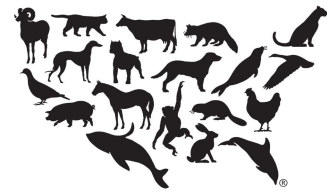




JEWISH INSPIRATION. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.



THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES

## ENERGY CHAIN GAME

**Learning objective:** To teach kids that raising animals for food is energy-intensive. As energy travels up the food chain, some is always leaking out. The higher up on the food chain an organism is, the more energy and resources it takes to sustain it.

**Materials:** 2 buckets filled with water, 2 empty buckets (one each for the pasta group and the hamburger group), 5 cups (two that represent the sun, one each that represent wheat, corn, and cow), costumes for the different characters (optional)

**Estimated length:** 20 minutes

**Instructions:** Say: "Who's hungry? Should we make some food? Over here are those who want pasta. Over here are those who want hamburgers." (Note: if your students really are hungry, you may want to avoid this opening, or give them a snack.) Frame this as a demonstration rather than a game or a contest to avoid much frustration and disappointment. Assign campers to each of the following roles: in one group sun, wheat, pasta; in another group sun, corn, cow, hamburger. Give each camper the corresponding cup or bucket. The two food chains should stand in parallel lines (one "pasta" and one "hamburger") with about 5 feet of space between each step in the chain. Any remaining campers can be judges or cheerleaders for the team of their choice, or you could have two lines of the same type (i.e. two "pasta" lines or two "hamburger lines"). If so, you'll need to increase your materials accordingly. After the demonstration, have a discussion with the kids.

The two sides race to complete making their food item (pasta or burger) by filling that cup with water (which represents energy).

- The sun on each team is first and gets water from the bucket and then pours it into the cup of the next teammate in line (in one group sun, wheat, pasta; in another group sun, corn, cow, hamburger). The energy is poured from cup to cup until it reaches the end of the line. While the others are running back and forth, the final student in each line (pasta and hamburger, respectively) cannot move – they must wait to have the water brought to them.
- The race continues until one team fills its final bucket all the way, or the sun bucket becomes empty.
- The winner is the team with more water in its final bucket. If the demonstration runs properly, the pasta cup will win every time.

### Food for Thought:

- What happened? Why?
- Review what you have just learned (make sure students understand the "learning objective" above)
- Why does this matter? What does it have to do with us?
- Why do you think we encourage eating plant-based food here at camp?