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HOW'D THAT GET ON MY PLATE?

Grades: 6 and up

Time: 45 minutes or more

Materials: Appropriate recipe(s) (good for breaking up into parts) written out large enough for the group to see; chart (on large paper or black/white board); markers/chalk; True Cost of Food or similar video

Relevant Subjects: Social Studies, Economics, Home Economics, Science, Agricultural Science, and Language Arts

Pertinent Information: If students have no familiarity with exploring the “hidden” impacts of ingredients, you may wish to first show them a relevant video such as “The True Cost of Food” (<http://www.truecostoffood.org/truecostoffood/movie.asp>).

1. Let students know that you’re all going to explore “How’d that get on my plate?” — how sample ingredients from a recipe might affect the environment, people, and animals, and what more humane alternatives might exist.
2. Show students a copy of the recipe(s)/meal that you’ve chosen. Divide them into groups and give each group one or more ingredients (depending on how you wish to conduct the activity) to investigate.

Sample recipes: chili and cornbread

Sample chili ingredients to explore:

- Tomatoes
- Hamburger

Sample cornbread ingredients to explore:

- Cornmeal
- Milk
- Eggs

- Sugar

- Have each group take one or more ingredients and brainstorm:
 - What is the process each of these ingredients undergoes to become an ingredient for the recipe?
 - How do these processes affect the world around us (people, animals, planet)?
- Have groups share the results of their brainstorming.
- Using a chart format (or similar), list the problems that the processes for each of these ingredients cause for people, animals, and the planet.
- Using the same chart, list suggested solutions to these problems (i.e., What could the companies who produce these ingredients/products do to develop creative solutions that do the most good and least harm for all involved?).

Sample Chart:

Ingredient	Problems for People	Problems for Animals	Problems for Planet	Solutions
Tomatoes				
Hamburger				
Cornmeal				
Milk				
Eggs				
Sugar				

Extensions:

- Compare the impact of the ingredients from the recipe used with those from a different recipe (vegan, organic, etc.) for the same kinds of foods.
- Divide a recipe into its primary ingredients and have participants do extensive research on that ingredient to determine more details about its impacts on people, animals and the planet.

Activity by: Molly Kelleher (M.Ed. Student)