

Name _____

Date _____



Wetlands Are Wonderlands! Family Page



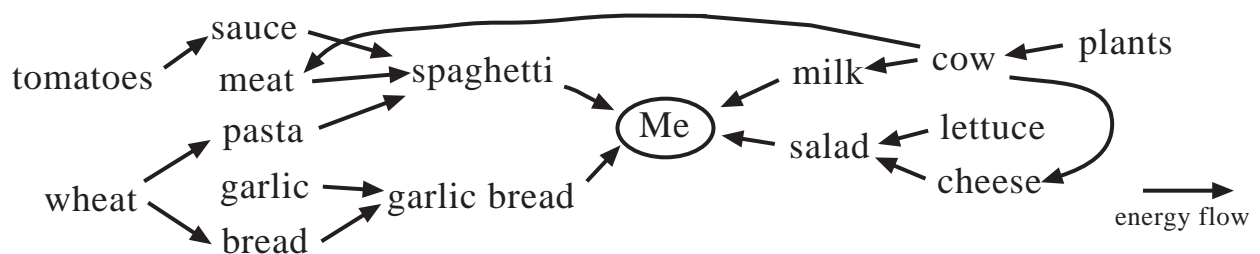
Question: How does energy flow and matter cycle in an ecosystem?

What's Happening in Class?

We are using the wetland, Ohio's most endangered ecosystem, as a context for exploring how living things interact in a system. Classroom activities related to this investigation focus on food chains, food webs, and the Pyramid of Energy--a model that explains why our world has so much plant life, but so few large consumers. For more specific information on this lesson, visit the *Science for Ohio* website at www.environmentaleducationohio.org and click on the *Wetlands Are Wonderlands!* inquiry.

What Can We Do at Home?

- 1) Remind your child to bring in one or two empty food containers (cereal box, fast food wrapper, etc.). These items will be used during the Pyramid of Energy activity.
- 2) Discuss the following terms and look for examples in and around your home.
Producer: an organism that makes its own food. The most common producers are green plants, which transform the sun's energy into food through photosynthesis.
Consumer: an organism which must eat to get energy. Animals are consumers.
Decomposer: an organism such as fungi or bacteria that breaks down matter and returns it to the soil, air, and water as nutrients
Abiota: the nonliving portion of an ecosystem, including soil, air, and water.
- 3) Create a food web with words and pictures to show how we get energy from plants (which get their energy from the sun) in a typical meal. An example (without pictures) is shown below.



- 4) Create your own Pyramid of Energy model at home. Visit *Science for Ohio* for directions.
- 5) Consult the following resources to learn more about wetlands.

Books

Wetlands by Rose Pipes
ISBN 0-8172-5001-8

Wetlands by Ewan McLeish
ISBN 0-7502-1587-9

World Wide Web

The Young Scientists Introduction to Wetlands is an 11-page printable document published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Visit the Related Resources section of the *Wetlands Are Wonderlands!* activity to check out this and other online resources.