

## Visual 1 The Case of the Pampered Chickens

Scientists are constantly looking for ways to improve our lives. They have little time to waste on nonsense. Yet a Texas A&M agricultural engineer has spent some of his time inventing a contact lens for chickens. Other scientists have experimented with playing classical music to barnyard animals.

*Are these the stereotypical mad scientists? Why would scientists waste their time on contact lenses and Mozart for animals when so much really important work needs to be done?*

### Handy Dandy Guide

1. People *choose*.
2. People's choices involve *costs*.
3. People respond to *incentives* in predictable ways.
4. People create *economic systems* that influence individual choices and incentives.
5. People gain when they *trade* voluntarily.
6. People's choices have consequences that lie in the *future*.

## Activity 1 The Case of the Pampered Chickens

**Directions.** Read the *Handy Dandy Guide* and the mystery. Read the clues assigned to your group. Be careful. While all the clues are correct, only some are *useful* in solving the mystery. Decide which clues are most relevant to solving the mystery. Use the clues and one or more of the ideas from the *Handy Dandy Guide* to figure out a solution to the mystery. Write your solution.

### ***Handy Dandy Guide***

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### ***The Mystery***

Scientists are constantly looking for ways to improve our lives. They have little time to waste on nonsense. Yet a Texas A&M agricultural engineer has spent some of his time inventing a contact lens for chickens. Other scientists have experimented with playing classical music to barnyard animals.

*Are these the stereotypical mad scientists? Why would scientists waste their time with contact lenses for chickens or Mozart for animals when so much really important work needs to be done?*

### ***The Clues***

1. Scientists receive billions of dollars to do agricultural research.
2. The United States government has a variety of programs to keep the price of some agricultural goods artificially high.
3. There is a scarcity of dollars to do scientific research.
4. Finding ways to lower the costs of agricultural production enables producers to earn higher profits while lowering prices for consumers.
5. American chickens produce millions of eggs each year.
6. The number of farms in the United States has been declining for several years—from 6.8 million in 1935 to less than 2 million today.
7. Satellites assist some farmers in providing information about the condition of their crops.
8. Farmers who are able to increase their efficiency and earn more profits benefit because they may keep most of what they earn by their efficiency.

***Record your solution and explain it briefly here:***

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