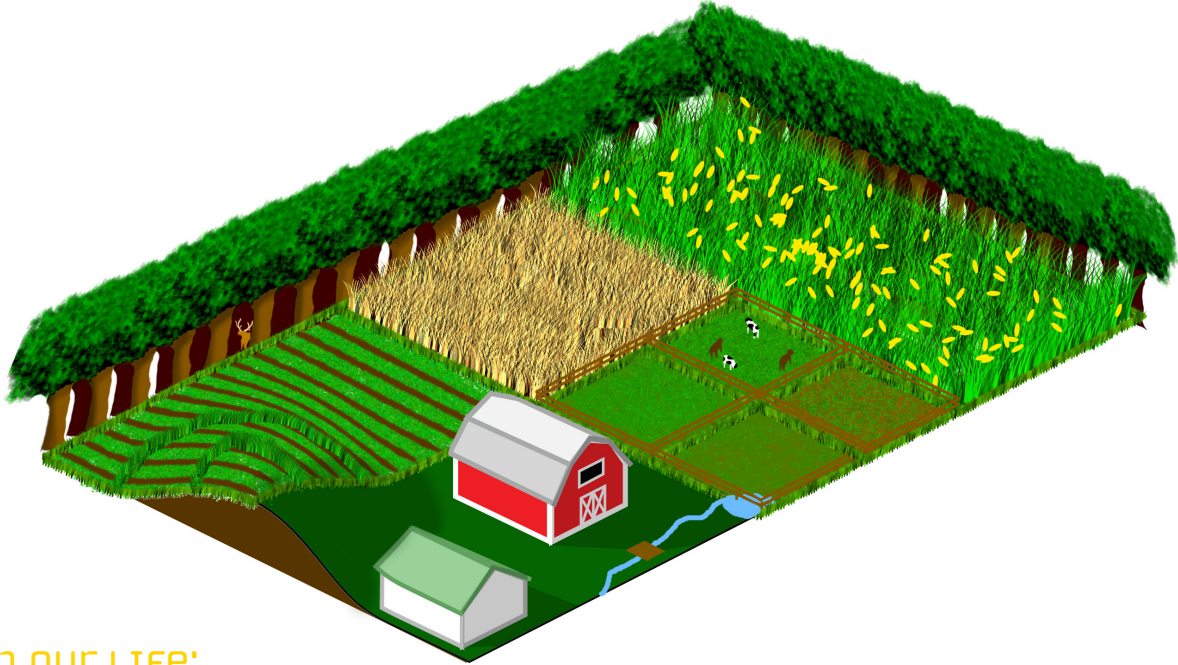


A DAY IN THE LIFE

DIRECTIONS

Investigate the illustration below, and read the short biography about the ranching family. Stewardship practices are ways that someone takes care of the land, resources and environment. Without looking back at the story, try to recall as many stewardship practices as possible. When you are done, look back to check your answers.



A DAY IN OUR LIFE:

We are a busy farming and ranching family, and protecting the environment is important to us. First of all, we care for the land. We plant corn, legumes, and small grains on a rotation. Each field gets to grow something new each year, which prevents erosion, weeds, pests and diseases! We also keep the soil healthy by making sure it has the right nutrients in the right amounts to grow healthy crops. For instance, in our soybean fields we check the soil regularly to make sure we have just the right amount of nitrogen. We put contour buffer strips in our fields, which are strips of ground where we let crops or grass grow without cutting it. This keeps soil in place and provides a nice home for animals. We even leave wildlife food plots in the winter, which are small patches of corn so that wildlife have enough to eat when it gets cold. We also care for air and water. Each year we plant trees that match our soil type. These trees keep our water clean by holding soil in place, and they make a great home for animals. They also slow down the wind and blowing snow to reduce air pollution. We water only the crops that need it and use watering systems that drip small amounts of water on the plants instead of spraying lots of water over the entire field. This puts water right at the crops' roots, which results in less water evaporated. Don't forget our cattle! We rotate the pastures that they graze on, to keep our cattle and grasslands healthy. Finally, we carefully store manure and control water that runs off our crops, so that we do not contribute to pollution.

TEST YOUR MEMORY HERE!

Without looking back at the story, write the stewardship practices you can remember in the space below. (HINT: Look at the picture to jog your memory of the practices mentioned in the story.)

After reading this paragraph, what do you think you can do to be a good steward of Earth's air, water and soil?



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Answers: crop rotation, checking soil nutrients, contour buffer strips, wildlife food plots, soil-specific trees, trees keep water and air clean, pasture rotation, manure storage, using drip watering systems, water-runoff management