

Corn Is All Around Us: Presentation Script

Ask these questions to the children: Why is corn important to us?

You may receive several answers, most of which include: “we eat it, and animals eat it.”

Those are all very important ways that corn is important to us, but I’m going to tell you how corn touches your lives every single day!



HISTORY OF CORN

First of all, corn was very important in the civilization of this continent and country. Do you know who the first people to grow and use corn were? That’s right, Native Americans. Corn was first grown in what is now Mexico more than 7,000 years ago. Corn was a primary staple of food for Indians. Most often, the Indians harvested the corn when the kernels were dried, and then ground them into corn meal for breads. Every part of the corn plant was used—toys, decorations, materials for building things, etc. Corn even became very important in their spiritual lives.

PRODUCTION OF CORN

Now, corn is grown on every single continent except one, Antarctica. The United States is the largest producer of corn, growing more than 12 billion bushels of corn each year. The kind of corn that I am referring to is known as FIELD or DENT CORN like I have here. It is different from the sweet corn that we eat because it has been dried in the field until the kernels are hard. The kernels of corn you see are actually the seeds of the corn plant. We could plant one of these kernels and grow a corn plant.

Farmers plant their corn in the spring of the year, hope for just enough rain to make it grow, and then harvest it in the fall. Farmers are harvesting corn right now with large machines called combines. The combine pulls the ears off the corn plant and then removes the kernels from the cob. The kernels are then emptied into a grain wagon and taken to the farmers’ grain bins for storage.

USES OF CORN

A farmer may do one of two things with his corn: sell it to a company that will make the corn into feed, food or fuel, or feed it to the livestock he or she has on their farm.

About half of all corn grown in the U.S. is fed to livestock such as cows, pigs and poultry. A very small part of that is fed to horses and other animals. Corn is fed to these animals because it is a very high-energy food, helping the animals to gain weight.

Another part of the corn crop is exported to foreign countries. They may either feed their livestock with the corn or use it for human food.

While corn can be used in many HUMAN FOOD PRODUCTS such as cereals, breads, chips, tortillas, etc., the largest use for corn in human food comes in the form of HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP. This sugary substance can be found in hundreds of food and beverage items such as non-diet sodas, fruit juices, salad dressings, candies, jams and jellies and more. Next time you are at home, look through your kitchen cabinets to find all items that contain corn syrup. You will be surprised.

There are many INDUSTRIAL and NON-FOOD uses for corn as well. Corn can be found in more than 3,500 different products. Examples of everyday items are:

Toothpaste	Batteries	Cosmetics	Medicines
Paper Products	Paints & Dyes	Inks	Glues
Detergents	Cleaners	Fireworks	Lubricants
Rubber Tires	Plastics	Body Lotions	Shoe Polish

NOTE: Try to include as many of the above items as visuals in your presentation... you can more than likely find most of them in your home or school.

One of the most important ways that corn is being used today is in the production of ETHANOL. Ethanol can be used as a fuel in motorized engines. It is much safer for the environment than petroleum-based gasoline because it does not produce the harmful greenhouse gases when burned. Ethanol is also good for the environment because it is made from RENEWABLE RESOURCES where petroleum is a LIMITED RESOURCE. Since ethanol can be made from corn or other starchy/sugary sources, the supply will never run out. Most vehicles in this country cannot run on ethanol alone, but ethanol can be blended with gasoline to make a cleaner-burning fuel. Next time you are at a gas station with your parents, ask the staff if they use ethanol in their fuel. If not, encourage them to do so.

Speaking of corn as a RENEWABLE RESOURCE, scientists are now able to use corn to make a number of more EARTH-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS. Corn can be used to make BIODEGRADABLE PLASTICS AND PACKING MATERIALS. Biodegradable means something is able to break down with natural elements such as the water, soil organisms, etc. By using these RENEWABLE, BIODEGRADABLE CORN PRODUCTS, we would be able to cut down on the amount of trash that fills up our land.

CONCLUSION

So there you have it. Corn is all around us and it touches our lives every day. We can eat corn, our livestock and pets eat corn, and we find it in thousands of important products that help make our world SWEETER, STRONGER, CLEANER, TASTIER, HEALTHIER, FRIENDLIER, SMOOTHER and SOFTER.

Are there any questions?

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