HOW'D THAT GET ON MY PLATE?

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PURPOSE
This activity encourages participants to explore how sample ingredients in our food might affect the environment, people, and animals, and what alternatives might exist that could do more good and less harm.

GRADES
6 and up

TIME
45 minutes to several days

MATERIALS
- appropriate recipe(s) (good for breaking up into parts) written out large enough for the group to see
- chart (on large paper or white board) and markers
- research materials

SUBJECT AREAS
Language Arts, Science and Social Studies/History

COMMON CORE STANDARDS


PERTINENT INFORMATION

If students have no familiarity with exploring the “hidden” impacts of ingredients, you may wish to first show them a relevant video such as “The True Cost of Food.”

PROCEDURE

1. Let students know that you’re all going to explore “How’d that get on my plate?” — how sample ingredients from a recipe might affect the environment, people, and animals, and what alternatives might exist that do more good and less harm for all.

2. Show students a copy of the recipe(s)/meal that you’ve chosen. Divide them into groups and give each group one or more ingredients (depending on how you wish to conduct the activity) to investigate.

Sample recipes: chili and cornbread

Sample chili ingredients to explore:

- tomatoes
- ground beef
Sample cornbread ingredients to explore:

- cornmeal
- milk
- eggs
- sugar

3. Have each group take one or more ingredients and brainstorm:

   A. What is the process each of these ingredients undergoes to become an ingredient for the recipe?

   B. How do these processes affect the world around us (people, animals, planet)?

   Depending on how much time you have, you may want each group to conduct some in-depth research about the impact on people, animals, and the earth of their ingredient(s).

4. Have groups share the results of their brainstorming.

5. Using a chart format (or similar), list the problems that the processes for each of these ingredients cause for people, animals, and the planet.

6. Using the same chart, list suggested solutions to these problems (i.e., What could the companies who produce these ingredients/products do to develop creative solutions that do the most good and least harm for all involved? What other alternatives exist?).

SAMPLE CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Problems for People</th>
<th>Problems for Animals</th>
<th>Problems for Planet</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburger</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### EXTENSIONS

1. Compare the impact of the ingredients from the recipe used with those from a different recipe (vegan, organic, etc.) for the same kinds of foods.

2. Divide a recipe into its primary ingredients and have participants do extensive research on that ingredient to determine more details about its impacts on people, animals, and the planet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornmeal</td>
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<td>Milk</td>
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<td>Eggs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
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