



Email: bridget@paperdragonreads.com Phone: (407) 212-7759

Family Reading Guide for "Food for the Future: Sustainable Farms Around the World"

Conversation starters for parents and children

Getting Started

What This Book Is About

"Food for the Future: Sustainable Farms Around the World" takes readers on a global tour of eco-friendly farming practices. From ancient agricultural methods that have sustained communities for centuries to innovative new techniques like farms under the sea and urban gardens, the book showcases diverse ways people are growing food sustainably while battling the effects of climate change. Illustrated by Robert Sae-Heng, this informative and inspiring book shows how we can feed the world while protecting our planet.

Key Themes Your Child Will Encounter:

- **Sustainable agriculture:** Understanding farming methods that protect the environment and can continue for generations
- **Global diversity:** Learning how different cultures and climates require different farming approaches
- **Ancient wisdom and modern innovation:** Respecting traditional knowledge while embracing new technologies
- **Climate change solutions:** Seeing how people are adapting agriculture to changing environmental conditions
- **Food systems:** Understanding where our food comes from and how it's grown
- **Hope and action:** Discovering that people worldwide are working on solutions to global challenges

Tip for Parents: This book offers wonderful opportunities to discuss where your family's food comes from and to explore sustainable practices together. Let your child's curiosity about specific farms or methods guide deeper conversations.

Discussion Questions

About the Different Farms

- Which farm or farming method from the book interests you most? Why?
- How do farms in different parts of the world adapt to their environments?
- What surprised you about how food can be grown?
- Which farming method would you most like to see in person?



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About Sustainability

- What does "sustainable" mean when we talk about farming?
- How is sustainable farming different from other farming?
- Why does it matter how we grow our food?
- What makes a farming practice good for the environment?

About Ancient and Modern Methods

- What traditional farming methods have people used for centuries?
- Why should we learn from old farming techniques?
- What new farming innovations are helping fight climate change?
- How can old and new methods work together?

Fun Conversation Starters

Imagination and Exploration

- If you could visit any farm from the book, where would you go?
- What would you grow if you had your own sustainable farm?
- What do you think farms under the sea look like?
- How would you design an urban garden for our community?

Food Connections

- Where does our family's food come from?
- What's your favorite food and how do you think it's grown?
- Have you ever grown any food yourself? What was it like?
- What food would you most like to learn how to grow?

Climate and Environment

- How does climate change affect farming?
- What farming methods help the environment instead of hurting it?
- How can the way we grow food help fight climate change?
- What can our family do to support sustainable farming?

Discussion Activities

Food Source Investigation

- Look at food labels together to see where different foods come from
- Visit a local farmer's market and talk to farmers about their methods
- Research where specific foods your family eats are typically grown
- Create a map showing the journey of a favorite food from farm to table

Hands-On Learning



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- Start a small garden together (even just herbs in a pot)
- Visit a local farm or community garden
- Try composting food scraps
- Grow sprouts or microgreens on a windowsill

Research Projects

- Investigate traditional farming methods from your family's cultural background
- Learn about farms in your local area and how they grow food
- Research one farming method from the book in more detail
- Explore climate zones and what grows well in each

Conversation Tips for Parents

Creating Curiosity

- **Start with what your child eats:** "Let's find out how [their favorite food] is grown!"
- **Make it visual:** Use the book's illustrations to spark questions and observations
- **Connect to experiences:** Relate farms to places you've visited or foods you've tried
- **Encourage wonder:** "I wonder how they grow food in [specific climate]?"

Encouraging Critical Thinking

- **Ask comparison questions:** "How is this farm similar to or different from that one?"
- **Explore reasons:** "Why do you think farmers in [place] use this method?"
- **Consider consequences:** "What might happen if we didn't farm sustainably?"
- **Problem-solve together:** "How would you solve this farming challenge?"

Making It Personal

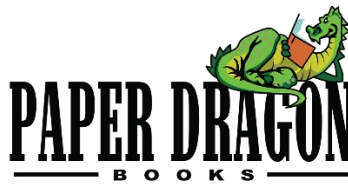
- **Connect to family practices:** Share stories about family members who gardened or farmed
- **Discuss family food choices:** Talk about where you shop and why
- **Explore cultural connections:** Learn about traditional farming in your family's heritage
- **Plan family action:** Decide together how to support sustainable agriculture

Questions by Age Group

For Younger Readers (Ages 6-8)

Focus on concrete examples and hands-on connections:

- What's your favorite farm from the book?
- How do farmers help plants grow?
- What would you plant in a garden?
- How can we help the farmers who grow our food?



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For Older Readers (Ages 9-11)

Explore deeper concepts and global perspectives:

- How do different climates affect what farmers can grow?
- What makes some farming methods more sustainable than others?
- How can farming help solve climate change problems?
- What innovations in farming are most important for the future?

Connecting to Real Life

At the Grocery Store

- Look for locally grown produce together
- Discuss organic vs. conventional farming
- Read labels to learn where food comes from
- Talk about seasonal eating and why it matters

In Your Community

- Find community gardens or urban farms nearby
- Research CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs
- Visit farmer's markets and talk to local growers
- Learn about school garden programs

At Home

- Start small food-growing projects appropriate to your space
- Compost food scraps to learn about soil health
- Reduce food waste and discuss why it matters
- Make conscious food choices as a family

Understanding Climate Change Connection

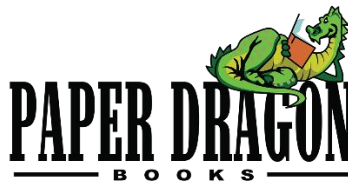
Age-Appropriate Climate Discussions

- Explain that climate change affects weather patterns farmers depend on
- Discuss how sustainable farming can help reduce climate change impacts
- Emphasize that people are working on solutions (not just problems)
- Connect individual actions to larger environmental efforts

Empowerment Through Action

- Focus on what we CAN do rather than what's scary
- Celebrate people working on solutions
- Find age-appropriate ways to participate
- Build hope through learning about innovations

Activity Ideas



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Garden Projects

- Plant a container garden on a balcony or patio
- Start an herb garden in a sunny window
- Create a compost bin for food scraps
- Grow vegetables from kitchen scraps (lettuce, celery, green onions)

Cooking and Eating

- Cook meals together using local, seasonal ingredients
- Visit a farm-to-table restaurant
- Try new vegetables and fruits
- Learn food preservation methods (freezing, canning, drying)

Creative Projects

- Draw or design your own sustainable farm
- Create a photo essay of food from local sources
- Make a cookbook of family recipes highlighting where ingredients come from
- Build models of different farming systems from the book

Educational Excursions

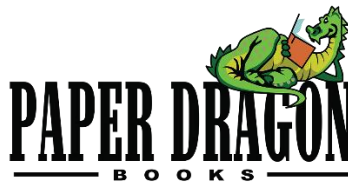
- Visit different types of farms (traditional, organic, urban, hydroponic)
- Tour a community garden
- Attend agricultural fairs or farm festivals
- Visit agricultural museums or exhibits

Remember

"Food for the Future" provides wonderful opportunities to discuss where our food comes from, how we can protect the environment while feeding ourselves, and the amazing diversity of agricultural practices around the world. The book's combination of traditional methods and innovative solutions shows that we can honor the past while building a sustainable future.

Use this book as a starting point to explore your family's relationship with food and farming. Whether you live in a city or countryside, there are ways to connect with sustainable agriculture and make choices that support both farmers and the environment.

Most importantly, let the book's global perspective and hopeful tone inspire conversations about human creativity and cooperation. People around the world are working on solutions to feeding humanity sustainably—and your family can be part of that effort through the choices you make and the practices you support.



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The diverse farming methods showcased remind us that there's no single solution to food security and climate change, but rather many approaches that work together. Just as the book celebrates diversity in farming, celebrate the different ways your family can contribute to a more sustainable food future.