

YEAR 9 GEOGRAPHY

Producing Cruelty: Considering the Impacts of Factory Farming

Australian Curriculum Alignment

Learning Area	Geography
Year Level	Year 9
General Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Numeracy • Critical and Creative Thinking • Ethical Understanding • Information and Communication Technology Capability
Strands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical Knowledge and Understanding – Biomes and Food Security • Geographical Inquiry and Skills – Observing, Questioning, Planning / Collecting, Recording, Evaluating and Representing / Interpreting, Analysing and Concluding / Communicating
Content Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges to food production, including land and water degradation, shortage of fresh water, competing land uses, and climate change, for Australia and other areas of the world (ACHGK063) • Develop geographically significant questions and plan an inquiry that identifies and applies appropriate geographical methodologies and concepts (ACHGS063) • Evaluate sources for their reliability, bias and usefulness and select, collect, record and organise relevant geographical data and information, using ethical protocols, from a range of appropriate primary and secondary sources (ACHGS064) • Present findings, arguments and explanations in a range of appropriate communication forms, selected for their effectiveness and to suit audience and purpose; using relevant geographical terminology, and digital technologies as appropriate (ACHGS070)

<p>Elaborations</p>	<p>(ACHGK063)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring environmental challenges to food production from land degradation (soil erosion, salinity, desertification), industrial pollution, water scarcity and climate change • Evaluating whether some ways of increasing food production could threaten sustainability <p>(ACHGS063)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing questions of geographical significance about an area of focus in the geographical knowledge and understanding strand (for example, questions about the importance of food security or types of interconnections) <p>(ACHGS064)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting geographical information from secondary sources (for example, topographic maps, thematic maps, choropleth maps, weather maps, climate graphs, compound column graphs and population pyramids, scatter plots, tables, satellite images and aerial photographs, reports, census data and the media) <p>(ACHGS070)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting an oral response, supported by visual aids including maps, to communicate a reasoned argument about a contemporary geographical issue, and responding to questions
<p>Cross-Curricular Priority</p>	<p>Sustainability</p> <p>Systems</p> <p>01.3 - Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems</p> <p>Futures</p> <p>01.8 – Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgements based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts</p> <p>01.9 - Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments</p>

Acknowledgments: This Australian Curriculum alignment statement is based on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) materials, which are licensed under CC BY 4.0. The material has been modified from the [Australian Curriculum](#) website (accessed January 2020).

Information to teachers

The suggested activities below have been developed for a Stage 5, Year 9 Geography class and ask students to evaluate the impacts of intensive animal agriculture (**factory farming**) on animals and the environment.

These activities refer to the [Voiceless Animal Cruelty Index \(VACI\)](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/) as its primary resource. The VACI tracks the **animal welfare** performance of 50 countries selected among the largest producers of farmed animal products in the world.

The interactive Index evaluates and ranks the countries based on the nature, extent, and intensity of cruelty associated with farmed animal production. In addition, it also assesses and ranks the consumption of farmed animals and animal products and the regulatory frameworks put in place to protect farmed animals within each country.

In these activities, students are asked to critically examine the facts and figures of the VACI; questioning how **animal cruelty** can be measured and considering what countries could be doing to better protect animals from such cruelty.

Time Allocation

50-100 minutes

Target

Mixed ability class with extension tasks.

Unit Focus

Question - what do you think constitutes **animal cruelty**, and what do you think countries could be doing better to protect animals from cruelty?

Consider - the different views on this issue, and decide for yourself where you stand.

Discuss - with your friends, family, classmates and teachers. Debating complex issues is healthy and helpful.

Voiceless Resources

- [The Voiceless Animal Cruelty Index \(VACI\)](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/). Voiceless, the animal protection institute, 2020, [vaci.voiceless.org.au](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/).
- The Voiceless Animal Cruelty Index – *The Index Logic*. Voiceless, the animal protection institute, 2021, [vaci.voiceless.org.au](https://voiceless.org.au).
- Voiceless Video – [Animal protection around the world - who ranks best and worst?](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/)
- Student Worksheet - [Comparing Countries](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/)
- [Hot Topics: Factory Farming](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/). Voiceless, the animal protection institute, voiceless.org.au.

- [Glossary](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/) (selected words appear in **bold**)
- [Quizlet](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/)
- [Animal Protection Encyclopedia](https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/). Voiceless, the animal protection institute, 2020, https://voiceless.org.au/encyclopedia_category/animal-protection-encyclopedia/.

Find all resources at www.voiceless.org.au

Other Resources

- [API - Animal Protection Index](https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/#). World Animal Protection, 2020, <https://api.worldanimalprotection.org/#>.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- In what ways can producing animals in **factory farming** systems correlate with **animal cruelty**?
- What are the consequences of **factory farming** for animals, humans and the environment?

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. PRE TEST

Students respond to the following questions:

1. What do you already know about **animal welfare** laws in Australia?
2. What is the difference between **animal rights** and **animal welfare**?
3. Write your own definition of the word 'cruel'. Now look up the definition and examples in the Cambridge dictionary online: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>.
4. What is your understanding of the word 'produce'?
5. What do you already know about how animals are produced for food in Australia?

TEACHER TIP

Refer to VACI Glossary for definitions of 'animal rights' and 'animal welfare'.

2. STARTER

Students watch the Voiceless video – *Animal protection around the world - who ranks best and worst?*

Use the questions below with your students.

Before Viewing

- For you, what does it mean to be cruel?
- Can you write your own definition of 'animal cruelty'?

During Viewing

- What are the three different ways the Index measures cruelty?
- Note down three facts or statistics which you hear/see as you watch.

After Viewing

- Of the three case studies which were you most surprised about and why?
- What further questions would you like to have answered in relation to the Index?
- What do you think constitutes **animal cruelty**, and what do you think countries could be doing better to protect animals from cruelty?

3. EXPLORE

What does it mean to produce cruelty?

As a class, read the short explanation of the Producing Cruelty category. Access it [here](#). Or, at vaci.voiceless.org.au

TEACHER TIP

Read the section as a class and then spend some time in discussion with your students. There may be some difficult/unfamiliar terminology – use the VACI [Glossary](#) for further clarification.

Group Comprehension Task

In pairs, students read the [Voiceless Hot Topics page – Factory Farming](#). This could be printed off in advance, or students could be directed to the webpage.

Students work together to answer the following questions:

- In your own words, how would you describe a factory farm?
- How do you think this differs from 'traditional methods' of farming?
- In what ways does **factory farming** relate to **animal cruelty**?
- Which animals are not accounted for in the results provided by the VACI?
- What are some of the environmental impacts of **factory farming**?
- What drives the production of meat, dairy and eggs?

4. DISCUSS

Comparing Countries

The countries in the VACI are ranked as follows:

- Very Good (A)
- Good (B)
- Adequate (C)
- Marginal (D)
- Poor (E)
- Very Poor (F)
- Worst (G)

No countries were awarded a Very Good (A). Students continue to work in pairs and choose two countries (not already covered in the video) to compare.

They should select a Very Poor to Worst performer (between 40-50) and a Good to Adequate to performer (between 1-10).

Students will need access to the interactive [VACI](#), the [World Animal Protection Index \(API\)](#), and Google to complete this task.

Complete the comparison table on the following page, '[Comparing Countries Worksheet](#)'.

Country	Very Poor - Worst performer: (between 40-50).	Adequate - Good performer (between 1-10).
Country		
Population		
Overall ranking on the VACI		
Producing Cruelty Rating Include an explanation (in your own words) of the reasons behind this ranking.		
Statistics The number of land animals slaughtered each year for human consumption.		
Considerations What details need to be taken into consideration when weighing up this country's performance?		
Factory Farming What details can you find out about factory farming in this country? i.e. Are sow-stalls for pigs, or battery cages for hens still in use? Hint: On the API you will find some helpful information.		

5. SHARE

Students to present their research and findings from the task above in a short oral presentation (3-4 minutes).

In addition, students could transform their findings from the table above into an infographic. There are free tools to create infographics online, such as Canva.

6. REFLECT

‘Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.’

(Sustainability outcome taken from: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>)

In light of what you have discussed in the previous activities, compose a visual or written response to the statement above.

7. EXTENSION

Read about the welfare issues experienced by layer hens confined to small cages for egg production. [Click here to access the Voiceless Hot Topics page on Battery Hens.](#)

- Give examples of natural behaviours which hens find difficult to perform when confined to small cages?
- List 5 physical or emotional impacts that battery hens can experience in this type of **factory farming**.
- Which is the only jurisdiction in Australia that has completely banned **battery cages** for egg production?

Voiceless would be delighted to receive completed student work to consider for publication on the Voiceless website. If you have student and parental consent, please email work or feedback to education@voiceless.org.au

We are always looking to improve our educational resources, please get in contact with us if you would like to provide some feedback on this APE, including how it was received by your students. education@voiceless.org.au

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Year 9 Geography

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COMPARING

CRUELTY



Comparing Countries Worksheet

The countries in the VACI are ranked as follows:

- Very Good (A)
- Good (B)
- Adequate (C)
- Marginal (D)
- Poor (E)
- Very Poor (F)
- Worst (G)

No countries were awarded a Very Good (A)

- Work with a partner to complete the following table.
- Choose two countries to profile. One must be a Very Poor to Worst performer (between 40-50) and the other a Good to Adequate performer (between 1-10). Note: You cannot choose the countries profiled in the video.
- You will need access to the interactive VACI, the World Animal Protection Index, and Google to complete this task.

	Very Poor - Worst performer (between 40-50).	Good to Adequate performer (between 1-10).
Country		
Population		
Overall rating on the VACI		
Producing Cruelty Ranking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include an explanation (in your own words) of the reasons behind this ranking. 		
Statistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of land animals slaughtered each year for human consumption. 		
Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What details need to be taken into consideration when weighing up this country's performance? Wealth/culture/religion? 		
Factory Farming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What details can you find out about factory farming in this country? • i.e. Are sow-stalls for pigs, or battery cages for hens still in use? • Hint: On the API you will find some helpful information. 		

Note:

The VACI was published and last updated in 2020. You can access the VACI here: vaci.voiceless.org.au

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voiceless.org.au/schools/comparing-cruelty/

Animal protection around the world - who ranks best and worst?

COMPARING

CRUELTY



Worksheet to accompany video

Access the video here:

voiceless.org.au/schools/comparing-cruelty

1. What question does the narrator ask in the opening of the video?
2. Comment on the symbolism of the scales – what do you think they represent in this context?
3. How do you feel when you see these animals in cages?
4. What is ONE way to measure how a country contributes to animal cruelty?
5. What does the acronym 'VACI' represent?
6. Identify the three categories the VACI uses to rank countries.
7. How many farmed animals are slaughtered around the world for human consumption each year, according to the VACI?
8. What is the more common term that is used to describe intensive industrial animal farming systems? Why do you think this term is used?
9. How is the welfare of farmed animals impacted by intensive industrial animal farming systems?
10. Finish this sentence: The third category is the sanctioning of cruelty based on a country's _____ and _____ attitudes towards animals.
11. How do Australia, France, and India perform on the Index?
12. How many land animals are slaughtered per person each year in Australia?
13. What is the global average of land animals slaughtered per person each year?
14. Where does Australia rank in the 'Consuming Cruelty' category?
15. Some countries around the world have banned battery cages for hens. Has Australia banned this practice also?
16. Is France slaughtering more than the global average of land-based animals per person/per year?
17. Finish the sentence: The French diet contains a high proportion of...
18. India does not consume as much meat as Australia or France. Outline some of the reasons as to why this is the case.
19. Write short responses to the following questions
 - What do you think constitutes animal cruelty?
 - What do you think countries could be doing better to protect animals from cruelty?

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Vocabulary

Definition

Animal Cruelty

Causing an animal pain that, in the circumstances, is unjustifiable, unnecessary or unreasonable.

Animal Rights

Moral and legal entitlements of animals.

Animal Welfare

How an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

Battery cages

Small cages used to house layer hens for egg production, which can be less than an A4 size of paper.

Ethical

Adhering to moral principles concerning beliefs on what is morally 'right' and 'wrong'.

Factory Farming

A system of large-scale intensive animal agriculture, where animals are generally confined indoors, and unable to perform most natural behaviours.

Sentience

The ability to perceive and feel things, such as pleasure and pain.

Sow Stalls

Small metal and concrete crates used to house mother pigs (sows) during pregnancy, which prevent them from turning around.

[For more terms and definitions access the online Animal Protection Encyclopedia](#)

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voiceless.org.au/schools/comparing-cruelty/