

Dear FACS Educator,

Today's meal preparation presents opportunities for both social awareness and culinary experimentation.

Consumers want to know that their food comes from sustainable practices and, increasingly, they are drawn to the flavors and recipes that reflect cultures from around the globe. As the world's number-one consumed animal protein, pork offers the consumer fresh, appealing, and authentic taste that they can feel good about eating.

Less than 2% of people in the U.S. are engaged in agriculture. And with many consumers being at least three or four generations removed from the farm, consumers have less firsthand knowledge of what happens there today. Thus, few consumers are aware of the steady improvements in sustainable agriculture. For example, pig farmers have sharply reduced the environmental impact of farming over the past 50 years while increasing pork production.

This program, created by the award-winning curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) in cooperation with the National Pork Board, helps students learn about the role of sustainable farming in pork production and offers healthy options for globally-based cuisines, as well as strengthening relationships when families cook together.

Please copy and share this program with your food service director, school nurse, and health teachers at your school. Although it is copyrighted, you may make as many copies as you need. Visit ymiclassroom.com/feedback-pork to give us your feedback. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

Pork: Sustainable and Healthy Protein

Target Audience

Students in grades 6-12 Family and Consumer Sciences classes

How to Use This Program

Download and print out this teacher's guide, the student activity masters, and the family take-home letter. Introduce the program by asking students to share what they know about pork products and how they enjoy pork in their own lives. *What dishes are they familiar with that are made with pork? What dishes does their family make using pork?* (Modify these discussion points for students who may observe dietary restrictions that prohibit pork.) Next, invite students to consider how sustainable agricultural practices might influence pork production. If students are not familiar with the term *sustainability*, explain that it is a way of doing something that uses fewer resources. Ask them to share what they might know about sustainability and write their responses on the board. Tell them that they might be surprised to learn about the improvements in sustainability that pig farmers have made from farm to fork. Provide students with copies of the family letter to take home (as appropriate).

Activity 1

Generations of Progress

This activity invites students to learn about changes pig farmers have made over the past 50 years to reduce the environmental impacts of their farming practices. Begin by distributing the activity sheet and sharing with students the statistics in the opening paragraph, encouraging them to visualize these reductions in concrete terms. Possible analogies could include:

- Using 76% less land is like taking an 18-hole golf course down to about four holes.
- Using 25% less water is like using three quarts of water instead of a gallon.

Next, lead students in a discussion of the importance of sustainability in caring for the environment. Invite students to share ways they practice sustainability at home, like recycling and reducing water and energy use. Divide students into small groups and have them visit www.porkcares.org to research the methods pig farmers use to make farming more sustainable and answer the questions.

Extension: Have students present their findings by creating a poster or PowerPoint presentation.

Answers:

1. Pig farming contributes just a little more than one-third of 1 percent (0.35 percent) of total U.S. GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions.
2. Some examples of sustainable farming practices include using natural vegetative wind breaks, planting buffers or installing fan



filters to minimize the movement of dust and odor, using natural sunlight or energy-efficient artificial light to conserve energy, properly insulating pig barns, capturing methane and using it to generate power for the farm and farm vehicles, and using technology like GPS to determine which crops need fertilizer and then injecting manure into the relevant soil.

3. Answers will vary; sustainable farming uses fewer resources, which puts less pressure on the land, air, and water supply. Sustainability reduces environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions, an important factor in combating climate change.

Activity 2

A World of Flavor

This activity invites students to explore international cuisine and the popularity of pork as a healthy protein, while also considering the role of food in global cultures and family traditions. Begin by sharing with students that pork is the most widely consumed meat in the world, followed by poultry, beef, and mutton (worldwatch.org). Pork is a versatile, flavorful, and affordable protein that is also an excellent source of nutrients important to our health such as thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, vitamin B-6, and phosphorus, and a good source of zinc and potassium.

Invite students to share some popular ways to eat pork, whether it's a hot dog at a baseball game, pepperoni on a pizza, or bacon at breakfast. Next, guide students in discussing how food can also have important cultural and symbolic meanings that connect us via traditions to previous generations and to our society. Pair students, distribute the activity sheet, and invite students to interview each other about family food traditions. Then ask the class to share findings, look for similarities, and explore what these food traditions reveal about cultural influences. As food can reveal a lot about a culture, sampling new dishes can be a way to learn more about a culture that's different from your own. If appropriate in your class, encourage students to research a pork recipe from another country or culture online to print and take home.

Extension: Plan an international food fest featuring pork recipes from around the world and invite the community to learn more about diverse cultures through food.

Follow-Up

Once students have completed the program, lead a discussion on how they can make environmentally responsible choices by becoming informed consumers about the food they eat and the products they buy. Encourage students to grow as global citizens by protecting our planet and continuing to learn about different cultures.





Generations of Progress

Sustainability — responsible use of natural resources — is an important goal for everyone from homeowners to the farmers who raise all the foods we enjoy. The pork that provides a tasty ham sandwich or an intriguing dish inspired by international cuisine comes to us today via tremendous improvements made by America’s pig farmers since 1960 in land use (75.9% less), water use (25.1% less), and carbon impact (7.7% less) per pound of pork produced. Farmers are producing more pork today using fewer natural resources thanks to their ongoing commitment to sustainability, a result of farmers working cooperatively with scientists, conservationists, government agencies, and local community members.

Learn more about sustainable agriculture by visiting www.porkcares.org to find the answers to these questions.

1. Businesses today are taking action to reduce their carbon footprint. According to the EPA, only 2.8% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) in 2007 came from animal agriculture. What percentage does pig farming contribute to the total U.S. GHG emissions? _____

2. What are some examples of sustainable pig farming practices?

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. Why is sustainability important? How does it benefit farmers, consumers, and the planet?



A World of Flavor

Food plays an important role in our everyday lives from fueling us up for school and work, to nurturing family bonds through shared meals, to connecting generations through well-loved recipes. What we eat, how we cook it, and what ingredients we use can reveal a lot about where we live and our heritage. Food is an essential element of our cultural connections. Interview a classmate about food traditions in his or her family and write your findings below.

1. What's your family's favorite meal? Why?

2. What's your favorite food memory? What makes this memory so special?

3. Does your family prepare certain foods for certain holidays or special days of the year? What are these foods and when do you eat them? What do you know about where these traditions might have come from?

4. Does your family have any recipes that have been passed down from one generation to the next? If so, tell me about one of these recipes, where it came from, and how long your family has made this special dish.

Around the world, pork is the most consumed meat, but it can be prepared in a variety of ways. Use the internet to find a recipe for preparing pork from a culture or country different from your own. Print out the recipe to take home. What made you choose this recipe?



Pork Pozole Verde



Double Crunch Vietnamese Pork and Noodle Roll



Pork Pappardelle Puttanesca



Pork Banh Mi Sandwiches



Adobo Pork Tacos

Dear Parent or Guardian,

A meal is more than just nutrition; it's an important way to connect with our kids, teach healthy habits based on USDA MyPlate guidelines, and build a positive family culture. Getting everyone to the dinner table can feel like a challenge in today's busy world, but fortunately, meals don't have to be complicated or time-consuming to be meaningful. It's all about taking a moment to be together.

Your child is completing a school program about sustainability practices followed by today's pig farmers that includes ideas for exploring new, quick-and-easy recipes featuring the world's favorite nutrient-rich protein, pork. Pork is an affordable, versatile, flavorful, and healthy option as a main dish that works well with a myriad of flavors and even pleases the pickiest of eaters. Help your kids learn healthy habits and safe cooking methods by inviting them into the kitchen to select a recipe, prepare ingredients, and help make the meal. Here are some suggestions:

5 Delicious Pork Recipe Ideas from Yummly.com

- 1. Ham Pinwheels:** yummly.com/recipe/Ham-Pinwheels-2508344
- 2. Pork Taco Rice Casserole:** yummly.com/recipe/Pork-Taco-Rice-Casserole-2248715
- 3. Peruvian-Style Pork Stir Fry:** yummly.com/#recipe/Peruvian-Style-Pork-Stir-Fry-2010607
- 4. Thai Ribeye Pork Chops:** yummly.com/recipe/Thai-Ribeye-Pork-Chops-2141410
- 5. Sweet and Spicy Roast Pork:** yummly.com/recipe/Sweet-and-Spicy-Roast-Pork-2249000



Ham Pinwheels

5 ingredients, 10 minutes



Pork Taco Rice Casserole

8 ingredients, 40 minutes



Peruvian-Style Pork Stir Fry

18 ingredients, 30 minutes



Thai Ribeye Pork Chops

7 ingredients, 15 minutes



Sweet and Spicy Roast Pork

6 ingredients, 55 minutes

While in the kitchen or at the dinner table, spark a conversation with your kids to help them process their day, make sense of current events, or simply share what's on their mind. They might share thoughts about the best or most surprising part of their day, or something they didn't understand or need help with. Who knows what you might learn while you're sharing a healthy home-cooked meal with those who matter most?

Cook smart! Cook safe! Always cook pork to an internal temperature of 145°F for juicy, flavorful results.

