

# Farming Factsheet

## **Big Issue - Farming**

The United States has a long history of agriculture, and our farming methods have been influenced by farming practices all over the world. Traditional farming practices and the way food is produced, transported and consumed need to change if we want to address climate change and global warming.



**Your group will be looking at the issues around farming in the United States.**

## **Farming**

When we talk about farming, we mean the growing and harvesting of crops and the rearing of animals for human consumption. Humans have been farming for thousands of years. Farming is a great way of ensuring we have food all year round; we can grow different foods at different times of the year according to the seasons and conditions of the area we live in. However, in more recent years, the size of farms has grown, and we've started using chemicals to help crops and animals grow bigger and faster and all year round and be less susceptible to damage from pests. The good thing about farming this way is that we can feed more people, and as populations grow, we do need more food. The bad thing about growing food in this way is that it can cause harm to our environment: native vegetation is cleared, the soil becomes poorer, the use of chemicals can affect insects and other animals, and as we use more water there is less water available for the environment. It's important to say though that many farmers are incorporating more environmentally responsible practices into their farms, but we still have a long way to go.

## **Big Questions**

- What are some of the ways conventional farming might harm our environment?
- How might alternative methods of farming be less harmful to our environment?