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every day to keep this precious land green.”

Learn how Florida farmers protect, conserve
and manage the land that provides food, fiber and
foliage for our everyday lives.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

DACS-P-01615



Green Florida Farms

Written by Gary Seamans • Illustrated by Mike Wright



A Florida Agriculture
Literacy Day Book



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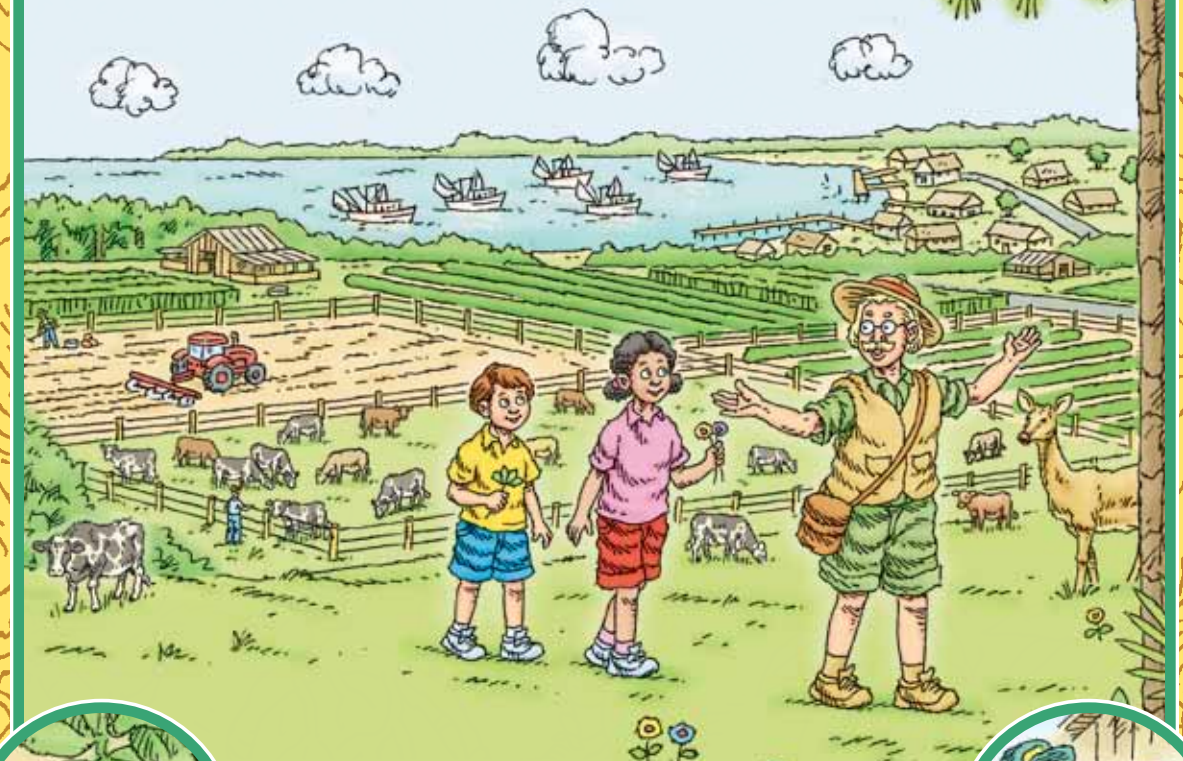


Florida
Agriculture in
the Classroom, Inc.



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Florida Agriculture Literacy Day

is an annual event held each spring in which hundreds of agriculture industry representatives read a designated children's book about agriculture in elementary school classrooms around the state.

The event is a partnership between Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom

is a non-profit association charged with educating Florida students and teachers about the importance of Florida agriculture. It is funded solely by sales of the agriculture specialty license plate known as the "Ag Tag."

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom is able to provide Agriculture Literacy Day books and other related items free of charge because of the funding it receives from the Ag Tag.



Definitions

Biomass: Plant material, vegetation, or agriculture waste used as a fuel or energy source.

Renewable energy source: A type of energy which is obtained from natural sources including flowing water, rain, wind, sunshine and other biological processes which are continually available.

Hydroponic: Growing plants by placing the roots in liquid nutrient solutions rather than soil; soilless growth of plants.

Irrigate: To supply dry land with water by means of ditches, pipes or streams; to water artificially.

Byproduct: Something produced in an industrial or biological process in addition to the principal product, a secondary product.

Erosion: The condition in which the earth's surface is worn away by the action of water and wind.

Farm: An area of land including buildings, used for growing crops, breeding and keeping livestock. An area (often man-made) of water devoted to the raising, breeding or production of a specific aquatic animal.

Ranch: A large plot of land used for raising cattle, sheep or other livestock.

Contour farming: Plowing, planting and harvesting at right angles to the natural slope of land to reduce soil erosion, protect soil fertility and limit water run-off.

Conserve: To keep in safety and protect from harm, decay, loss or destruction. The care, protection or management of natural resources.

Recycle: To process used material into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials.

Soil: The top layer of the earth's surface, consisting of rock and mineral particles mixed with organic matter. It is capable of retaining water and providing nutrients for plants.

Plow (v.): To break, cut and turn over earth in preparation for sowing seed or planting.

Plow (n.): A tool used in farming to break, cut and turn over earth in preparation for sowing seed and planting.

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Florida Department
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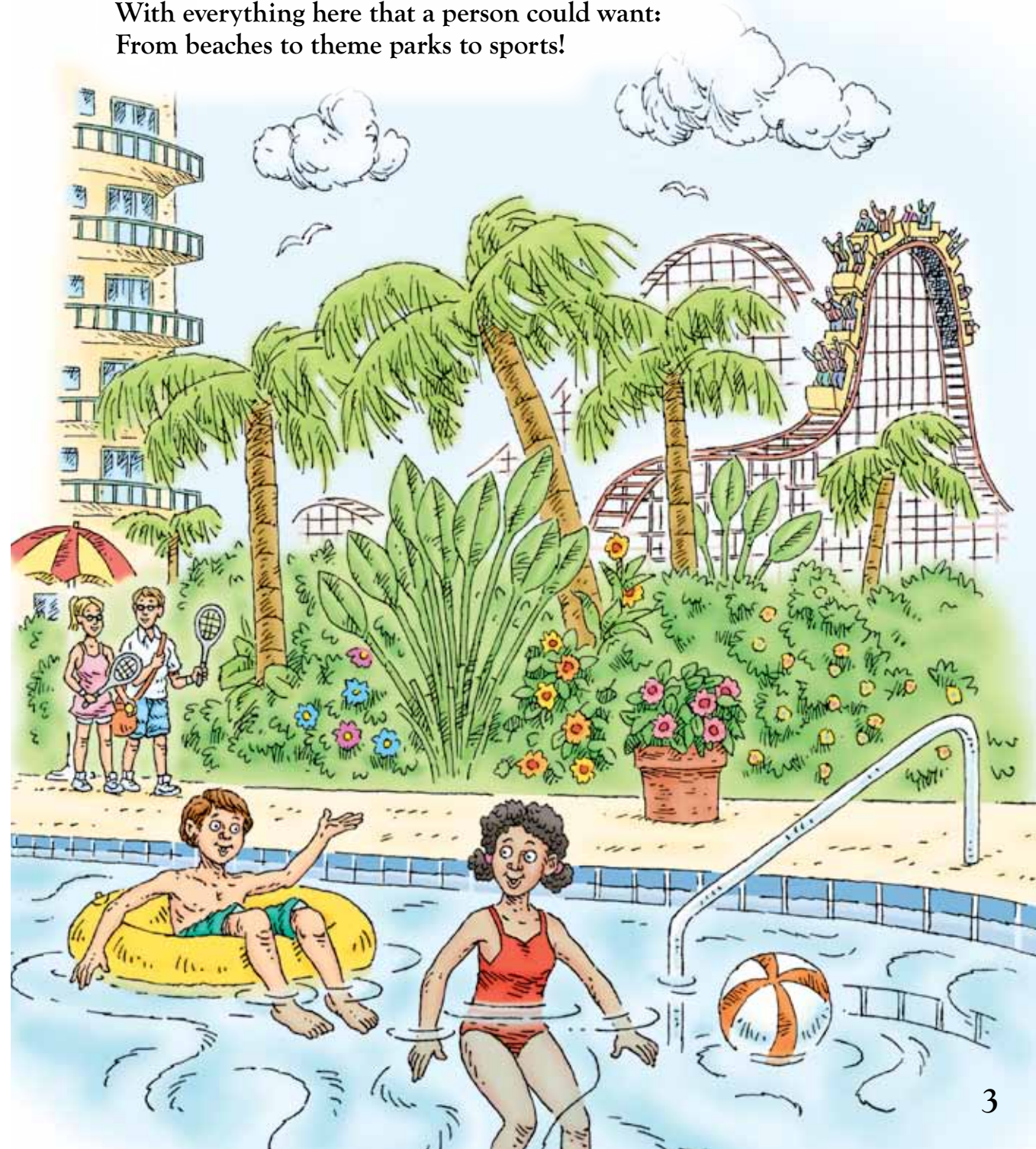


**Florida
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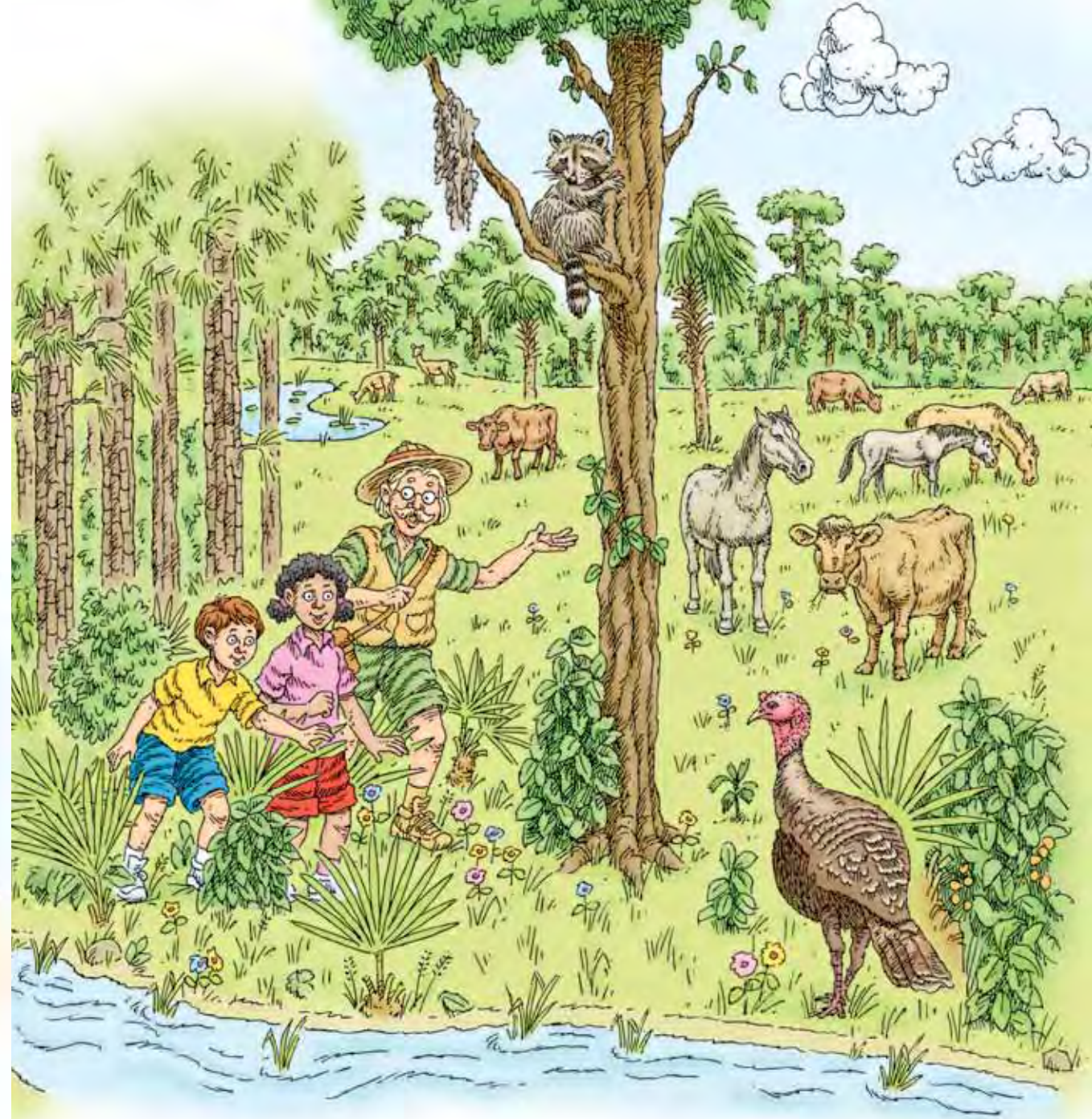
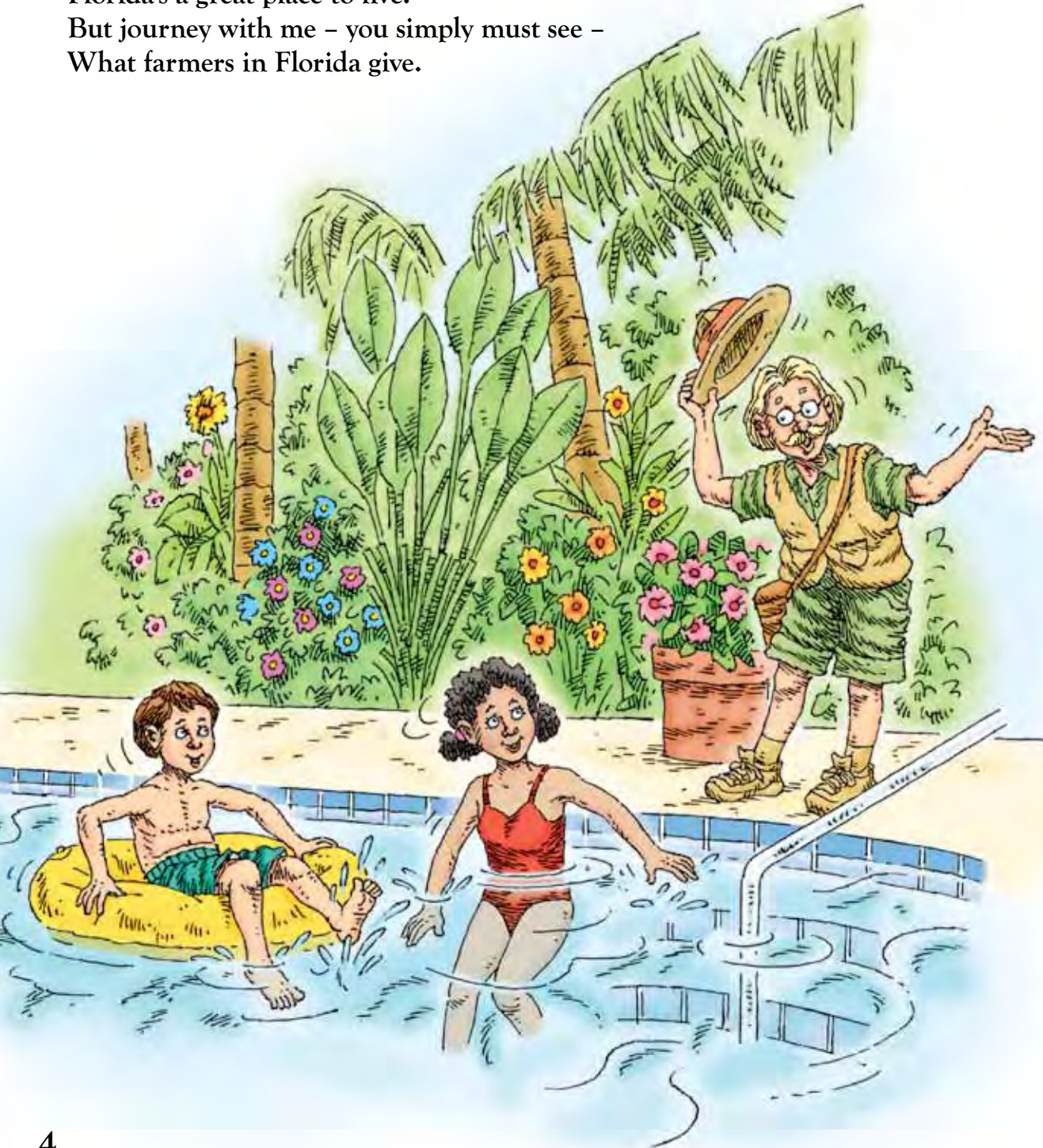
“Educate Students About
Florida Agriculture”
(352) 846-1391
www.agtag.org

*This book is dedicated to
Florida's school children who will help
farmers ensure that Florida stays green for
future generations.*

Florida is such a wonderful place,
Ah! The sunshine and friendly resorts,
With everything here that a person could want:
From beaches to theme parks to sports!



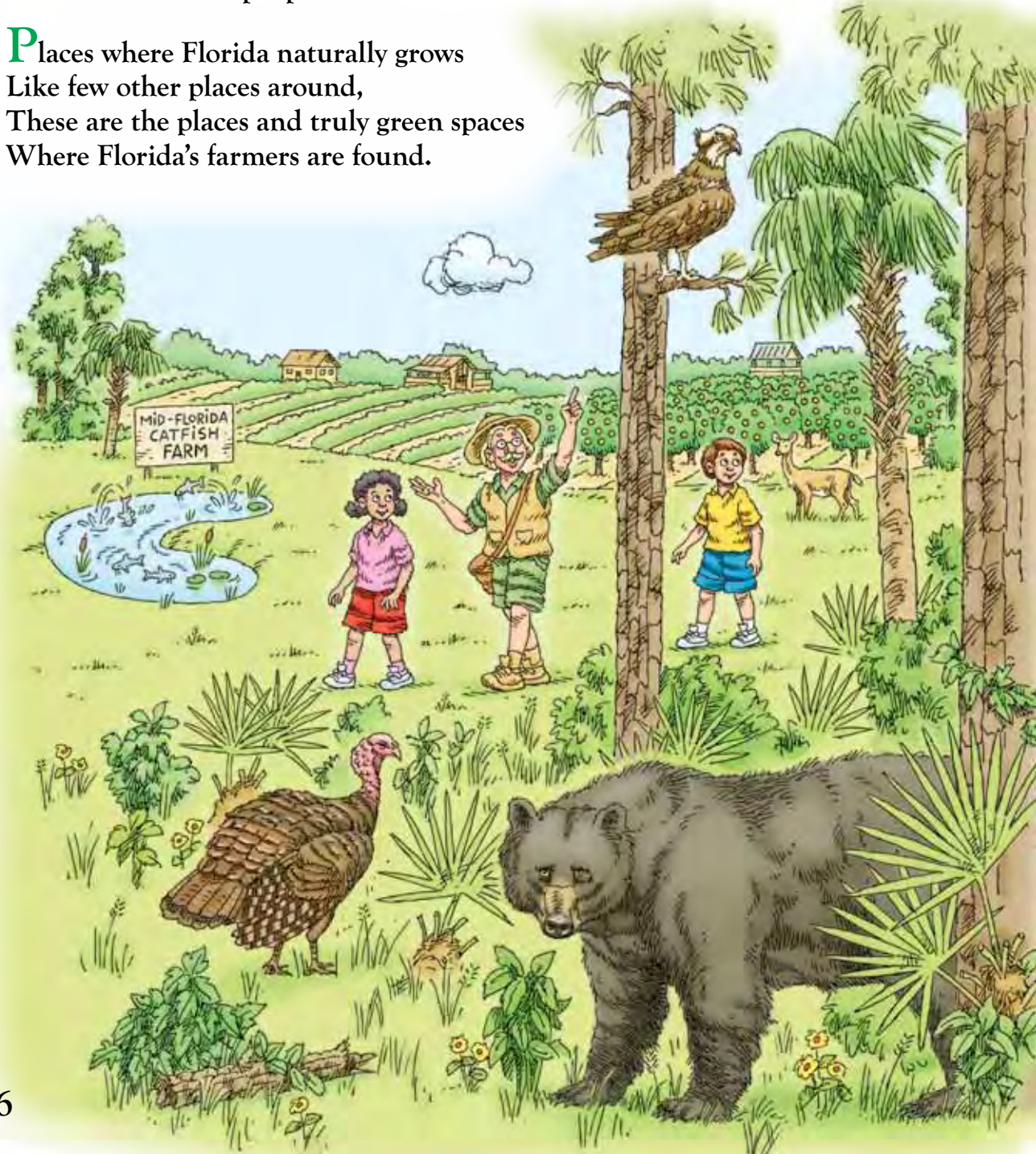
Hold on, dear friends, I know that it's true,
Florida's a great place to live.
But journey with me – you simply must see –
What farmers in Florida give.



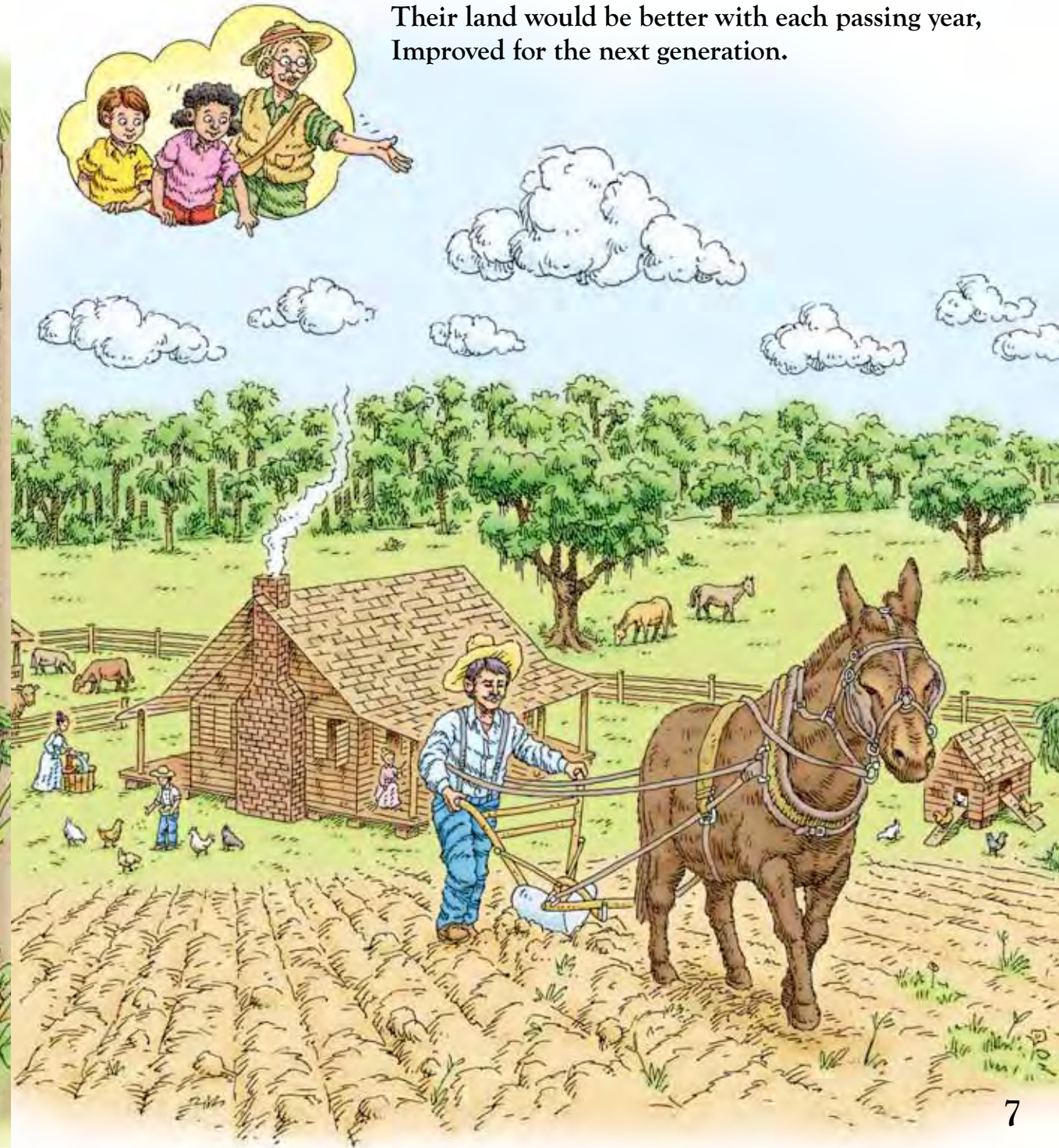
There's more to our state than sunshine and beaches –
And all of the fun they provide.
There are rivers and streams and wide open spaces
It's Florida's natural side.

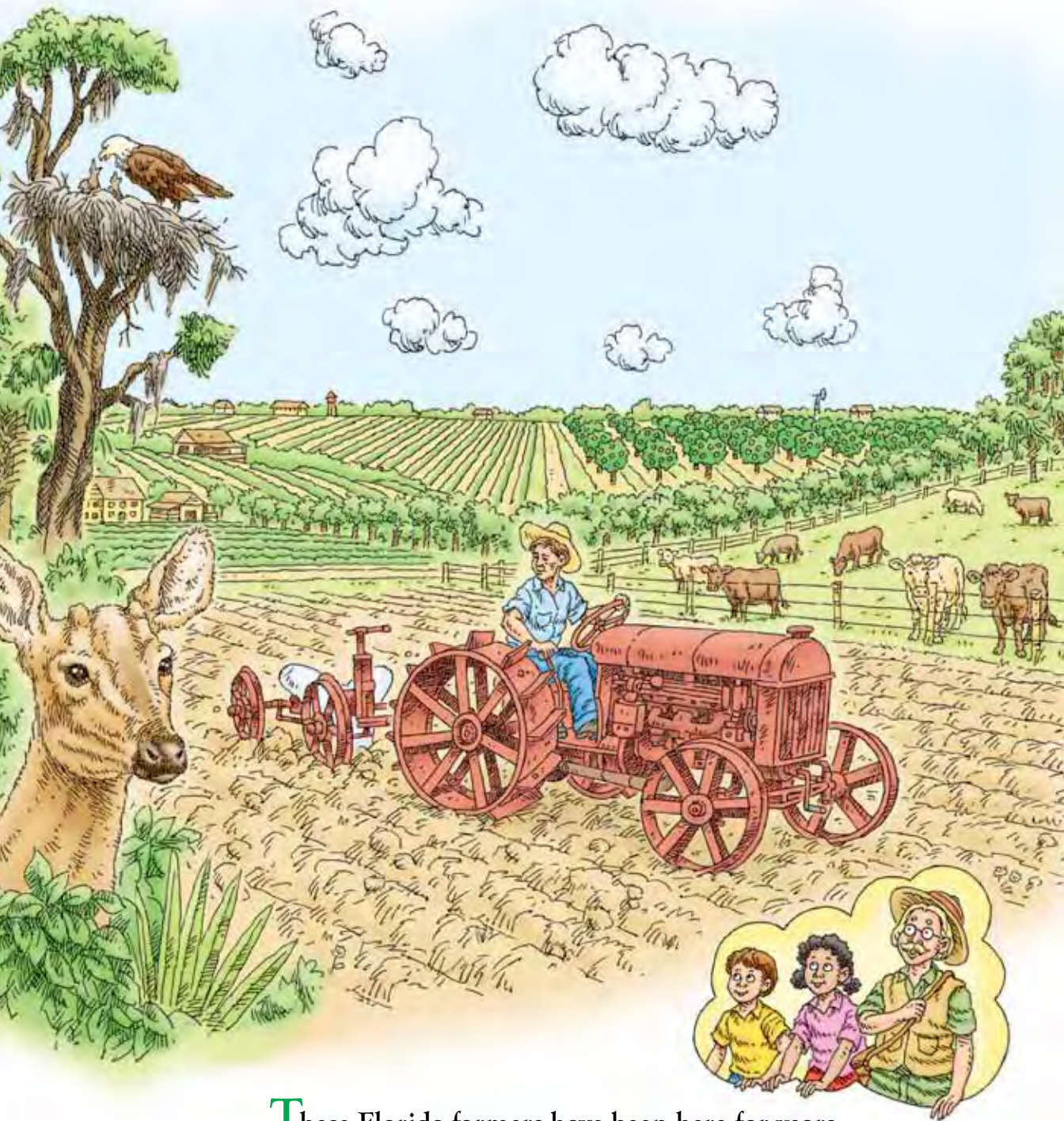
Places where deer and turkey can roam,
In woodlands so lush and so green
Places where creatures, protected and rare,
Can live where few people have seen

Places where Florida naturally grows
Like few other places around,
These are the places and truly green spaces
Where Florida's farmers are found.

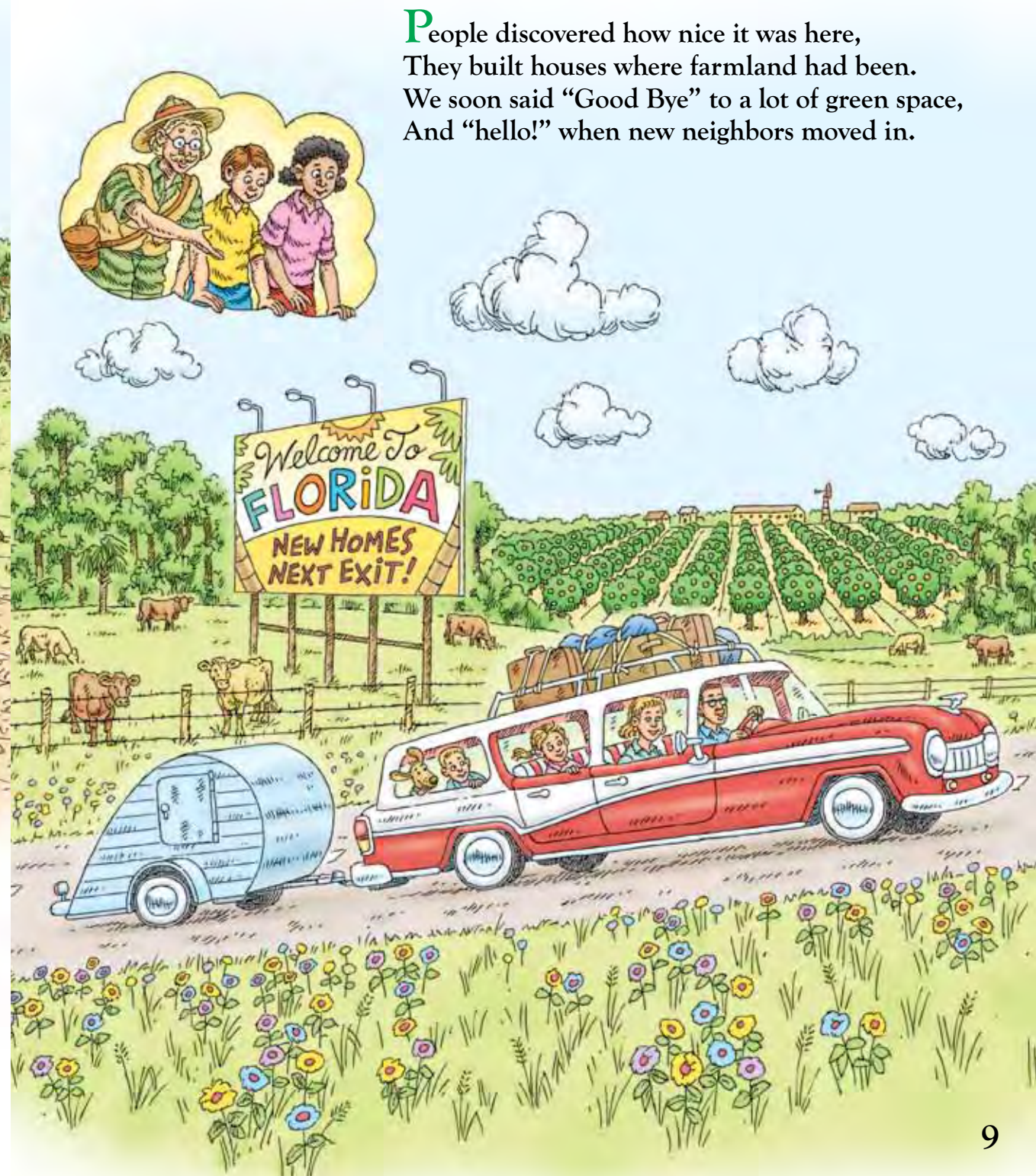


As humble caretakers they worked with the land,
Proving through determination
Their land would be better with each passing year,
Improved for the next generation.





These Florida farmers have been here for years
 Taking care of the land that you see,
 Ranches and row crops once covered the state.
 And wildlife and cattle roamed free.



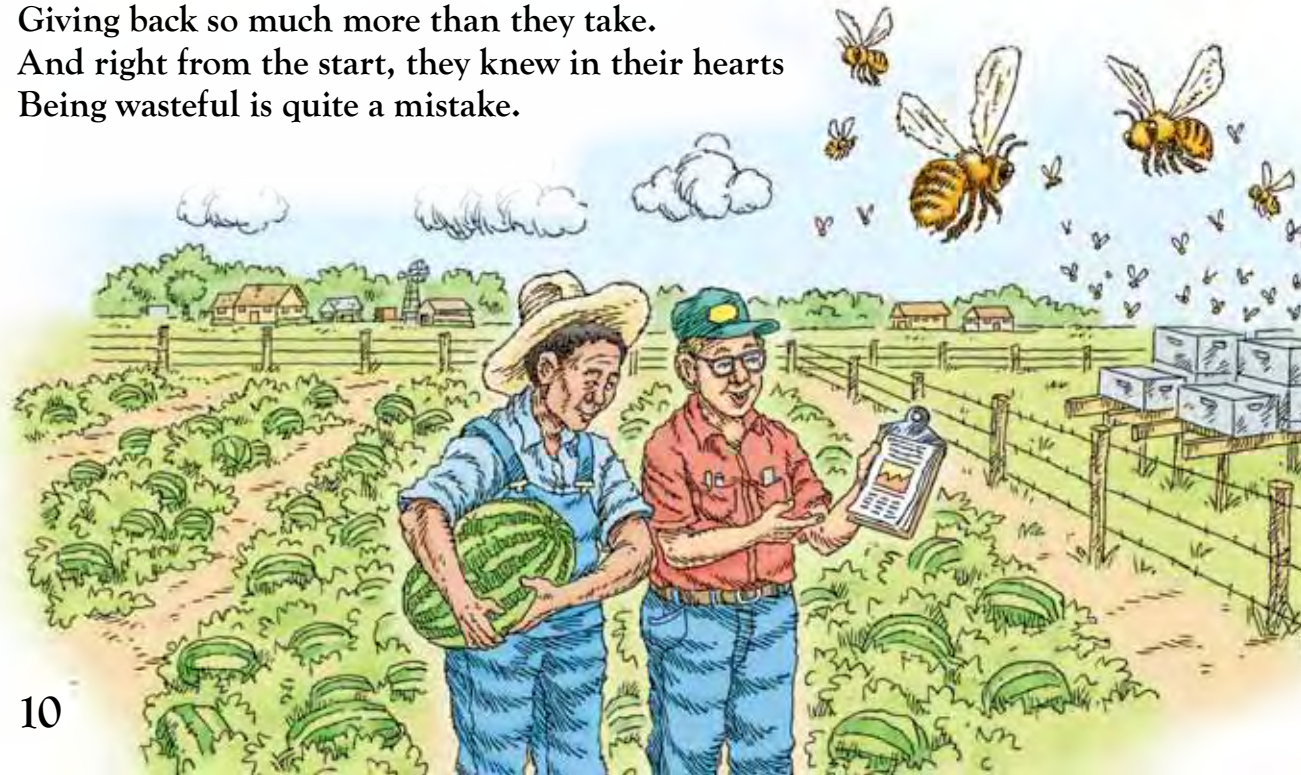
People discovered how nice it was here,
 They built houses where farmland had been.
 We soon said "Good Bye" to a lot of green space,
 And "hello!" when new neighbors moved in.



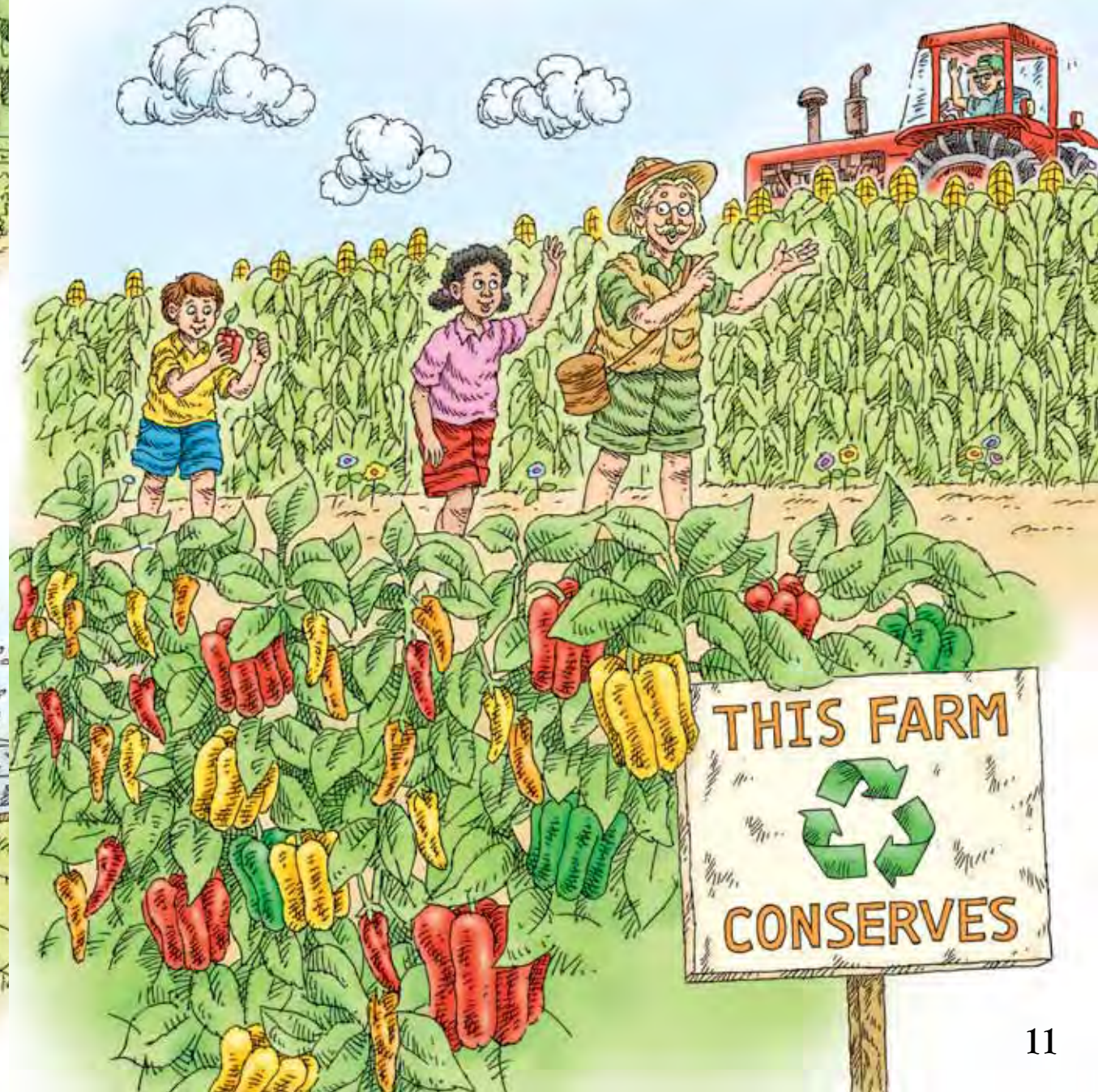
Now Florida farmers had more food to grow—
A job they all knew would be harder.
In order to harvest more crops on less land,
They had to farm better *and smarter!*



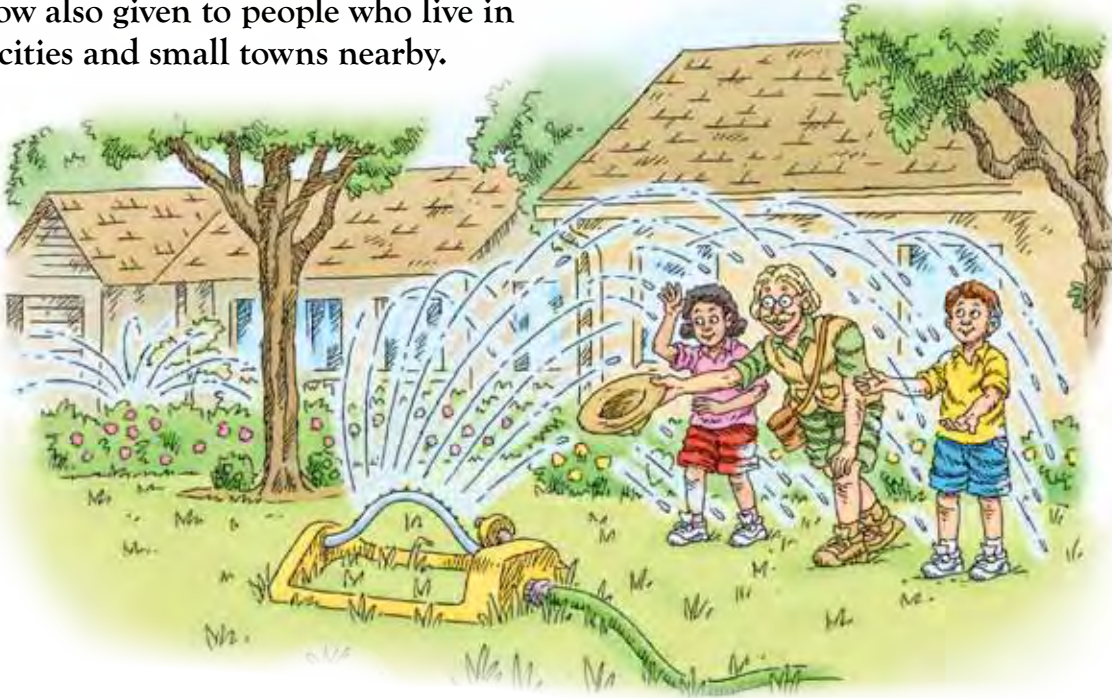
Our farmers have always cared for our land,
Giving back so much more than they take.
And right from the start, they knew in their hearts
Being wasteful is quite a mistake.



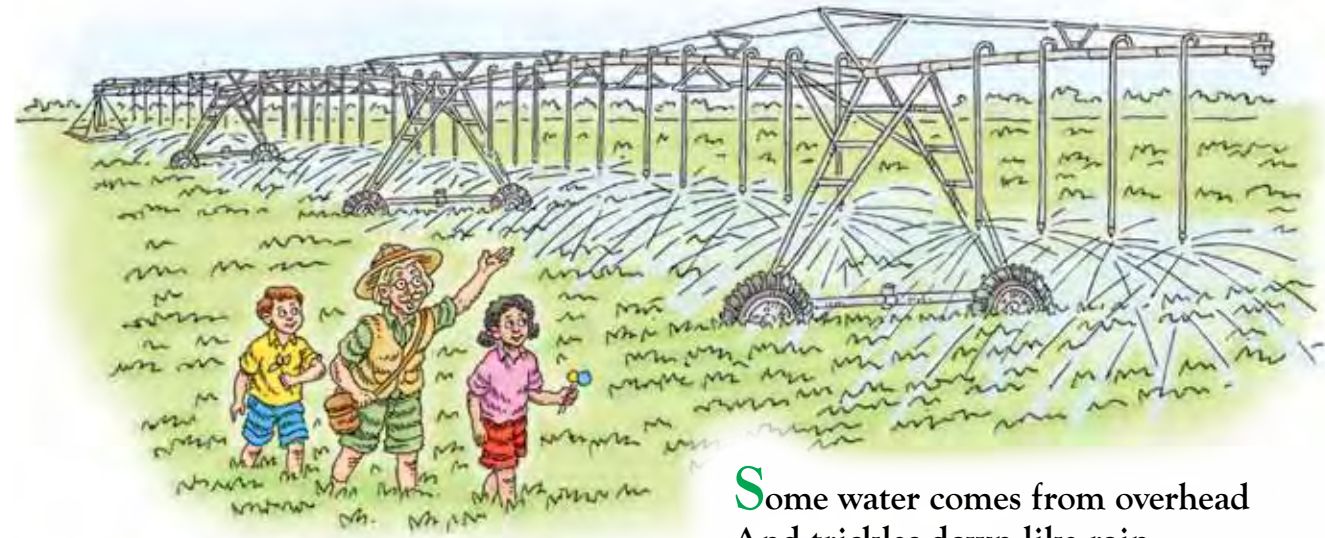
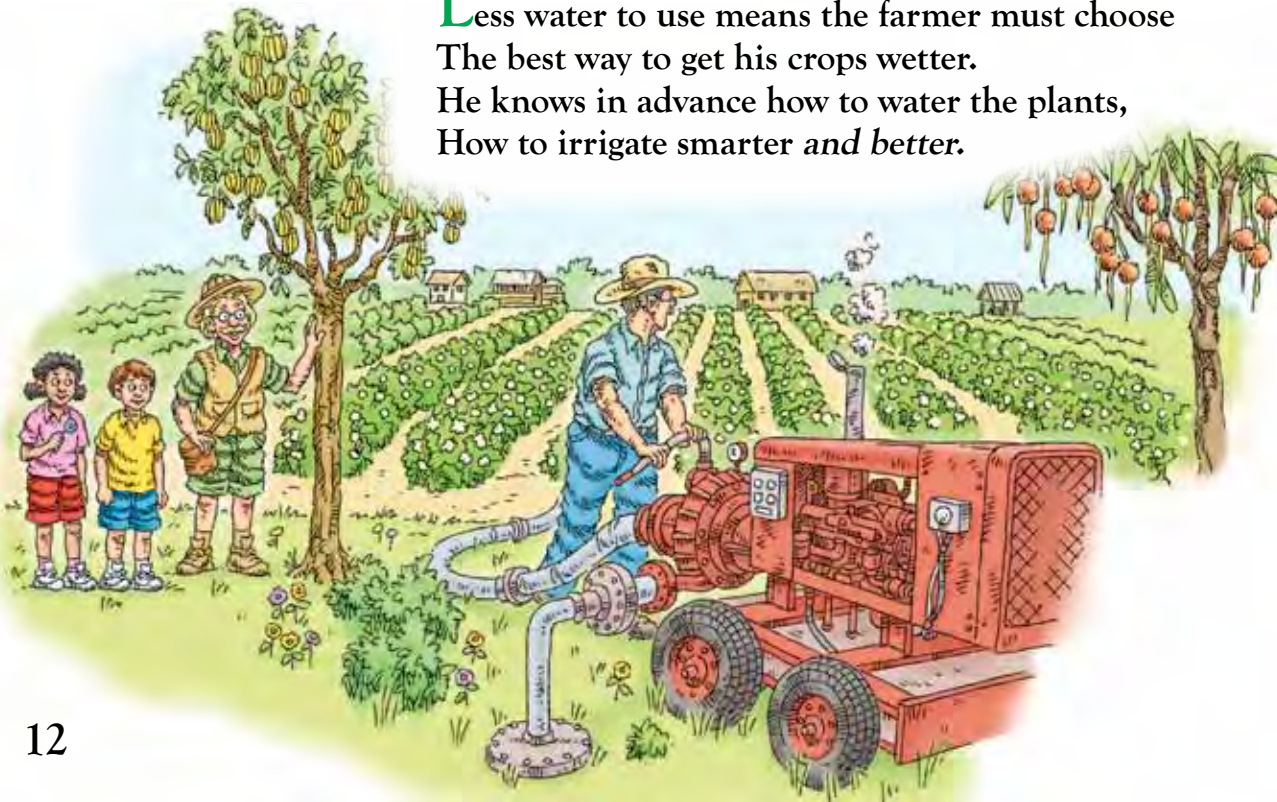
So whether they're growing peppers or corn
From the time that each crop is a seed,
Farmers take care to not waste what they have,
And the plants only get what they need.



Water once drawn from deep in the ground
For crops that grew straight to the sky,
Is now also given to people who live in
Big cities and small towns nearby.



Less water to use means the farmer must choose
The best way to get his crops wetter.
He knows in advance how to water the plants,
How to irrigate smarter and better.



Some water comes from overhead
And trickles down like rain,

Some water comes through sprinklers
At certain times each day,



Some water soaks in drip by drip
Through special types of hoses.
No matter how we irrigate
What every farmer knows is
From orange groves to beds of ferns,
For every crop we planted,
Water is a precious thing
we should not take for granted.



It's surely worth knowing that while we are growing,
We need to eat veggies and fruits.
But plants have to feed, too; that's why they need to
Take nutrients up through their roots.



For a crop to succeed, it continues to feed
Until there's no food to be found
So after the harvest, each Florida farm must
Put nutrients back in the ground.

Each one is different, these Florida farms,
So are the ways that they plow,
Each has their own way to fight soil erosion –
Look and I'm sure you'll see how:



With swervy, curvy, contour farming
Soil won't wash away.
And trees that grow beside the fields
Keep harmful winds at bay,

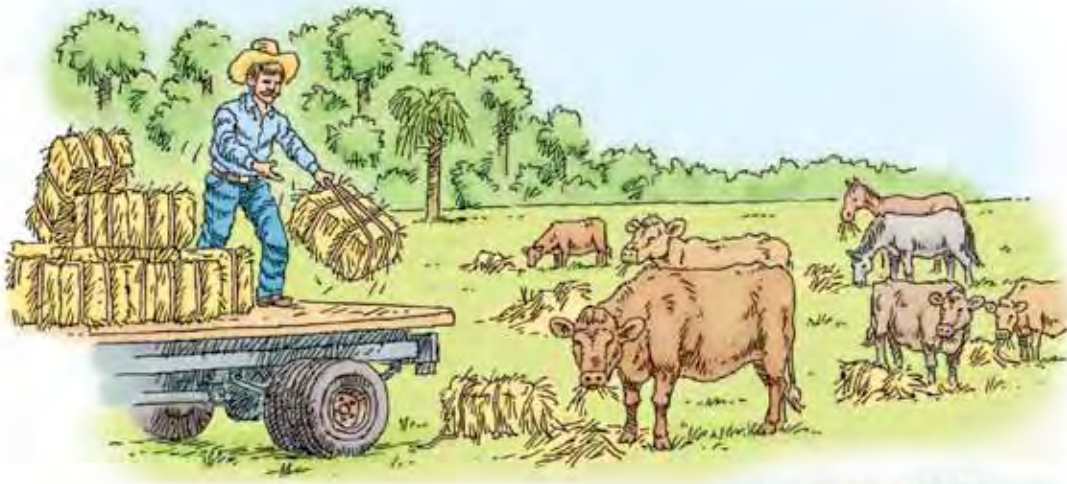


Some turn and churn to till the soil,
For others, that won't do.
A no-till approach helps make the soil richer
And holds in the moisture more, too.

I follow a plan when I plow my own land
And the effort is worth all the toil!
Day in and day out – that's what it's about
Making sure we're conserving the soil.



Hydroponic gardening is really quite unique
If growing plants without the dirt
Is something that you seek.
I do not toil with any soil for veggies or for fruits.
Can you believe what I achieve by watering the roots.



Sometimes my harvest will go to a ranch

Sometimes it will go to the store



Sometimes I harvest some things we can't chew
So it's sent off to make something more



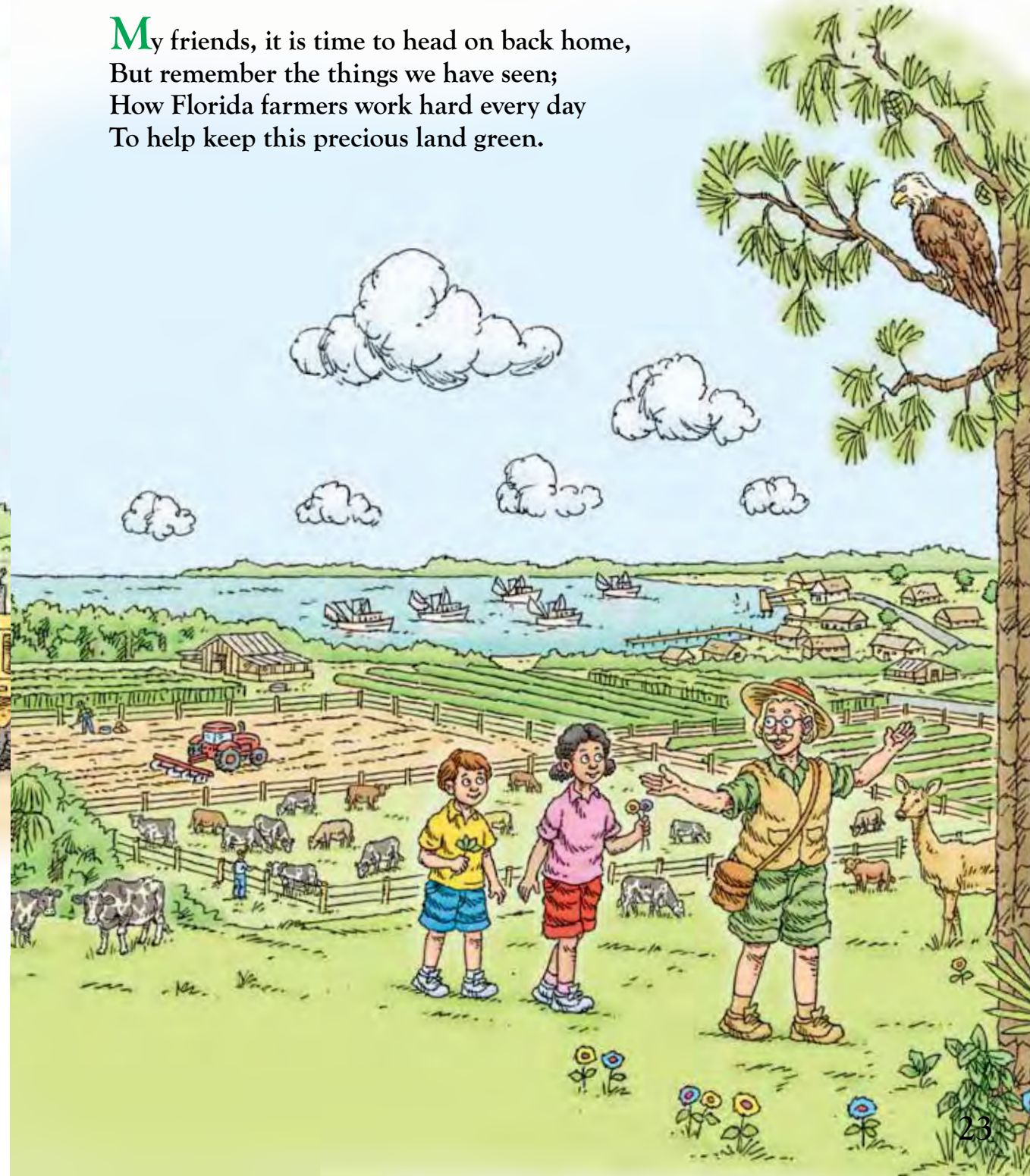
Sometimes the harvest has useful byproducts –
Reused to make things farmers need;
Like citrus pulp, culls and cottonseed hulls
Are all used to make cattle feed.





What once we called trash, we now call biomass
A renewable energy source.
It makes Biofuel – and that's really cool,
It helps power our country, of course!

My friends, it is time to head on back home,
But remember the things we have seen;
How Florida farmers work hard every day
To help keep this precious land green.



Remember, you too have things you can do,
And a message I hope you will share:
Conserve and recycle, reuse what you can,
To maintain clean water, clean earth, and clean air.

