

Barnyard Chronicles

Tails From The Inside



Volume 2
Community Day



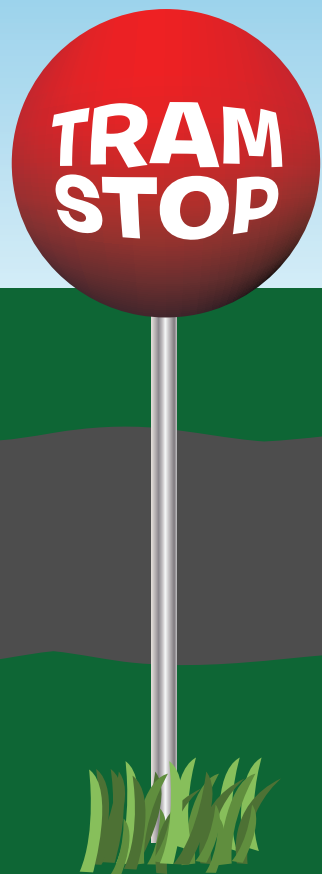
It was a beautiful day at Summerville Farms. Members of the community—both young and old alike—had come to tour the farm and enjoy the Community Day Fun Fair. Carnival music and squeals of laughter are temporarily interrupted by a voice over the farm’s loudspeaker.

“Welcome to Community Day. Our next tour will be departing from the tram station in five minutes!”

A young voice is heard wailing in the distance, “Hurry up, Mom. We’re going to miss the tram!”

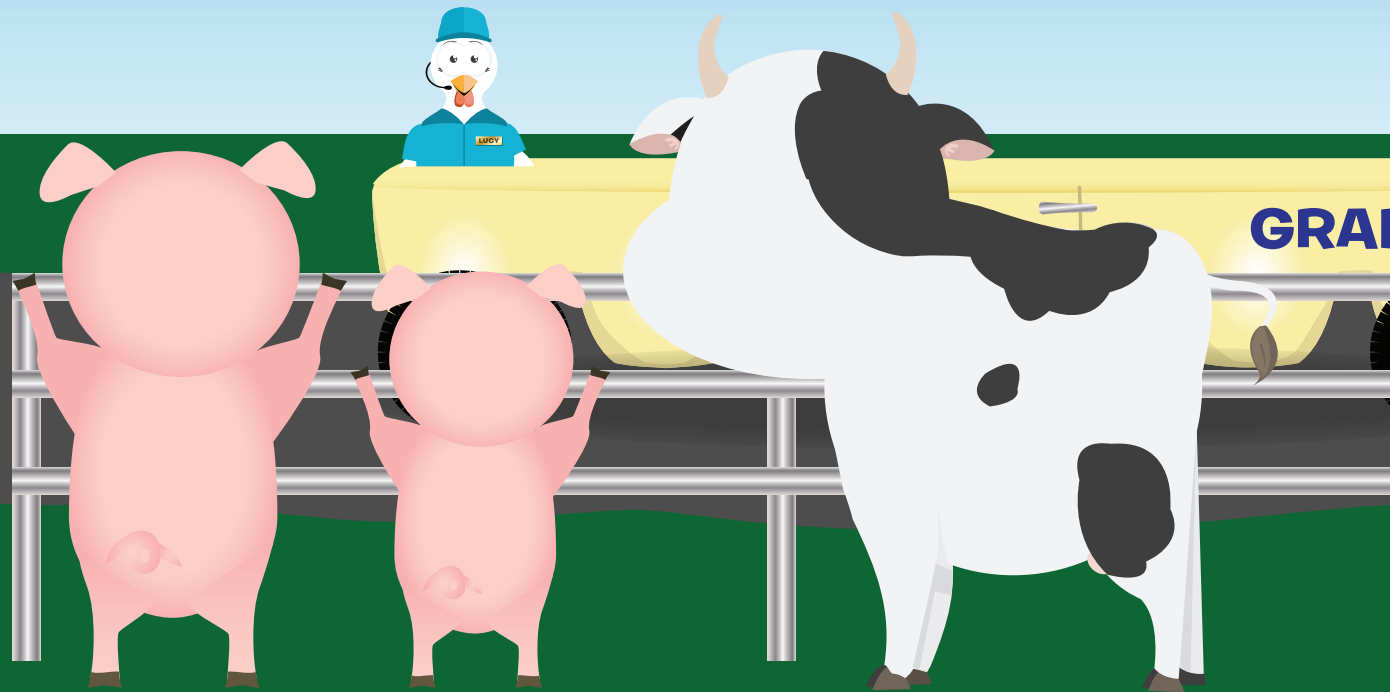
A cart full of chicken

As you walk the aisles of the grocery store, you’ll see the many different kinds of poultry products available. Eggs, chicken and turkey meat are the obvious ones. But poultry products also include buffalo wings, hot dogs, chicken nuggets and chicken patties. Poultry gives us protein, nutrients and minerals—and that should make your parents happy!



A number of excited visitors scramble to form a line to the tram that will take them on a tour of Summerville Farms. Tour guide Lucy happily greets each visitor before formally introducing herself.

"Howdy folks! Please watch your step and ya'll climb aboard! My name is Lucy, and I'll be your guide for today's tour of Summerville Farms! I'm happy so many of you came out to visit us today to learn about our farm. I see a lot of familiar faces and some new ones, too!"



What's in a name?

Ever wonder what the difference is between a hen and a rooster? A lot, apparently. See if you can match the poultry species with its correct definition.

- 1. Hen**
- 2. Rooster**
- 3. Chick**
- 4. Tom**
- 5. Poult**
- 6. Pullet**
- 7. Drake**

- A. Male turkey
- B. Female bird under one year old that has not yet begun to lay eggs
- C. Adult female bird
- D. Adolescent turkey
- E. Adult male chicken
- F. Adult male duck
- G. Newly hatched or very young bird



Before boarding the tram, one resident chicken greets Lucy and introduces her two uniquely dressed guests. "Hi, Lucy, I want you to meet some of my relatives. They're from out of town—as you can see—and they're excited to see how

we live here at Summerville Farms. I've told them how great it is!"

"We're so glad to have you here. Welcome!" exclaims Lucy.



Egg-actly what you need!

As you grow, it's important to take care of your body and eat foods that build up your strength. Eggs are a sure bet. They contain protein, vitamins and minerals. Even better, you can eat eggs in a variety of ways! Scrambled, poached, sunny-side up, hard-boiled, deviled... the list is endless. Crack one open today!

Take a poll: What are your classmates' favorite ways to eat eggs? How about in your family? Record your findings below.

What do you like best?

Scrambled:

Poached:

Sunny-side Up:

Hardboiled:

Deviled:

Other:

What do chickens eat?

We enjoy chicken for many of our meals, but what do chickens have for dinner? Chickens primarily eat ground corn and soybean meal, topped off with vitamins and minerals. This balanced diet helps chickens stay healthy and grow, while also maintaining the egg shell quality and yolk color.



Most common breeds

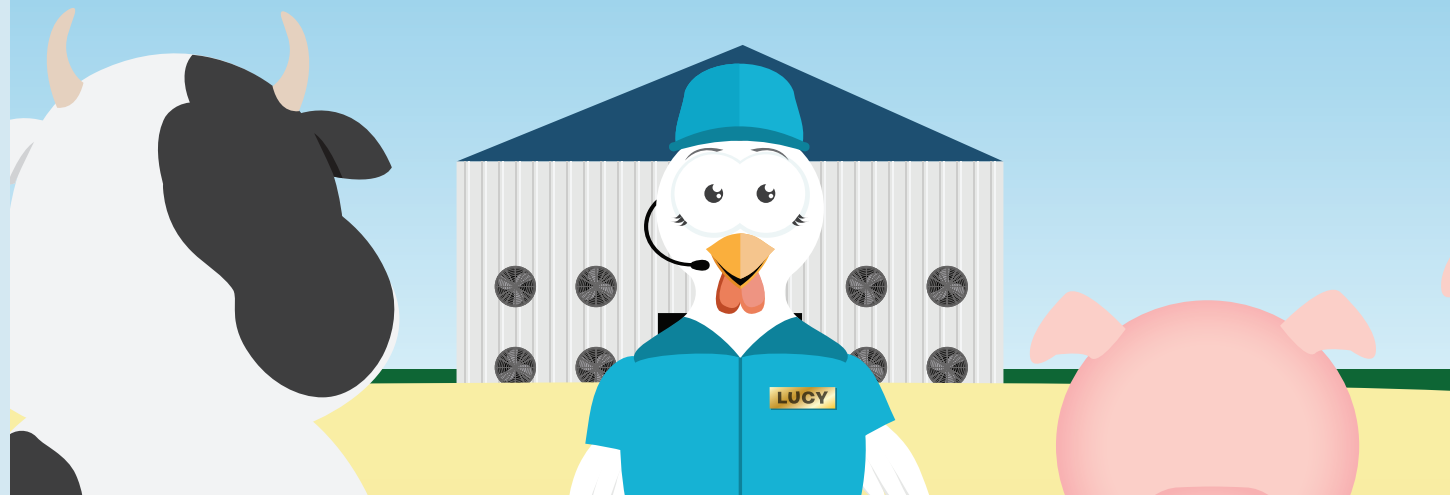
Today, the most common breeds of chickens are:

- New Hampshire
- White Leghorn
- Plymouth Rock
- Rhode Island Red or White

Onboard, the likeable Lucy turns on her tour guide charm as she addresses the group assembled on her tram. "Now, just a few quick announcements before we depart, folks... Animal safety is of the utmost importance to us, so be sure to keep all hooves, claws and

respective digits inside the tram at all times. And please, do not exit the tram until it comes to a complete stop."

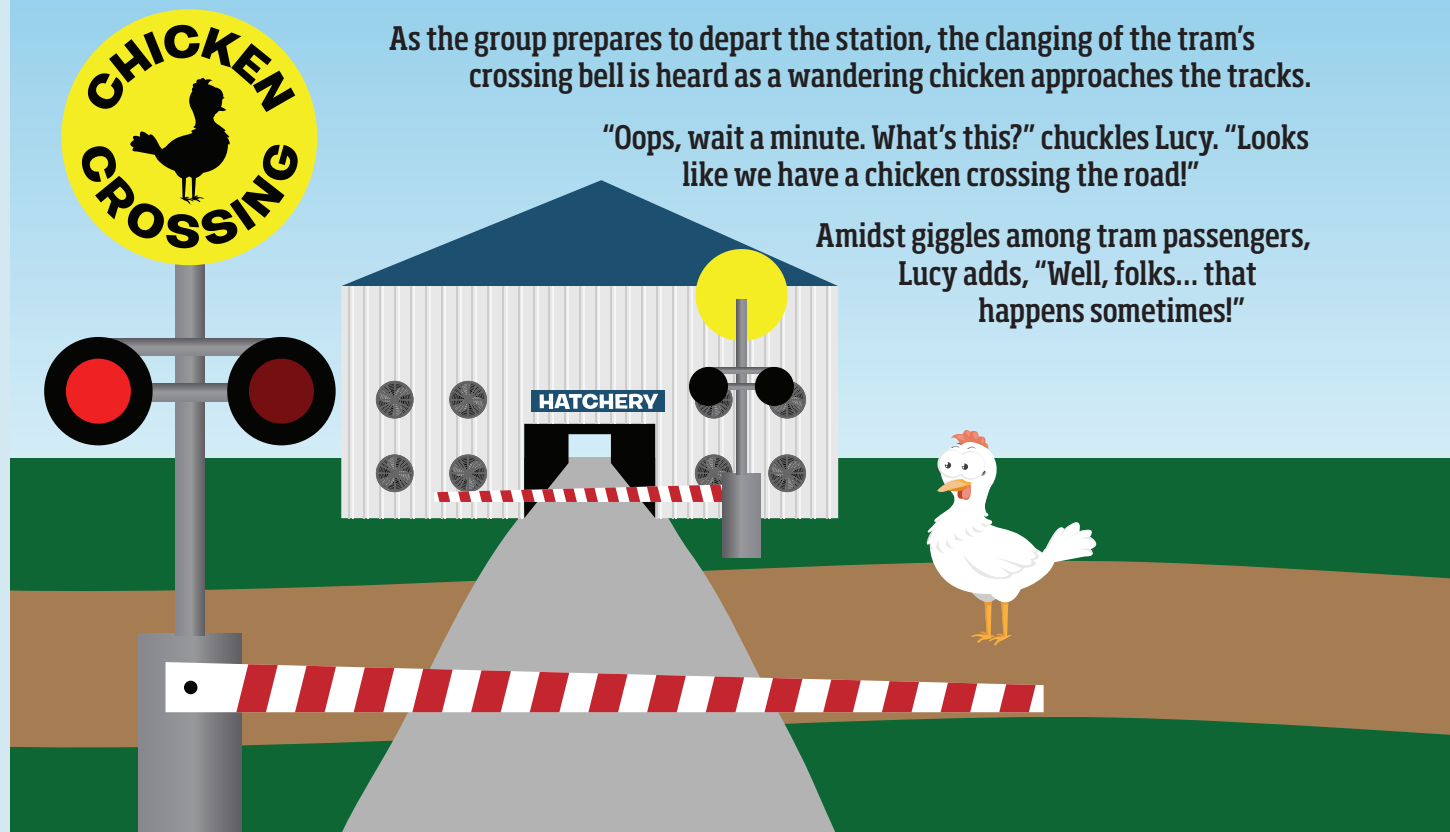
"So... without further ado, let's begin our tour of the place that I am tickled pink to call home!"



As the group prepares to depart the station, the clanging of the tram's crossing bell is heard as a wandering chicken approaches the tracks.

"Oops, wait a minute. What's this?" chuckles Lucy. "Looks like we have a chicken crossing the road!"

Amidst giggles among tram passengers, Lucy adds, "Well, folks... that happens sometimes!"



HATCHERY

Once the chicken clears the tracks, the tram lunges forward and heads toward a barn.

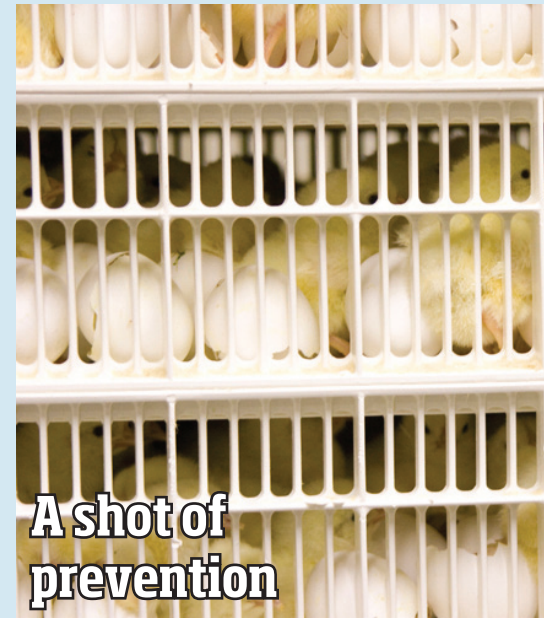
"The first stop on our tour is the place where I was born," exclaims Lucy. "My

mamma says I was just the sweetest, little thing! This part is called the hatchery because - you guessed it - it's where chicks hatch from eggs. This is where the 'newbies' live for awhile."



Battle of the beaks

When chicks are one to 10 days old, they have their beaks trimmed because it's not uncommon for them to attack one another, pluck feathers or peck so violently they injure or kill another bird. Beak trimming protects chickens and reduces the chance of them hurting one another.



A shot of prevention

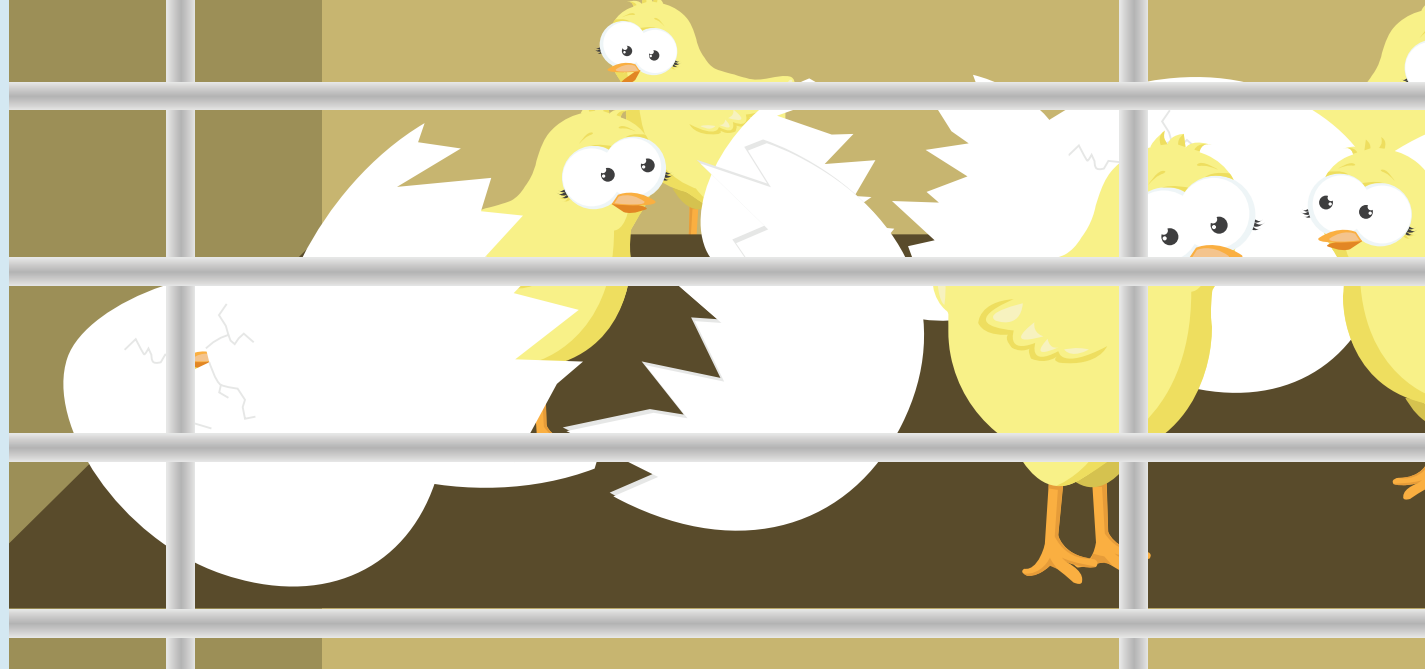
When chickens are born in the hatchery, they receive vaccinations of special medicines to protect them from certain diseases. Like you, they receive additional vaccinations as they grow. The goal is the same for humans and chickens: protect us before we get sick.



Understanding the labeling

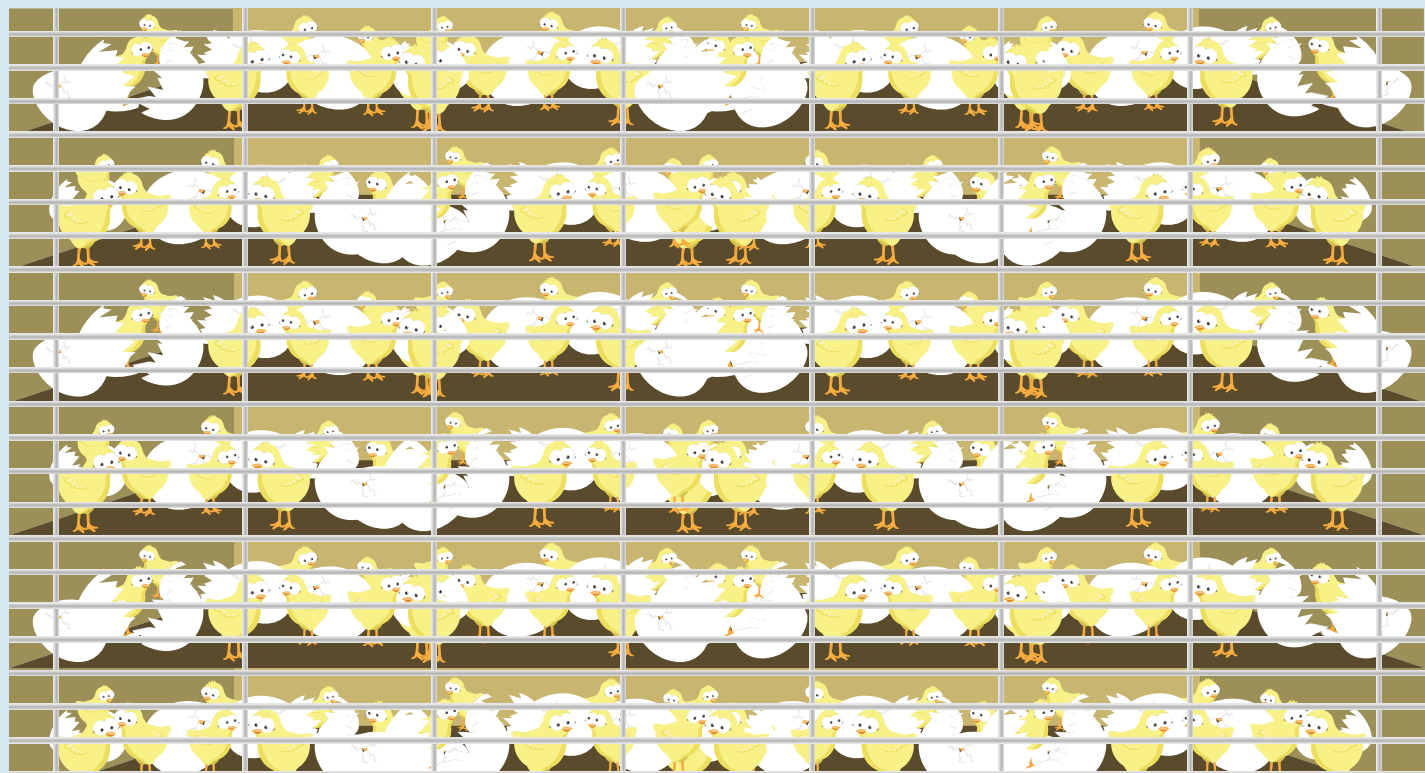
Some egg cartons boast being hormone-free, which means the chickens didn't receive any artificial hormones (chemical substances that affect body functions). That's true because ALL eggs produced in the United States are hormone-free. (Some people think chickens are bigger today than they used to be. That's also true—but it's not due to hormones or steroids. They're simply eating better!)

Some egg cartons also say that the eggs are free of antibiotics. Again, that's true—and it's true for all eggs produced in the United States. While hens may be given antibiotics if they are ill, we don't need to worry. When hens are ill, they stop laying eggs for awhile.



"Oh, look!" adds Lucy. "One baby chick is trying to make her way into the world. Come on, honey. Come on out!"

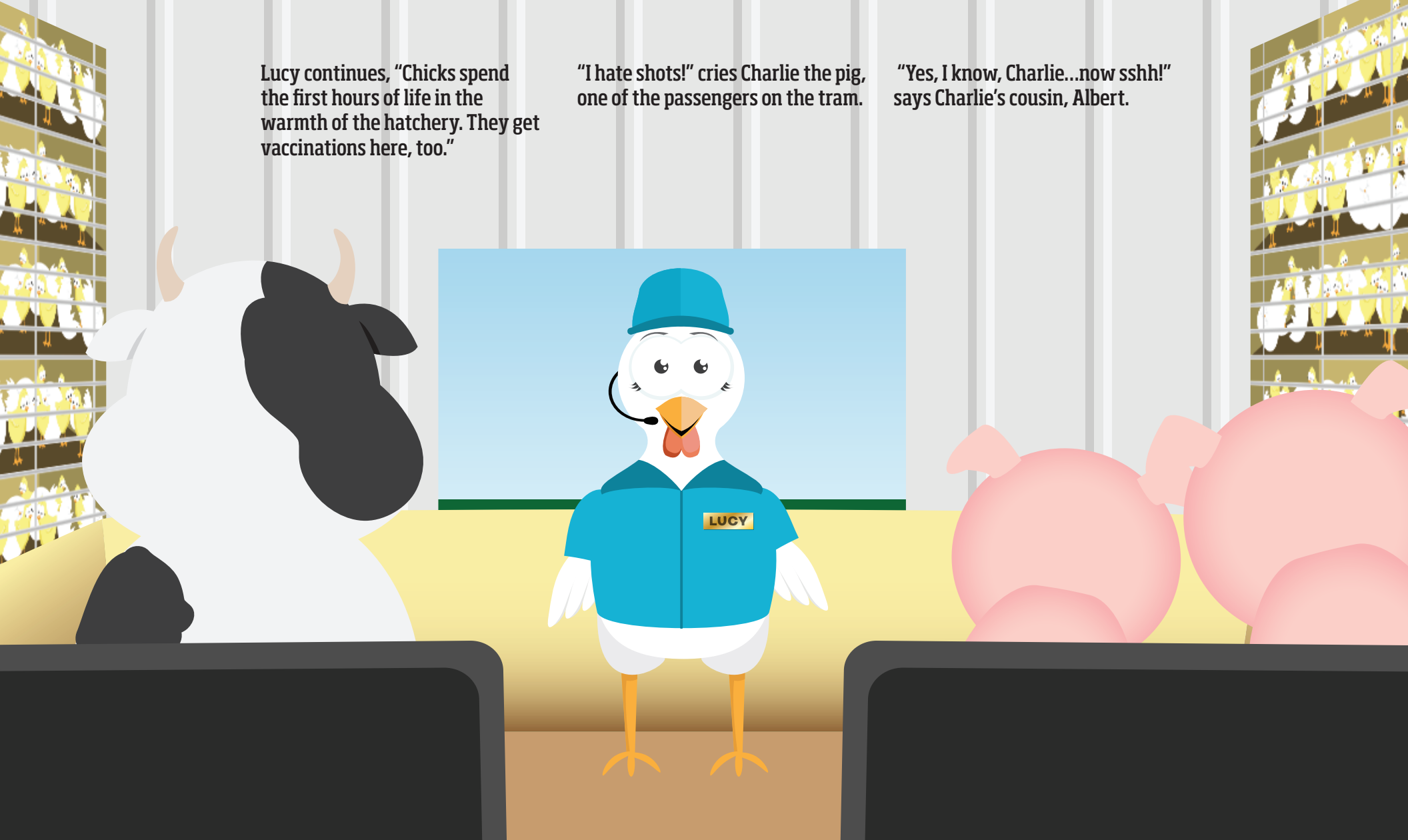
Tram passengers excitedly look on as they "ooh" and "ahh" at the hundreds of fuzzy, new creatures.



Lucy continues, "Chicks spend the first hours of life in the warmth of the hatchery. They get vaccinations here, too."

"I hate shots!" cries Charlie the pig, one of the passengers on the tram.

"Yes, I know, Charlie...now sshh!" says Charlie's cousin, Albert.

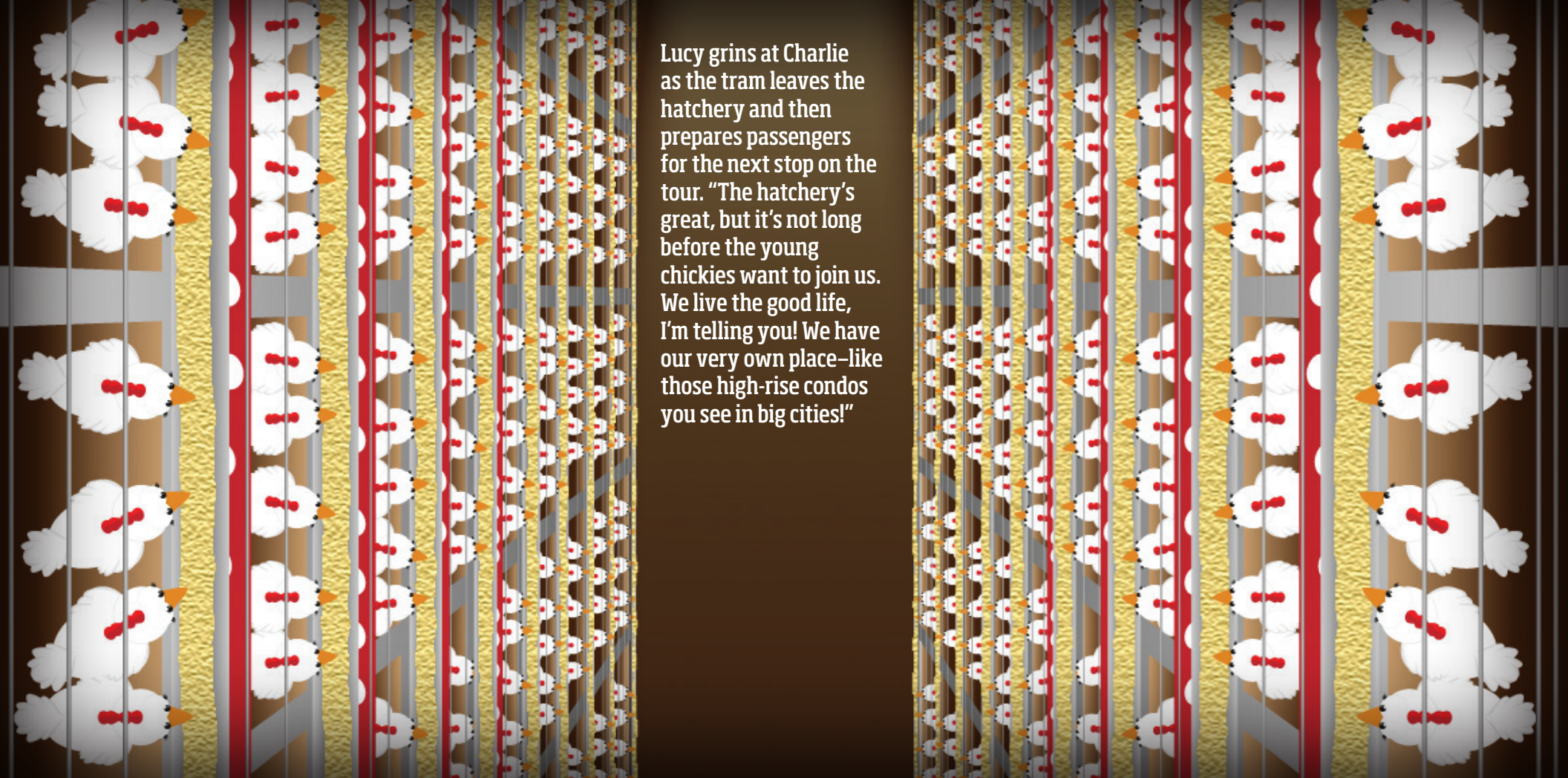


Broilers raised for meat

Some chickens are raised for eggs. Others—called broilers—are raised for meat. The most common broilers today are Cornish Crosses, or Cornish-Rocks.

Graded on quality

Like egg-laying hens, broilers are inspected for quality and given a grade. The two primary grades are USDA Grade A and USDA Grade B.



Lucy grins at Charlie as the tram leaves the hatchery and then prepares passengers for the next stop on the tour. "The hatchery's great, but it's not long before the young chickies want to join us. We live the good life, I'm telling you! We have our very own place—like those high-rise condos you see in big cities!"

Laying cycle

Birth to 4 weeks:

Spend first weeks of life under heating lamps

16 weeks:

Transferred to laying facilities, or another part of the barn designated for laying

17-19 weeks:

Begin laying cycle, which typically lasts 56 weeks

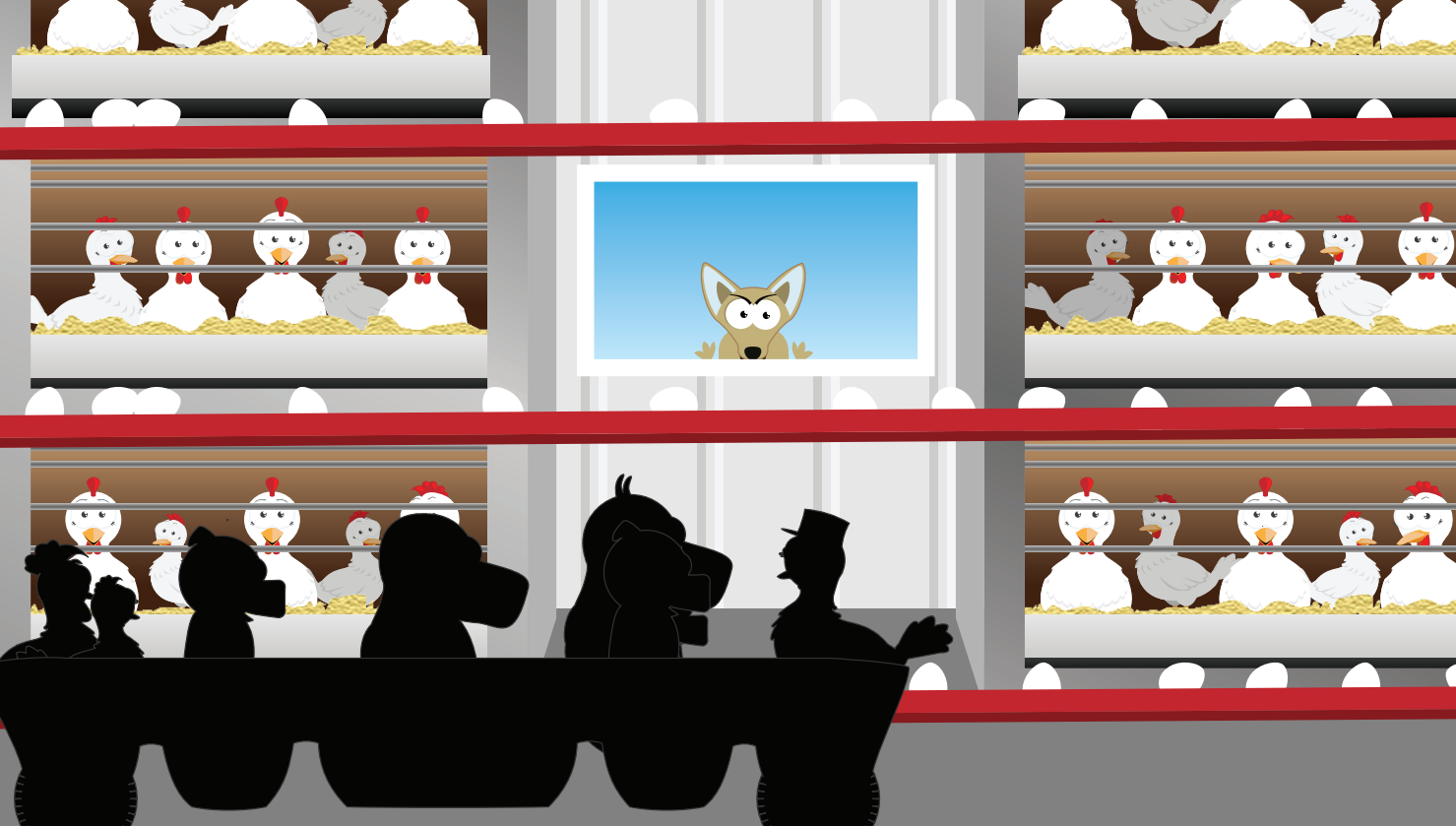
Through 2-3 years of age:

Repeat laying cycle - laying about 259 eggs per year

Experiment!

How do you tell if an egg is hard-cooked or raw?

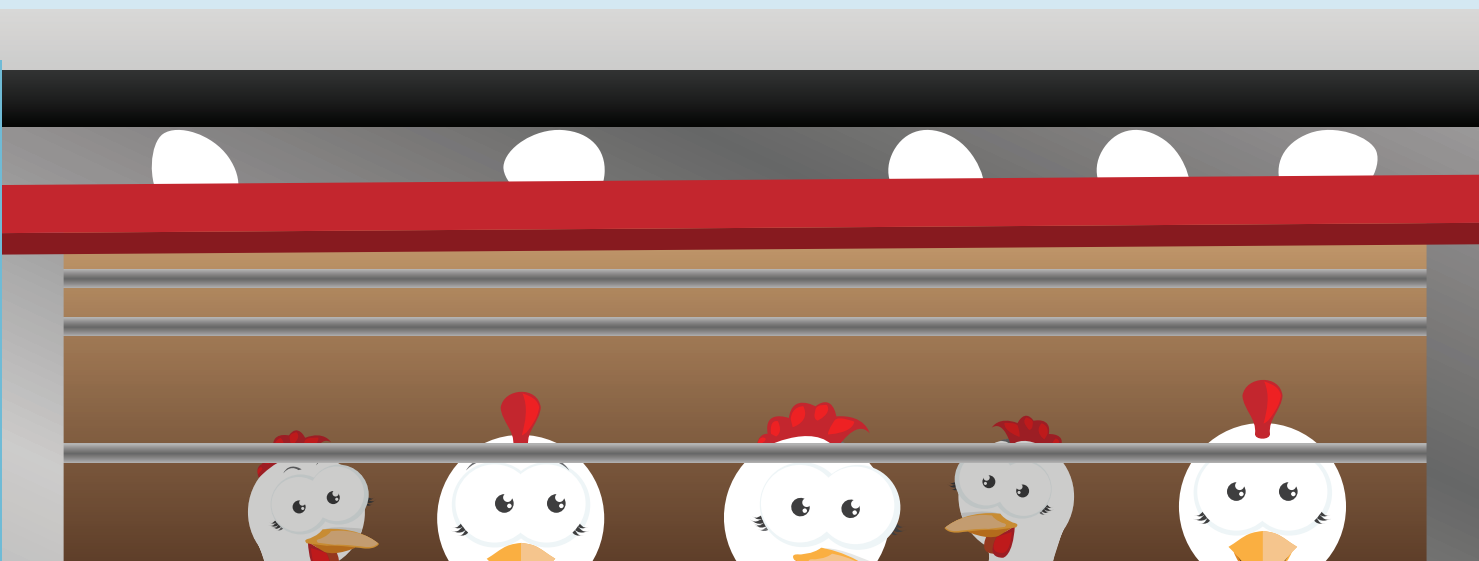
Spin it! If the egg spins easily, it is hard-cooked. If the egg wobbles, it is raw.



As the tram passes a window, a frustrated coyote is seen peering into the barn.

"And we're protected from the 'wild,'" declares Lucy as she taunts the coyote. "Mmm, hmm. Safe in here," she adds. "And we're all close together—just like we like it!"

As the tram proceeds through the high-rise and passes a number of fast-moving conveyor belts, an inquisitive young passenger asks, "What's that?"



Modern production facilities

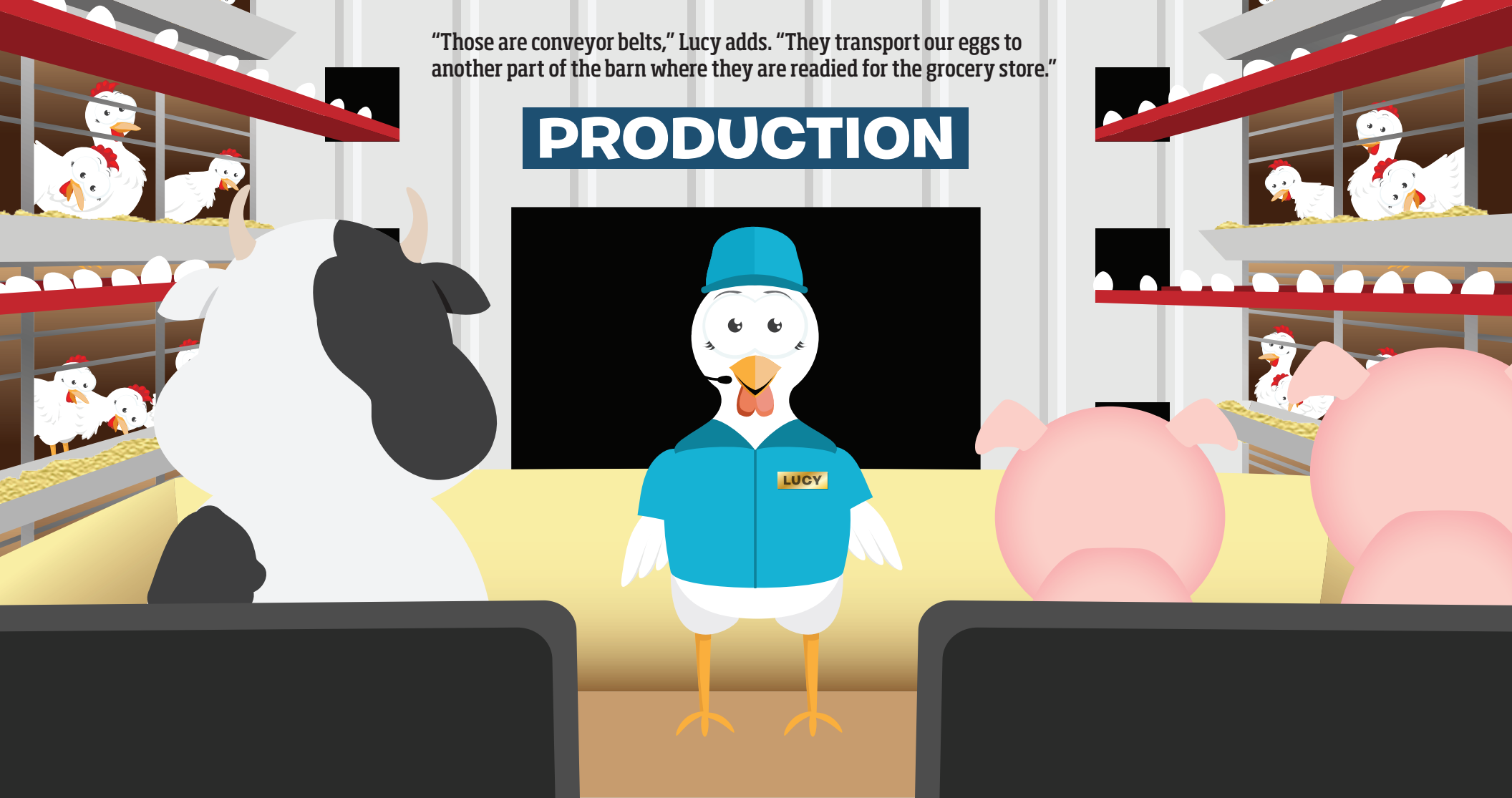
Some people still think of chicks in small, red barns, but the truth is most modern poultry facilities are large, enclosed buildings that protect the chickens from weather, predators (think eagles, foxes and wolves!), and diseases from wild birds. There are two main types of chicken farms:

In-line production: Hen houses side-by-side and linked by a conveyor belt that leads to a central processing building where eggs are sorted, graded, packed and shipped.

Off-line production: Similar to in-line production, but eggs are sent to another facility to be sorted and graded.

"Those are conveyor belts," Lucy adds. "They transport our eggs to another part of the barn where they are readied for the grocery store."

PRODUCTION



From hen house to your house

Delivering eggs from the hen house to your house happens faster than you may think! After hens lay eggs, there are four main steps:

Collecting

While some eggs are still gathered by hand, most are collected by automated gathering belts in today's modern facilities.

Washing

Eggs are washed to make sure they are safe and clean.

Sorting and packing

Eggs are sorted according to size, and are placed in cartons.

Shipping

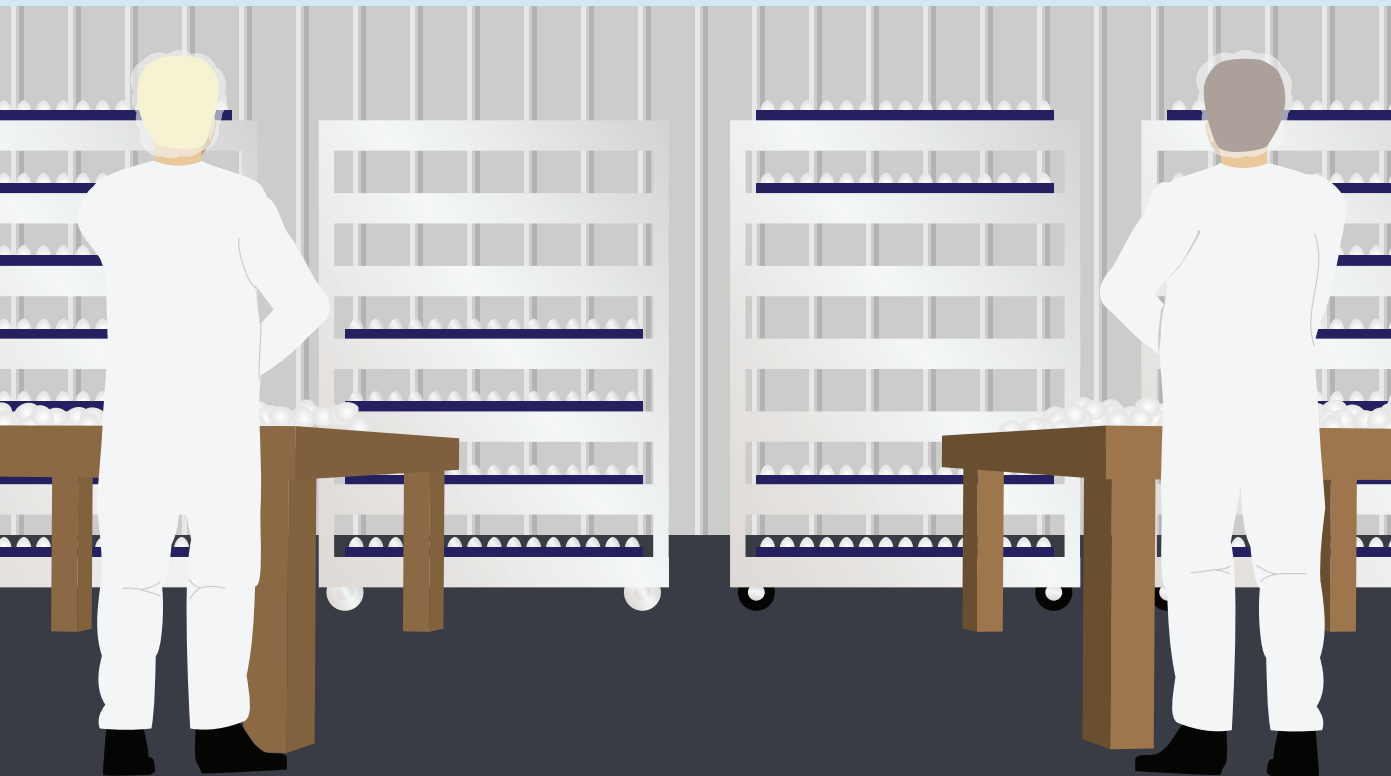
Eggs are shipped in refrigerated trucks. Most eggs reach the grocery store just one day after being laid. Isn't that amazing?

PRODUCTION



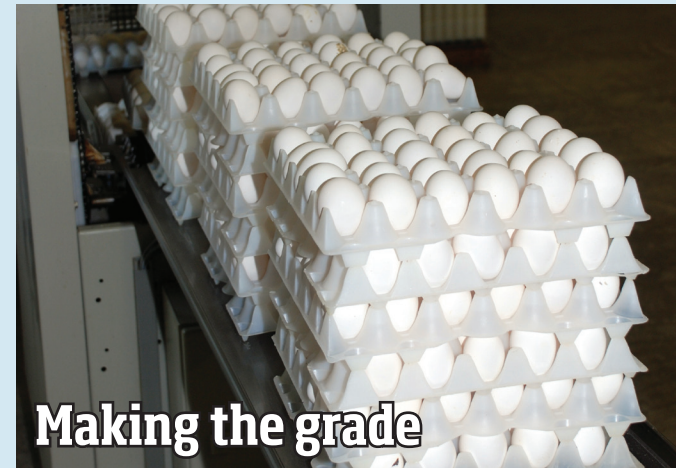
"The people creatures do all sorts of work to make sure the eggs are clean and safe to eat.

And take it from me, they are deeee-licious!"



The good life on the inside

Broilers are raised in "grow-out houses," which have automated systems that control heating, ventilation, water and feed. In these houses, chickens drink from water lines equipped with nipples like those on a baby bottle. There also are feed lines that deliver feed to trays where the chickens eat. And when they aren't eating or drinking, they can roam freely in a wide open space inside the barn.



Making the grade

Eggs have to pass a test before they are sold in stores. And they get grades, too! In the United States, egg grades are AA, A and B.

Grade AA eggs have thick, firm whites and round yolks.

Grade A eggs are like Grade AA, but their whites are not quite as firm.

Grade B eggs are typically weaker or abnormally shaped, but they have the same good nutrition as A and AA!

Chicken Glossary

Free range

Free range chickens have access to the outdoors. Generally, this means they are in a fenced area outside the chicken house. Less than one percent of chickens nationwide are raised as free range.

Organic

Organic refers to the way chickens are raised. An organic label does not mean that the product's safer, better tasting or healthier—just that it was raised using an organic method.

Produced without Hormones

No artificial or added hormones are used in the production of any poultry in the United States. That means all chicken is hormone-free.

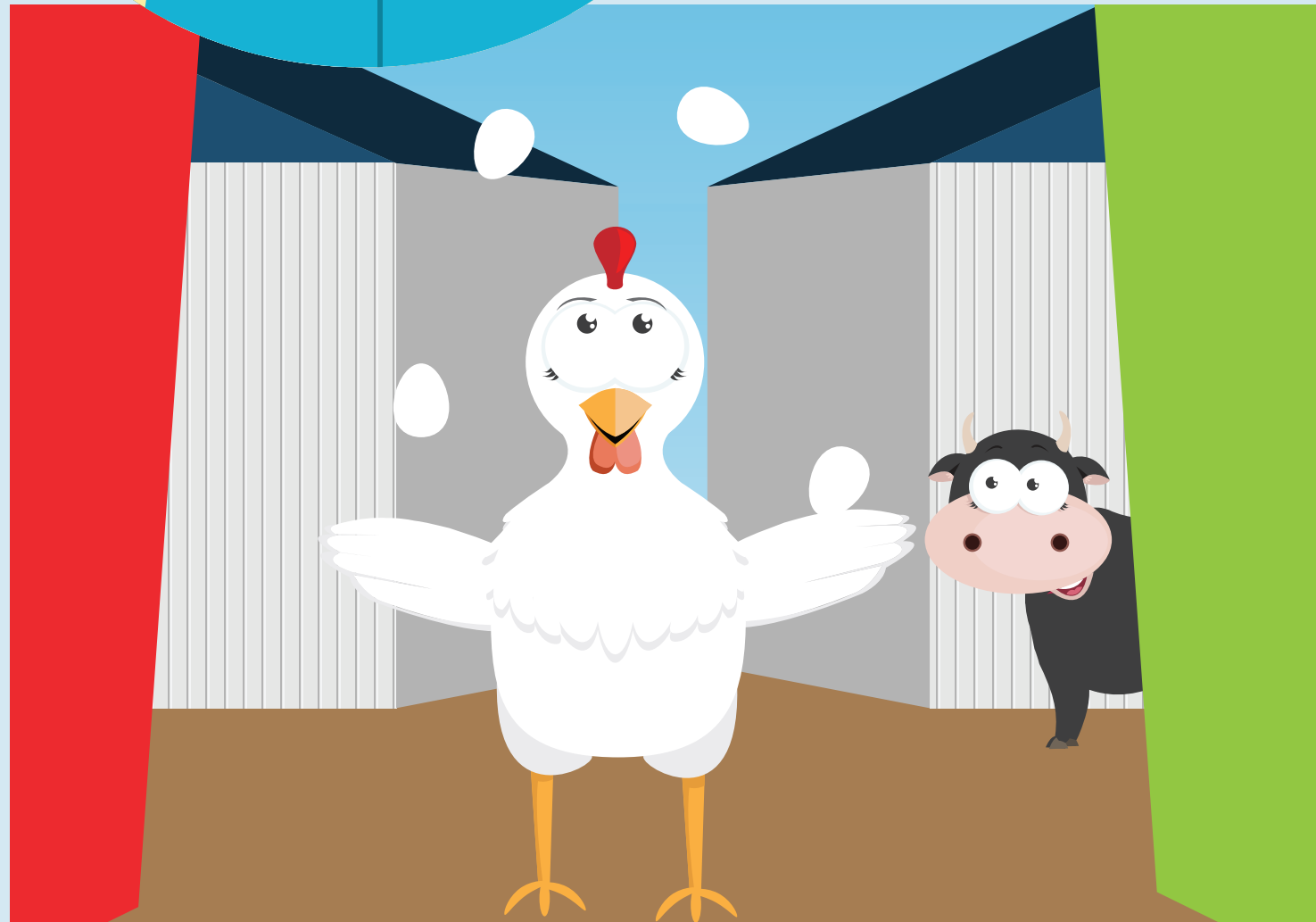
"Raised without Antibiotics" or "Antibiotic-Free"

These terms mean that no antibiotics were used for the flock for disease prevention or treatment.



"Well folks, that concludes our tour," exclaims Lucy. "Now go enjoy some egg-cellent activities at our Fun Fair. There are so many egg-citing things to do. I think you'll find that it's egg-actly what you're looking for."

At the Fun Fair, happy visitors are enjoying the festivities. One very coordinated chicken is "wowing" the crowd with his impressive juggling skills.



DUNK BOOTH



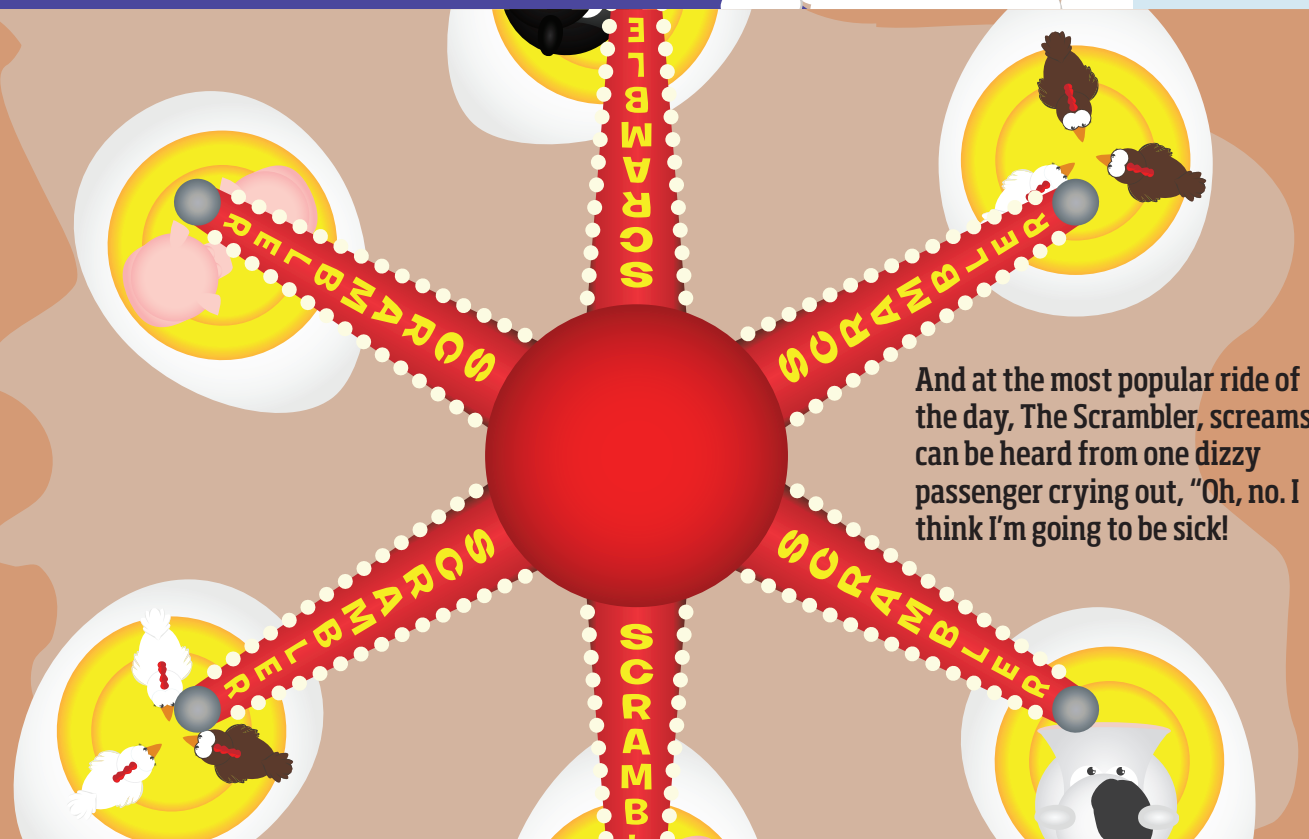
At the dunk booth, an inquisitive chicken who is anticipating her fall into the water, exclaims to the guest who ready to throw the first pitch, "You look familiar!"



"Uh...really, I'm new to the area," replies the wolf in sheep's clothing.

The great egg debate: white versus brown

The color of the egg shell is determined by the breed of the chicken. Breeds with white earlobes ordinarily lay white eggs, while breeds with red earlobes ordinarily lay brown eggs. (Ever wonder why they don't lay red eggs?) Interestingly, though, the color of the egg has nothing to do with its quality, flavor, nutritional value or cooking characteristics.



And at the most popular ride of the day, The Scrambler, screams can be heard from one dizzy passenger crying out, "Oh, no. I think I'm going to be sick!"



Straight up!

The broiler industry is known for its use of vertical integration. This term refers to the process of producing chicken meat. It starts with “integrators,” such as hatcheries, feed mills, grain elevators or processing plants, that contract with individual farmers to grow chickens. The integrators do everything but raise the birds. That’s the farmers’ job. The farmers feed the birds and make sure the temperature, humidity and air quality is comfortable for the birds.



As Lucy’s tour group prepares to head to the Fun Fair, she adds, “Thanks for joining us today. I hope you enjoyed seeing how we chicks live. Does anyone have any final questions?”

One curious cow steps forward and replies, “Yes, I do... So why did the chicken cross the road?”





Word Search

I	B	E	U	W	N	F	X	M	S	J	W	B	K	U	V
T	A	P	Z	Q	L	D	M	Z	E	A	H	N	I	M	G
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G	P	O	U	L	T	R	Y	T	W	C	E	R	V	Z	X

Breed

Broiler

Chicken

Cornish Rocks

Grade A

Hard Boiled

New Hampshire

Poultry

Pullet

Ready To Cook

Scrambled Eggs

USDA

White Leghorn

(Solution on next page.)

Barnyard Chronicles Teacher Tips

Bring the barnyard into your classroom. Consider supporting your curriculum with these ideas!

Social studies

- Invite a poultry producer to the classroom for a career day presentation; encourage students to prepare interview questions ahead of time.
- Take a field trip to a local poultry production facility or a virtual tour online, and have students write an “eggpressions report” on what they learned.

Art

- Challenge students’ creativity by designing a menu of eggciting egg dishes for a new local restaurant called Eddie’s Eggcellent Eggs. The menu design should include a restaurant logo, creative names for the egg dishes and pictures of the food items.
- Create a life-cycle chain activity in which major activities of the poultry production process, described in *Barnyard Chronicles Volume II: Community Day*, are documented on sets of 3 X 5 cards. Have students work in teams to assemble the production activities in the order of their occurrence in the production cycle. This can be a timed activity!

Science

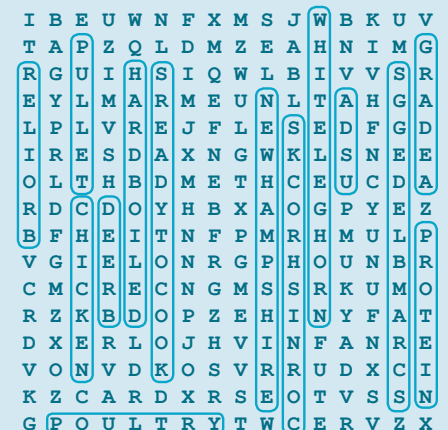
- Incubate eggs and hatch baby chicks in the classroom - this fun and educational introduction to life sciences will be a favorite among students!

Language arts

- Assign a “procedure writing” activity in which students describe how to make their favorite egg recipe. The student’s completed assignment (which may be presented to the entire class) must: provide clear, step-by-step instructions, consist of proper sentence structure and grammar, and include a hand-drawn picture of the final food product.

Health

- Introduce students to the “Step Up To A Healthier You” Food Pyramid and discuss how and where the egg fits in.
- Have students work in teams to research the steps a poultry producer takes with his or her chickens to ensure the eggs we eat are healthy and nutritious.



Read-to-Learn Comprehension Questions

Barnyard Chronicles Story

- What do you think was the main purpose of the Community Day being held at Summerville Farms?
- What happens in the hatchery?
- Where do chickens live after they leave the hatchery? What did you notice about their new environment?
- What is the purpose of the conveyor belts?
- Are chickens safe living in the barns? What could hurt a chicken if it was not protected in the barn?

Factual Sidebar Information

- What are some of the products found in a grocery store that come from a chicken?
- What do chickens eat? How are they fed?
- What's the difference between laying hens and broilers?
- What are the four main steps of delivering eggs from the henhouse to the grocery store?
- What do the different egg grades mean?
- Do chickens prefer to have lots of space to spread out away from other chickens or do they prefer to be close to one another?

Bonus Question

- Identify some ways the author and illustrator pulled humorous chicken and egg references into the story.

Key Learning Points

- Chickens are raised in a safe and comfortable environment—one that protects them from predators and diseases by wild birds.
- High-quality feed (made from corn and soybeans often grown on the same land!), vaccinations and beak-trimming are just some of the many ways farmers take care of their poultry livestock and keep them healthy.
- At modern poultry facilities, eggs can be washed, sorted, graded, packed and shipped, arriving at the grocery store typically within 24-48 hours after being hatched.



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