

**First Place (Third-Grade Student)**

Super Bull is on an Adventure  
By Shelby Duivenvoorden  
Sacred Heart School  
Carolyn Stefanich, Teacher  
Shasta County

"Hi. My name is Super Bull. I'm on an adventure today! I am going to the Malmart Store to buy some lipstick for my wife. Her name is Lilia. It's probably not going to be fun. Buying lipstick is boring! Well, here I am at the store. I don't really like makeup, but it's made out of cow by-products," said Super Bull.

Super Bull thinks that lipstick is special because it's made out of fatty acids from beef cattle. He started shopping around the store and found a candle for Lilia. The candle is also made out of fatty acids.

"Well, I am still going to stay here for a while. Wow! A real baseball glove and it's made out of cowhide, another cow by-product. I'm going to get this for myself. I think I'll shop a little longer. I could use a comb for my beautiful hair."

He likes it because it is made out of cows. Now he's going home to show Lilia the things he found.

"Did you know they are made out of us? Yikes!!!!!"

**First Place (Fourth-Grade Student)**

The Winning Vegetable  
By Franklin Dingemans  
Valley Oak Elementary School  
Elaine Tillman, Teacher  
Yolo County

Joseph and Philip's grandfather was telling them a story about when he won a county fair competition for the most warped vegetable. He won a blue ribbon and \$50 for a zucchini that looked like a cat.

Suddenly, Philip exclaimed, "Maybe we could enter that contest and win money for the new bikes we want."

Grandfather said, "You can't buy two bikes for just \$50. You'll need a lot more."

"Then we'll just have to find another way to make more money," Joseph said. "How about we find someone who will hire us to help on their farm?"

"How about you come and work for me?" said Grandpa.

"Yeah!" Joseph exclaimed.

"Can we also grow our prize-winning vegetable here?" Philip asked.

"Yes," said Grandpa, "and you can help me tend my walnut trees, corn, and tomatoes."

"Let's start tomorrow," said Philip.

For the next few days, Philip and Joseph worked hard preparing the soil and planting summer squash, pumpkins, and tomatoes. They planted the plants near together so they would grow into a hideous mass. They fertilized and watered.

One day, Joseph and Philip discovered that their pumpkins had been invested by fruit flies. Philip yelled and called Grandpa. Grandpa came running.

He said, "Oh, no! Your pumpkins are ruined. There is no time to regrow them. You will just have to hope that your tomatoes and squash turn out better."

Another day, Joseph and Philip were astonished to find that their tomato plants were crawling with tomato worms. They had eaten up all the sun-absorbing, life-giving leaves, so the tomato plants died. Now the only vegetable left was the squash.

So, they took special care of their squash. They gave it extra fertilizer. They sent all the irrigation water to the squash plants. Now there was only one thing left to do—wait.

On the day of the county fair, Grandpa drove them to the fairgrounds. In the large judging room, they saw their competition. It didn't look good for them. Their friend, Jessica, had a sloth-shaped tomato. There was also a very

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large, ugly man whose pumpkin had a striking resemblance to him. There was a woman who had a potato that looked like an owl. Philip and Joseph's crookneck squash looked like Abraham Lincoln!

All the competitors showed their vegetables to the judges. One person slipped and fell and squashed her tomato all over her shirt!!

The judges looked at the entries. Suddenly, the judge who was looking over Joseph and Philip's squash burst out in laughter because he thought it was so funny. The head judge announced, "First place goes to Joseph and Philip Walker."

"Yeahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh," said Philip. "We won!"

The next day, Joseph and Philip were riding down the street on their shiny new bicycles. Suddenly, Joseph braked.

He said, "I think I know why we won. We won because we grew a variety of vegetables. Even though some got eaten, we had some left. Maybe that's why Grandpa grows several different things, too."

**First Place (Eighth-Grade Student)**

Farm Wars  
By Greg Brawner  
Valley Center Middle School  
Cathey Anderson, Teacher  
San Diego County

A long time ago, on a farm far, far away, lived a young cucumber named Cuke. Cuke was chilled as he watched the destruction of his homeland by the evil minions of the Insect Empire lead by the sinister Roach Vader. The Empire had invaded his garden-like planet with the intent of destroying all plant life forms.

One day, as Cuke was watching the evil bugs destroy the farm, a platoon of aphids descended on his family's vine and annihilated all of his relatives by sucking the plant sap out of their defenseless bodies. Cuke narrowly escaped because he was growing on the side of a hill. He rolled down the hill and stopped at the feet of his friend, Obe Juan Cantalopie. Obe Juan, startled out of his siesta, yelled "Ai caramba! Who is there?" Cuke quickly explained to Obe Juan that the Evil Empire had invaded the garden.

Obe Juan knew exactly what had to be done! He used his pruning shears to sever his own vine, never to return. He and Cuke set off to the *Salad Bar* where they knew they could find a way to get out of the garden and get help. Inside the *Salad Bar* they ran into all kinds of peculiar vegetables playing musical instruments.

They quickly spotted who they were looking for at a corner table. It was Fronds (as in palm) Solo, the famous crop dusting pilot known for his conquests of insects far and wide. Obe Juan sat down at the table with Fronds and told him of the trouble back at the garden. Cuke looked on with crisp innocence as the two old friends made plans to destroy the Empire.

The next morning, Cuke, Obe Juan, and Fronds Solo filled his Geranium Falcon airplane with a secret weapon... LADYBUGS and their army of beneficial insects! The bugs were ready for action as they lined up in Fronds' ship ready to jump at his command. They soared high into space and, through a wormhole in the garden fence, lined up the plane for the deadly attack. Things in the garden were much worse than when Obe Juan and Cuke had left. As Fronds piloted the ship over the brigade of hungry bugs, he pushed a button marked EXTERMINATE! A blur of red and black dots sprayed over the entire garden. The army was ready for warfare! All that could be heard was the sound of the insects screaming. As the ladybugs and their army devoured the evil bugs, what was left of the garden looked like a battleground that had been nuked.

The bugs were all dead, gone forever. All of the surviving fruits and vegetables yelled with joy as Obe Juan, Cuke and Fronds flew over the garden. When they landed, the Jolly Green Giant gave his daughter, Princess Peas, to Cuke as his wife. They all lived happily ever after.

**Second Place (Second-Grade Student)**

The Persimmon  
By Emily Eastman  
Conway Elementary School  
Lila Theofel, Teacher  
San Diego County

Jackie and her mom work on a ranch. One day Jackie and her mom were picking persimmons to sell to the store. While they were working, one of the persimmons woke up. Jackie put it in the box.

Suddenly a bird came down and picked up a persimmon from the box. He opened his beak ready to take a bite and all of a sudden the persimmon started to talk. The bird was so surprised she almost fell out of the nest.

The persimmon said, "I can tell you a story about persimmons."

"What do you know?" said the bird. "I picked you up from a box."

"My mom told me a lot about persimmons," said the persimmon.

"Can you tell me a story?" said the bird.

"Sure!" said the persimmon. "Well, first we are put into a box. After that, we go to the packing house. Then we go on a ride on a machine that cleans us up and sorts us by size. Then we go in a box with a special liner to keep us safe and snug. Next, a whole bunch of boxes are put in a big container. The container is then put on an airplane going to some place far away. Some persimmons go to Chicago or New York. Some persimmons go to Canada. Others go really far away to places like China, Thailand and Singapore. So you see, little bird, the life of a persimmon can be very interesting"

"I wish I was a persimmon," said the bird.

**Second Place (Fourth-Grade Student)**

My Honey Adventure  
By Alicia Page  
Green Oaks Elementary School  
Bev Hill, Teacher  
Sacramento County

I was helping my mom make breakfast for my family one Saturday morning. I needed to get honey for my family's toast. I was supposed to be home by 10:15 a.m., so I headed to my grandpa's apple orchard, and fast.

When I got there, I ran to my grandpa and said, "Mommy needs to get some honey for our toast, and I have to be home by 10:15 a.m."

Then, Grandpa took me to his orchard and sat me down on a bench near the beehive. "I will go get some special beekeeper clothes for us to wear to get the honey," said my grandpa.

"Beekeeper clothes? I am not going to get the honey from the beehive. It takes too long and I only have until 10:15," I said. But that was all I could say.

I knew my grandpa was magical. The next thing I knew I was as little as a bee. In fact, I was a bee. I turned around. I was looking for my grandpa. He was not there. Soon I was following some other bees.

They each landed on a flower. So, I did the same thing. I landed in the same one as another bee. They stuck their tongue in the flowers. They were sucking up nectar with their tongues. So, I did the same thing.

Then, I followed the bees back to the hive. Soon, I felt something in my stomach. I was making honey! In no time at all, we were at the hive. I put my honey into a cell.

"Ahh!" I thought I saw a giant coming to get us. Then, I saw it was only my grandpa. He was getting the honey, not us.

About two seconds later I was a person again. My grandpa was getting the honeycomb out of the hive. He only took out four frames of honeycomb. He put the honeycomb in an extractor. It spun the honeycomb around and around and the honey came out of the honeycomb cells and drained into a bucket. Then, he gave me the bucket to take home. I got home twenty minutes early!

**Second Place (Sixth-Grade Student)**

The Big Day  
By Danny Greenwood  
Barry Elementary School  
Cathryn Coffman, Teacher  
Sutter County

Have you ever thought about agriculture when you go on a field trip? Did you know that there's lots of agriculture when you go on your field trip? When you look outside you can see fields and other things that make up California. Well, today I have a story for you about agriculture.

Today was my big day. I was going to San Francisco on a field trip with my class. When I walked on the bus and sat down I thought of all the amazing things that could happen. I didn't think of anything big.

As we were on the road I saw a **big** red tractor and a field of tomatoes. Yuck! When I looked a little farther, I saw two red things standing up and coming towards the moving bus. I must have been day dreaming. They went right through the open window and said, "Hey, do you think we're disgusting? Well, think again." I couldn't believe my eyes, two red tomatoes talking to me. They started to call their friends. They said, "We are here to give you lots of information. We are very juicy and high in fiber and vitamins, too. There are at least 4,000 different kinds of tomatoes. We are called red tomatoes, because of the color of our skin. We are getting ready to be harvested."

"First, we are put in a big truck that holds lots of us, and then we are shipped to the processing plant. Then we are washed in different kinds of liquids to wash off bacteria. Then we are sorted into the good tomatoes and the bad tomatoes. And then, we are shipped to large supermarkets. Some of us, or would you say the bad tomatoes, are put in buckets and thrown away. Also at the factory, we are made into catsup, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, tomato juice, tomato bread, salsa, pizza sauce, tomato soup, and sun-dried tomatoes. Some of our seeds are planted in water and dead salmon. Most of us live out in the sun. Others are planted in greenhouses."

"We are actually fruit, but people prefer to call us vegetables. We are one of out of 1,000,000 plants grown in California. People love us a lot. We are one of Californians' favorite vegetables, or should we say - FRUIT!"

"Hey, we have to go. The truck is here and all my friends are getting harvested. I hope you learned a lot about tomatoes." I sure did.

WOW! Was that a dream or what? What's this? It's a tomato. I guess I wasn't dreaming after all.