



Activity 4

Agriculture Then and Now

Lesson Time Estimate

15–20 minutes

Objectives: Students will discuss information from a chart, comparing “then” and “now” farming procedures.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.6

Pillars of Agricultural Literacy

- The Connection Between Agriculture and Technology

Materials

- Activity 4 Worksheet part 1 and part 2, which may be displayed on a whiteboard or copied for each student

Directions

Have a discussion with your class:

Just as the invention of the car helped people move from one place to another faster than walking or riding a horse, agricultural machines helped farmers do their work more quickly and easily. Would you like to pick cotton in a hot field all day

or drive the mechanical cotton picker machine? Would you like to milk cows by hand or control a robotic milker through a computer program?

Next, discuss the farming practices shown in the chart below. This chart compares some farming practices in 1850, when John Deere lived, to practices used now. After looking at the chart, display or hand out copies of Activity 4 Worksheet part 1 and part 2 and discuss the pictures. Ask students to match the “then” and “now” illustrations.

Bonus

Grades 2–3 Extension

To further learning, ask students the questions below and discuss the answers. How has farming changed over time?

- How many people are fed each year by a U.S. farmer? *One family was fed per year in 1850, but today, the U.S. farmer feeds 165 people each year around the world.*
- How long does it take to produce 100 bushels of corn? *In 1850, it took 75–90 hours of labor. Today's farmer can produce 100 bushels of corn in 2–3 hours with modern equipment.*
- What percentage of the U.S. population are farm and ranch families? *Today, farm and ranch families comprise just 2 percent of the U.S. population. In 1850, farmers were 64% of the nation's labor force.*

Farming Practice	Then (1850)	Now (2017)
Preparing fields	Oxen or horses pulled plows.	Tractors pull plows.
Dairy farming	Cows milked by hand.	Robotic milkers milk hundreds of cows.
Bookkeeping – records	Farmers kept records with paper and pencil.	Farmers keep records using apps and computer programs.
Planting	Seeds planted by hand.	Farmers use tractors designed just for planting.
Cutting hay	Hay cut by hand and stored in haystacks.	Farmers use swathers and balers to harvest hay.



Activity 4 Worksheet (part 1)

Agriculture Then and Now

Directions: Can you match the "old way" with the "modern way" used now? Cut out the pictures and paste them into the chart on the next page.





Activity 4 Worksheet (part 2)

Agriculture Then and Now

Farming Practice

Preparing fields

Then (1850)	Now (2017)
Oxen or horses pulled plows.	Tractors pull plows.
Dairy farming	Robotic milkers milk hundreds of cows.
Bookkeeping – records	Farmers keep records using apps and computer programs.
Planting	Farmers use tractors designed just for planting
Cutting hay	Farmers use swathers and balers to harvest hay.