



Chicken Connections

WHAT'S THE Big Idea?

Cycles Interdependence

Materials

Gather the following into a large bag:

- feather duster
- recycled "chicken nuggets" box
- chicken egg (either a real one in a carton, or a fake one)
- jar of water
- jar of oyster shells
- jar of crushed corn/chicken grain
- hand rake (used for gardening)
- some fake insects (either pictures or plastic)

Enduring Understandings

- All living things have needs.
- Food comes from nature: from plants and animals.
- People depend on chickens, and chickens depend on people.

Objectives

Children demonstrate an understanding of the food cycle.

Children consider how humans use chickens to meet our needs.

Directions

1. Ask students why a farmer would want chickens on his or her farm? As they share their answers, pull the corresponding product out of the bag:

Feathers: Ask students if they have ever helped to clean with a feather duster. Have they ever used a down comforter? See if any of the students are wearing a down coat.

Meat: Ask students if they have ever eaten chicken before. What are their favorite chicken recipes?

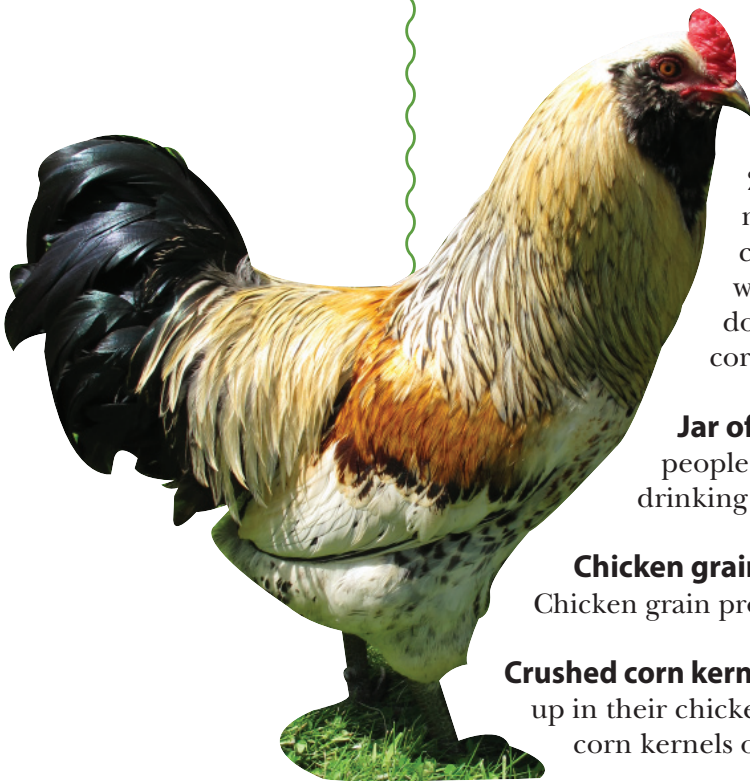
Eggs: Ask students if they've ever eaten eggs. Brainstorm what kinds of foods are prepared with eggs (cakes, cookies, quiche, some bread)

2. Ask students to brainstorm what a chicken needs to be healthy. If they have already seen chickens, what did they notice the chickens were eating? What do chickens spend their time doing? As students share their answers, pull the corresponding product out of the bag:

Jar of water: Chickens need to drink water just like people. Ask students if they have ever seen a chicken drinking water.

Chicken grain: Chickens need to eat food just like you and me. Chicken grain provides them with the nutrition they need every day.

Crushed corn kernels: Chickens love to eat corn! Usually it is crushed up in their chicken feed. (As an extension: have students grind corn kernels on a stump with a rock and feed it to chickens.)





Why do farmers raise chickens? For eggs, meat, and feathers (items at right). What do chickens need to be healthy? Water, grain, corn, and oyster shells, which have calcium for strong egg shells. Chickens also eat insects (some that can damage crops). They use their feet, represented by the hand rake, to scratch the ground for bugs. This also helps farmers aerate the soil.

Oyster shells: Chickens need vitamins and nutrients just like people. Oyster shells from the sea are fed to chickens to make their shells strong. Ask students if they have ever cracked an egg. Was it strong?

Insects: Farmers love chickens because they eat insects, many which are harmful for crops.

Hand rake: Ask students to describe a chicken's foot. Does it look similar to the rake? Chickens help the farmer to have healthy soil by "aerating" the soil with their feet as they scratch for food.

3. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- How do people depend on chickens?
- How do chickens depend on people?