

Online Outreach

Interactive web games give consumers a glimpse at real-life agriculture.

Story & photos by
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With a global population that is hungry for more and more information about the food they eat — while also spending the bulk of their time on the Internet, it seems

like a natural fit to create online resources that educate consumers about agriculture.

But education can also be entertaining, as the latest efforts have proven.

One example is the site www.myamericanfarm.org, which

was created by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) with sponsorship from Pioneer Hi-Bred. The website offers 15 educational and interactive games along with teacher resources and family activities.

Curtis Miller, director of

education for the AFB Foundation says My American Farm is “a fun and engaging way to share positive messages about agriculture with the public.”

Each of the activities on the site is designed to emphasize four consistent messages:

1. Agriculture is everywhere.
2. Farmers feed the world.
3. Farmers steward the land.
4. Farmers care for animals.

Examples of games on the site include: *Where in the World?*, a mystery game that challenges individuals to locate where different crops and livestock originated around the world; *Ag Across America*, which provides a quiz about American agriculture while also testing geography knowledge; *Keys to Stewardship*, a race to earn points by identifying different conservation practices hidden in a farm scene.

“Modern agriculture allows farmers and ranchers to grow more food using fewer resources and offers Americans an array of food choices,” states Steve Brody, director, Global Biotechnology Affairs and Industry Relations for Pioneer. “We are proud to support innovative programs like My American Farm because we believe resources like this can help farmers engage in conversations locally to share this important message with consumers and, most importantly, with our youth, who represent our nation’s future decision-makers.”

The My American Farm activities are available free online. To further grow awareness for the website and the ag knowledge it emphasizes, portable kiosks with the My American Farm activities are also being created for use as an ag literacy exhibit at various venues — from schools to state fairs and farmers’ markets.

Beef launches Cow Chow game, videos

The beef industry has also launched an online game and video series called “Cow Chow” that allows curious consumers to explore what cattle really eat from birth to the feedyard. The 10-question game and corresponding videos give consumers a glimpse into the life of a real cow.

For creation of the “Cow Chow” videos, cattle in Kansas, South Dakota, Texas and Florida wore specially rigged GoPro cameras to share this important animal care story from the cows’ eye view.



Portable kiosks featuring the “My American Farm” online games and activities are being made available to help consumers learn more about agriculture. The suite of farm-based activities is also free online at www.myamericanfarm.org.

The interactive web game was recently launched by the beef checkoff and is hosted on the checkoff's www.explorebeef.org website, where consumers can also learn more about beef safety, environmental stewardship, animal care and beef nutrition. The videos are also available on the Explore Beef YouTube channel.

Consumers can see exactly what cattle really eat every day as they compete in the interactive quiz game. Upon completion of the game, users can post results and badge to their Facebook page, and challenge their friends to beat their best score. The Cow Chow game and videos emphasize the attention cattle farmers and ranchers pay to their animals, their land and their communities.

Roger Butler, a cattle producer from Lake Okeechobee, Fla., explains that Cow Chow is another tool to show how proper cattle diets help farmers and ranchers raise high-quality, great-tasting and nutritious beef they can feel good about feeding their families.

"By using social media outlets such as Facebook and YouTube, we're hoping to reach a new generation of beef consumers," says Butler. "Cow Chow takes people to the farm via video, showing them how and where their food is raised, and the commitment cattle farmers and ranchers have to raising safe, healthy beef."



New children's book showcases 'The Story of Food'

"Almost nothing is more important than the food we put in our children's mouths," says Chris Butterworth. She adds, "A loaf of bread starts in a wheat field; I think everyone should know that."

That precept is what prompted the England native and author to write the book *How Did That Get In My Lunchbox? The Story of Food*.

The book shows young readers how each ingredient made its journey to their lunchbox. Illustrations, by Lucia Gaggiotti, highlight many aspects of farming and include information on food safety and nutrition.

Butterworth says, "Many people today think the source of their food is shopping. They need to know more; I hope this book will do that."

The book also provides healthy tips to make good food choices and gives the reader a peek at the basic food groups to select a healthy menu each day.

The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture recently selected *How Did That Get In My Lunchbox?* as its 2012 Book of the Year.

The book has received numerous other accolades. The *School Library Journal* called it "a great springboard to units on food and nutrition." The Library Media Connection said, "Results of reading this book include a greater understanding of the farm-to-table methodology."

Butterworth's new book, along with teacher resources and other accurate books about agriculture are available at www.agfoundation.org under the "ag literacy" button.

