

# All in a day's work

By LYDIA SMITH  
Home School, Grade 6

Beep, beep, beep. My alarm clock goes off. I roll over and go back to sleep. Ten minutes later, my sister shakes me back to reality. I stumble out of bed and fumble for my clothes. I slip quietly down the stairs, trying not to wake my parents and other siblings.

In the kitchen, I mix up a warm bottle of milk replacer for the bottle lamb. One of our ewes hasn't been able to feed both of her lambs, so we have to supplement one. When the milk is ready, I fetch my sister from the other room. Together, we slip on our barn boots and heavy coats and step out into the chilly morning air.

It's a short drive to the old barn where we winter our flock. Still half asleep, we ride in silence. The large, open, three-sided barn is dark and quiet. I hop out and call for the bottle lamb. Out of a pile of snoozing sheep he eagerly jumps up, hungrily baaing for his breakfast.

I squeeze through the gate, not wanting to disturb the ewe that's leaning against it. I check to see if any new lambs have been born during the night — none. Meanwhile, a demanding tug on my jeans reminds me that the lamb is hungry. I hold his bottle as he greedily chugs it down.

My sister strides around the pen, making sure everyone's all right. I walk across the barn and say hello to our youngest lamb. He's not even a day old yet. Lambs and ewes are sleeping in various clumps around the barnyard. I have to be careful not to step on anyone on my way back to the gate.

After making sure that the gate is securely locked behind us, my sister and I clamber stiffly back into the car. We turn around and head home. We'll be back later to feed and water the animals. This is only the beginning of the day's work.

## Morning on the farm

By HENRY LANG  
Dothan Brook School, Grade 5

Up at dawn  
Slip on boots  
Open the loft  
Slide down the chute  
Get the pail  
To milk the cow  
The crud on my pants  
Makes others say, "Wow!"  
I skip to the coop  
To feed Mrs. Henny  
Then hop out the door  
To give slops to Lenny  
He eats like a pig  
Because he is one of course  
"Breakfast!" Mom calls  
I hop on my horse  
My great meal is eggs  
Farm fresh from the coop  
I scarf it all down  
Then it's back to the loop



## THIS WEEK: Farming

Each week, Young Writers Project receives several hundred submissions from students all over the state. With the help of some anonymous students we select the best for publication here and in eight other newspapers. This week, students submitted writing done in response to the prompt, "Farming." To read more great student work, go to [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), a safe, civil online community of young writers.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work.

YWP runs [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) — a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback; and builds Digital Writing Classrooms for schools. For more go to [ywpschools.net](http://ywpschools.net).

### YWP NEWS

YWP thanks several key supporters:

**FairPoint Communications** is supporting YWP Schools Project digital classrooms in St. Albans, Enosburg, Grand Isle and Milton.

**Bay and Paul Foundations** has given YWP a grant to help students create digital stories about themselves and their heritage.

## The Vermont ritual

By MEGAN KLOECKNER  
Champlain Valley Union High School, Grade 9

The brown-feathered rooster crows as the dark sky begins to tint shades of light pink, orange and yellow. The old Vermont native rises up out of the comfort of his flannel sheets and changes into a flannel shirt; it's cold these early spring mornings.

He looks back at his old red house, just as he has done every morning since he was a boy helping his father, who had in turn helped his father too. His old forest-green rubber boots clunk against the ground as he trudges on.

All his cows greet him as he opens the door and checks the barn to make sure everything is in order. He greets them all in return, except the big bull, Hot Shot Hamilton, for he is a trouble-maker and the old farmer stays away from him as much as he can.

His glasses get fogged up because of the sudden warmth inside the barn. Better this than the winter of 1939, he recalls with a simple smile upon his weathered face.

A sudden nudge from behind him given by a friendly Holstein cow frees him from his memory and he remembers his work. He silently returns to feeding his cows, moving along quickly. He is a Vermont farmer, and he has his work to finish.

### NEXT PROMPT

**General.** Send us your best writing. **Due Friday.** This is the last prompt for the year.

Submit at:

[youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org)

## A farmer's life

By PETER BOWLEY  
Edmunds Middle School, Grade 7

I was walking down the road, looking for a way to pass the time. I encountered an older man with a roundish belly and white hair. He wore overalls and was dirty all over. His straw hat kept the sun off of his face, but he still looked hot and tired. As I walked by, he took his hat off for a moment and said, "Hey there." I stopped, and looked at the tool in his hands. He seemed to be working hard doing something with the soil and I asked if he needed any help. His reply was, "Well, that would be mighty fine." So we went to work.

I figured out farming was hard work right away. I had been bored, which was the main reason I helped the farmer, but I didn't know what I was in for. I had inadvertently started to mess up the dirt, and the old man told me what I hadn't even realized. "Farming is hard work, Boy, but you've gotta stay focused and hoe the ground correctly. Yeah, that's right, Boy."

I was sweating and wiped my hand over my forehead. I looked at the blinding sun beating down on me. My skin burned and I was getting hungry so I figured I'd stop soon. I looked at my watch which was now smudged with dirt, and saw it was 5:00, time for dinner. I lay the tool down, a strange looking thing — I didn't even know what it was, and said goodbye to the man, who thanked me.

Walking back, I thought about the farming. I ate dinner, went to bed and woke up the next morning and ate a quick breakfast. I told my mom I was going for a walk again and returned to the old man. "Well that would be mighty fine," he said before I could even ask the question, and we went to work.

## My garden plan

By OBADIAH MULDER  
Home School, Grade 3

My father works at Cerredian Farm. I want to make money this summer, so he said that I could grow vegetables at the farm. He is giving me a 50-foot-long plot to grow them in. I am going to sell the vegetables I grow at the Poultney farmer's market.

I am planting red, white, black, yellow and orange cherry tomatoes. I have chosen these because I think that they are pretty and will sell well. Having many different varieties means that if one kind gets sick the others might not. I am also going to plant basil because if the cherry tomatoes get a sickness, I will still have the basil.

I will have to get the bed ready to plant. I have already started on this. I have to turn over the soil and take out any rocks and weeds. If the roots of the weeds are left in then the weeds will still grow. Then I will plant. Then I will weed and water. When they are grown I will harvest and sell. I hope to make \$200.

## Who knew?

By ADDY CAMPBELL  
Mt. Abraham Union Middle/High School, Grade 8

Back stooped  
she's bent over,  
looking naturally lovely.  
Bare toes clad only with rings  
sunk beneath inches of soupy, glorious mud  
wiggle with the joy  
that only comes with wearing no shoes.  
Her father's olive Carharts  
slung low on her hips  
meet the purple tank-top  
and her long hair, twisted into a loose bun  
escapes  
strand-by-strand, to greet the early morning  
air.  
She's glamorous.  
And as her smooth fingers  
extend to caress the leaves of yet another  
strawberry plant  
a little too eager to grow  
another hour passes.  
Who knew berry farming  
could be this beautiful?

## Farming

By AUSTIN HOYT  
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 7

Fantastic fields of corn  
Amazing squishy squash  
Radiant red radishes  
Mounds of crunchy carrots  
Immense round zucchini  
Nice firm tomatoes  
Great green beans