

# ORGANIC HISTORY RESEARCH

## Objective:

Students will use a variety of resources to research and reflect on the history of organic agriculture. This project will encourage students to review and identify information from a number of sources, therefore providing the opportunity to establish a foundation of information to help them understand the history of organic agriculture and its impact on our society.

## Advance Preparation:

Students will need a basic understanding of the organic agriculture industry as well as internet access and guidance to identify credible sources.

## Materials:

Access to resources for research

## Estimated Time:

30-45 minutes

## Activity:

Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group one of the following historical figures to research:

- Sir Albert Howard
- Lady Eve Balfour
- J. I. Rodale
- Rachel Carson

## Procedure:

- Ask students to think about the people who have influenced agriculture as we know it today.
- In a class discussion, talk about how each of the individuals made an impact. Did they invent a new tool? Change the way we produced food or fiber? Address new issues?
- Arrange the students into small groups, and assign them one of the notable organic agricultural forerunners noted above.
- Provide time for students to access research sources to find information about their individual.

- Provide time in class for students to conduct research, create presentations, and present projects to the class. If students wish, they can be creative about how they present the information (for example, one student can pretend to be the historical figure and another can be an interviewer).
- Conclude with a brief class discussion.
  - What similarities are there between these people?
  - How are they different from one another?
  - What do you think of their ideas?
  - Would their approaches still be valid today?
  - How do you believe they would think about issues in agriculture today? (For example, genetic engineering, precision farming, world trade in agricultural commodities.)

### Evaluation:

- Summarize information – **5 points**
- Each partner must equally contribute to the project – **5 points**
- Be creative and original – **5 points**
- Three objectives (these are areas you want to cover and items the class should know and understand after your presentation) – **5 points**
- Attention grabber—an interesting introduction that entices the audience. – **5 points**
- Body—teach the subject matter using games, worksheets, visual aids, hands-on learning, or whatever best suits the information. Must incorporate objectives into the presentation. – **10 points**
- Conclusion—Wrap up your presentation with a final thought or message that helps convey your topic. This might be the time you choose to quiz others to find out if they understand the content you covered. – **5 points**

**Adapted from the UW–Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and SARE Resources**