# Lesson 1: What is the Farm Crop?

## Objective:

This lesson is an introduction to the many crops that farmers plant and harvest on their farms. For this activity, students will be introduced to corn, wheat, soybeans, hay, and straw to learn more about their uses in the agricultural and food industries.

## Agricultural Literacy Standards:

T2.K-2.c (Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber & Energy Outcomes)

* Identify examples of feed/food products eaten by animals and people.

T5.K-2.d & f (Culture, Society, Economy & Geography Outcomes)

* Identify plants and animals grown or raised locally that are used for food, clothing, shelter, and landscapes.
* Trace the sources of agricultural products (plant or animal) used daily.

## NGSS:

K-LS1.C. All animals need food in order to live and grow. They obtain their food from plants or from other animals.

## Essential Questions:

* What is a crop?
* How are crops used as food sources for animals and people?

## Materials:

* Create a crop kit for your classroom (this can be assembled once and then used for many years OR items can be gathered each time you want to teach this lesson).
* Crops:
* ½ cup of corn seeds
* ½ cup of wheat seeds
* ½ cup of soybean seeds
* 1 flake (or smaller sample) of hay
* 1 flake (or smaller sample) of straw

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| **Crop Name** | **Uses** |
| Corn | Feed for livestock; fuel (ethanol production) |
| Wheat | Food for people—grain used to make many different products |
| Soybeans | Over 100 uses—feed for livestock; food for people; fuel most common |
| Hay | Feed for livestock including cattle, horses, goats, and sheep |
| Straw | Bedding for animals; mulch for gardens |

* Things to consider: Depending on your location, some crops may be more common, such as fruits, vegetables, sugar cane, etc., and can be used in place of the list above.
* Paper to create notes or running records of the observations made or a “Farm Detective Sheet” made in an accessible format for each student.
* Create cards for each item in your crop kit and another card for the uses using the information found on the chart below.

## Directions:

1. Assemble the needed items for the farm crop investigation.
2. Give each item a number.
3. Example: 1 = Corn, 2 = Wheat, 3 = Soybean, 4 = Hay, 5 = Straw
4. Have students, individually or in a group, work through describing their item using all of the senses (except taste).
5. Have students chart or keep a running record of their descriptions or use the “Farm Detective Sheet” found below.
6. Ask students to identify each item. The students should place the name card of each item by the item they have pulled from the kit.
7. Once students have identified each item, use the “Uses” cards to match each item to their purpose. If students know other uses for that item, they can list it on their observation sheet.
8. Discuss findings and reasoning for the placement of the identification cards and “Uses” cards. Discuss any additional items that may fit into the categories noted in your kit.

*Note*. This lesson was intentionally written with the idea that students have no or little knowledge, in order to learn some of the basic building blocks of agriculture.

## Extension Activities:

As discussed in the chart for this lesson, crops have many uses in our foods, our clothing, and our shelter. Assign small groups of students one of the crops from this lesson. Challenge them to find as many different unique uses for the crop as they can possibly find. Have them create a poster, slide show, or a written presentation of their findings.

Resources:

Economic Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. (2022.) Feedgrains sector at a glance. [https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/crops /corn-and-otherfeedgrains/feedgrains-sector-at-a-glance](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/crops%20/corn-and-otherfeedgrains/feedgrains-sector-at-a-glance)

National Association of Wheat Growers (2020). Wheat 101. <https://wheatworld.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-Wheat-101-One-Pager.pdf>

Ohio Soybean Council (2023). All about soybeans. [https://www.soyohio.org](https://www.soyohio.org/)

## FARM DETECTIVE WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Directions:

Using your senses (sight, touch, smell, sound), describe the crop so you can identify it correctly by name. Once you have figured out the name, match the crop to its uses.

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| **Crop #** | **Sight Observations** | **Touch Observations** | **Smell Observations** | **Sound Observations** |
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After my investigation, I think…

Fill in the lines below with the crop number, name, and its most common use in agriculture:

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