

Themes From Rural Life

**A Resource Book For Adult Literacy And
ESL**

**Dan and Ellen Friesen
Illustrations by John Morrall**

THEMES FROM RURAL LIFE (1998)

By Dan and Ellen Friesen

Drawings by John Morrall

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Single copies or class sets of Themes from Rural Life may be purchased for \$7.95 per copy, plus shipping costs, by writing to:

Dan and Ellen Friesen

L.E.A.R.N. (Lifelong Education for Adults: Reading & Numeracy)

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A book of suggested activities to accompany Themes from Rural Life will be available in the spring of 1999. For further information, please contact the authors at the address above, or telephone 1-204-937-4646.

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Tourist Brochures
Sizzle Through Summer
Warm Up to Winter

promotional material

Prairie Weather

poem

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended as a resource that can be used in a variety of flexible and creative ways to meet a wide range of needs in rural literacy programs.

The concept of a farming-based language-learning resource grew out of our experience with new Canadians who immigrated to Manitoba to farm and who needed (quickly) a working vocabulary to enable them to interact with neighbors and the rural business community. We knew of no materials that effectively addressed this need. Such a resource, we felt, could serve as well in a rural literacy class as in an ESL class.

The writing samples in this booklet represent a variety of common genres. Written at various reading levels, using verb forms of varied complexity, these pieces can serve as models and springboards for oral and written language activities. We hope, in the near future, to develop an activity book to accompany this resource.

The vocabulary lists, by no means exhaustive, are generally divided into Content Words, based on pictures and text, and Related Words, which can obviously be expanded or adapted for individual needs.

Our thanks to Roblin artist John Morrall for his excellent illustrations. As a means of stimulating vocabulary growth, they form an integral part of this material. Thanks to Muriel Lowe for her contributions regarding dairy and hog farming, to several farmer friends and students for their practical advice, and to the Labour Market Training Project in Russell for the use of LMTP's computer.

We gratefully acknowledge the funding received for this project from the National Literacy Secretariat; the encouragement and guidance of Marie Matheson, our Rural Literacy Coordinator; and the moral support of our Literacy Working Group at L.E.A.R.N. (Lifelong Education for Adults: Reading and Numeracy).

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A CAREFUL HOMEOWNER

A careful homeowner mows his lawn every week. He whippersnips the long grass that grows in difficult places. He rakes the leaves that fall from the trees. He clips and trims his hedges and shrubs. He paints his house when it needs it. His house and yard look neat and well-kept. His neighbors enjoy driving by his place.

A BEAUTIFUL YARD

We went to visit our neighbors yesterday. They have a beautiful yard. The grass and trees are very green and healthy. The flowers are more colorful than the rainbow! Best of all, they have a few comfortable lawn chairs where friends can sit and talk.

GARDENING

The Gardening Cycle

Every spring I till my garden with the rototiller. Then I rake the soil (ouch, my sore back!). I make rows with a hoe. I use twine tied between two stakes to make the rows straight. I plant seeds in each row and put a marker at one end. I use a hoe to cover the seeds. I cover small seeds with a shallow layer of soil, and large seeds with a deeper layer.

During the summer, I weed the garden every week and water it when it doesn't rain. I look for insects and diseases, and hope I don't find any! I grow peas, beans, corn, lettuce and many other vegetables.

I harvest my vegetables when they are ready. I like digging potatoes because I find treasure under every plant.

Every year, I write the date we plant the garden, and the kinds of seeds we sow, in my gardening book. I like to see the changes from year to year.

HOW TO FREEZE PEAS.

Pick peas when the pods are plump but not old.

Shell the peas into a large bowl.

Put the peas into a colander and wash them with cold water.

Blanch 2 cups of peas in boiling water for 3 minutes (4 minutes over steam).

Cool the peas quickly with cold water.

Drain them and spread them out on a dry towel.

Put the peas into a small freezer bag.

Expel the air from the bag and seal it.

Write the date on the bag.

Put the filled bags into your freezer immediately.

PICKLES LIKE GRANDMOTHER MADE

I make pickles the same way my grandmother made them.

She picked pails of small cucumbers early in the morning. Then she washed several quart sealers. She also washed and brushed the cucumbers and pricked each one with a fork. She scalded the sealers and put a head of dill and a clove of garlic in each one. She packed cucumbers into the sealers like green sardines in a can. Then she poured boiling brine over the cucumbers and immediately sealed the jar. She put a boiled rubber ring on a glass top and screwed down the glass top with a metal ring. After the sealers cooled, she tamed them upside down for a few hours to check for leaks. She stored them on shelves in her basement. Sometimes her grandsons would go down, open a jar of pickles and eat them all at once.

I seal my jars with boiled metal tops instead of glass tops. The center of a sealed metal top stays dented downward so I can easily see which jars are sealed and which are not. Otherwise, my dill pickles look and taste just like my grandmother's, and my sons can eat a whole jar of them at once, too.

BRINE

Boil together in a large kettle: 3 quarts water, 1 quart vinegar, 3/4 cups pickling salt.
Pour over cucumbers and seal.

LETTERS FROM A PRAIRIE FARMER

May 2, 1998

Dear Folks,

At last it is spring here on the prairie. The snow is gone, and the fields are nearly dry. We are busy. This week I picked stones on the summerfallow. The new stonepicker was a big help. This morning I harrowed the south field, and tomorrow I'll seed it to wheat. The press drill is old, but it still works well.

In a few weeks (before we know it) the weeds will be up. The chemicals are too expensive, but we'll have to spray if we want a good crop.

Until next time, Jim

September 3, 1998

Dear Folks,

Already it is fall here. The summer is gone, and the crops are nearly ripe, so we are very busy. Last week I repaired the swather. The old combine will be a bigger problem. Yesterday I swathed the west wheatfield, and in a few days we'll combine it. The crop is not heavy, but it is high in protein.

Before we know it the snow will be falling. The season is very short, so we'll have to hurry if we want to get ready for winter.

Love, Jim

DIARY OF A CATTLE WOMAN

Fri., Feb. 27:

Tiny had twins last night. She was licking the first calf and seemed very surprised when the second one came! We named them Jack and Jill. The temperature was -30C, so we took both calves into our basement and warmed them up. Our kids like feeding them their mother's milk from a bottle.

Tues., Mar. 3:

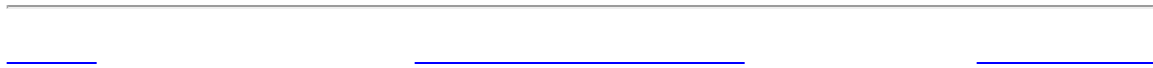
Our twin babies are back in the barn with their proud Mama. This morning we had to pull a calf from Big Cheese (it was coming backward). The kids hoped they could bottle-feed this baby, too, but Cheddar can suck very well on her own. We have fun naming our calves; our cattle are almost like family.

Mon., Mar.9:

We had to call the vet today. Josie's calf was too big, so she needed a Caesarean. The vet sewed her up as neat as a pin. We named her calf Caesar.

Mon., Apr. 20:

June didn't come for milking yesterday afternoon, so we went looking for her. We finally found her, stuck in a bog with only her head above water. We rescued her with the tractor and some long chains. She pulled through!



FROM STABLE TO TABLE

Kurt the dairy farmer, gets up quietly. It's four a.m. He hurries to the barn, where he meets Howard, his hired man. Howard is already feeding the cows. Later in the day, the two men will crush and mix another truckload of grain. But right now it's time to milk.

One by one, the Holsteins take their turns in the milking parlour. Kurt washes each cow's udder with disinfectant. He checks for signs of injury or disease. Then he attaches the milking machine inflations to the teats. The cows stand still because they are used to this.

A pipeline carries the fresh, warm milk to a large stainless steel tank where it is cooled quickly. The temperature must be down before the tank truck comes. The tanker takes the raw milk to a processing plant in the city. There it will be tested, pasteurized and processed into skim milk, 2% milk, sour cream, yogurt cheese, ice cream, etc.

Kurt gets a good price for the milk he ships, but he also pays a good price for the milk products he buys at the local grocery store. And he works hard for what he gets. At three p.m., for instance, he goes back to the barn and starts all over again.

THE PMU INDUSTRY: YES OR NO?

There are 282 horse ranchers in Manitoba who sell PMU (pregnant mares' urine) to a laboratory. This lab makes Premarin, a source of estrogen used world-wide in hormone replacement therapy. Among other things, it controls the symptoms of menopause. Some people praise the PMU industry, others want to shut it down.

One of the disagreements is over treatment of the horses. Animal rights activists say the mares are mistreated: they are tied up in a barn for six months at a time, stand on concrete, can't lie down, and don't get enough feed and water. But the ranchers say it is important to them to keep their mares healthy and comfortable. Even though the animals are tied, they can move about in their stalls and can lie down anytime on the straw-covered floor (some barns use a tough rubber floor mat in each stall; a few use wood). The horses are exercised, fed and watered to keep them in good condition. Most inspection teams agree that the horses are well cared for.

Another argument is about the foals born in spring. Some people are upset because they hear that most newborns, especially males, are killed. This seems very cruel and wasteful. But people in the PMU industry quote figures to show that most of the foals are sold for showing, pleasure riding and ranch work. Others are used as replacement stock, while some are raised for the meat markets. Very few, if any, are put down.

A third argument is about whether the product, Premarin, is even needed. Those who say no point out that estrogen replacements can be made from synthetic (man-made) materials. PMU supporters believe it is better to use organic (natural) materials. They argue that the PMU industry provides work, a good income and a healthy lifestyle for 282 Manitoba families while also controlling a worldwide health problem.

The future of the PMU industry will probably depend on which side can win the most public and political support. The arguments are not over yet.

TWO HOG FARMERS TALK

"That's a good litter, Tom."

"Yup! They were born last night. Long bodies - good pink colour - not a runt among them. Tonight I'm going to pull their sharp back teeth so they won't hurt the sow when they feed."

"Need any help? I'd like to see how you do that."

"Sure thing, Bill. Later you can help me give them iron shots. I'll probably vaccinate them against pneumonia and rhinitis and erysipelas, too."

"Pigs can run into a lot of trouble, eh?"

"Yeah. I have to dock their tails, too, so they don't start chewing on each other. And I'll have to castrate the males of the litter."

"I see you have a farrowing crate. It keeps the sow from lying on her little ones, I guess."

"Yes. It protects me from the sow, too. She gets ornery when I touch her babies."

"I'll have to get some of those crates. We have five sows that will farrow next month. I've got lots to learn before then. Well, I have to go now. See you tonight."

A few months later, Bill visits his neighbor's barn again.

"Your pigs are looking pretty healthy, Tom. I'd like to look at the pens you've built in your barn."

"They're very handy. I can sort the hogs easily and keep them separated by size."

"And you have a feed bunk and watering bowl in each pen?"

"Right. They eat their grain and drink whenever they want to."

"I see you have raised floors covered with straw. That keeps your animals warm and dry, I guess?"

"Yes, and when I want to come in with the tractor and loader to clean up, I just close the pen gates and drive through. That part is pretty easy."

"Is that better than a manure pit under the floor?"

I think it's safer. There's always the danger of poisonous gases from a manure pit."

"Well thanks, Tom. I have to go now. Looks like we'll both be pretty busy."

EXOTICS: THE NEW AGRICULTURE

Horses, cows, pigs and chickens were the animals raised by most Canadian farmers fifty years ago. Today we see very different-looking animals on some Canadian farms. Some of these animals are a long way from home; others were native to this land before the European explorers came. Let's take a quick look at some examples of each group.

IMPORTED ANIMALS:

Emus and Ostriches

Emus and ostriches are from Australia. These birds are ratites; they have no keel (breastbone) and cannot fly. An ostrich can grow to 2.5 m (8 ft.) tall. It can weigh up to 160 kg (350 lbs.). Emus grow to 1.5 m (5 ft.) and weigh 55-80 kg (125-150 lbs).

These birds have been raised in Canada since the 1980's. Back in Australia they are valued for their hide, meat and oil, but in this country the demand for these products is still small. Most ratite farmers sell their birds as yearlings, two-year-olds or adult breeding pairs. The start-up costs for an emu or ostrich farmer are high.

Llamas and Alpacas

The llama and alpaca are from South America. Both are related to the camel, but are smaller. In the Andes Mountains they are used as pack animals. Llamas and alpacas are wanted for their soft hair, which is used to make wool and cloth. These animals also make good pets for children.

A good breeding llama can cost \$30,000 or more. Llamas have been raised in Canada for only about ten years, and there are only about 10,000 head in this country. The number is expected to grow because llamas are not hard to raise. They have easy births, a good digestive system, and they don't mind our cold winters.

FARMERS WIN ELK LOTTERY

(Condensed from The Winnipeg Free Press, Friday, Sept. 26, 1997)

Forty-four Manitoba farmers have won a chance to buy elk worth thousands of dollars from the province.

The Department of Agriculture divided 250 elk, captured in the past two years, into 44 groups. Lyleton-area farmer, Ron White, whose number was selected in the draw, can buy six cows and one mature bull for \$52,000. He says the price is reasonable.

White, a grain farmer, is optimistic about the future. "The returns are better for elk ranching," he says.

Elk antlers are worth \$80 to \$90 per pound, and the average rack weighs about 20 pounds. About 80% of antlers go to Korea, where they are used to make natural medicines.

Bill Steeds, manager of livestock development and diversification with the Department of Agriculture, says elk ranching is good for Manitobans. "It's a multi-million dollar business across Canada," he said.

Plans are in the works for more draws in the province. Farmers must meet certain standards to enter the draw.

TOURIST BROCHURES

SIZZLE THROUGH SUMMER

Bear and moose breaking through tall trees, deer dotting grassy hillsides, loons crying over blue lakes - this is the Parkland in the summertime.

Experience it firsthand by camping in our parks, hiking our trails, canoeing our rivers.

The Parkland provides great opportunities for hunting, fishing, golfing, photography and even berry picking.

"Sizzle" through this summer with us!

WARM UP TO WINTER

Want to heat up a Canadian Winter? Don't fly to Florida! Put on your woollies and join the outdoor crowd in the Parkland.

Skate or fish on a frozen lake. Snowmobile for miles through dense bush. Ski downhill or across the rolling countryside. You'll be toasty in no time.

If you'd rather beat the weather than join it, you might curl, watch a hockey game, sign up for a class, or just snuggle up to the fire with a book or your knitting.

Outdoors or in, The Parkland will take the chill out of your winter.

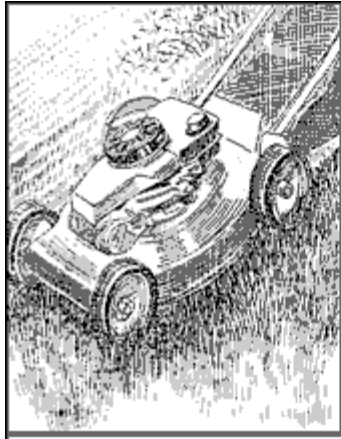
PRAIRIE WEATHER

Thunder is a wonder
Rain makes gain
A blizzard is frigid
And floods are a strain.

Lightning is frightening
Drought makes us doubt
Without prairie weather
What would we talk about?

THE FARM YARD VOCABULARY

house
garage
barn
poultry barn/chicken coop
grain bins/granaries
bale shed
machine shop
tractor
front-end loader
auger
fuel tanks
driveway
garden
shrubs
corrals
pasture
fence
dugout



YARD AND HOME CARE VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

homeowner
grass
place
rake
leaves
hedges
shrubs
neighbors

VERBS

mow
whippersnip
rake
clip
trim
paint
enjoy

ADJECTIVES

careful
difficult
neat
well-kept
beautiful
healthy
comfortable
colorful

RELATED WORDS

bagger

lawn mower

whipper snipper

weed eater

clippers

ladder

eaves/eavestroughs

roof/shingles

siding/stucco

chimney

window

brush/roller

flower beds

fruit trees

neighbors

cut

snip

prune

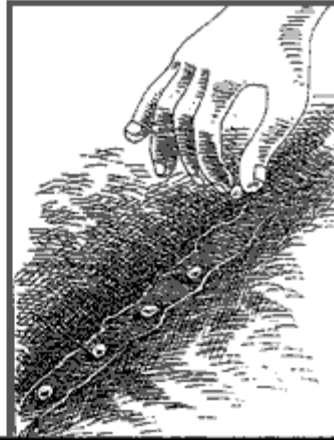
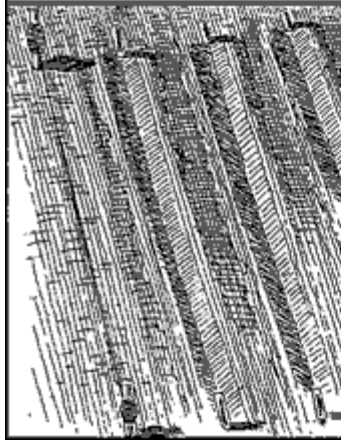
scrape

sand

paint

climb

hang on



VOCABULARY FOR THE GARDENING CYCLE

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

tiller/rototiller
rake
rows
hoe
twine (string)
markers
watering can
insects
diseases
vegetables
potatoes
treasure

VERBS

till
make
cover
water
pick/weed
grow
dig
harvest

ADJECTIVES

sore
straight

RELATED WORDS

row maker
hose/nozzle/coupling
sprinkler
pests/pesticide
insecticide
cabbage moth
cutworm
potato beetle
blight
instructions
caution
precautions
weeds

water
sprinkle
dust/spray

dangerous
successful
complete
satisfied
tired



HOW TO FREEZE PEAS

VOCABULARY

NOUNS

peas
pods
bowl
colander
water
pot
stove
towel
cup
bag
freezer
date

VERBS

pick
shell
wash
blanch
cool
drain
spread
dry
write

ADJECTIVES

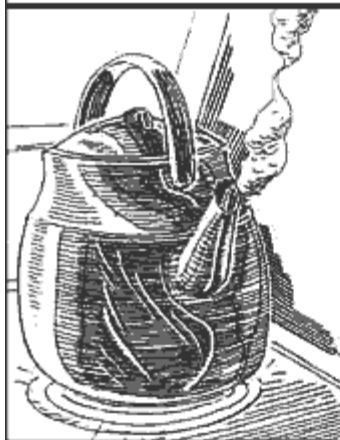
plump
large
boiling
dry
freezer (bag)
plastic (bag)
immediately

RELATED WORDS

deep-freeze

measure
store
preserve

green
fresh



PICKLES LIKE GRANDMOTHER MADE

VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

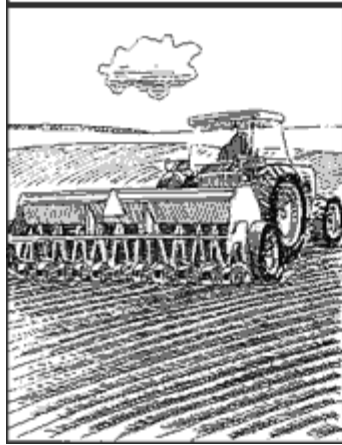
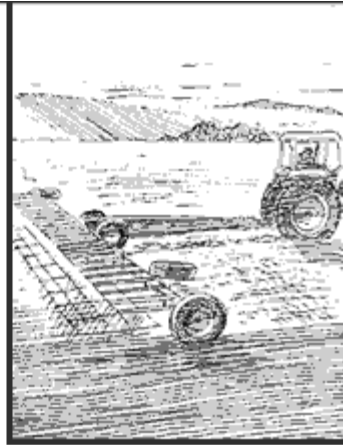
pickles
grandmother
pails
cucumbers
morning
sealers
fork
water
head
dill
clove
garlic
sardines
brine
rubber ring
metal ring
leaks
basement
grandsons
centre/center

VERBS

pick
wash
brush
prick
scald
pack
pour
seal
screw
cool
turn
check
store
test

ADJECTIVES/ADVERBS

small
early
quart
several
boiling
green
boiling
immediately
boiled
glass (top)
down/upside down
downward
easily



FIELD WORK VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

prairie
fields
stones
stonepicker
cultivator
harrows
press drill
sprayer
haybine
baler
swather
combine
auger
summerfallow
stubble

VERBS

pick
summerfallow
seed
mix
spray
bale
swath
combine
summerfallow

ADJECTIVES

expensive
hydraulic
forward
reverse

RELATED WORDS

bucket
cylinder
frame
hitch
drawbar
caution/danger
fertilizer
pest/pesticide
herbicide
fungus/fungicide
instructions

dump
hitch/hitch up
unhitch
cultivate
fertilize
clamp
weld
repair

anhydrous
dangerous

Wed., May 20:

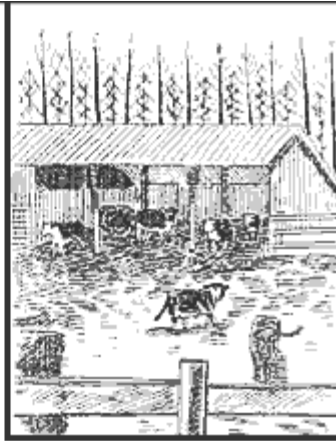
Lizzy was really wild today. She wouldn't go to her stall, so John tried to milk her outside. She wouldn't stand still, so he tied her tail to a willow tree. It was a bad idea! Lizzy just pulled the tree out and ran faster than ever because she was scared of the tree. Lizzy is full of tricks. We'll have to take her to the Auction Mart soon.

Mon., June 15:

Star has been limping for a few days. She has foot rot, so I tried to catch her to give her a shot of antibiotics. She forgot about her limp and ran like lightning. Animals don't like needles any more than humans do! I wish we had a cattle squeeze.

Tues., June 16:

I'm feeling very sad today. We trucked Big Cheese, along with Lizzy and a bunch of calves, to the Auction Mart this morning. Big Cheese was our favorite cow, but she was too old to keep. Why do I get so attached to our livestock? I guess that's part of being a cattle woman.



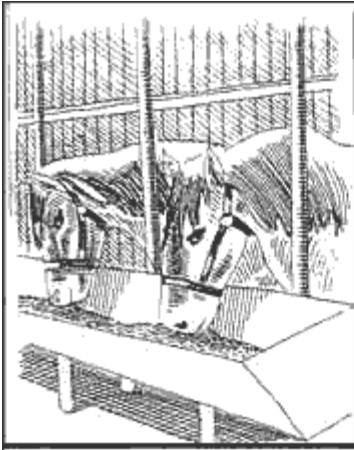
RELATED WORDS FOR CATTLE FARMING

NOUNS

cow
bull
heifer
steer
herd
pasture
corral
barbed wire
eartag
pole bam
bale ring/feeder
hay
trough
oiler
vet clinic
livestock
trailer
udder
milking machine
inflatons/hoses
pipeline/bulktank
calf puller
conversion
mixer
grinder
cattle prod
salt block
minerals
supplements
syringe

VERBS

graze
chew
tag
wear
dehorn
vaccinate
inoculate
itch
castrate



RELATED WORDS

NOUNS

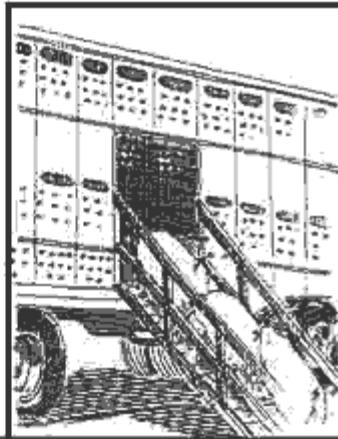
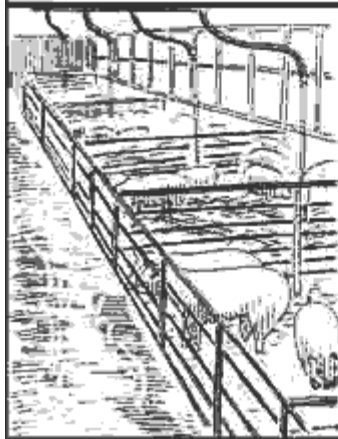
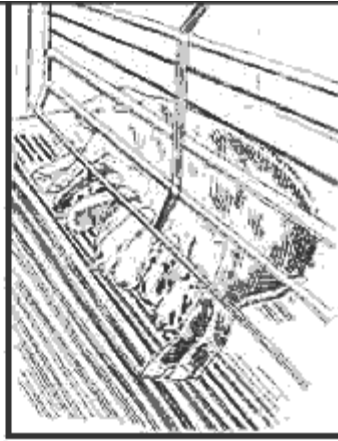
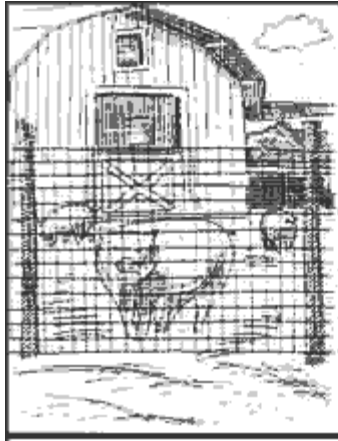
stud/stallion
brood mare
Belgian
Percheron
quarterhorse
timothy(hay)
rations
square(bales)
harness
quota/licence
controversy
inspector

VERBS

breed
preg-test
dump
ship
argue
debate
inspect
approve

ADJECTIVES/ADVERBS

bred
controversial



HOG FARMING VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

fitter
colour
runt
sow
iron
pneumonia
rhinitis
erysipelas
crate
neighbour
feed bunk
watering bowl
manure pit
gases

VERBS

vaccinate
dock
farrow
castrate
protect
sort
build up

ADJECTIVES/ ADVERBS

probably
healthy
easy
easily
separated
whenever
poisonous

RELATED WORDS

disease
vaccine
inspector
sanitation
gilt
boar

inspect
fumigate
wean

NATIVE ANIMALS

Bison

Once there were millions of wild bison roaming North America. The native peoples used these huge, shaggy animals as a source of food and clothing. They wasted very little when they killed a bison. Even so, by the late 1800's, very few bison were left. They were destroyed by over- hunting and the opening of the West by European settlers. Soon the only herds left were protected in National Parks.

For at least ten or fifteen years, a few ranchers on the prairies have been raising bison, also called buffalo. These powerful beasts with their thick coats of hair are easy to care for. They never need a barn in winter, and they can survive on very short grasses in the summer. There is a fair demand for their meat which is much like beef.

A BIT OF ADVICE

Farmers who want to raise flightless birds from Australia or hairy mammals from Tibet should learn all about them before risking their money. The same holds true for anybody who wants to earn a living by raising elk or bison. No business is free from risk, but you can reduce the risk by investing with your eyes wide open.

**VOCABULARY FOR
EXOTICS: THE NEW AGRICULTURE**

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

chicken
animal
emu
ostrich
Australia
ratite
keel
breastbone
hide
demand
product
yearling
adult
breeding pair
llama
alpaca
camel
pack animal
cloth
number
birth
system
Tibet
wild boar
bison
Boer goat

VERBS

raise
cannot
grow
want
expect
mind
learn
risk

ADJECTIVES/ ADVERBS

different-looking
very
long way
valued
small, smaller
start-up
related
soft
digestive
flightless

**VOCABULARY FOR
FARMERS WIN ELK LOTTERY**

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

chance
elk
thousands
dollars
province
Department of
Agriculture
price
future
returns
antlers
rack
medicine
manager
livestock
development
diversification
business
the works
draw
standards

VERBS

win
divide
captured
select
weigh
enter

ADJECTIVES

mature
reasonable
optimistic
average
natural
certain





TOURISM VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

bear
moose
hillside
summertime
parks
trails
opportunity
hunting
fishing
golfing
photography
berrypicking
woollies
Parkland
countryside
hockey
knitting
chill

VERBS

sizzle
break
dot
cry
experience
camp
hike
canoe
provide
heat up
skate
snowmobile
ski
beat
curl
watch
sign up
snuggle

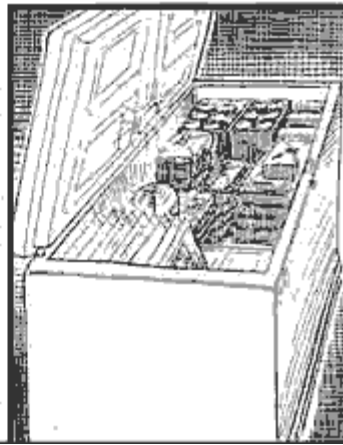
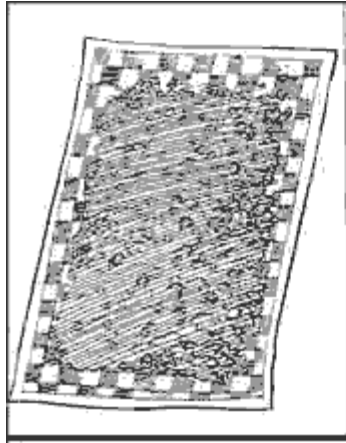
ADJECTIVES/ ADVERBS

tall
grassy
firsthand
outdoor
frozen
dense
downhill
rolling
toasty

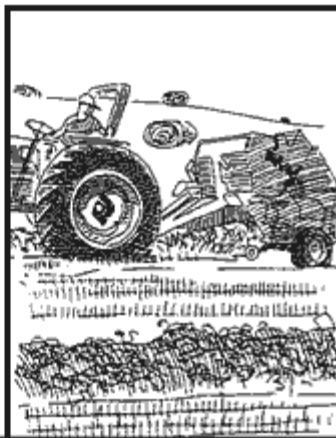
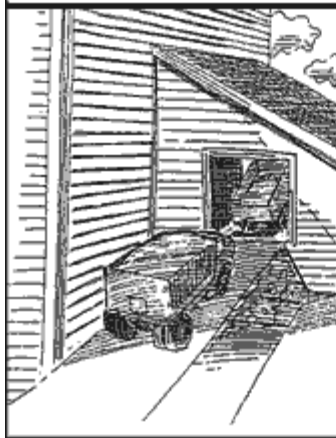
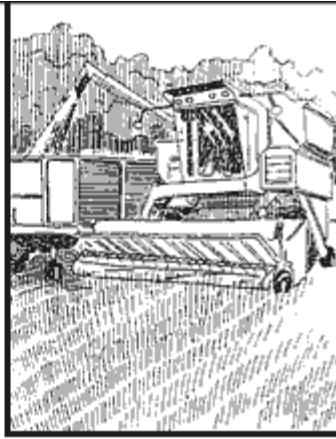
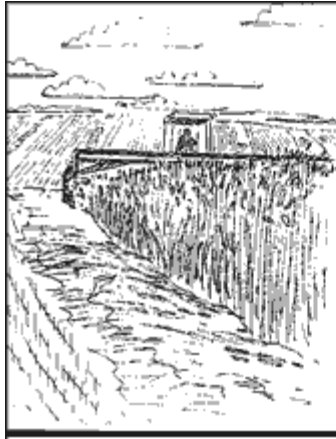


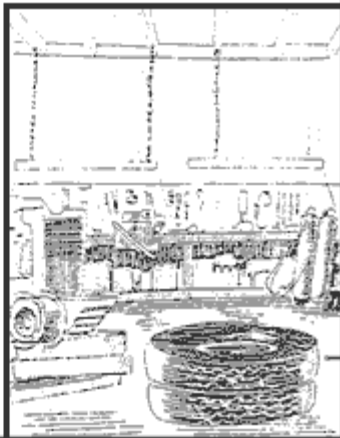
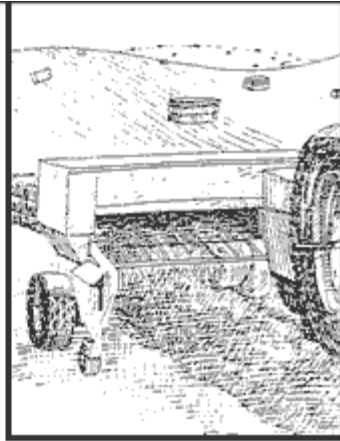


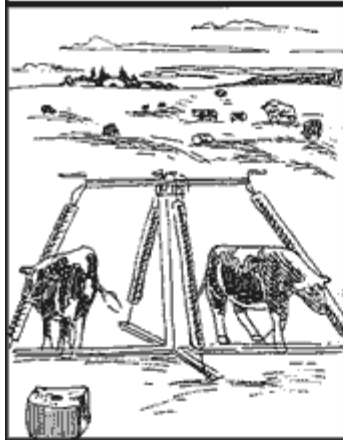
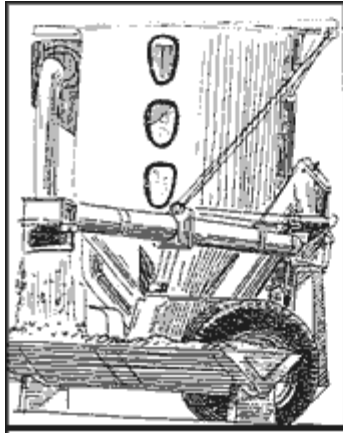












CONTENT VOCABULARY FOR CATTLE FARMING
(Diary of a Cattle Woman and Stable to Table)

NOUNS	VERBS	ADVERBS/ADJECTIVES
Calf/calves	lick	surprised
twins	warm	proud
temperature	like	backward
mother's milk	hope	neat
bottle	bottlefeed	
cattle	suck	
Caesarean section	find	
vet (veterinarian)	rescue	
bog	Pull	
stall	stand	
willow	limp	
foot rot	truck	
antibiotics		
lightning		
needles		
squeeze		
dairy	take turns	quietly
nobody	hurry	awake
parlour	meet	ready
disinfectant	wash	still
udder	attach	fresh
teats	stand	warm
milking machine	carry	quickly
pipeline	cool	processing
tank	test	
temperature	pasteurize	
plant	process	
products		
yogurt/yoghurt		
grocery store		

PMU RANCHING VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

ranchers
urine
source
laboratory/lab
premarin
estrogen
hormone
replacement
therapy
symptoms
menopause
industry
disagreement
treatment
activists
concrete
stalls
condition
inspection
argument
newborns
foals
figures
pleasure
materials
income
lifestyle
future
support

VERBS

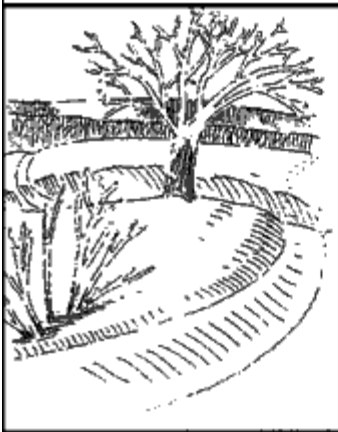
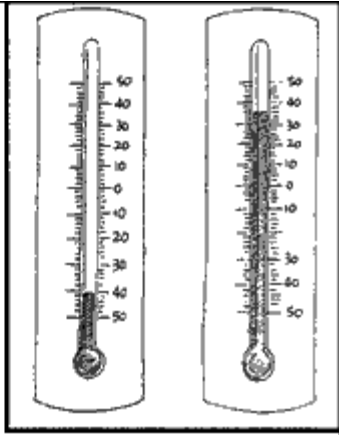
mistreat
agree
foal
quote
control
depend

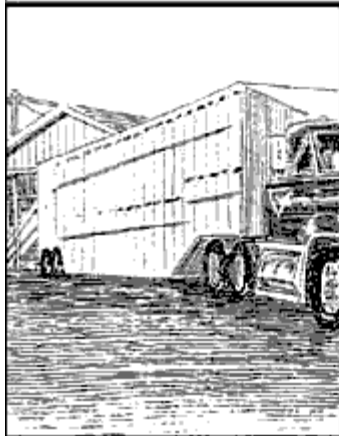
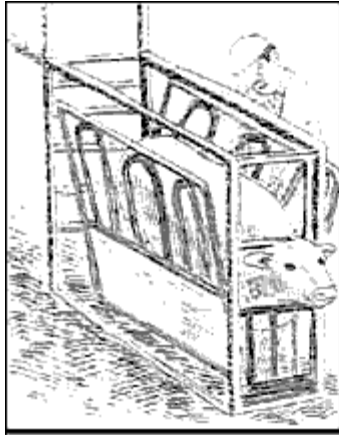
ADJECTIVES/ADVERBS

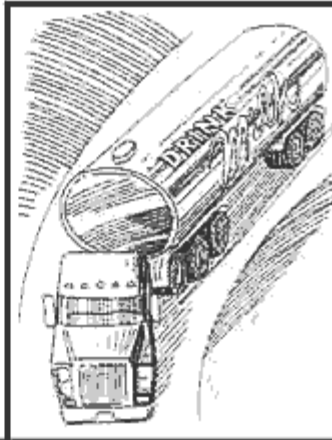
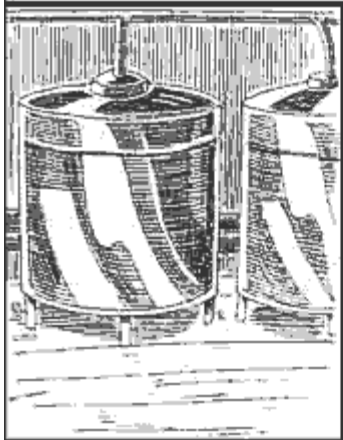
pregnant
mistreated
important
healthy
comfortable
tough
exercised
upset
especially
cruel
wasteful
synthetic
organic
worldwide
probably
public
political











PRAIRIE WEATHER VOCABULARY

CONTENT WORDS

NOUNS

weather
thunder
wonder
rain
gain
blizzard
flood
strain
lightning
drought

VERBS

make
doubt
talk

ADJECTIVES

prairie
frigid
frightening

RELATED WORDS

frost
hoarfrost
fog
mist
tornado
hail
gale
gust
flurry
shower
dust storm
barometer
pressure
forecast
windchill

predict

overcast
humid
muggy
mild
intermittent
gusty
