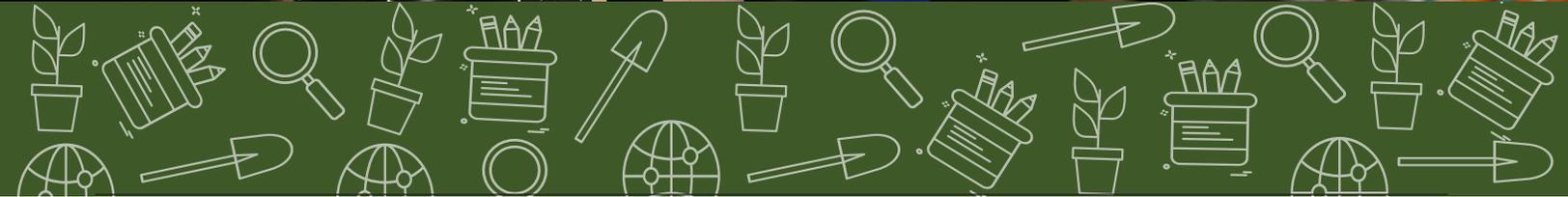


OREGON AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

LITERATURE CIRCLES



About Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom

We are dedicated to helping students grow in their knowledge of agriculture, the environment and natural resources for the benefit of Oregonians today and in the future.

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Connect With Us

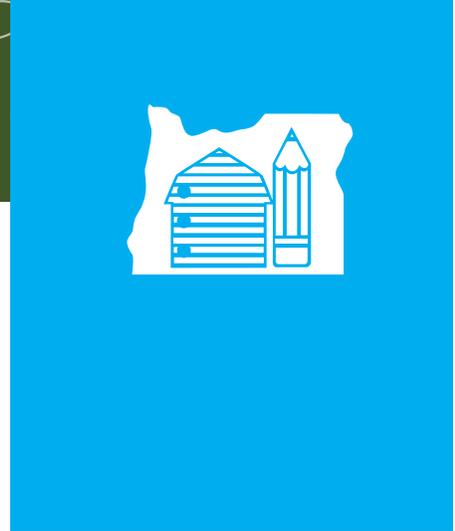
Join our monthly newsletter to stay up-to-date with all of our exciting programs! Follow us on social media to discover new resources and participate in "Trivia Tuesday" each week!



GROWING MINDS BLOG
oregonaitc.org/growingminds

Adopted From:





THEMES

Using agriculture as a contextual theme in literature circles allows students to choose publications on a variety of different subjects and encourages classroom discussion on common connections between the texts. The Agricultural Reading Recommendations offer diverse perspectives on stewardship of the land and the effects on a character’s lifestyle, values and identity.

ABOUT

Literature circles provide students the opportunity to explore texts of their interest engaging them in effective student-centered learning. This reinforces comprehension, analysis and evaluation.

Tips for Implementation

1. Know the books, and offer books you feel meet the needs of your students.
2. Offer diversity of texts to appeal to each of your students
3. Have students write down their top three choices allowing you to design groups based on the needs and skill levels of your students

SET UP

Project Calendar

Provide students with a master calendar of important due dates. Have students work as a group to plan out due dates for their project.

MASTER CALENDAR

- Beginning/ending dates of project
- No school days
- Lit circle days (days dedicated to lit circles)
- Non-lit circle days (groups not able to meet)
- Final project dates

STUDENT/GROUP CALENDAR

- Reading benchmarks (read to page number)
- Group discussions
- In-class reading days
- Complete discussion questions/vocabulary
- Final project work-time

Engaging

- Books are chosen by the students
- Groups are designed around book interest
- Variety of formative and sumative assessment options are offered

Student-Centered

- Students set their own pace and deadlines
- Groups hold their members accountable

Effective

- Students challenge one another to think critically about the text, with guiding questions
- An outlet to apply reading and writing practices using a real-life applicable concepts



READING WITH PURPOSE

Tracking Important Information

HOW IT WORKS

Have students use a trail of breadcrumbs to track specific details as they read the book. Provide students with a color coded system to mark specific details using colored post it notes.

GREEN - SETTING

- Explicit detail about location or time
- Detail about what's going on in the world beyond the characters' lives.
- Detail about the setting's effect on the character's lives

BLUE - CHARACTER

- A new character is introduced
- A character's physical feature is described for the first time
- Detail about the character's background that affects the way he or she thinks, acts or feels

YELLOW - COMMENTARY

- You have something to say about this and want to bring it up in group discussion
- You want to know what other readers in your group think about this.

PINK - READER REACTION

- Something happened that you weren't expecting
- Prediction: you think you know what's coming next
- Connection: You have been there, thought that, felt that, smelled, heard, or tasted.
- Agree/Disagree: You believe the thoughts or actions of the characters are right or wrong.

Reader Response Activities

Reader response activities allow for assessment of individual students' comprehension of the text and encourages them to analyze and evaluate through the following activities. It's helpful to have students complete these tasks in a journal that can be checked regularly.

- **Diary Entry** - Students will write a diary entry from the perspective of a minor character about the events that just took place in the novel.
- **Letter of Advice** - The student will write a letter advising one of the characters on a course of action to take and why. This letter can be from the student (with advice drawn from real-world experiences) or from another character in the novel (based on the experience that character faced).
- **Illustration** - The student will draw and color a character, event or setting of the story in detail. In a short paragraph, the student should also identify some of the specific detail of the drawing.
- **Reaction** - The student will explain his or her reaction to this section of the story. Were they surprised? Did he or she have any connection to the character or the world around the character? What does he or she think will happen next? How did this section make him or her feel, and why?

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The group discussion portion of literature circles is key to creating an enriching learning experience for students. Group discussions allow students to gain a complete understanding of a novel, its theme and its context through hearing the different interpretations of the passages from peers. The goal is for group discussions to be student-led to allow for students to analyze the readings through guiding questions set by the teacher.

FACILITATING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Discussion Goal: Set a goal for your groups to meet within each discussion; e.g. get to know the main character, share your opinion about the book so far, decide on the most important choice made by a character, etc. Provide each group member with one of the following roles during the discussion.

- **Summarizer** - Describe the events of the most recent reading section.
- **Travel Agent** - Track action's movement within the story. No location change is too small.
- **Literary Luminary** - Select and share an important quote or passage from the recent reading and explain its importance and impact on the story.
- **Researcher** - Bring in information to share regarding the background or context of the novel.
- **Discussion Director** - Keep the discussion going with thoughtful questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."

FINAL PROJECTS

The capstone project of the Literature Circles is to be completed by the entire group. These projects allow students to create something from their interpretation of the story, form an idea, agricultural topic or theme within the story.

ABC Book: CCSS:Literacy-ELA.W.8.2

Have students create an illustrated ABC book. The book can either cover the literature circles novel in general, or a specific, approved agricultural topic relating to that novel.

Board Game: CCSS:Literacy-ELA.W.8.1; W.8.2

The students work together to produce an original board game that reflects the plot or theme of the book. The board game should be playable, with all pieces and rules created.

Collage: CCSS:Literacy-ELA.W.8.1; W.8.2

The students work together to create a collage representative of the story or theme using cutout pictures from magazines or other materials. There should also be some writing requirements (i.e. explain 10 of your photos in 2-3 sentences each).

Map: CCSS:Literacy-ELA.W.8.2

Have students create a large map of the area in which the story took place. They should plot the path the characters follow in the story. Then have students research the real locations and identify the demographic, economic, and agricultural features of the area to compare and contrast with the version in the story. They should also highlight and illustrate at least three key locations on the map with descriptions of what happened at each location.

Scrapbook: CCSS:Literacy-ELA.W.8.1

The students will put together a scrapbook as if they were one of the characters. The scrapbook should include pictures or materials that would be meaningful to the character (i.e. real or fictionalized newspaper articles). Each addition to the scrapbook should include a brief description of what was added, as told by the character.

Sequel: CCSS: Literacy-ELA. W.8.3

The students should work together to write a sequel for the novel. The sequel should continue directly after the original novel or should explain what has happened since the original novel ended. It should be a complete story with a beginning, middle and end. Though the story does not necessarily need to include the same characters, it should clearly connect to the original.

Alternate Ending: CCSS:Literacy- ELA.W.8.3

Together, students will change the ending of the novel. The new ending can begin at any point in the original, but it should be a meaningful changes to the conclusion. The alternate ending should also be written from the same perspective as the original novel and in a similar style. Then, in a brief paragraph, the students should justify their ending (i.e. What makes the new ending better than the original?).

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 3-5



Animal Agriculture

Return to Sender, Author: Julia Alvarez (Grades 5-9)

After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family is forced to hire migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure. Tyler isn't sure what to make of these workers. Are they undocumented? And what about the three daughters, particularly Mari, the oldest, who is proud of her Mexican heritage but also increasingly connected to her American life. Her family lives in constant fear of being discovered by the authorities and sent back to the poverty they left behind in Mexico. Can Tyler and Mari find a way to be friends despite their differences?

...and now, Miguel, Author: Joseph Krumgold (Grades 4-8)

He wanted to be treated like a man, not a child. Every summer the men of the Chavez family go on a long and difficult sheep drive to the mountains. All the men, that is, except for Miguel. All year long, twelve-year-old Miguel tries to prove that he, too, is up to the challenge that he, too is ready to take the sheep into his beloved Sangre de Cristo Mountains. When his deeds go unnoticed, he prays to San Ysidro, the saint for farmers everywhere. And his prayer is answered . . . but with devastating consequences. When you act like an adult but get treated like a child, what else can you do but keep your wishes secret and pray that they'll come true. This is the story of a twelve-year-old Miguel Chavez, who yearns in his heart to go with the men of his family on a long and hard sheep drive to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains--until his prayer is finally answered, with a disturbing and dangerous exchange.

War Horse, Author: Michael Morpurgo (Grades 4-8)

In 1914, Joey, a farm horse, is sold to the army and thrust into the midst of World War I on the Western Front. When Joey is dragged away, his heart aches for Albert, the farmer's son he is forced to leave behind. In the army the beautiful red-bay horse is trained to charge the enemy, drag heavy artillery, and carry wounded soldiers not much older than Albert off the battlefields. Amongst the clamoring of guns, and while plodding through the cold mud, Joey wonders if the war will ever end. And if it does, will he ever find Albert again?

The Beef Princess of Practical County, Author: Michelle Houts (Grades 4-6)

After years of waiting, it is finally Libby Ryan's turn to shine at the Practical County Fair. Libby is filled with excitement as she and her granddad pick out two calves for her to raise on her family's cattle farm, in hopes of winning the annual steer competition. Against her father's advice, Libby gives the calves names, even though both steers will eventually be auctioned off. After a few months of preparing for the Practical County Fair, Libby finds that she is growing closer to her steers with each passing day, and the pressure to win Grand Champion is mounting. Luckily, Libby can count on her best friend to get her through most of the county fair chaos. Yet once reality sets in and she realizes that her steers will soon be sold to the highest bidder, the chaos in Libby's heart becomes too much to bear.

Little Joe, Author: Sandra Neil Wallace (Grades 3-6)

It's a cold December night and Fancy, the Stegner family's cow, is about to give birth. Out pops Little Joe, a huge bull calf, and with him comes nine-year-old Eli's first chance to raise an animal to show at next fall's county fair. Over the next ten months, Eli, and Little Joe, learn some hard lessons about growing up and what it means to take on bigger responsibilities, especially when it comes to taking care of another living thing. But one thing Eli is trying not to think about is what will happen to Little Joe after the fair: it's auction time, and he'll have to sell Little Joe! In this appealing and heartwarming story that's reminiscent of James Herriot's books, Eli comes to terms with some of the realities of life on his family's farm, and in the outside world, as he raises his first bull calf for competition. Told in a straightforward and appealing text, brimming with lush details about the natural world of the farm, and with characters that are sure to appeal to readers, Eli's story is one that may not be familiar to every kid, but the themes of growing up and learning some difficult lessons will appeal to kids and adults alike.

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When Brother's dad is shipped off to Iraq, along with the rest of his reserve unit, Brother must help his grandparents keep the ranch going. He's determined to maintain it just as his father left it, in the hope that doing so will ensure his father's safe return. The hardships Brother faces will not only change the ranch, but also reveal his true calling.

Harvest Season

Esperanza Rising, Author: Pam Munz0 Ryan (Grades 5-9)

Esperanza thought she'd always live a privileged life on her family's ranch in Mexico. She'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home filled with servants, and Mama, Papa, and Abuelita to care for her. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California and settle in a Mexican farm labor camp. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard work, financial struggles brought on by the Great Depression, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When Mama gets sick and a strike for better working conditions threatens to uproot their new life, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances because Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 3-5



Oregon Agriculture in the
Classroom Foundation

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Summer knows that kouun means "good luck" in Japanese, and this year her family has none of it. Just when she thinks nothing else can possibly go wrong, an emergency whisks her parents away to Japan—right before wheat harvest season. Summer and her little brother are left in the care of their grandparents -- Obaachan and Jiichan -- who come out of retirement in order to harvest wheat and help pay the bills. A coming of age story that takes place in wheat fields across the country.

A Handful of Stars, Author: Cynthia Lord (Grades 4-8)

When Lily's blind dog, Lucky, slips his collar and runs away across the wide-open blueberry barrens of eastern Maine, it's Salma Santiago who manages to catch him. Salma, the daughter of migrant workers, is in the small town with her family for the blueberry-picking season. After their initial chance meeting, Salma and Lily bond over painting bee boxes for Lily's grandfather, and Salma's friendship transforms Lily's summer. But when Salma decides to run in the upcoming Blueberry Queen pageant, they'll have to face some tough truths about friendship and belonging. Should an outsider like Salma really participate in the pageant -- and possibly win? Set amongst the blueberry barrens and by the sea, this is a gorgeous new novel by Newbery Honor author Cynthia Lord that tackles themes of prejudice and friendship, loss and love.

Agricultural Commodities

Just Your Average Princess, Author: Kristina Springer (Grades 5-9)

Jamie Edwards has loved everything about growing up on a pumpkin patch, but ever since her cousin Milan Woods arrived, things have really stunk. Jamie can't imagine it was easy for Milan to leave her life back in Los Angeles and move to Average, Illinois, population one thousand. But it's kind of hard to feel sorry for her since (a) Milan's drop-dead gorgeous; (b) she's the daughter of two of Hollywood's hottest film stars; (c) she's captured the attention of everyone in town, including Danny, Jamie's crush since forever; and (d) she's about to steal the title of Pumpkin Princess right out from underneath Jamie!

My Louisiana Sky, Author: Kimberly Willis Holt (Grades 4-7)

Tiger Ann Parker is smart in school and good at baseball, but she's forever teased about her family by the girls in class. Tiger Ann knows her folks are different from others in their small town of Saitter, Louisiana. They are mentally slow, and Tiger Ann keeps her pain and embarrassment hidden as long as her strong and smart Granny runs the household. Then Granny dies suddenly and Aunt Dorie Kay arrives, offering Tiger Ann a way out. Now Tiger Ann must make the most important decision of her life. Dad and his job at the nursery show the importance of a good work ethic and illustrates small towns, food, jobs and concerns.

Seedfolks, Author: Paul Fleishman (Grades 4 & up)

A Vietnamese girl plants six lima beans in a Cleveland vacant lot. Looking down on the immigrant-filled neighborhood, a Romanian woman watches suspiciously. A school janitor gets involved, then a Guatemalan family. Then muscle-bound Curtis, trying to win back Lateesha. Pregnant Maricela. Amir from India. A sense of community sprouts and spreads. Newbery-winning author Paul Fleischman uses thirteen speakers to bring to life a community garden's founding and first year. The book's short length, diverse cast, and suitability for adults as well as children have led it to be used in countless one-book reads in schools and in cities across the country.

The Year Money Grew on Trees, Author: Aaron Hawkins (Grades 4-8)

An unusual and captivating novel brimming with a sense of can-do and earned independence. With frostbitten fingers, sleepless nights, and sore muscles, fourteen-year-old Jackson Jones and his posse of cousins discover the lost art of winging it when they take over an orchard of three hundred wild apple trees. They know nothing about pruning or irrigation or pest control, but if they are to avoid losing the \$8,000 they owe on an unfair contract with their neighbor, Mrs. Nelson, they just have to figure it out.

The Giant Pumpkin Suite, Author: Melanie Heuser Hill (Grades 5-8)

Twelve-year-old Rose Brutigan has grown seven inches in the last eight months. She's always been different from her twin brother, Thomas, but now she towers over him in too many ways. The gap in their interests continues to widen as well. Musically talented Rose is focused on winning the upcoming Bach Cello Suites Competition, while happy-go-lucky Thomas has taken up the challenge of growing a giant pumpkin in the yard of their elderly neighbor, Mr. Pickering. But when a serious accident changes the course of the summer, Rose is forced to grow and change in ways she never could have imagined. Along the way there's tap dancing and classic musicals, mail-order worms and neighborhood-sourced compost, fresh-squeezed lemonade, the Minnesota State Fair — and an eclectic cast of local characters that readers will fall in love with.

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 3-5



George Washington Carver For Kids: His Life and Discoveries with 21 Activities, Author: Peggy Thomas (Grades 4-6)

George Washington Carver was a scientist, educator, artist, inventor, and humanitarian. Born into slavery during the Civil War, he later pursued an education and would become the first black graduate from Iowa Agricultural College. Carver then took a teaching position at the Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T. Washington. There, Carver taught poor Southern farmers how to nourish the soil, conserve resources, and feed their families. He also developed hundreds of new products from the sweet potato, peanut, and other crops, and his discoveries gained him a place in the national spotlight. *George Washington Carver for Kids* tells the inspiring story of this remarkable American. It includes a timeline, resources for further research, and 21 hands-on activities to help better appreciate Carver's genius.

Bread and Roses ,Too, Author: Katherine Paterson (Grades 5-7)

The story of immigrant workers in the textile mills in turn of the century America. Rosa's mother is singing again, for the first time since Papa died in an accident in the mills. But instead of filling their cramped tenement apartment with Italian lullabies, Mamma is out on the streets singing union songs, and Rosa is terrified that her mother and older sister, Anna, are endangering their lives by marching against the corrupt mill owners. After all, didn't Miss Finch tell the class that the strikers are nothing but rabble-rousers—an uneducated, violent mob? Suppose Mamma and Anna are jailed or, worse, killed? What will happen to Rosa and little Ricci? When Rosa is sent to Vermont with other children to live with strangers until the strike is over, she fears she will never see her family again. Then, on the train, a boy begs her to pretend that he is her brother. Alone and far from home, she agrees to protect him . . . even though she suspects that he is hiding some terrible secret. From a beloved, award-winning author, here is a moving story based on real events surrounding an infamous 1912 strike.

Life on a Farm

Harris and Me, Author: Gary Paulsen (Grades 5-8)

A young boy spends his tenth summer on his aunt and uncles farm, where he is constantly involved in crazy escapades with his cousin Harris. On the Larson farm, readers will experience hearts as large as farmers appetites, humor as broad as the country landscape and adventures as wild as boyhood imaginations. All this adds up to a hearty helping of old-fashioned, rip-roaring entertainment.

Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry, Author: Mildred Taylor (Grades 4-6)

Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, this is the story of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice. And it is also Cassie's story—Cassie Logan, an independent girl who discovers over the course of an important year why having land of their own is so crucial to the Logan family, even as she learns to draw strength from her own sense of dignity and self-respect.

Out of the Dust, Author: Karen Hesse (Grades 5-9)

A terrible accident has transformed Billie Jo's life, scarring her inside and out. Her mother is gone. Her father can't talk about it. And the one thing that might make her feel better -- playing the piano -- is impossible with her wounded hands. To make matters worse, dust storms are devastating the family farm and all the farms nearby. While others flee from the dust bowl, Billie Jo is left to find peace in the bleak landscape of Oklahoma -- and in the surprising landscape of her own heart.

Food Security

The Hunger Games, Author: Suzanne Collins (Grades 5-9)

The dystopian novel for young adults features a strong heroine in a fight for survival, in a world where food, and the control of food, is power. In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Long ago the districts waged war on the Capitol and were defeated. As part of the surrender terms, each district agreed to send one boy and one girl to appear in an annual televised event called, "The Hunger Games," a fight to the death on live TV. Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her district in the Games. The terrain, rules, and level of audience participation may change but one thing is constant: kill or be killed.

The Vanderbeekers and the Hidden Garden, Author: Karina Yan Glaser (Grades 3-7)

While Isa is off at sleep-away orchestra camp, Jessie, Oliver, Hyacinth, and Laney are stuck at home in the brownstone with nothing to do but get on one another's nerves. But when catastrophe strikes their beloved upstairs neighbor, their sleepy summer transforms in an instant as the Vanderbeeker children band together to do what they do best: make a plan. They will create the most magical healing garden in all of Harlem.

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 6-8



Oregon Agriculture in the
Classroom Foundation

Animal Agriculture

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The Sweetheart of Prosper County, Author: Jill S. Alexander (Grades 7-9)

Almost-15-year-old Austin Gray is tired of standing at the curb and watching the parade pass her by. Literally. She decides this is the year she'll ride on the hood of a shiny pickup truck in the annual parade, waving to the crowd and finally showing the town bully that she's got what it takes to be the Sweetheart of Prosper County. But far from simply being a beauty contest, becoming Sweetheart involves participation in the Future Farmers of America (FFA), raising an animal, and hunting or fishing. Austin will do almost anything to become Sweetheart, and has the support of her oldest friend, Maribel, her new FFA friends (including the reigning Sweetheart, and a quiet, cute cowboy), an evangelical Elvis impersonator, a mysterious Cajun outcast, and a rooster named Charles Dickens. If only her momma would stop overprotecting her, and start letting Austin live her own life. But Austin can't move on until Momma moves on, too—and lets the grief of losing Austin's daddy several years before out into the open.

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Tiger Ann Parker is smart in school and good at baseball, but she's forever teased about her family by the girls in class. Tiger Ann knows her folks are different from others in their small town of Saitter, Louisiana. They are mentally slow, and Tiger Ann keeps her pain and embarrassment hidden as long as her strong and smart Granny runs the household. Then Granny dies suddenly and Aunt Dorie Kay arrives, offering Tiger Ann a way out. Now Tiger Ann must make the most important decision of her life. Dad and his job at the nursery show the importance of a good work ethic and illustrates small towns, food, jobs and concerns.

The Year Money Grew on Trees, Author: Aaron Hawkins (Grades 4-8)

An unusual and captivating novel brimming with a sense of can-do and earned independence. With frostbitten fingers, sleepless nights, and sore muscles, fourteen-year-old Jackson Jones and his posse of cousins discover the lost art of winging it when they take over an orchard of three hundred wild apple trees. They know nothing about pruning or irrigation or pest control, but if they are to avoid losing the \$8,000 they owe on an unfair contract with their neighbor, Mrs. Nelson, they just have to figure it out.

The Giant Pumpkin Suite, Author: Melanie Heuser Hill (Grades 5-8)

Twelve-year-old Rose Brutigan has grown seven inches in the last eight months. She's always been different from her twin brother, Thomas, but now she towers over him in too many ways. The gap in their interests continues to widen as well. Musically talented Rose is focused on winning the upcoming Bach Cello Suites Competition, while happy-go-lucky Thomas has taken up the challenge of growing a giant pumpkin in the yard of their elderly neighbor, Mr. Pickering. But when a serious accident changes the course of the summer, Rose is forced to grow and change in ways she never could have imagined. Along the way there's tap dancing and classic musicals, mail-order worms and neighborhood-sourced compost, fresh-squeezed lemonade, the Minnesota State Fair — and an eclectic cast of local characters that readers will fall in love with.

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 6-8



Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation

George Washington Carver For Kids: His Life and Discoveries with 21 Activities, Author: Peggy Thomas (Grades 4-6)

George Washington Carver was a scientist, educator, artist, inventor, and humanitarian. Born into slavery during the Civil War, he later pursued an education and would become the first black graduate from Iowa Agricultural College. Carver then took a teaching position at the Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T. Washington. There, Carver taught poor Southern farmers how to nourish the soil, conserve resources, and feed their families. He also developed hundreds of new products from the sweet potato, peanut, and other crops, and his discoveries gained him a place in the national spotlight. *George Washington Carver for Kids* tells the inspiring story of this remarkable American. It includes a time line, resources for further research, and 21 hands-on activities to help better appreciate Carver's genius.

Bread and Roses ,Too, Author: Katherine Paterson (Grades 5-7)

The story of immigrant workers in the textile mills in turn of the century America. Rosa's mother is singing again, for the first time since Papa died in an accident in the mills. But instead of filling their cramped tenement apartment with Italian lullabies, Mamma is out on the streets singing union songs, and Rosa is terrified that her mother and older sister, Anna, are endangering their lives by marching against the corrupt mill owners. After all, didn't Miss Finch tell the class that the strikers are nothing but rabble-rousers—an uneducated, violent mob? Suppose Mamma and Anna are jailed or, worse, killed? What will happen to Rosa and little Ricci? When Rosa is sent to Vermont with other children to live with strangers until the strike is over, she fears she will never see her family again. Then, on the train, a boy begs her to pretend that he is her brother. Alone and far from home, she agrees to protect him . . . even though she suspects that he is hiding some terrible secret. From a beloved, award-winning author, here is a moving story based on real events surrounding an infamous 1912 strike.

Life on a Farm

Harris and Me, Author: Gary Paulsen (Grades 5-8)

A young boy spends his tenth summer on his aunt and uncles farm, where he is constantly involved in crazy escapades with his cousin Harris. On the Larson farm, readers will experience hearts as large as farmers appetites, humor as broad as the country landscape and adventures as wild as boyhood imaginations. All this adds up to a hearty helping of old-fashioned, rip-roaring entertainment.

Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry, Author: Mildred Taylor (Grades 4-6)

Set in Mississippi at the height of the Depression, this is the story of one family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride, and independence in the face of racism and social injustice. And it is also Cassie's story—Cassie Logan, an independent girl who discovers over the course of an important year why having land of their own is so crucial to the Logan family, even as she learns to draw strength from her own sense of dignity and self-respect.

Squashed, Author: Joan Bauer (Grades 7-10)

Coming of age tale set on a pumpkin farm in Iowa, a story of Ellie and Max, a girl and her pumpkin. Growing the record holding pumpkin isn't as easy as it sounds in this delightful tale. Humor, agriculture and young love all come together in Joan Bauer's first novel, set in rural Iowa. Sixteen-year-old Ellie Morgan's life would be almost perfect if she could just get her potentially prize-winning pumpkin to put on about 200 more pounds—and if she could take off 20 herself...in hopes of attracting Wes, the new boy in town.

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The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, Author: William Kamkwamba (Grades 5-8)

When a terrible drought struck William Kamkwamba's tiny village in Malawi, his family lost all of the season's crops, leaving them with nothing to eat and nothing to sell. William began to explore science books in his village library, looking for a solution. There, he came up with the idea that would change his family's life forever: he could build a windmill. Made out of scrap metal and old bicycle parts, William's windmill brought electricity to his home and helped his family pump the water they needed to farm the land.

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 6-8



Food Security

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Dust Bowl

Out of the Dust, Author: Karen Hesse (Grades 5-9)

A terrible accident has transformed Billie Jo's life, scarring her inside and out. Her mother is gone. Her father can't talk about it. And the one thing that might make her feel better -- playing the piano -- is impossible with her wounded hands. To make matters worse, dust storms are devastating the family farm and all the farms nearby. While others flee from the dust bowl, Billie Jo is left to find peace in the bleak landscape of Oklahoma -- and in the surprising landscape of her own heart.

The Great American Dust Bowl, Author: Don Brown (Grades 7-9)

The Dust Bowl told in the form of a graphic novel. On a clear, warm Sunday, April 14, 1935, a wild wind whipped up millions upon millions specks of dust to form a duster—a savage storm—on America's high southern plains. The sky turned black, sand-filled winds scoured the paint off houses and cars, trains derailed, and electricity coursed through the air. Sand and dirt fell like snow—people got lost in the gloom and suffocated... and that was just the beginning. Don Brown brings the Dirty Thirties to life with lively artwork in this graphic novel of one of America's most catastrophic natural events: the Dust Bowl.

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The dust storms that terrorized the High Plains in the darkest years of the Depression were like nothing ever seen before or since. Timothy Egan's critically acclaimed account rescues this iconic chapter of American history from the shadows in a tour de force of historical reportage. Following a dozen families and their communities through the rise and fall of the region, Egan tells of their desperate attempts to carry on through blinding black dust blizzards, crop failure, and the death of loved ones. Brilliantly capturing the terrifying drama of catastrophe, Egan does equal justice to the human characters who become his heroes, "the stoic, long-suffering men and women whose lives he opens up with urgency and respect" (New York Times). In an era that promises ever-greater natural disasters, *The Worst Hard Time* is "arguably the best nonfiction book yet" (Austin Statesman Journal) on the greatest environmental disaster ever to be visited upon our land and a powerful cautionary tale about the dangers of trifling with nature.

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

Grades 9-12



Oregon Agriculture in the
Classroom Foundation

Animal Agriculture

Return to Sender, Author: Julia Alvarez (Grades 5-9)

After Tyler's father is injured in a tractor accident, his family is forced to hire migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure. Tyler isn't sure what to make of these workers. Are they undocumented? And what about the three daughters, particularly Mari, the oldest, who is proud of her Mexican heritage but also increasingly connected to her American life. Her family lives in constant fear of being discovered by the authorities and sent back to the poverty they left behind in Mexico. Can Tyler and Mari find a way to be friends despite their differences?

The Secret Life of Bees, Author: Sue Monk Kidd (Grades 9-12)

Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted black "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the deepest racists in town, Lily decides to spring them both free. They escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. Taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sister, Lily is introduced to their mesmerizing world of bees and honey, and the Black Madonna. This is a remarkable novel about divine female power, a story that women will share and pass on to their daughters for years to come.

The Sweetheart of Prosper County, Author: Jill S. Alexander (Grades 7-9)

Almost-15-year-old Austin Gray is tired of standing at the curb and watching the parade pass her by. Literally. She decides this is the year she'll ride on the hood of a shiny pickup truck in the annual parade, waving to the crowd and finally showing the town bully that she's got what it takes to be the Sweetheart of Prosper County. But far from simply being a beauty contest, becoming Sweetheart involves participation in the Future Farmers of America (FFA), raising an animal, and hunting or fishing. Austin will do almost anything to become Sweetheart, and has the support of her oldest friend, Maribel, her new FFA friends (including the reigning Sweetheart, and a quiet, cute cowboy), an evangelical Elvis impersonator, a mysterious Cajun outcast, and a rooster named Charles Dickens. If only her momma would stop overprotecting her, and start letting Austin live her own life. But Austin can't move on until Momma moves on, too—and lets the grief of losing Austin's daddy several years before out into the open.

Harvest Season

Esperanza Rising, Author: Pam Munzo Ryan (Grades 5-9)

Esperanza thought she'd always live a privileged life on her family's ranch in Mexico. She'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home filled with servants, and Mama, Papa, and Abuelita to care for her. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California and settle in a Mexican farm labor camp. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard work, financial struggles brought on by the Great Depression, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When Mama gets sick and a strike for better working conditions threatens to uproot their new life, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances--because Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.

The Thing About Luck, Author: Cynthia Kadohata (Grades 5-9)

Summer knows that kouun means "good luck" in Japanese, and this year her family has none of it. Just when she thinks nothing else can possibly go wrong, an emergency whisks her parents away to Japan--right before wheat harvest season. Summer and her little brother are left in the care of their grandparents -- Obaachan and Jiichan -- who come out of retirement in order to harvest wheat and help pay the bills. A coming of age story that takes place in wheat fields across the country.

The Man Who Fed the World, Author: Leon Hesser (Grades 9-12)

Dr. Norman Borlaug, one of the world's greatest heroes, is the most highly-decorated individual of our time. He is credited with saving over a billion people from starvation. Dr. Borlaug is only one of five people in history to win the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal. In addition, Dr. Borlaug received the Padma Vibhushan, the highest civilian award the government of India can present to a non-citizen. *The Man Who Fed the World* has won three nation book of the year awards: USA Booknews best Biography of the Year. The American Farm Bureau for Agriculture Best Book of the Year award, and Florida Publishers Association Best Book Award.

Life on a farm

Just Your Average Princess, Author: Kristina Springer (Grades 5-9)

Jamie Edwards has loved everything about growing up on a pumpkin patch, but ever since her cousin Milan Woods arrived, things have really stunk. Jamie can't imagine it was easy for Milan to leave her life back in Los Angeles and move to Average, Illinois, population one thousand. But it's kind of hard to feel sorry for her since (a) Milan's drop-dead gorgeous; (b) she's the daughter of two of Hollywood's hottest film stars; (c) she's captured the attention of everyone in town, including Danny, Jamie's crush since forever; and (d) she's about to steal the title of Pumpkin Princess right out from underneath Jamie!

Agricultural Reading Recommendations

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Classroom Foundation

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By Any Means Necessary, Author: Candice Montgomery (Grades 9-12)

On the day Torrey moves and officially becomes a college freshman, he gets a call that might force him to drop out before he's even made it through orientation: the bank is foreclosing on the bee farm his Uncle Miles left him. Torrey's worked hard to become the first member of his family to go to college, but while the neighborhood held him back emotionally, Uncle Miles encouraged him to reach his full potential. For years, it was just the two of them tending the farm. So Torrey can't let someone erase his uncle's legacy without a fight. He tries balancing his old life in L.A. with his new classes, new friends, and (sort of) new boyfriend in San Francisco, but as the farm heads for auction, the pressure of juggling everything threatens to tear him apart. Can he make a choice between his family and his future without sacrificing a part of himself?

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