

## **'TOP OF THE CROPS' – Adapted Versions**

'Top of the Crops' is a short radio play for Key Stage 3 pupils. The action is set mainly around a class of pupils in a secondary school. It is not a complete story but rather a series of scenes, intended to motivate pupil research, and then lead on to informed discussion.

This adapted version introduces organic issues but has shorter adapted scenes that may be more suitable with some groups. The scenes could be used independently and further adaptations could be possible.

It raises questions such as:

- Is organic food better for your health?
- Is organic farming better for the environment?
- Can organic farming feed a growing world population?

It is envisaged that the performance of the play will not only include the participating pupils but should involve as many of the class as possible.

The original version was written by Andy Merriman.

### **PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS**

**JADE ROWE** - Popular. Eco friendly, but still learning! Principled but sensitive to other viewpoints.

**MRS ROWE** - **JADE's** mother. Strong and very opinionated!

**MICHAEL ROWE** - **JADE's** eight year old brother.

**TONY FLOWERS** - Supermarket Manager. Smarmy. Condescending.

**SUPERMARKET ANNOUNCER**

**MRS PHILPOTT** - Form 8P Teacher

**FORM 8P STUDENTS**

**SARAH** - **JADE's** adversary. Confident. Self obsessed.

**DANIEL** - A devotee of the internet.

**JORDAN** - **DANIEL's** best friend.

## **SCENE ONE:**

**In the Rowe's flat where Jade, Michael and Mrs Rowe are having dinner.**

MRS ROWE Here you are, you two.

MICHAEL Mmm. Thanks mum!

JADE What is that? Chicken nuggets?

MRS ROWE And oven chips. You like chicken nuggets, Jade.

JADE I liked them when I was 6 but not now!

MRS ROWE Michael likes chicken nuggets and it was all we had in the freezer.

JADE Mum, I cannot eat those. I want to become a vegetarian.

MRS ROWE Why?

JADE We were talking at school about factory farming and I said it was cruel. My friend said that animals are here for us to eat.

MRS ROWE Oh dear.

JADE And she also said that I wasn't a real vegetarian because I still eat chicken.

MRS ROWE Well, you don't have to stop eating meat.

JADE . . . I've made my mind up. We should produce food and eat it ourselves instead of feeding farm animals. I think we need to eat more healthy food.

MICHAEL No! I want to eat my chicken nuggets.

MRS ROWE Well let's not argue now. Tomorrow we can decide at the supermarket.

## SCENE TWO:

### In the school canteen at lunch time.

DANIEL This organic food is horrible.

JORDAN I thought at least our canteen would be safe this week.

DANIEL I blame the teacher. She is Eco-mad.

JORDAN Nearly all this food is green.

DANIEL Even the meat!

JORDAN And it doesn't taste any better than ordinary food.

DANIEL I think it tastes worse. Probably all that manure.

JORDAN What?

DANIEL Yeah. In organic farming they don't use chemicals or pesticides, they use manure – or fertiliser - that's the polite word for it.

JORDAN But don't you get maggots in your fruit without pesticides?

DANIEL Yeah, but it could be worse.

JORDAN What could be worse than taking a bite out of your apple and finding a worm?

DANIEL Finding half a worm, I suppose. Anyway, organic food is healthier than eating chemicals and it's better for the animals.

JORDAN Really? How come you know so much about it?

DANIEL I looked up on a website, ***everyclodhasasilverlining.co.uk***

JORDAN Cool.

DANIEL And you should say organically grown food - not organic food. All plants are organic. We don't have plastic food, do we?

JORDAN You've never tasted my mum's cooking.

DANIEL The only trouble is the vegetables end up with funny shapes.

JORDAN Oh, I wouldn't like that. I like my food to always be the same shape – like burgers are always round.

DANIEL But think about farming in other countries because we are talking about something that is happening in the whole world, not just here.

(SCHOOL BELL SOUNDS)

### SCENE THREE:

#### In the Supermarket.

MRS ROWE Now what food would you like, Jade?

JADE How about organically grown vegetables? I'll make a casserole tonight.

MRS ROWE Fine, now let's have a look. Oh, there isn't much choice, is there?

JADE No, there isn't.

MRS ROWE These potatoes don't look very nice. And look at the prices!

JADE It's what it tastes like that matters.

MRS ROWE No, this is pathetic. They must have some more organic produce somewhere else.

JADE Mum!

MRS ROWE Excuse me! You, over there! Yes you! Do you work here?

TONY FLOWERS (*walks in*) Actually, I'm the manager.

MRS ROWE There are not many organic vegetables and they are very expensive.

FLOWERS Well, you can buy lettuce, tomatoes, carrots or potatoes which is a good choice. Not many people buy organic food.

MRS ROWE I am not surprised, it is very expensive!

FLOWERS Well, organic farming is expensive for the farmers.

MRS ROWE So, it's expensive to eat healthily. I see. . less chemicals – more cost!

FLOWERS Well, it's not us that's making a big profit, believe me. And as for chemicals, I think you'll find that organic foods are not completely free of pesticides.

JADE I am sure organic food is better for you. And what about the Third World? They need to be able to produce their own food.

FLOWERS We all need pesticides to save the crops from insects and disease. And the world population is still growing.

JADE That is rubbish!

MRS ROWE Yes. And chemicals can't be good for our bodies.

FLOWERS Let me tell you, being over weight is more of a health problem.

MRS ROWE Yes, we could all do with losing some weight! Now let's see if we can choose what's best for us to buy.

## SCENE FOUR:

### In the classroom

MRS PHILPOTT Jade, put on this blindfold and now taste the bread.

JADE (TASTING) Mmm that's delicious. I think this is the organic bread.

MRS PHILPOTT Sarah, you try.

SARAH Yuck. That is horrible! It must be organic.

MRS PHILPOTT You are both right, which shows different people have like different tastes. Right then, Jordan and Daniel, put your blindfolds on. Lets try some milk.

DANIEL Oh no, I hate milk. I'd rather have an apple with a maggot in it.

MRS PHILPOTT Just try the milk.

MRS PHILPOTT Remember, 'Organic Farming' is a farming system which avoids the use of man made fertilisers, pesticides, growth regulators and livestock additives.

SARAH Mrs Philpott, the problem is, fresh food is sometimes more expensive which means people may choose to eat less.

DANIEL Yeah, but think about how much it costs to sort out problems like Mad cow disease, which came from modern farming.

MRS PHILPOTT Now lets get back to the milk.

DANIEL We've finished all the milk – it was really creamy.

MRS PHILPOTT Both jugs?

DANIEL Yes.

MRS PHILPOTT Ahh . . .well . . .you see both jugs have organic milk in them.

JORDAN Hey that's not fair! But, it was nice – even I liked it.

MRS PHILPOTT Now for your homework during the holiday, I want you all to start to grow something like lettuce - in an organic way - at home.

JORDAN But I don't like lettuce!

MRS PHILPOTT Well you could bring the lettuce to school – and maybe sell it.

JORDAN Mmm. Now I'm definitely interested!