

Apple Earth

Consider the Earth as an apple. Get an apple and do the following sequence, or read the activity slowly and imagine or draw each action.

Slice an apple into quarters. Set aside three of the quarters. These represent the oceans of the world. The fourth quarter roughly represents the total land area left.

Slice this land quarter in half, giving you two $1/8^{\text{th}}$ world pieces. Set aside one of the pieces. This is land that people cannot live on, like polar areas, deserts, swamps, very high or rocky mountainous areas. The other $1/8^{\text{th}}$ land is where people live, but not necessarily grow the foods needed for life.

Now slice this $1/8^{\text{th}}$ piece into four sections, giving you four $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ pieces. Set aside three of these pieces. These are areas too rocky, too wet, too cold, too steep, or with soil too poor to produce food. They also include the areas of land that could produce food but are buried under cities, highways, suburban developments, shopping centers and other structures people have built.

This leaves us with a $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ slice of the earth. Carefully peel this slice. This tiny bit of peeling represents the surface, the very thin skin of the earth's crust upon which humankind depends. Less than five feet deep, it is quite a fixed amount of food-producing land.

When we see the small amount of land that produces our food, it's easy to see that protecting land resources is important. Advanced agriculture technology has enabled the world to feed many of its people. However, farmers, ranchers and livestock producers are making extra efforts to be environmental stewards of the land, air and water. Here are some of those efforts:

- Producers use livestock waste (manure) as a resource to fertilize soil to grow corn and soybeans in Iowa.
- Producers use new technology, like feed additives, to reduce odor from hog farms.
- Most pork producers contain their manure in deep pits underneath the hog buildings. This way they can better utilize the nutrients found in manure to fertilize the soil and add value to their land.
- Pork producers have made tremendous improvements in reducing impact of the environment from livestock production due to improved facilities.

