Name _____ Reading informational text (RI.5.1–4)

A Big Job

Read the selection. Then answer the questions on your own paper.

No matter what's on your plate, chances are part of your meal began on a farm. Many people believe farmers who raise animals for food should treat their animals humanely. One group that helps farmers do just that is the American Humane Association. It helps farmers make sure they keep their animals safe and well cared for (see the information in the box).

One farm animal that provides food for us is the dairy cow. Just like you, dairy cows need a healthy and balanced diet. The cows need to be fed every day. In addition, cows need a daily supply of clean, fresh drinking water.

Dairy cows need shelter and a comfortable resting area. Farmers must keep check on the amount of dust and ammonia (a gas produced by cows' waste) in the buildings that house cows. Farmers also must see that these buildings don't have features that could harm a cow, such as sharp edges or slippery floors. The lighting must help the cows keep up a daily, natural cycle. For example, the cows must have eight hours of natural light each day. Cows also need time when the lighting is reduced so they can rest. When it's hot outside, farmers must provide a shaded area or a water system to keep the cows cool.

Farmers must help keep their cows from getting sick or injured. They work with veterinarians who can diagnose and treat a sick cow. They inspect the cows daily. They keep areas such as the milking rooms clean to reduce the risk of infection. Equipment such as milking machines, buckets, and shovels must be kept clean. If a cow does get sick or injured, she needs a comfortable, safe place away from the healthy cows.

Cows are healthier when they are not under stress. They need resting areas that are big enough for the cows to lie down together without getting kicked or stepped on by other cows. Farm workers must handle the cows calmly. Farmers also need to have a plan that will protect the cows in case of an emergency like a fire or bad storm.

It's hard work to raise healthy cattle. Dairy farmers who treat their cows humanely know their efforts are worth it. Happy, safe cows produce healthy, safe food for us!

Quality Care Standards for Farm Animal Well-Being

- Access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health and vigor
- Provide an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- Prevent pain, injury and disease through rapid diagnosis and treatment
- Provide sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind and opportunity to express natural behaviors
- Provide conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

Look for eggs, meat, and dairy products that are American Humane Certified. That shows that the animals were raised humanely.

1. Choose three terms from the selection that you think are important to its overall message. Then tell what each word means and why it is important to the selection.
2. What is the main idea of the selection? How do you know?
3. Name two important details from the selection that support the main idea.
4. What do you think the word *diagnose* means in the fourth paragraph?
5. What do you think this sentence means:

   "The lighting must help the cows keep up a daily, natural cycle."

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“A Big Job”
Answer Key

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary but should convey that the main idea is that there are many things dairy farmers must do to treat their cows humanely.
3. Answers will vary.
4. to recognize a disease or illness
5. Answers will vary.

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