"

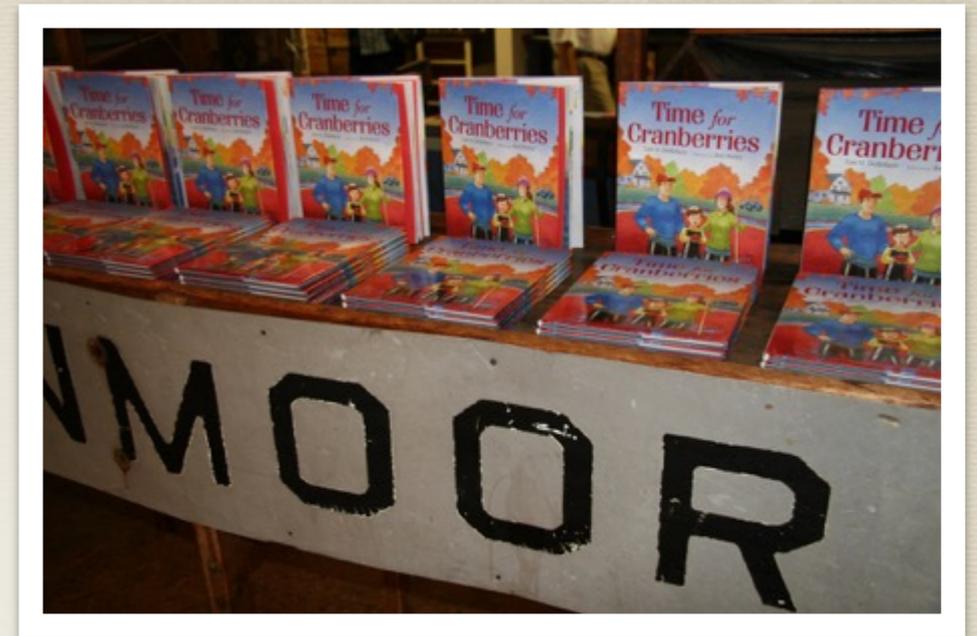


My cranberry book as a “mirror and window”

- When I saw my first cranberry harvest in 1999, I thought the process would make a great picture book.
- It began as a non-fiction, photography project, evolving over 34+ drafts into a realistic fiction picture book. It sold to an editor I'd met at a workshop in 2013.
- It gives kids who don't live on or near a cranberry marsh a “virtual field trip,” an opportunity to see and learn how cranberries are harvested.
- It also gives kids who DO live on a cranberry marsh the chance to see themselves represented in a book.
- BOTH of these are critical--Ag books matter! We need to show kids accurate and well-rounded representations of different communities, careers and lifestyles.
- We also need the general public to appreciate and understand where

BUT...this whole journey took me TEN YEARS! WHY?

- timing
- market/demand
- style/content of product presented
- my (lack) of experience in the publishing industry



And...

- a lack of understanding about agriculture, the importance of it, and the way to market books about it from traditional publishers. This last one CONTINUES to be a problem, both for me and for other authors.



So how can this problem be solved? Hopefully, one solution is a small, focused publisher like Feeding Minds Press

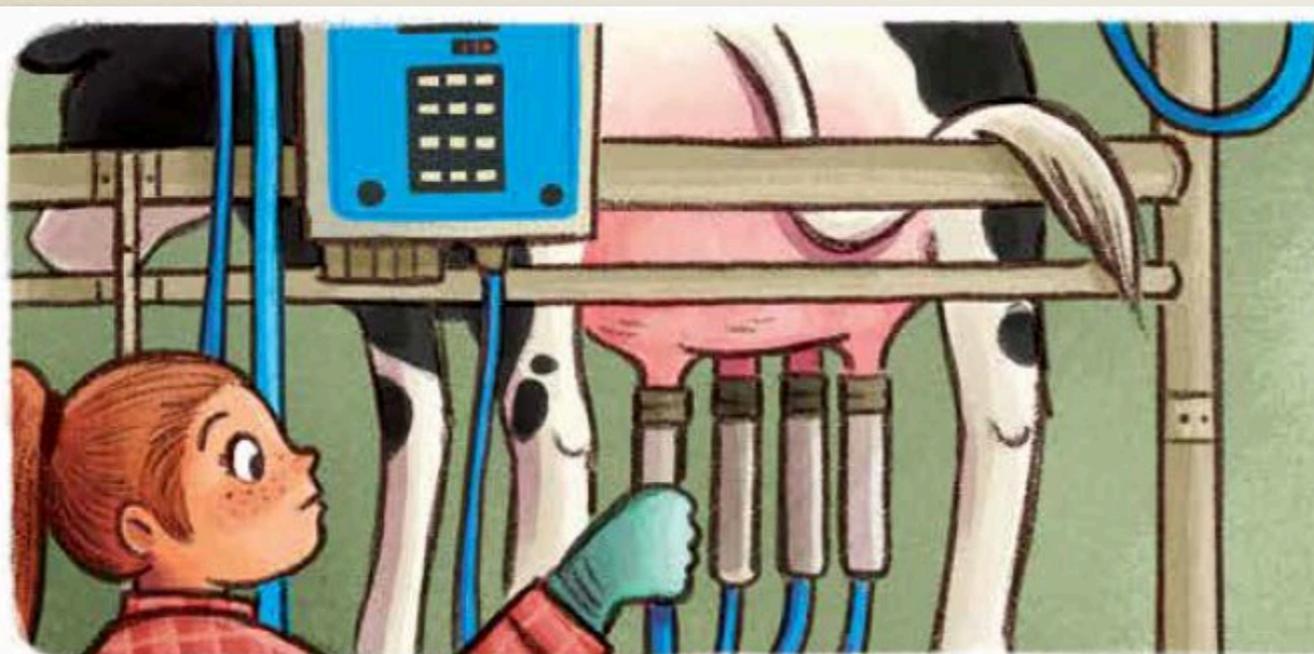
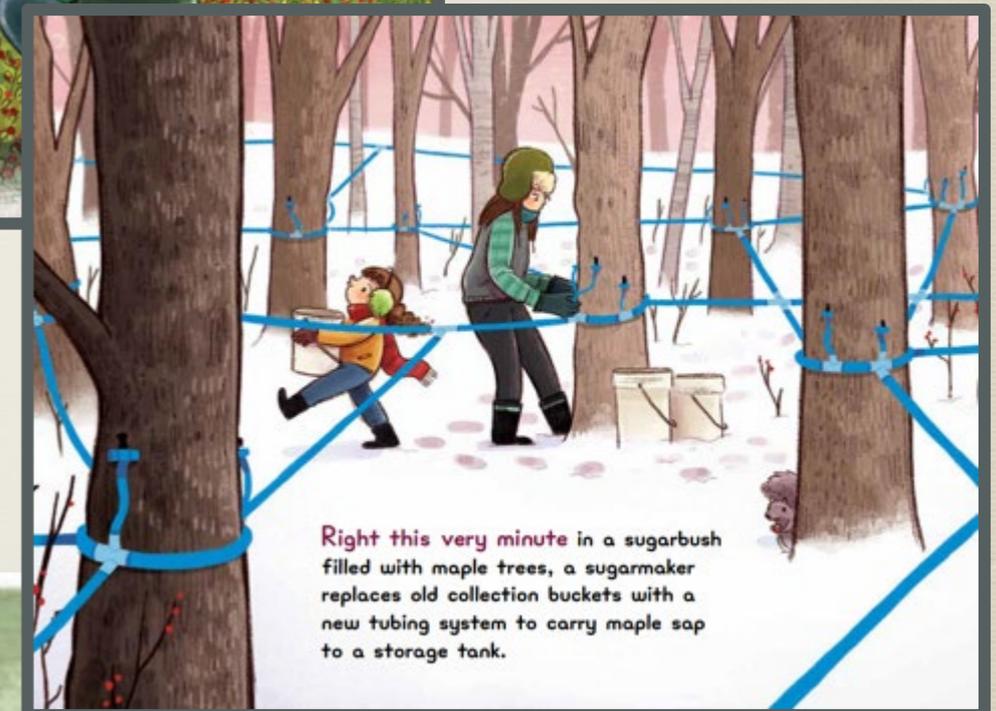
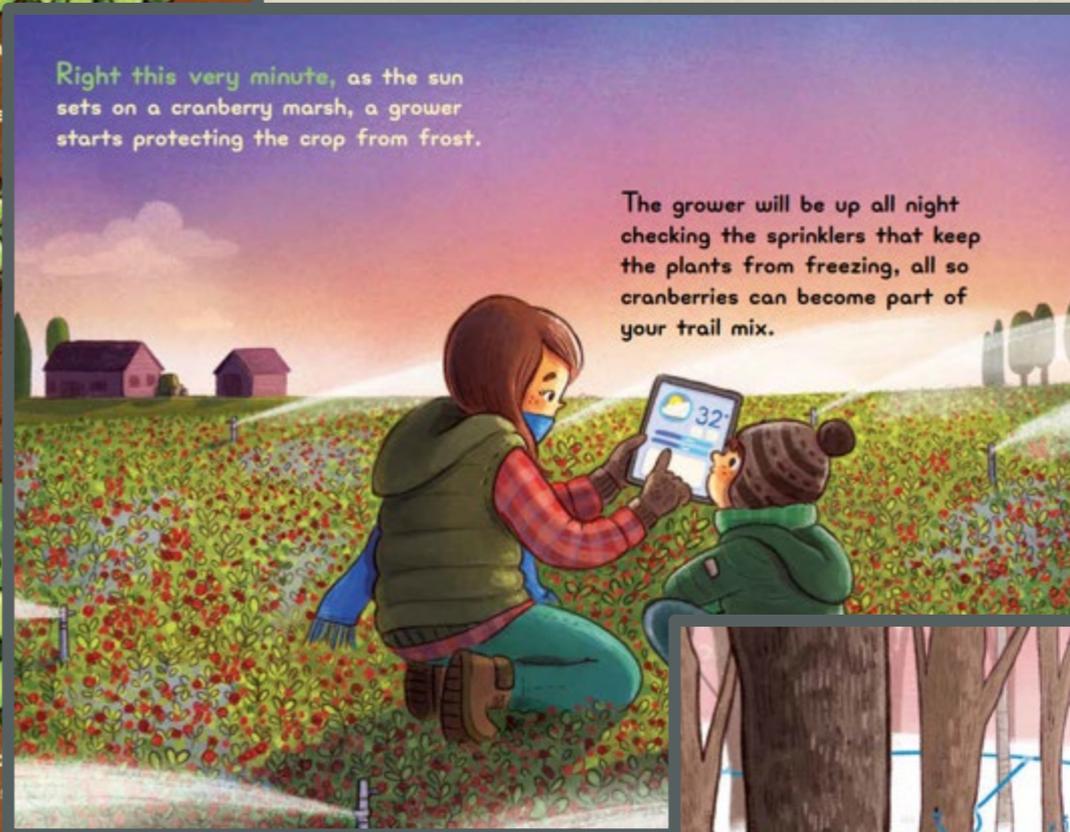
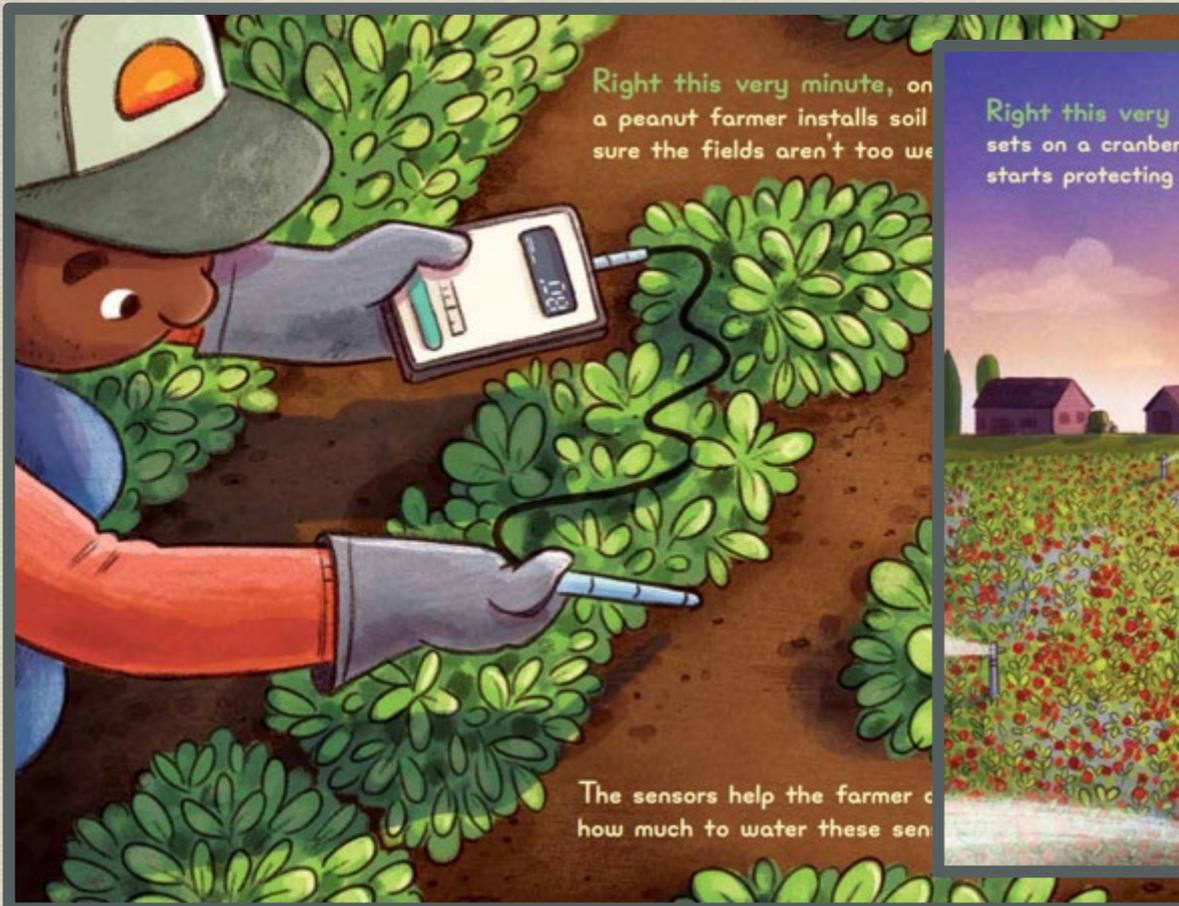


Their goal: *To create accurate and engaging books about agriculture that connect readers to where their food comes from and who grows it.*

In doing so, Feeding Minds Press will:

- Address misconceptions about agriculture
- Address stereotypes of farmers/ranchers and rural life
- Create an awareness of **modern** agricultural practices
- Promote the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy





The cheese in your sandwich was made with milk from cows that must be milked at least twice every day, whether it's a weekday, a Saturday, a birthday, or a holiday.

Examples of current technology in RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE

Extending the learning with videos of what happens on farms like ours

in late spring...

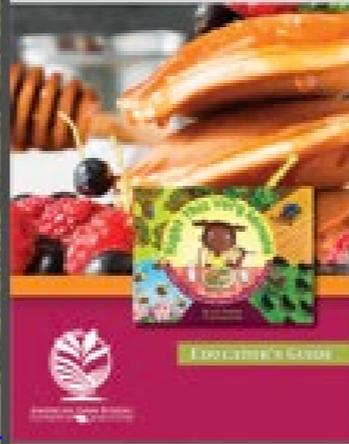


<https://www.feedingmindspress.com/latest-news/right-this-very-minute-videos-july-2018>

and during harvest.



<https://www.feedingmindspress.com/latest-news/right-this-very-minute-videos-october-2018>



Right This Very Minute Educator's Guide
By American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture

This educator's guide accompanies the book, Right This Very Minute. It includes seven lessons that encourage students to dig deeper into thinking about where the food on their plates originated.

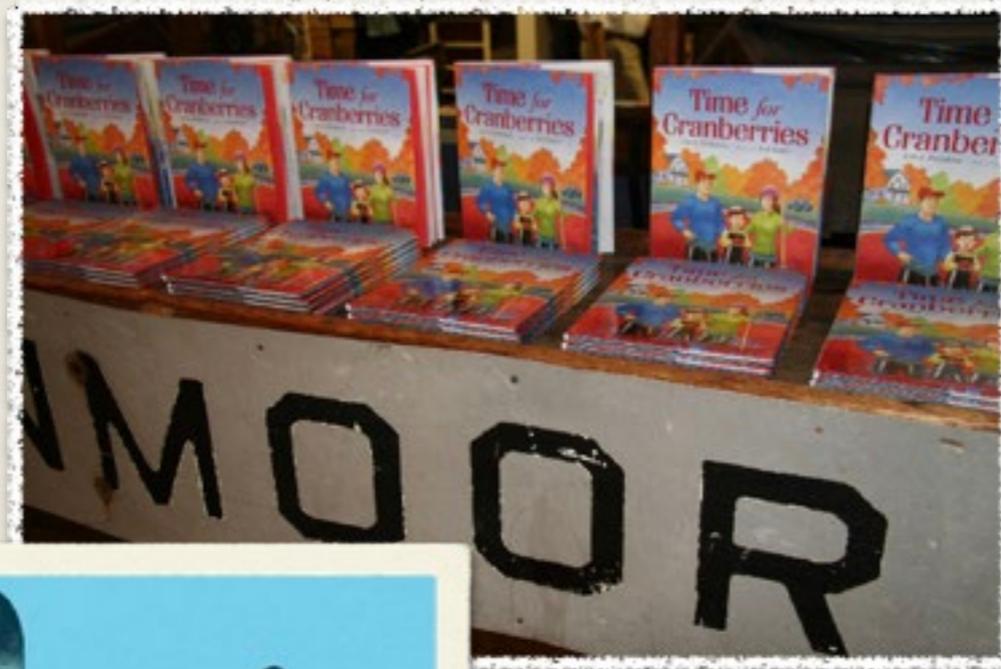
Target age range range is Kindergarten through Second Grade.

ISBN:

To watch more RTVM videos on farms across the country, visit [feedingmindspress.com](https://www.feedingmindspress.com).

Questions?

I'd love to answer them! Ask me about cranberries, books, writing, publishing, etc.





Pollinator Activity

ACTIVITY 7: Pollination Project

Time: Two 15-minute activities, with drying time in between

Objectives:

- Students will make a model bee.
- Students will use their model to mimic the pollination process.
- Students will understand the important role bees play in pollination.

Standards:

NGSS.K-LS1-1: Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

NGSS.1-LS1-1: Use materials to design a solution to a human problem by mimicking how plants and/or animals use their external parts to help them survive, grow, and meet their needs.

NGSS.2-LS2-2: Develop a simple model that mimics the function of an animal in dispersing seeds or pollinating plants.



The Relationship between Agriculture and the Environment

Materials:

- Black pipe cleaners (one per student)
- Yellow pipe cleaners (one per student)
- White pipe cleaners (one per student)
- Craft glue (one container per group)
- Craft sticks (one per student)
- Flower template (one per four students)
- 3-oz. paper cup (one per four students)
- Extra-fine yellow glitter (one tsp. per four students)
- Use your model pipe cleaner bee

Procedure:

Part I

1. Read the book "Right This Very Minute" aloud to the class.

After finishing the story, ask students:

- a. What insect helps the apple farmer? (*Honeybee*)
- b. Why does the apple farmer bring honeybees into the apple orchard? (*To pollinate the trees*)
- c. Why is pollination important? (*It helps each tree grow apples*)

2. Explain that today students are going to be making their own bees to pollinate flowers.



Demonstrate how to make a bee using pipe cleaners:

- a. Show students how to twist a black and yellow pipe cleaner together.
 - b. Wrap the twisted pipe cleaners around your finger. Tuck in the ends.
 - c. Create two loops using the white pipe cleaner. Nestle loops into your bee body to create wings. Add glue if needed.
 - d. Glue the bee onto the end of a craft stick.
3. Distribute the pipe cleaners, glue and craft sticks. Circulate around the room to supervise construction. Remind students to write their names on the end of their craft stick. Designate a safe place for bees to dry.

Part II

1. Before the activity, duplicate the flower template and glue a 3-oz. cup to the center of each flower. Place one teaspoon of glitter powder in each cup. Place flowers in accessible locations around the room.
2. Explain to students that bees eat nectar produced by flowers. Use a model bee to demonstrate how bees land on a flower's petals before looking inside the flower for nectar. Show students how pollen inside a flower sticks to the bee's body. Distribute bee models to students, and direct them to visit the flowers located around the classroom. Allow 5–10 minutes for students to visit flowers.
3. Summarize the activity with these questions:
 - a. What do bees eat? (*Nectar*)
 - b. Where can bees find nectar? (*Inside flowers*)
 - c. What else is inside flowers? (*Pollen*)
 - d. What happens when a bee enters a flower looking for nectar? (*Pollen sticks to the bee's body*)
 - e. What happens to the pollen when a bee moves to another flower? (*Some pollen is left on the new flower*)
 - f. What do we call this process? (*Pollination*)



Extensions and Variations:

- Cut out the flower templates and glue onto paper plates. The plates will help contain pollen during the activity.
- Use cotton swabs to collect pollen from flowers. Observe pollen under a microscope.
- Make a bee bath using a shallow tub, small stones and water. After a week or so, sit outside and observe how many bees visit the bee bath. Record observations in a science notebook.
- Dissect a flower to locate the pollen and the nectar. Advanced students can learn and label the parts of a flower.
- Research different agricultural crops that require pollination for successful production. Discuss how mealtimes might be different if bees stopped doing their job.

