

A photograph of a farm at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow over the scene. In the foreground, there is a field of golden-brown crops. In the middle ground, several large white silos and a barn are silhouetted against the bright sky. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and rural.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Photos by Ken Kashian, Cyndi Cook - Illinois Farm Bureau®
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2015-2016



BEEF (Mid Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Cloven, regurgitated, insulin, glands, digested, chambers, hooves

Recommended Reading:

Little Joe by Sandra Neil Wallace

Amazing Grazing by Cris Peterson

Beef Cattle in the Story of Agriculture by Susan Anderson and JoAnne Buggey

The Beef Princess of Practical County by Michelle Houts

August 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3 The average annual per capita consumption of beef is around 66 pounds.	4 Christopher Columbus brought cattle with him on his second voyage to the New World in 1493.	5 There are more than one million cattle operations in the United States.	6 Male cattle used for breeding are called bulls.	7 The most tender cut of beef is beef tenderloin, or Filet Mignon.	8
9	10 Ground beef is the most popular form of beef. It is used to make hamburgers.	11 Beef is a good source of ZIP (Zinc, Iron & Protein).	12 Cattle can eat around 40 pounds of food each day.	13 Beef cattle have cloven, or split hooves.	14 Ear tags are one way farmers mark their cattle for easier recognition.	15
16	17 A cow's diet is a mixture of grain, hay, grass and supplements.	18 The cattle family (Bovidae) also includes sheep, goats, goat-antelopes and antelopes.	19 Cattle weighing 1,000 pounds will produce about 1,600 hamburgers.	20 Cattle have a stomach with four different chambers.	21 Female cows, prior to giving birth, are called heifers.	22
23 30	24 Cattle can see in color, just like people. 31 It takes the hide of 3.8 steers to make 72 footballs.	25 Cattle's partially digested, regurgitated food is called cud.	26 Many medicines, including insulin, are made from the glands of cattle.	27 Depending on the breed, calves can weigh between 60-100 pounds at birth.	28 Leather, from cowhide, is used to make footballs, basketballs, gloves, jackets and wallets.	29



APPLES (Late Season)

Words and terms to learn:
 Fiber, grafted, commercially,
 archeologist, pomology

Recommended Reading:
Apple Picking Time by Michele Benoit Slawson
Apples by Gail Gibbons
Johnny Applesseed by Madeline Olsen
From Seed to Apple by Anita Ganeri

September 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1 Americans eat an average of 18 pounds of apples per year.	2 The GoldRush apple, a sweet-tart yellow apple, is the Illinois state fruit.	3 There are approximately 7,500 varieties of apples grown throughout the world.	4 Apple trees are difficult to grow from seeds. Therefore, most trees are grafted to produce a new tree.	5
6	7 The apple was brought to the United States by the Pilgrims in 1620.	8 Apples are a great source of fiber, containing 5 grams. Most of the fiber is in the peel.	9 The apple tree originated in an area between the Caspian and the Black Sea.	10 It takes about 36 apples to create one gallon of apple cider.	11 The science of apple growing is called pomology.	12
13	14 Apples are a member of the rose family.	15 Most apples are still picked by hand in the fall.	16 Apple trees take four to five years to produce their first fruit.	17 Two pounds of apples make one 9-inch pie.	18 The crabapple tree is the only apple tree native to North America.	19
20	21 Sunlight causes a chemical reaction in the sugars of apples. This is why they change colors.	22 Fresh apples float because 25% of their volume is air.	23 Of the 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the United States, 100 varieties are grown commercially.	24 Apples were the favorite fruit of the ancient Greeks and Romans.	25 Apple varieties range in size from a little larger than a cherry to as large as a grapefruit.	26
27	28 The top apple producing states are Washington, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania and California.	29 Archeologists found evidence that humans have enjoyed apples since at least 6,500 B.C.	29 Apples are fat, sodium and cholesterol free.	1	2	3



PORK (Early Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Piglet, litter, insulin, domesticated, manure, fertilizer, annually

Recommended Reading:

A Hog Ate My Homework by Gary Metivier
Pigs & Pork in the Story of Agriculture by Susan Anderson & JoAnne Buggey
Pigs will be Pigs by Amy Axelrod
Pigs by Gail Gibbons

October 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1 An average litter includes 8 to 12 piglets. Piglets weigh 2 ½ pounds at birth.	2 Pigs cannot sweat, so farmers use fans and sprinklers to keep them cool.	3
4	5 As pigs grow, they can eat up to 9 pounds of feed per day.	6 Insulin is made from pigs' adrenal glands and helps people with diabetes lower their blood sugar.	7 Pigs are very smart. They rank as the fourth most intelligent animal.	8 Pork is the food and products that come from pigs. Some examples are bacon, ham, sausage, and pork chops.	9 Mature pigs drink up to 5 gallons of water each day.	10
11	12 There are more than 180 species of pigs, found on every continent except Antarctica.	13 Pigs weigh about 250 pounds by the time they are four to six months old.	14 The pig dates back 40 million years. By 4900 B.C., pigs were domesticated in China.	15 The explorer, Hernando de Soto, landed with America's first 13 pigs at Tampa Bay, Florida, in 1539.	16 When first sold, hot dogs were called "red hots" and did not come on a bun.	17
18	19 Iowa is the largest pork producing state in the United States, with Illinois ranking fourth.	20 A pig's tongue contains 15,000 taste buds. By comparison, the human tongue has 9,000 taste buds.	21 Research shows that pork tenderloin is just as lean as a skinless chicken breast.	22 Salt pork was shipped to Valley Forge to feed the Continental Army in the winter of 1776-77.	23 Hog manure is often spread on fields as fertilizer.	24
25	26 The pork industry contributes \$1.8 billion to the Illinois economy annually.	27 Mother pigs are called sows. Baby pigs are called piglets.	28 The average person will eat twenty 240 pound pigs in their lifetime.	29 Pigs are one of the few animals that will not overeat.	30 Hot dogs were introduced to the public at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.	31



CORN (Late Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Kernel, fossilized, domesticated, components, evaporation, biodegradable, emissions

Recommended Reading:

Corn by Gail Gibbons
Corn Belt Harvest by Raymond Bial
Corn in the Story of Agriculture by Susan Anderson and JoAnne Buggiey
Seed, Soil, Sun by Cris Peterson

November 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Corn is grown in every state in the United States.	3 There are several types of corn. The most common types are field corn, sweet corn and popcorn.	4 A kernel is the yellow seed on an ear of corn. One ear of corn averages 800 kernels in 16 rows.	5 Fossilized corn cobs and pollen found in Mexico suggest that corn was first domesticated by Mesoamerican farmers 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.	6 One bushel of corn weighs 56 pounds.	7
8	9 Each corn kernel contains four major components: starch, protein, oil and fiber.	10 Native Americans taught the settlers of Jamestown how to grow their own corn.	11 An acre of corn will give off 4,000 gallons of water per day in evaporation.	12 More than half of the corn grown in the United States is fed to livestock.	13 Scientists created a road deicer made from corn.	14
15	16 Most corn grown in Illinois is field corn, which is used for ethanol production, animal feed & processing.	17 Tassels, stalks, husks, ears, leaves, roots and kernels are all part of a corn plant.	18 Sweet corn is sweet because it turns starch into sugar.	19 Field corn is also known as dent corn, which is higher in starch and lower in sugar than sweet corn.	20 Processed corn is soaked and milled (ground) so that the germ oil, starch, gluten and hulls can be separated.	21
22	23 One bushel of corn produces 2.8 gallons of ethanol.	24 Ethanol, a high performance fuel made from corn, is a renewable resource; gasoline is not.	25 Corn plastic is more environmentally friendly than petroleum based plastic, and it is completely biodegradable.	26 Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota grow more than 62% of the corn grown in the U.S.	27 Popcorn is the official Illinois snack food.	28
29	30 Ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 40-50% when compared directly to gasoline.	1	2	3	4	5



CHRISTMAS TREE (Late Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Erosion, biodegradable, mature, species

Recommended Reading:

Christmas Tree Farm by Ann Purnell

Mr. Willowby's Christmas Tree by Robert Barry

The Beautiful Christmas Tree by Charlotte Zolotow

The Pine Tree Parable by Liz Curtis Higgs

December 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1 98% of all Christmas trees are grown on tree farms.	2 Using small candles to light a Christmas tree dates back to the middle of the 17 th century.	3 Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, developed the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees in 1882.	4 Christmas trees take an average of 7-10 years to mature.	5
6	7 More than 2,000 trees are usually planted per acre. At harvest, 750 trees usually remain.	8 Oregon is the leading producer of Christmas trees in the United States.	9 In the first week, a tree in your home will consume as much as a quart of water per day.	10 In 1856, Franklin Pierce, the 14 th President of the United States, was the first President to place a Christmas tree in the White House.	11 Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states.	12
13	14 The most common Christmas tree species are: Balsam fir, Douglas fir, Fraser fir, Noble fir, Blue spruce, Scotch pine, and White pine.	15 Recycled trees are used to make sand and soil erosion barriers, and are placed in ponds for fish shelter.	16 Christmas trees remove dust and pollen from the air.	17 The first recorded reference to the Christmas tree dates back to the 16 th century.	18 Until the 1930s, most Christmas trees grew wild in forests or in abandoned fields.	19
20	21 In the United States, there are about one million acres dedicated to tree farming. Each acre provides enough oxygen for 18 people.	22 As a long term crop, trees allow a natural build-up of bird and animal populations.	23 There are about 350,000 acres in production for growing Christmas trees in the U.S., much of it preserving green space.	24 Christmas tree lights were first mass produced in 1890.	25 In 1851, the first Christmas tree retail lot in the United States was started in New York.	26
27	28 There are close to 350 million Christmas trees currently growing on tree farms in the United States, all planted by farmers.	29 Over 100,000 people are employed full or part-time in the Christmas tree industry.	30 There are almost 15,000 farms growing Christmas trees in the United States.	31 Christmas trees are biodegradable, which means they will break down and become part of the soil again.	1	2



DAIRY (Mid Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Beta-carotene, acute, gestation, calcium, ruminant, silage, pasteurization

Recommended Reading:

The Milk Makers by Gail Gibbons

Clarabelle by Cris Peterson

Ice Cream: The Full Scoop by Gail Gibbons

MILK! Life on a Dairy Farm by Ruth Owen

January 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1 Most dairy cows are milked 2-3 times per day. On average, a cow produces 6-8 gallons of milk per day.	2
3	4 It takes more than 21 pounds of whole milk to make one pound of butter.	5 The natural yellow color of butter comes mainly from the beta-carotene found in the grass cows eat.	6 A typical dairy cow weighs 1,500 pounds and consumes about 100 pounds of dry matter each day.	7 Cows have an acute sense of smell, and can smell something up to six miles away.	8 Cheddar cheese is the most popular natural cheese in the United States.	9
10	11 The average cow drinks 25-50 gallons of water each day-about a bathtub's worth.	12 Plastic milk bottles were first introduced in the United States in 1967.	13 McDonalds uses approximately four million gallons of low-fat vanilla yogurt each year in its Fruit 'n' Yogurt Parfait.	14 The most common breed of dairy cow found in the U.S. is the Holstein.	15 Female dairy cows must give birth to a calf to produce milk.	16
17	18 Milk provides your body with calcium, which is needed for healthy bones and teeth.	19 The milk you purchase is fresh. In most cases, only two days have passed from milking the cow to stocking the grocery store shelves.	20 It takes 12 pounds of whole milk to make one gallon of ice cream. Vanilla is the most popular flavor.	21 Americans eat over 31 pounds of cheese each year.	22 The gestation (pregnancy) period for cows is nine months.	23
24 31	25 A dairy cow's diet includes hay, silage and grain. Silage is fermented corn, wheat or hay with the stalks and leaves.	26 Dairy cattle are called ruminants because they have four compartments in their stomach.	27 All 50 states in the United States have dairy farms.	28 Louis Pasteur discovered the process called pasteurization, which kills bacteria and protects purity and flavor.	29 Americans eat about 350 slices of pizza per second, or almost 3 billion pizzas (made with Mozzarella cheese) per year.	30



HORSES (Late Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Equus, paddock, gait, filly, colt, farriers, hippology, thoroughbred, withers, herbivores

Recommended Reading:

A Field Full of Horses by Peter Hansard
War Horse by Michael Morpurgo
Leah's Pony by Elizabeth Friedrich
Horses! by Gail Gibbons

February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1 The term Equus is the scientific term used for our modern day equines (horses).	2 There are more than 350 breeds of horses and ponies around the world.	3 A large enclosure to hold a horse is called a paddock.	4 Mustangs are the wild horses of the Western plains. Mustang means "ownerless."	5 Gait is a term used to describe the way a horse moves.	6
7	8 The average life span of a horse is 20-25 years, though they can live for up to 30 years.	9 A hand is a unit used to measure the height of a horse. A hand is equal to 4 inches.	10 Hippology is the study of horses.	11 Filly is the name for a young female horse. A young male horse is a colt.	12 Horses are herbivores and prefer a diet of fresh grass and hay (dried grass).	13
14	15 When a horse is born, its legs are almost their full adult length.	16 Horses generally sleep standing up.	17 Professionals that trim horses' hooves are called farriers. Horses' hooves need to be trimmed every 6-8 weeks.	18 A group of horses is a herd.	19 Tack is the name given to brushes, saddles and other equipment used to ride and care for horses.	20
21	22 A thoroughbred horse can run a mile in about 90 seconds.	23 The height of a horse is measured from the ground to their withers, which is the high point between a horse's shoulder blades.	24 The four natural gaits of a horse are the walk, trot, canter and gallop.	25 A yearling is a horse that is between one and two years old.	26 Modern day equines are classified into four groups based on their size-miniatures, ponies, light weights and heavy weights, or draft horses.	27
28	29 The smallest breed of horse, the Falabella, grows to only 30 inches in height.	1	2	3	4	5



POULTRY (Mid Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Domesticated, fowl, angular, predators, comb, wattle, lutein, fertilized, omnivore

Recommended Reading:

EGGS! Life on a Chicken Farm by Ruth Owen
Chicks & Chickens by Gail Gibbons
When the Rooster Crowed by Patricia Lillie
Turkeys by Rachael Bell

March 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	1 By 3000 B.C., Egyptians had domesticated, or tamed, fowl that were laying eggs for man to eat.	2 Eggs contain the highest known quality food protein.	3 Laying hens sit on eggs for 21 days until they hatch.	4 The yellow portion of the egg is called the yolk.	5
6	7 A hen requires 24-26 hours to produce an egg.	8 Chickens make sounds with actual meaning. They give different alarm calls when threatened by different predators.	9 Chickens need grit, which is a mixture of angular, hard crushed rock, in their diet to produce eggs.	10 Chickens raised for their meat are called broilers or fryers.	11 Male chickens are called roosters.	12
13	14 You can tell whether an egg is fresh or stale by dropping it in water. A fresh egg will sink, but a stale one will float.	15 The top 5 egg producing states are Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, California and Pennsylvania.	16 The comb is a fleshy crest on a chicken's head, and the wattle is the hanging flap of skin under their beaks.	17 Chickens are usually fed corn, wheat and soybean meal.	18 Female chickens are called pullets for their first year or until they begin to lay eggs, usually around 20 weeks.	19
20	21 Hens typically need to eat about four pounds of feed to produce a dozen eggs.	22 The color of an egg shell specifies the breed of chicken laying the egg and not the hen's diet.	23 Chickens can travel up to 9 miles per hour.	24 Most eggs are laid between 7 am and 11 am.	25 Eggs are a good source of lutein, important for eye health.	26
27	28 Chickens are not completely flightless. They can get airborne enough to make it over a fence or into a tree.	29 Only fertilized eggs will hatch.	30 The house or cage in which a chicken lives is called a coop.	30 Chickens are omnivores. They eat seeds and insects but also eat larger prey like small mice and lizards.	1	2



SOYBEAN (Early Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Legumes, amino acids, biodiesel, renewable, biodegradable, extracting, consumption

Recommended Reading:

Soybeans in the Story of Agriculture by Susan Anderson and JoAnne Buggey
The Super Soybean by Raymond Bial
From Seed to Plant by Gail Gibbons
Oh Say Can You Seed by Bonnie Worth

April 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1 Farmers in China began growing soybeans more than 5,000 years ago.	2
3	4 Biodiesel is a renewable fuel made from soybeans. It is biodegradable and non-toxic.	5 During the Civil War, soybeans were used in place of coffee because real coffee was scarce.	6 The soybean is the highest natural source of dietary fiber.	7 A bushel of soybeans weighs about 60 pounds.	8 A soybean seed grows a little tail-like root called a radical. This becomes the plant's main root.	9
10	11 Soybeans are good for crop rotation because they leave nitrogen in the soil for the next crop.	12 Each soybean plant grows 60-80 pods, and each pod has three to four beans inside.	13 Soy ink is used in over 95% of America's daily newspapers.	14 One acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.	15 Illinois plants enough soybeans to cover nine million football fields.	16
17	18 Soybeans are bushy, green plants that are three to five feet tall, called legumes.	19 In the 1920s, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg developed soy milk and meat substitutes from soybeans.	20 Henry Ford used soybeans for paint and plastic in his cars.	21 In the fall, the soybean plant turns brown and the leaves drop off before they are harvested.	22 Soybeans are a source of high quality protein and contain all eight of the essential amino acids.	23
24	25 In 1904, George Washington Carver discovered a method of extracting soybean oil.	26 The average American consumes nearly half a cup of soybeans in some form each day.	27 More soybeans are grown in the United States than anywhere else in the world.	28 One and a half gallons of biodiesel and 48 pounds of soybean meal can be produced from one bushel of soybeans.	29 The soybean is used for animal and human consumption, as well as consumer and industrial use.	30



WHEAT (Mid Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Yields, kernel, produces, harvested, grain elevators, embryo, varieties, consume, mature

Recommended Reading:

From Wheat to Pasta by Robert Egan
BREAD! Life on a Wheat Farm by Ruth Owen
Food: Bread by Louis Spilsbury
Grains by Jill Kalz

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 More foods are made with wheat than any other cereal grain.	3 One bushel of wheat yields 60 pounds of whole wheat flour or 42 pounds of white flour.	4 The wheat produced in Illinois is soft red winter wheat, which is used in cake mixes and pretzels.	5 A kernel of wheat, called the wheat berry, is the seed from which the wheat plant grows.	6 Wheat kernels are ground into flour.	7
8	9 The rest of the wheat plant below the spiked head is called straw (after harvest), which is bundled and used as animal bedding.	10 Wheat is harvested, or taken out of the fields, by combines where the kernel is separated from the straw.	11 A wheat plant is an annual grass plant that grows to be two to four feet tall.	12 Kansas produces the most wheat of any state in the nation.	13 The wheat from area farms is collected at grain elevators and then shipped to flour mills.	14
15	16 A wheat head contains 50 to 75 kernels.	17 One bushel of wheat makes 5,000 four-inch cookies or fills 53 boxes of cereal.	18 Swiss lake dwellers were grinding wheat kernels and water to bake flatbread by 7000-6000 B.C.	19 Wheat germ is the embryo of the wheat kernel that will develop into a wheat plant.	20 A modern combine can harvest 1,000 bushels of wheat per hour.	21
22	23 Wheat yields have improved by approximately ½ bushel per acre each year since 1900.	24 Wheat is grown in 42 states.	25 New varieties of wheat can take up to 17 years to develop before they are available for farmers to plant.	26 A family of four can live 10 years off of the bread produced from one acre of wheat.	27 Wheat plants grow many leaves and send up 3-12 stems called tillers. A spike develops at the top of each tiller and matures into a wheat head.	28
29	30 In Illinois, 83% of the wheat grown is in the southern half of the state, from Springfield south.	31 Each American consumes, on average, 53 pounds of bread per year.	1	2	3	4



PUMPKIN (Mid Season)

Words and terms to learn:

Colonial, radius, originated, staple, ingredient, edible

Recommended Reading:

The Pumpkin Patch by Margaret McNamara
Just Your Average Princess by Kristina Springer
From Seed to Pumpkin by Wendy Pfeffer
Too Many Pumpkins by Linda White

June 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 Illinois produces more pumpkins than any other state and more than twice as many as 2 nd ranked California.	2	3 It takes 110 days for a pumpkin vine to produce mature pumpkins.	4
5	6	7 Pumpkin seeds contain protein and iron, and can be roasted as a snack.	8	9 The name pumpkin originates from "pepon," the Greek word for "large melon."	10	11
12	13 Pumpkins are a fruit because they are the part of the plant that contains seeds.	14	15 Morton, Illinois, is known as The Pumpkin Capital of the World.	16	17 Pumpkins originated in Central America.	18
19	20	21 Native Americans used pumpkin as a staple in their diets centuries before the Pilgrims landed.	22	23 Pumpkins can range in size from less than a pound to over 1,000 pounds.	24	25
26	27 In early colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for the crust of pies, not the filling.	28	29	30	1	2

July 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1 A single vine from a pumpkin can grow up to 20 feet long.	2
3	4 Native Americans taught the Pilgrims how to grow pumpkins.	5	6 Pumpkins are members of the Cucurbita family which includes squash and cucumbers.	7	8	9
10	11	12 The flowers of a pumpkin have 5 petals and are edible.	13	14 Pumpkins are 90% water.	15	16 Native Americans flattened strips of pumpkins, dried them and made mats.
17	18 Pumpkins are low in calories, fat and sodium, and high in fiber.	19	20 Eighty percent of the pumpkins produced commercially in the U.S. are produced within a 90-mile radius of Peoria, Illinois.	21	22 Giant pumpkins can grow 5 pounds a day.	23
24	25	26	27	28 Pumpkins seeds are also known as pepitas.	29	30
31						

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