

COW BREEDS

An Introduction to Different Breeds of Beef and Dairy Cattle

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Tennessee 4-H Youth Development

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Skill Level
Intermediate

Outcomes

The learner will be able to:

- Identify different breeds of cows.
- Understand the use for each breed.
- List distinctive characteristics of different breeds of cattle.

Educational Standard(s) Supported

This lesson is written to be used with a project group and is not aligned to state content standards.

Success Indicator

Learners will be successful if they:

- Identify at least four breeds of cattle based on physical characteristics.

Time Needed

1 hour

Materials List

- The *Breed* PowerPoint
- Materials for the game (questions and buzzers)
- A prize (optional)

Introduction to Content

In this lesson, students learn about major cow breeds that they may encounter in their project work. 4-H members will also learn what the main purpose of each breed is and how it can be easily identified.

Introduction to Methodology

The topic of cow breeds will be discussed in detail with the class using a PowerPoint presentation. Pictures and general information about the breeds will be presented to the class. After the content has been presented, students will take part in a game where they can share their new knowledge.

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Terms and Concepts Introduction

A PowerPoint with the different breeds and information about them is included with the lesson.

Setting the Stage and Opening Questions

Start the lesson by setting up a scene for the classroom. Say, *“So imagine that you and your family are driving down a long road that looks like it never ends. All of a sudden you come up on a farm, and there are cows grazing in the pasture. What do those cows look like?”*

Once a few students answer, proceed to ask them if they know the breed of the cow they just described. (Most will say black and white, Holstein or all black, or black angus.)

Then say, *“Today we are going to learn that there is more than just the typical black-and-white cow that you normally see. We are going to learn about a few different cow breeds and what they are used for.”*

Experience

Say, *“To begin, breeds are usually divided into two groups: beef and dairy. Beef breeds are specifically grown to be used as a food source for us versus dairy breeds, which are used for the collection of milk which we can then use for various things.”*

Proceed to inform the students about the different breeds. Show pictures along with information contained in the PowerPoint.

After presenting the content, divide the group into two or three teams (depending on the size of the class), and prepare to play the game.

For the game: Have something that can make a different sound for each team. Ask a question or show a picture of a cow. The team that hits their buzzer first, answers the question. If they get it wrong it goes to the next team (and so on). Do this for as many rounds you wish; the team with the most points in the end wins.

(Different variations can be done: If a team gets a question right, they can try and answer the next question, or if a team gets a question wrong, points can be deducted. Just make it enjoyable for the students and yourself, as well.)

You can even bring in a prize for the winning team.

Once you finish the game, tie everything together and conclude the lesson (Share, Process, Generalize, and Apply).

Tips for Engagement

- Try not to overwhelm the students. This lesson is meant to be a fun way to teach them something new. With that being said, when it comes to the game, try and get everyone involved.
- If the students seem overwhelmed, teach them fewer breeds.
- Try and get everyone involved in the game.

Share

Ask the students, *“What is the most interesting thing that you learned today?”*

Process

Ask the students,
“If you were to have a farm one day, what animals would you like to have?”

“If you were to have cows what breed would you have and why?”

Generalize

Inform the students that just like cows, other animals such as sheep, goats and even chickens have different breeds depending on how you want to use them.

Ask the students,
“Do you know any of the different breeds for the animals that were just stated?”

“No? Would you like to learn about them in the future?”

Apply

To conclude the lesson, give the class a scenario.

For example: If I was a dairy farmer and I want to have cows that are going to produce a rich-tasting milk that I can use to make butter, is the cow that I want a Holstein? (The correct answer would be, “No, Holsteins may produce the most milk, but it is the Jersey that has the richest milk of the dairy cows.”)

This scenario can be created based on type (beef/dairy) and preference of breed within each type.

Life Skill(s)

4th Grade

- Participate in 4-H club meetings by saying pledges, completing activities, and being engaged. (Head)
- Identify at least four project areas to consider as a project area for future 4-H work. (Head)

5th Grade

- Participate in 4-H club meetings by saying pledges, completing activities, and being engaged. (Head)
- Select at least one project area in which to focus future 4-H participation. (Head)

Cow Breeds Lesson Plan Sample Questions

Answer is given in *italics*

- 1) Which dairy breed is most commonly used in the U.S? *Holstein*
- 2) What is the Jersey's milk known for? *Being the richest/high in butterfat*
- 3) What is the name of this breed? *Guernsey*



- 4) What cow originated from Switzerland? *Brown Swiss*
- 5) Is this a dairy breed or beef breed? *Beef*



- 6) What color is the Ayrshire? *Cherry red/brown with white*
- 7) The cow used most in beef production is what breed? *Black Angus*
- 8) Why were the Hereford cows created? *To fulfill the expanding food market created by the industrial revolution*
- 9) Cold weather and snow have no effect on this breed? *Highland*
- 10) True or False: The Beefmaster has a large hump over their right shoulder? *False: Brahman is the correct breed*

These are just a few sample questions: You can use these or create a rendition of your own. Maybe even add in some trick questions.

For example:

- 1) What type of cow is a Hampshire? *Neither. It's a breed of pig or sheep.*
- 2) Is the Southdown a meat or dairy breed? *Dairy is correct, but it is a sheep breed.*
- 3) Is the Lincoln a dairy or meat breed? *Neither. It is a sheep breed that is used for wool.*