Science of Life Explorations

Celebrate the Growing Year:
The Farmer’s Year
While you are in school or on a vacation, farmers are working hard to provide us with the foods we eat and the products we use.

What would the world be like without farms?

Name three foods raised on a farm that you would miss:

1. 

2. 

3. 

Would you be able to raise any of those foods yourself? Explain why or why not.
Springtime

In spring, the leaves appear on the trees, the grass grows green, flowers begin to bloom, and many animals are taking care of their newborn OFFSPRING.

This is a busy season for farmers. In March, once the weather warms up, farmers begin to prepare the soil for planting.

In April and May the fields are planted with the seeds of crops such as corn, carrots, cabbage, lettuce, and potatoes. These crops may be ready for harvest in only a month or not until many months later.

Farm animals are let out into the pastures and pens when it is warm enough. Match the animal name with the name of its OFFSPRING:

Sheep  lambs
Pigs    calves
Cattle  kids
Goats   piglets

Farmers have to take extra care of the newborns and their mothers until they are strong enough to be on their own in the pasture or barn. Chickens begin to lay more eggs as the temperature warms up.

Also in spring, farmers clean out their barns and other farm buildings and organize them for the summer.

Name three crops that are planted in the spring:

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

What does the farmer do with the animals? ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Chickens ____________________________________________ as the temperature warms up.
Many people relax during the summer months but life on the farm only gets busier!

In **June**, sheep are SHEARED. Their wool is cleaned, combed and spun into yarn. The yarn is used to create fabric or clothing.

On cattle and dairy farms, the spring-calves have their horns removed so they don’t hurt each other if they fight.

The winter wheat is harvested. The grains are added to the animal feed or sent off to processing companies. The straw is dried and bundled for bedding.

Strawberries and peas are two June crops. Your family may be able to buy them at roadside PRODUCE stands.

In **July**, Farmers check to see if their corn is “knee-high by the fourth of July.”
Can you think of something plants need to grow?____________________

In **August**, pest problems may get worse if farmers don’t keep their farms clean. Farmers SCOUT for pests in their barns and fields and gardens.

Throughout summer, crops become ready for harvest. What is your favorite summer vegetable to eat?____________________

______________________________________________________________

Name one thing that keeps a farmer busy in June: _____________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

What do you do in June?_________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
Fall

In fall, students and teachers are back in school. The weather is cooler and leaves begin to change colors.

**September** is when most grains and other spring-planted crops are harvested. Fruit crops, like apples and grapes, are harvested in the fall also.

Sometimes, after a field is harvested, farmers plow it and add more fertilizer. This helps restore nutrients in the soil that the last crop used up. Farmers begin planting crops such as winter wheat.

**By October**, most of the spring-babies of animal farms have begun eating regular animal feed. Some animals are put up for sale at farm markets.

**November** brings in the cold weather leading up to winter. Animals may be given extra feed to help them stay warm in winter.

What are you doing in the fall? ________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What did you learn about farmers? ________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What do you think is the hardest part of being a farmer? ________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Winter

After the summer growing season and the autumn harvest, the farmer is not as busy in the fields but there still is plenty of work to be done.

Cows, and other milking animals, still need to be milked everyday. Farm animals depend on the farmer more in winter for their food, and they may need to eat more to stay warm.

By December, farmers have moved their animals indoors to protect them from the cold weather. This means there is more cleaning to be done indoors to keep old food, bedding, and manure from building up.

In the winter, farmers think about the past year and make plans for the next season.

This time of year, the farmer makes repairs to the farm equipment, buildings and tools. These need to be ready in time for spring and for the new growing season.

What did you learn about farmers? __________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

What do you think is the hardest part of being a farmer? ________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
* March: Farmers begin plowing their fields.

* April and May: Fields are planted with seeds and seedlings.
  Animals are let back outside when the weather warms up.
  Most farm animals bear their offspring.

* June: Sheep are sheared when the weather is warm enough for them to be
  without their wool.
  Winter crops such as barley and winter wheat are harvested.
  Strawberries and early peas are harvested.

* September: Many crops, including grains and apples are harvested.
  Fields are plowed, fertilized, and planted with winter crops.

* October: Animal offspring are weaned from their mothers.
  Animals are bought and sold.

* December/January/February:
  Animals are kept indoors, out of the cold weather.
  Animal housing is cleaned out more often.
  Repairs are made to farm equipment, buildings, and tools.