

“This Episode of *Bluey* is Called...”: A Descriptive Qualitative Analysis of AFNR Representation in an Animated Television Show

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Abstract

With the recent rise in streaming viewership, researchers, educators, and communicators must recognize the impact of popular culture media and the opportunities it presents for agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR) literacy efforts. Specifically, the television show, Bluey, which has amassed billions of streams and was the most-streamed show in 2024 and 2025, can be leveraged to discuss AFNR topics. This descriptive qualitative analysis, framed using cultivation theory, explored how AFNR was portrayed in Bluey. Based on a review of all 153 available episodes on Disney+, we identified 63 episodes that showcased themes focusing on how AFNR topics were portrayed in the setting, directly influencing the narrative, as a topic of play, or used as props and background inclusion. From our findings, we determined that AFNR, while not always explicit, had a strong underlying influence on the setting of the series, and its portrayals of AFNR go beyond stereotypical topics audiences may expect (e.g., farm animals). We recommend that communicators and educators use this show to supplement learning and address potential misconceptions with AFNR. Additionally, future research should engage with the show’s creators to understand decisions made in portraying AFNR topics and themes.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, television viewing has changed drastically. Where viewership numbers on broadcast and cable began to drop in the mid 21st century (Edelman, 2024; The Nielsen Company, 2014), watching television shows on streaming platforms rose in the past few years as more U.S. homes have a Smart TV—from 62.3% in 2021 to 70.6% in 2023 (The Nielsen Company, 2024)—and the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for people to binge television episodes on streaming platforms (Edelman, 2024). Moreover, a longitudinal study conducted in Europe found that, compared to pre-pandemic, “viewing frequency, number of episodes watched during a single session, daily time spent viewing and co-viewing practices all significantly increased” (Sigre-Leirós et al., 2023, p. 180). In the U.S., a similar trend was reported, with television consumption rising from 2 hours and 48 minutes in 2019 to 3.9 hours from March to April 2020 (Gruber, 2020). Moreover, since 2021, media streaming has increased by nearly 71% (The Nielsen Company, 2025), underscoring the continued relevance of television media. While many of these statistics focus on adults, the relevance is also evident among youth and children. More than 80% of toddlers watch television, and, like the average American, most children spend three hours per day watching television during the week and four hours per day on weekends (Gutnick et al., 2011). Nearly a decade later, television remains the leading form of media consumption among youth, in part due to their access to streaming devices (e.g., tablets and smartphones) (American College of Pediatricians, 2020; Rideout et al., 2010).

While streaming viewership continues to rise, excessive screen time among youth is criticized for negatively affecting cognitive development, social skills, and nutrition (American College of

Pediatricians, 2020; Asgher & Gohar, 2022; Tremblay et al., 2011). However, it is important to recognize that learning can be leveraged from television media that children and youth are already consuming. Popular culture media in education has also been a heavily discussed topic, with some arguments stating media helps learners retain knowledge and model actions (Al-Baharni et al., 2016; Gold et al., 2025), with others claiming students will view the popular culture, specifically animated media, as purely entertainment with minimal educational value (Champoux, 2001; Rockler, 2002). Parsemain (2016) suggests that to ensure learning, the media must present a true and authentic view of the real world. Research on media use for education has varied from the impact of *Sesame Street* on problem solving, which found that repeated viewing of episodes can help children model process skills (Fisch et al., 2024), to analyzing teamwork, agriculture perceptions, and agricultural literacy (Gold et al., 2025; Specht & Beam, 2015; Summerfield et al., 2025). Moreover, Dietrich et al. (2015) explored how agriculture is framed in *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse*, and how understanding this framing may help communicators and educators to improve agricultural literacy in preschoolers.

It is important to recognize, though, that a significant portion of the literature on popular culture media in the classroom, specifically in agriculture, has focused on higher education classrooms and not on youth in school-based agricultural education (SBAE) classrooms from kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12). The National Research Council (NRC) (1988) recommends that K-12 students receive some form of agricultural education beyond vocational classes. In addition, the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE) has emphasized the importance of advancing public knowledge of agricultural, food, and natural resources (AFNR) systems (AAAE, 2023). However, due to the aforementioned lack of research, it is unclear if popular media can help promote agricultural literacy in younger children.

Media Selection

To recognize the importance of K-12 AFNR literacy, in this study, we analyzed the children's television show *Bluey* to explore how the depiction of AFNR topics could be used to understand its potential impact on viewers' AFNR opinions and knowledge. The synopsis of *Bluey*, as described on Disney+ (Brumm, 2018–2022), says

This funny and honest look at modern family life celebrates how imaginative play helps shape healthy children. Australian blue heeler puppy Bluey has a boundless imagination and loves to turn daily life into playful adventures. She and little sister Bingo throw themselves into exploring their world, using gameplay to conquer their fears and try out adult roles.

The television show *Bluey* was originally released in 2018 and completed the most recent season in 2022 (Brumm, 2018–2022). This series, set in Australia, is available in over 140 countries (The Walt Disney Company, 2024) and has been the top-streamed show for two years in a row—2024 and 2025—garnering approximately 39.3 billion minutes of streamed content in 2025 (McCarty, 2026; The Walt Disney Company, 2024). Although *Bluey* is a children's show by design, as mentioned previously, it has also attracted a wide adult fan base, including both parents and non-parents (Balanzategui & Baker, 2024), as only 43% of viewership is attributed to children ages 2 to 11 (Vasquez, 2025). Based on this overwhelming popularity, *Bluey* has

received numerous awards, including the Peabody Award, two Television Critics Association Awards, a BAFTA award, and an Emmy (The Walt Disney Company, 2024). As a reflection of the show's popularity, BBC Studios and The Walt Disney Company are releasing an animated film of the show in 2027 (The Walt Disney Company, 2024).

An important component of this show, and building off Parsemain's (2016) discussion on the importance of an authentic view of the real world when using television for learning, was that all of the characters were voiced by an appropriately aged person. For example, all younger dogs in the show were voiced by children, while all older dogs were voiced by adults. The names of the child voice actors are not available to protect their privacy; however, some of the adult actors, including singer David McCormack (Bandit—Bluey and Bingo's dad) and actress Melanie Zanetti (Chilli—Bluey and Bingo's mom), are named (Martinez, 2025). Though not considered main characters, supporting characters such as Stripe (Bandit's brother), Muffin (Bluey's cousin), Pat (neighbor), Grandad (Chilli's dad), and various friends (Mackenzie, Lila, Judo, Pretzel, Jack, and Jean-Luc) are mentioned in the analysis.

While *Bluey* is described as a children's show, research has found a direct correlation between parents' hours of television viewing and their children's predicted viewing habits from ages 5 to 17 (Bleakley et al., 2013). Although co-viewing between parents and children often exposes children to more mature media, St. Peters et al. (1991) noted that parents who watch television with their children tend to view more programs targeted at children. As a result, the AFNR topics presented in *Bluey* will be seen and interpreted by children and their parents, or teachers in the classroom, as the show is designed for co-viewing (Balanzategui et al., 2021; Bohl et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework

Exploring how a modern children's television show can elicit different ideas about AFNR topics can help agricultural educators and communicators understand how to use this media to either reframe or promote AFNR literacy in both adults and children. As children, and their parents, have grown up around multimedia and specifically the television (American College of Pediatricians, 2020; Rideout et al., 2010), educators and communicators should recognize the consequences of living in the media environment. Devised by George Gerbner, cultivation theory helps to explain the impact that television has on its viewers (Gerbner, 1969). Moreover, this theory describes what messages are presented on TV, how those messages impact viewers, and why the television shows are presented the way they are (Gerbner, 1969; 1973; Griffin et al., 2023). Traditionally, research using this theory has focused on recognizing the differences in views, reflective of those seen on TV shows, between those who watch more television versus those who watch less (Morgan et al., 2009; 2014). Moreover, cultivation theory and cultivation analysis focus on the cumulative long-term exposure to television messages. As children often request to view the same media content repeatedly (Mares, 1998), cultivation theory is particularly appropriate for this audience. Research has shown that repeated media viewing by children not only enhances their engagement with media but also increases comprehension and learning (Crawley et al., 1999; Skouteris & Kelly, 2006; Skouteris et al., 2007).

Previous research has used cultivation theory to determine associations between watching shows about extraterrestrial life, such as *Unidentified: Inside America's UFO Investigation*, and beliefs

about whether UFOs and aliens exist (Stise et al., 2024), watching medical shows like *Grey's Anatomy*, and how much people trust doctors (Tian & Yoo, 2020), and how television portrayal of race from news media can influence people's desire to become police officers (Pollock et al., 2021). While this paper does not measure the impact *Bluey* has on viewers' perceptions of AFNR topics, it provides a structure for understanding how this children's television show portrays AFNR and how it can be used to promote agricultural literacy through exposure.

Purpose and Question

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of agriculture, food, and natural resources (e.g., nature and the environment) in the television show *Bluey* and the influence that the depiction of these topics may have on viewers. This study was guided by the research question: *How is AFNR portrayed in the narrative of Bluey?*

Methods

This descriptive qualitative analysis identified AFNR depictions in the television show *Bluey* and explored how episodes with AFNR themes may be used to promote AFNR literacy. In this study, researchers conducted a descriptive analysis of episodes. First, researchers identified those with AFNR topics, then coded episode notes into descriptive themes based on the research question.

Data Collection

One researcher watched all 153 available episodes of *Bluey* on the streaming service, Disney+. Episodes were approximately seven to eight minutes long, plus the 28-minute special episode "The Sign," for a total of approximately 1,092 minutes of content. As the researcher watched, they noted episodes that included nature or the environment and took detailed notes of AFNR representations. The researcher described how AFNR topics were depicted or how characters interacted with or were influenced by these elements. All episode names and numbers are from Disney+, as of winter 2025, and may not fully reflect all episodes released.

Once the first researcher completed episode viewing, they provided a condensed list of episodes ($n = 59$) to a second researcher. The second researcher independently watched these 59 episodes and took their own notes on AFNR representation. This researcher also purposively selected six additional episodes from all 153 episodes that indicated potential AFNR content, based on the titles and episode descriptions (e.g., Asparagus), and provided them to the first researcher for re-review. Next, the two researchers debriefed to compare notes and confirm or reject episodes for analysis. Researchers agreed to add three of the six additional episodes to the analysis and removed five episodes from the initial list, resulting in an intercoder reliability of .93 and a total of 63 episodes used in the analysis. This range is considered acceptable (Riffe et al., 2005; Krippendorff, 2004). Although this is a qualitative analysis, the researchers felt it was important to demonstrate agreement among researchers on episode selection through reliability.

Data Analysis

Researchers used categorical thematic analysis to answer the research question. Thematic analysis is used to explore patterns of meaning and is appropriate for exploring representations of specific topics in certain contexts (Clarke et al., 2015). First, researchers used inductive descriptive coding on their viewing notes. In descriptive coding, researchers use a short word or phrase to describe a portion of the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2021). Then, codes were sorted into categories based on how they were similar, different, or related (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Saldaña, 2021). Finally, these categories were reevaluated into interpretative, thematic statements that describe the underlying patterns in the data.

Subjectivity

As qualitative research is inherently value-laden, qualitative researchers should report and acknowledge their potential biases and values (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The first researcher's analysis was shaped by their farm upbringing, holding a B.S. and M.S. in agricultural communication, and experience as a female in agribusiness, which enhances their focus on AFNR topics in media. The second researcher grew up in an agricultural community and has earned both a B.S. and M.S. in agricultural education and communication from a land-grant institution, which has helped to frame how they view AFNR in the media. Additionally, they have explored popular culture media in prior research, thus influencing their interpretation of how media with AFNR content can be used as a tool for education and communication. While neither researcher has children of their own, they were exposed to the show through their nieces and nephews and have observed how these children interact with and are affected by it.

Limitations

It is important to recognize that the methodological procedure—descriptive qualitative analysis—is inherently subjective, and researchers' interpretations of the episodes' content may not align with other researchers or viewers. Moreover, since this is an Australian show, some of the phrasing and words identified by the American researchers may not perfectly match the meaning of the words/phrases Australians use. This can also be a potential challenge if this series is used in K-12 SBAE classrooms, since the terminology may cause confusion if not clarified during a reflection process. Since this is described as a children's television show, and in connection to K-12 SBAE or even post-secondary education, older students may not see value in using this show. Finally, only one researcher watched every episode of the show. However, this was reconciled through peer-debriefings of every episode and the second researcher randomly selecting additional episodes to watch, both of which resulted in high intercoder reliability.

Findings

A total of 63 episodes were identified that connected to AFNR topics, with varying degrees of inclusion. The researchers identified six major themes: *Environment and Nature Serve as Setting for Play*, *AFNR Influence on Character Engagement with the Environment*, *Natural Resources Serve as Props*, *Imaginary Play Centers Around AFNR Subjects*, *Depictions of Nature Permeate Background Scenes*, and *Opportunities to Learn about AFNR*.

Environment and Nature Serve as Setting for Play

Bluey features a variety of settings that often drive the narrative of its respective episodes. Although many episodes take place within Bluey’s home and backyard, episodes have also been set in natural environments. For non-Australian viewers, the show introduces likely unknown terrain terms such as bush (i.e., an undeveloped forested region) and the scrub (i.e., a dense, thicket-like forest area). Bluey’s school—Glasshouse Primary School—is a secondary setting for the show, located in a non-urban region that includes hills, plains, and forested areas where the children often play. Other episodes have featured beach or ocean settings, campgrounds, and other forested areas. Episodes like “The Creek,” “Camping,” and “Grandad” are among the most prominent for highlighting their natural setting.

Figure 1

Natural Environments in Bluey (from L-R: “Creek,” “Camping,” “Grandad”)



In “The Creek,” Bluey is apprehensive about journeying away from the park into the nearby bush, evidenced by her panic when encountering bugs or falling into the water. However, as she travels with Bandit, Bingo, and Mackenzie, she starts to see and appreciate the natural world around her, eventually exclaiming, “The creek is beautiful.” The characters go on to play in and around the creek, skipping stones, building a dam, and creating a mud spa.

In “Camping,” Bluey and her family go on a camping trip where Bluey plays in a small creek at the campground. As she begins building a house out of sticks, Bluey meets Jean-Luc, a French-speaking Canadian tourist. Though a language barrier exists, the two start playing in the creek and the nearby bush. Together, they built a teepee-style house out of sticks and leaves, seen above in Figure 1. They plant a seed along the creek bank, stating, “We can plant this seed like farmers. This will grow into a big tree with fruit on it.” Realizing the tree will take too long to grow, they paint themselves with mud and instead “hunt” Bandit, who pretends to be a wild boar. Near the end of the episode, a time-lapse shows the planted seed growing into a big tree, where Bluey and Jean-Luc reunite on another camping trip years later.

In “Grandad,” Bluey and Bingo are accompanied by their Grandad as they run from Chilli, who is trying to get Grandad to relax for his health. They escape into the surrounding scrub, hiding within tree roots, wading through the small creek, and covering themselves with mud as a means of evasion. Having grown up in the area, Chilli easily tracks and finds them, though they continue to run. The group eventually gets to the nearby pond, where they canoe away. On the opposite bank, Grandad finally gives in, and the girls swim while Chilli finally catches up.

Table 1

Episodes Featuring Environment and Nature as Play Setting(s)

Bush/Scrub	Shops (1: 23), The Creek (1:29), The Adventure (1: 37), Camping (1: 43), Granddad (2: 29), Barky Boats (2:38), Army (3: 13), Explorers (3: 15), Space (3: 36), Wildgirls (3: 44)
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Beach/ocean	The Beach (1: 26), Stickbird (3: 41)
Creek/river/pond	The Creek (1: 29), Camping (1: 43), Piggyback (2: 24), Grandad (2: 29),
Farmers Market	Markets (1: 20)
Plains	Army (3: 13), Space (3: 36)

Note. The numbers in parentheses after the episode names are the season: episode

AFNR Influence on Character Engagement with the Environment

Characters often interact directly with their natural environment and are, in turn, influenced by it. The characters are often seen engaging closely with animals, like when Bluey must get around beach wildlife—saltwater clams, crabs, jellyfish, and a pelican—on her quest to catch up to Chilli (“Beach”). In “Creek,” Bluey encounters a wallaby near a small tributary while collecting mud (Figure 2). Even in urban settings, characters interact with wildlife, including an instance where Bandit chases an Australian white ibis (“Shaun”) or when Bandit and Bingo must avoid being attacked by a swooping magpie in a park (“Curry Quest”) (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Nature Interactions in Bluey (from L-R: “Creek,” “Curry Quest,” “The Weekend”)



Bingo is especially cognizant of the world around her, often noticing small creatures as she plays in the yard. In “The Weekend,” she spots a leaf bug and is amazed, talking to the creature directly: “Is that a leaf? Are you a leaf? You look like a leaf, but you’re walking. Are you a walking leaf? But I don’t understand, why would a leaf want to walk? You should be in a tree, leaf.” During this exchange, the leaf bug hops onto her nose before eventually flying away.

In “Slide,” Bingo and her friend Lila are playing on a waterslide. However, play is stopped when Bingo notices bugs have climbed onto the slide. They discuss sliding anyway, but don’t want to hurt the bugs because the bugs have “a mommy and a daddy who would miss them.” They go to great lengths to avoid injuring the bugs by adjusting the sides of the slide, removing them with sticks, and eventually designating a “bug inspector” to ensure the slide is clear before the next “rider” goes. Throughout this episode, a caterpillar is shown in the grass, moving up the side of the slide, falling onto the slide, and Bingo eventually removing it. Through a time-lapse at the end of the episode, the caterpillar transforms into a chrysalis and emerges as a butterfly, which visits Bingo and Lila at the end of this episode and again in a future episode (“The Sign”).

The environment also influences how the characters play. In “Shadowlands,” Bluey and her friends Snickers and Coco play a game where shadows are the “safe land,” while areas in sunlight are crocodile-infested waters. The group works together to traverse the shadows, aiming to reach their parents. However, they are challenged when the shadows move, especially when

the blowing wind causes a skinny palm tree shadow to sway. Their greatest challenge is a seemingly uncrossable area in the sun. The game is saved, however, when a cloud blocks the sun, casting the whole park in shadow, allowing the kids to complete the game.

Table 2

Top Episodes Where Characters Directly Interact with AFNR

Episode Title	S: E	Interactions
Shadowlands	1: 5	The game “shadowlands” is directly influenced by shadow placement
The Weekend	1: 6	Bingo is fascinated by a walking leaf
Butterflies	1: 15	Bingo stops to watch a ladybug climbing up their shed
The Beach	1: 26	Bluey encounters and interacts with beach wildlife, including saltwater clams, crabs, jellyfish and a pelican
The Creek	1: 29	Playing in and around the creek, engaging with wildlife such as tadpoles and a wallaby
Camping	1: 43	Bluey and Jean-Luc make a house out of sticks and leaves, play in the creek, plant a seed that later grows into a tree
Shaun	1: 50	Bandit (playing as an imaginary friend emu) chases an Australian white ibis, which the kids call a “bin chicken”
Bingo	2: 6	Bingo talks to an ant that’s carrying a blueberry away
Stumpfest	2: 15	Bandit, Stripe, and Pat are removing tree stumps from the yard at Chilli’s request. Playing on one stump, the kids refuse to move, chanting, “Save our stump.”
Grandad	2: 29	Kids use the scrub to hide from and distract Chilli, throwing rocks, painting on mud. They also canoe and swim in the pond
Barky Boats	2: 38	Bluey, Mackenzie, and their 8 th -grade buddies race boats made of bark, and build fairy gardens out of natural material
Curry Quest	3: 8	While traveling through a park, Bandit and Bingo must navigate a nesting magpie that swoops at perceived threats
Rain	3: 18	Bluey plays outside in a rainstorm, building a dam across the sidewalk to stop the rainwater runoff
Dirt	3: 36	The girls play in a dirt pile delivered for topdressing the yard
Stickbird	3: 41	On vacation at the beach, the family plays in tidal pools, builds sand castles, practice throwing sticks, and collect driftwood from the shore
Slide	3: 46	Bugs on a waterslide stop Bingo and Lila from playing

Note. S: E indicates Season: Episode

Note. Other episodes with AFNR interaction include “Markets,” “Work,” “Copycat,” “Army,” “Piggyback,” “Pizza Girls,” “Stories,” “Wild Girls,” and “The Sign,” for 25 episodes total.

Natural Resources Serve as Props

As episodes are often set outdoors or in nature, the kids use natural resources as props for play. With the power of imagination, the kids transform sticks, leaves, flowers, vines, stumps, and more into whatever props are needed to advance the game or story. Stumps are a popular prop, serving as a nail salon (“Stumpfest”), a helicopter and airplane (“Helicopter”), and a tractor (“Wild Girls”). During a family barbecue, the kids mimic the food the parents are preparing (“BBQ”). As Bluey cooks sticks (sausages) and Muffin notices the salad set on the table, and insists they need a salad to match. Bingo is tasked with collecting green, yellow, and red natural resources to serve as their salad ingredients, ultimately using leaves and flowers from around the yard as the peppers and mud as the dressing.

Table 3

Natural Elements Serving as Props for Play

Episode Title	S: E	Prop and Purpose
BBQ	1:07	Plants and mud from the yard serve as become BBQ food
Spygame	1:13	Grass as key ingredient for parent-controlling spell
Shops	1:23	Fallen log as a table, berries as currency, pinecone as a register
The Adventure	1:37	Sticks and bark become costumes (e.g., headgear and staff)
Camping	1:43	Building home out of sticks and leaves, mud crayons to draw hunting plans, palm fronds for hunting spears
Stumpfest	2:15	Stump painted and used by kids for a nail salon
Barky Boats	2:38	Forest elements transformed into fairy garden
Circus	2:40	Sticks and leaves make a circus ring, tree nuts are popcorn
Helicopter	2:45	Stump with a handle-shaped stick becomes a helicopter
Pizza Girls	3:19	Mud and plant pieces are packaged into pizza boxes
Wild Girls	3:44	Hunt a “pig” with stick spears, uses a stump as a tractor

*Note: S: E indicates Season: Episode

Imaginary Play Centers Around AFNR Subjects

Most episodes of *Bluey* feature some kind of game or playtime for Bluey, Bingo, and their friends and family. While some play is designed around exploring the outdoors, as described above, many scenarios are imaginary in nature. Often, games are dependent on one or more characters pretending to be animals. These depictions are sometimes accurate, but often they are embellished. For instance, in “Horsey Ride,” Bandit and Stripe pretend to be horses and give the kids rides on their backs. Later, though, the kids throw a “horsey wedding,” and dress the two up as a bride and groom. Even in this imaginary play, however, Muffin insists “Horseys can’t talk,” whenever Bandit or Stripe tries to say something.

Also using imagination in practice, Bluey uses a magic asparagus to turn her family into different creatures (“Asparagus”). With each transformation, the character fully embodies their animal. As a goat, Chilli starts chewing on one of Bluey’s favorite toys. Playing as a pig, Bingo runs around the house and gets into the cabinets, scattering food everywhere. Later, as lions, Chilli and Bingo stalk and tackle their next-door neighbor. Other creatures include donkey, chicken, elephant, meercat, mouse, penguin, walrus, parrot, bunny, and dinosaurs.

Bluey teaches Chloe the game “octopus,” where one dog pretends to be an octopus that tries to grab players as they run by to steal its treasure (“Octopus”). Chloe tries to play with her own dad, but he doesn’t play it the same way, and Chloe gets frustrated. To try to play better, Chloe and her dad learn about different sea creatures, which they incorporate into their version of the game, adding flying fish, electric eels, flatback sea turtles, and different types of octopi with different skills based on their real-life counterparts.

Table 4

Top Episodes with Imaginary Play Centered Around AFNR Subjects

Episode Title	S: E	Theme
Shadowlands	1: 5	Shadows are islands, sunny areas crocodile-infested oceans
Fruit Bat	1: 8	Bluey dreams she is a fruit bat, flies with other fruit bats, hangs in trees, eats lots of different fruit
Horse Ride	1: 9	Bandit and Stripe pretend to be horses, giving rides to the girls, and participating in a “horse wedding”
Butterflies	1: 15	Bluey, Bingo, and Judo act out the life cycle of a butterfly, inching on the ground for the caterpillar, using a hammock as the cocoon, and emerging as a butterfly, flapping their wings
Calypso	1: 17	Bluey sets up a fish and chips shop that is out of fish, the fish is later supplied by Pretzel, who pretends to be a fisherman
Trampoline	1: 33	Bluey and Bingo pretend to be different foods: bread, fruits—bananas, rockmelon, berries—and eggs, which Bandit “prepares” by jumping on the trampoline. Later, the girls make the trampoline into a “salad spinner” with a sprinkler and pretend to be lettuce.
Zoo	1: 35	Bluey creates a zoo using stuffed animals in her backyard. Bandit pretends to be a gorilla, which kidnaps Bingo
Asparagus	1: 49	Bluey transforms the family into different animals
Flatpack	2: 21	Bluey and Bingo pretend to be different animals in various environments (e.g., fish, frogs, lizards, monkeys)
Helicopter	2: 45	Using the stump “helicopter,” Bluey rescues imaginary kangaroos from a bushfire
Octopus	2: 46	Play game where you must avoid an octopus to get treasure
Housework	3: 12	While cleaning, Bluey and Bingo pretend to be animals, including an elephant, kangaroo, chicken, emu, donkey
Explorers	3: 15	Jack and friends pretend to sail back to Australia, navigate storms and coral reef on their journey
Wild Girls	3: 44	Kids pretend to be hunter gathers, while Bluey and others pretend to be farmers, planting seeds and growing food

Note. S: E indicates Season: Episode

Note. Other episodes with AFNR-inspired play include “Bob Bilby,” “Doctors,” “Pirates,” “Copycat,” “Shaun,” “Rug Island,” “Sheepdog,” “Whale Watching,” and “Onesies,” for 23 total.

Depictions of Nature Permeate Background Scenes

Although AFNR topics were the focus of many episodes, their inclusion was often more subtle. Appreciation for the environment and natural resources was conveyed in non-plot-centric ways, such as quick transition shots of bugs and animals, shown in the image below from “Ragdoll.” In “Born Yesterday,” Bandit pretends he was literally born yesterday; therefore, everything is new to him. At one point, he is fascinated by a leaf, noticing every tiny detail as he examines it. Even in AFNR-heavy episodes, such as “Camping,” there are still moments when the narrative seems to pause on the environment, as in the nighttime shot of the stars below.

Figure 3

Background Shots in Bluey (from L-R: “Ragdoll,” “Born Yesterday,” “Camping”)



Opportunities to Learn about AFNR

As noted above, the Australian setting of the show allows non-Australian viewers to learn about the country’s natural settings, including unique flora and fauna, by having characters encounter these creatures within episodes. In “Fruit Bat,” Bluey learns that fruit bats are nocturnal fruit eaters, and desires to be one so she doesn’t have to go to bed. That night, she dreams that she is a fruit bat, flying with other bats and eating a variety of fruits. In “The Dump,” Bluey is upset when she discovers Bandit is throwing out her drawings, but is pacified when he tells her he is actually recycling them to be made into new paper for new drawings.

Sometimes, in-episode learning becomes part of the games they play, as in the episode “Octopus” described above. Chloe and her dad add the toxic nature of the South Moriba octopus to the game, and Bluey “transforms” into a flatback sea turtle for protection. In “Whale Watching,” an exhausted Chilli puts on a nature documentary about whales rather than engage in the rambunctious whale play the children desire. Learning that mother whales will do anything for their young, Chilli throws herself fully into the game, pretending to be a breaching whale.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

In our analysis of the television show *Bluey*, we identified 63 episodes that featured, in varying degrees, elements of agriculture, food, or natural resources. Episodes like “The Creek,” “Camping,” and “Grandad” feature strong AFNR themes, showcasing narratives centered on the appreciation and exploration of the natural environment. In these episodes, viewers watch Bluey’s perceptions of natural spaces change from apprehension and fear in “The Creek,” to coating herself with mud and enthusiastically exploring the world around her in “Camping.” These episodes invite the viewer to walk alongside Bluey as she learns to enjoy playing outside.

Characters often engage directly with animals and natural resources around them. While inanimate objects, such as detritus and stumps, become props, wildlife are largely given a wide berth. Often, characters employ strategies to minimize their impact on wildlife while still

achieving their goals, as seen in episodes like “The Beach” and “Curry Quest.” Even in urban settings, characters encounter and navigate wildlife, evidenced by Bingo’s many encounters with bugs in the backyard (e.g., “The Weekend,” “Butterflies,” “Bingo,” and “Slide”). In this way, the show explores how nature isn’t just “in the wild,” instead, it may be encountered regularly.

Beyond direct engagement through setting and narrative, the children’s play often centers on AFNR elements, especially animals. Although play is somewhat fanciful in nature, expected in a children’s show, there is often an element of truth in how characters portray animals they pretend to be. In the episode “Asparagus,” Bluey uses a magic asparagus to transform her family into animals. While the asparagus's effects are exaggerated for the game's purpose, Bluey’s family fully embodies the animals they have become. Even in “Horsey Game,” where Bluey, Bingo, and her cousins throw a horse wedding with Bandit and Stripe, Muffin makes sure everyone knows that “Horseys can’t talk.” Episodes like “Octopus” take this engagement one step further, with Chloe and her dad researching marine life to add new, realistic rules to their game.

Although only a few episodes are explicitly tied to agricultural themes, the show overall conveys a deep appreciation and love for the environment. The way background imagery and underlying themes are woven into the show’s overarching narrative underscores the importance of AFNR broadly in the everyday world. It is important that we use these types of shows to demonstrate to the general population the importance of AFNR, outside the stereotypical depictions they may expect or be familiar with. As a result, we believe the show provides an exploratory opportunity for communicators and educators to utilize non-traditional depictions of AFNR with K-12 students and adults. Further, since episodes are relatively short (7-8 minutes), they provide a quick supplement to enhance learning in the classroom and align with children’s attention spans, which average three to five minutes per year of age (Schmitt, 2025).

Children often request to view their favorite media content repeatedly (Mares, 1999), which has been shown to increase their understanding of and engagement with that content (Crawley et al., 1999; Skouteris & Kelly, 2006; Skouteris et al., 2007). As evidenced by its status as the most-streamed show of 2024 and 2025 (McCarty, 2026; The Walt Disney Company, 2024), *Bluey* is a popular show likely viewed repeatedly by its target audience, furthering their exposure to the AFNR themes within it, underscoring the relevance of cultivation theory and the potential impacts these repeated exposures may have (Gerbner, 1969).

While this descriptive analysis can assist in identifying, teaching, and communicating AFNR themes and topics in *Bluey*, there is still a lack of research on whether this show cultivates specific attitudes and beliefs toward AFNR in its viewers. We recommend that future research conduct a discourse analysis on social media discussions about this show and whether AFNR topics are being addressed. Additionally, future research could conduct focus groups with children and their parents on specific episodes targeting AFNR topics to discuss their feelings about the content. Finally, future researchers could engage show creators to explore their views of *Bluey*’s AFNR themes and why there was a stronger focus on natural resources and less on agricultural topics, similar to recommendations by Dietrich et al. (2015). Beyond research, we emphasize the relevance of this series and the opportunity it presents to SBAE educators and agricultural communicators in addressing misconceptions or building on the reality of AFNR, both in the classroom and at home.

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