



# Feed Me

## by Rhiannon Tise

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A play for secondary school students focusing on Sustainable Diets and the impact food consumption has on the planet's resources.

### Cast

Jake

Lila, Jake's sister

Mum

Dad

Davida, presenter of Feed Me

Eartha, the computer

Pedro, South American Farmer.

Juanita, Pedro's wife.

Carlos

Rosa

Enrique, A south American TV presenter

South American Business man

Crowd of Davida fans, animals of the rain forest, South American farm workers

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## Setting and Style

The acting style should be exaggerated where necessary, mimicking the infamous Reality TV shows. Music and colourful glitzy props and some suggestion of costume could be used to differentiate between the TV world and the other worlds.

## Settings

1. A domestic house setting. Tables and chairs etc. Table laid for dinner. A big flat screen TV dominates the wall.
2. outside the house – studio setting
3. the rain forest, South America

Performers can stay on stage at all times (no need to 'dim lights' and change the scene...the scenes should merge into each other). Performers can freeze or sit still on the spot or simply take a few steps back and sit on the floor/chair.

## Sound and Movement

Alex Parson's original music and sound effects are provided for your use. It is clearly marked in the script where to use the music or sound cues; however, feel free to add your own spin on things or incorporate the pupils' own live sound effects.

Take a look at Movement Director Robin Guiver's movement videos for ideas and starting points.

## Feed Me TV programme notes

Jake and his family – Mum, Dad and sister Lila - are taking part in a Reality TV show called Feed Me (think Big Brother mixed with Gogglebox with a bit of 'I'm a Celebrity...' thrown in).

The programme explores the dietary choices of a selection of UK families. The audience then vote off families depending on whether they like their food choices. The families also have to take part in nightly challenges in order to 'win' food for the next day. There is a big cash prize at the end for the family who last the series.

The programme has a catchy theme tune and a glitzy Davina McCallesque presenter – DAVIDA - who introduces the show to us...

## Scene 1

Music: Feed Me Theme

*Davida enters followed by a crowd of excited general public, who all cheer and whoop at appropriate moments.*

The catchy theme tune fades....

**Davida:** Welcome! Welcome to Feed Me. The brand new show that explores what You! - The average family in the UK eats. And it's all about you! - You! You! It's you who gets to decide who stays and who goes. So let's see tonight, who will eat and who will go hungry?

The crowd around Davida cheer.

**Davida:** So let's get straight to it. Eartha- are you there?

**Eartha:** I am here Davida.

**Davida:** Great. So, who are we meeting tonight in the Feed Me house?

Jake and his family are in the 'Feed Me' house. There is a big computer monitor transmitting images and 'the voice' of the programme (simple to create with big TV screen made from cardboard, black material behind and a student being the computer's voice/head)

**Eartha:** Tonight Davida we meet the Howard family. Jake, Lila Mum and Dad. We are going to join them as they are about to sit down for dinner.

**Davida:** Howard Family you're live to the Nation in five four three two one - Howard family you're live! Say hello Jake -

**Jake:** Hi. (*Waves*)

**Lila:** Hello! (*waves too, cutely*)

**Jake:** They don't want you to speak. She asked me.

**Lila:** Cooiiiieeee Davida!!! Hello!

**Mum:** You two, stop please.

**Lila:** He started it-

Mum makes a face at Lila implying 'we're on telly. Behave'

**Eartha:** Shall we continue?



**Jake:** Yeah. Shut up.

**Eartha:** Jake, can you tell us where you live?

**Jake:** Kent. England.

**Eartha:** Thank you. And tell us what is your favourite food Jake?

**Jake:** Burgers! I'd happily eat them every day of the week

**Mum:** Sometimes you do.

**Lila:** Mine is chicken nuggets and chips

**Dad:** Nice big bit of steak.

**Mum:** Roast beef and gravy.

**Eartha:** Thank you. System processing.

**Davida:** Shall we crack on with tonight's first challenge then Eartha?

**Eartha:** System processing

**Davida:** Hello?

**Eartha:** And tell me what is your favourite food Jake?

**Jake:** err, burgers -?

**Eartha:** Thank you. And what is your favourite food Jake?

*Eartha is having a malfunction*

**Jake:** I just said. Burgers.

**Eartha:** Thank you. And and and and  
What is your favourite favourite favourite favourite

**Jake:** What's happening?

**Dad:** Stupid thing, it's broken.

**Mum:** How can it be broken when we're on the telly?

**Eartha:** Thank you thank you thank you thank you.  
Jake Jake Jake Jake. Jake Jake Jake.

**Lila:** Why is it doing that? It's scaring me.

A loud cracking sound. A major malfunction.

SFX: ELECTRICAL CRACKLE.WAV

The screen goes dead.

## Scene 2

The curtain is pulled back to reveal a beautiful rainforest. The sounds of birds and other wild life all around.

SFX: RAINFOREST ATMOS.MP3

*The group of children that were the general public with Davida have created/create a rainforest. Trees, waterfalls, beautiful birds, jaguars in the trees and other animals that inhabit the rainforest. It's a beautiful place, full of wildlife.*

*Another group create a small village of one or two houses on the outskirts of this forest. They are very poor but farm enough food to survive. Among them is CARLOS, playing football, and his family – Father PEDRO, who is tending to his crops and Mother JUANITA, sister ROSA who are preparing supper.*

*Jake and his family peer in to get a better look. OR/ the screen opens up and the Howard family 'step inside'*

**Jake:** Wow. Where are we?

**Mum:** Is this the right programme?

**Lila:** It's like "I'm a Celebrity" ...or something.

**Mum:** I'm not eating any bugs, just so you know.

**Jake:** They might taste alright dipped in ketchup.

**Dad:** Everybody just stay close. Okay? Nobody wander off.

**Eartha:** Meet Carlos. He lives with his dad Pedro, Mum Juanita and his sister Rosa

**Jake:** Hey, it's not Carlos. It's Jake.

**Lila:** And I'm Lila. Not Rosa!

**Eartha:** Carlos and his family live by the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

**Jake:** No. We live in Kent. What's going on?

**Eartha:** The rainforest is vitally important in stabilizing the climate, storing up to 140 billion tonnes of carbon.

**Mum:** Is this the rainforest then?

**Lila:** It's beautiful.

**Eartha:** The rainforests are like huge fridges. Keeping the earth cool.

**Lila:** Look at all the amazing animals and insects!

**Eartha:** The rain forests are the champions of biodiversity. No one knows just how many different species live here. Some estimate it's anything between 3 and 50 million species.

**Lila:** Hey look there is a family over there! Can they see us?



- Eartha:** Carlos is fifteen. He dreams of one day being a great footballer.
- Jake:** Just like me! Hey Carlos! Carlos! Want a game?!
- Eartha:** But it is likely his dreams will not be fulfilled.
- Lila:** How come?
- Eartha:** He has no free time to practice his skills. Carlos's family farm soy beans. They work very hard for very little reward.
- Dad:** Sounds a bit like my life.
- Mum:** Shhh. You don't live in a hut on the edge of a forest for a start.
- Eartha:** The beans they farm are used to feed cattle in rich countries, like the UK. The cattle eat feed made from the soy beans and then you eat the meat in the burgers you love, in the steak and the roast beef.
- Lila:** Actually I prefer chicken nuggets.
- Eartha:** Chickens eat food made from soy beans from South America too. All the animals that you eat do. And it's not just animals. Soy beans can be found in lots of readymade foods. And demand is increasing daily and still Carlos and his family have very little money or food.
- Jake:** Why can't they eat the beans they grow? There are masses of them. They are everywhere you look.
- Eartha:** They can't, the soya beans they produce are all for the UK market.
- Dad:** The cows can't possibly eat all of that!
- Eartha:** All of it, and much much more.  
In fact, there is an area the size of Yorkshire in South America that is growing soya beans especially for the UK. We want to eat so much meat and the cows have to keep eating to get nice and fat. Our demands are having a terrible effect on the environment.
- Dad:** How can us eating burgers be bad for the environment? You're telling me my family is to blame for all this climate change stuff?
- Eartha:** Not quite, but our food system (*consumption?*) is destroying the environment upon which future food production depends.
- Dad:** In English please -

A fabulous samba beat kicks in.

MUSIC: ENRIQUE'S THEME.WAV

*Enrique, Davida's South America counterpart, dances onto the stage.  
The Howard family look on in amazement/bewilderment*

**Enrique:** Welcome welcome! Ola! Ola, tudo bem? [*Translation: Hello, how are you?*]

**Dad:** What is going on? Who are you?

**Enrique:** Mr Howard. It's okay. I'm Enrique.  
Come over. Come over.

**Dad:** Everybody stay put.  
We're fine actually, thank you all the same.

**Enrique:** But Mr Howard what about your challenge?

**Jake:** We've got to do the challenge. We don't get food for tomorrow otherwise.

**Lila:** I told you it was a bush tucker trial!

**Dad:** This was not in the contract I signed.

**Enrique:** Ah that's okay Mr Howard. We don't mind about contracts at all.

**Dad:** Where is Davida? I did not agree to this. Being in the rain forest with I don't know what.

**Jake:** We've got to do it Dad or we don't get any food.

**Dad:** I never wanted to take part in this stupid programme anyways.

**Enrique:** Who knows Mr Howard, you might learn something.

**Dad:** I doubt it.

**Enrique:** Juanita– tonight's first challenge for this lovely family if you please.

Juanita produces four basic fishing nets for the family. She hands them out. Rosa and Carlos put on cow masks. Pedro is the UK farmer.

**Dad:** Are we fishing then?

**Enrique:** Not quite Mr Howard.

**Eartha:** So, here are some cows in their field in England happily munching away.

Rosa and Carlos pretend to be munching cows, eating, eating, eating.

**Eartha:** And here is the farmer giving the cows more food to eat. The farmer needs to produce as much meat as possible as demand for beef is so high so he is fattening his cows up.



**Dad:** Is this actually going somewhere?

**Lila:** Shhh Dad we'll miss the instructions.

**Dad:** I know how to fish. We'll be fine.

Juanita steps forward with other farmers all munching on hamburgers and other meaty dishes (can be simply drawings on card or paper?)

**Enrique:** But look what's this? The world wants to eat more meat so the farmer has to buy more cows and feed these cows more and more food...

*More cows (other children in cow masks) come into the 'field' All hungry, mooing.*

SFX BURPING COWS.WAV

**Enrique:** When the cows digest they burp out a dangerous gas called methane.

The cows all burp.

**Dad:** Charming.

**Enrique:** The methane gas pollutes the atmosphere, absorbing the sun's heat and contributes to global warming.

**Dad:** Is this actually going somewhere?

**Enrique:** Your challenge Howard family is to catch the methane before it rises up into the atmosphere.

Pause – they looked confused

Off you go then –

*The Cows burp,*

SFX BURPING COWS.WAV

*the Howard family attempt in vain to catch the invisible burps.*

**Dad:** How on earth are we meant to do this -?

**Enrique:** You have your nets. You said you knew how to fish -

**Jake:** But we can't see the gas. So how can we catch it?

**Enrique:** Good point. Um. I don't know. Any ideas?

*The South American family shrug their shoulders – no idea.  
Everyone thinks. The cows continue to burp*

SFX BURPING COWS.WAV



- Enrique:** Oh it's so hot, it's so hot. Better hurry up. These cows are burping. The atmosphere is heating up....
- Lila:** How about if there were fewer cows would there be less methane polluting the atmosphere?
- Enrique:** Yes. That might work. But how could there be fewer cows?  
Everyone wants to eat so much meat.
- Dad:** Of course we do it's delicious!

A big 'Wrong Answer' sound. Everyone boos, thumbs down.

SFX WRONG ANSWER.WAV

- Enrique:** Oh dear. Wrong answer Mr Howard.
- Jake:** Oh Dad!
- Lila:** That's not fair
- Mum:** You and your stomach.
- Dad:** What? What did I do?
- Enrique:** I'm sorry Howard family. You have failed tonight's challenge.
- Lila:** No please, please give us another chance. We didn't know there was a right or wrong answer.
- Jake:** Our Dad is just stupid, he's a big mouth. Ignore him
- Dad:** Excuse me.
- Mum:** You want to eat don't you?
- Dad:** I never agreed to any of this in the first place.
- Lila:** Please. One more chance. Please.
- Enrique:** Well, I am feeling generous tonight so I will give you another chance.  
Let's see how you fair with building a better Burger.

Carlos and his family step forward with plates of food choices

As you will see, Carlos and his family are arranging some plates of food in front of you. If we are now all in agreement that red meat should be limited, I want you to build a better burger out of what you have in front of you.... Start the clock Carlos....

*Howard family examine the plates in front of them.... the seconds tick round  
(like the on Countdown could be pre-recorded SFX)*

SFX CLOCKS TICKING.WAV



- Lila:** How about a chicken burger?
- Jake:** I think he said chickens eat soya beans too. We end up with the same problem...
- Mum:** Veggie burger?
- Enrique:** Good choice Mum.
- Jake:** Oh no way. I'm not eating that.
- Mum:** You may have to. They may not give us anything else.
- Jake:** But Mum, yuk already. Vegetables. In a burger?
- Enrique:** We're not suggesting every day. We're saying once or twice a week make a conscious effort to try not to eat meat. Can it really be that hard?
- Mum:** They do hate vegetables.
- Lila:** I'm willing to give it a go. I do like salad.
- Enrique:** Errr-errrrr wrong answer

#### The clock comes to an abrupt end

- Dad:** What now?
- Enrique:** Fruit and vegetables can also have an impact on the environment. We should try and eat more brassicas and root veg and less hot house/perishable fruit and veg
- Dad:** Err, in English please.
- Lila:** He means more broccoli less salad. Less stuff that you need to artificially grow, out of a season.
- Enrique:** Very good Lila. Bonus point for you.

Lila is smug.

- Jake:** Teachers pet.
- Enrique:** Would you like to earn yourself a special food treat all for yourself?
- Lila:** Yes please.
- Enrique:** Okay. Carlos if you please –

Carlos, his family and other farmers step forward with the real fruit and vegetables or cards with the fruit drawn on/photographs of the food. It should be a mixture of hothouse fruit and veg – salads, strawberries, peppers and brassicas and traditional UK fruit crops – apples and pears (UK grown).

- Enrique:** So Lila, I would like you to arrange our fruit and vegetables into a water usage line up. Highest levels of water usage first, right down to those fruit and veg which do not need so much. Off you go then.

The ticking clock music starts...Lila examines the fruit and veg

SFX CLOCKS TICKING.WAV

**Dad:** Strawberries like their water Lila. That goes first.  
I remember from Grandad's garden.

Lila moves the people round as best she can.

**Enrique:** Not bad Lila. Not bad at all.

**Enrique:** You're right Dad, strawberries require a huge amount of water. And these days we want to eat strawberries all year round, not just the ones we grow in our garden. And those types of fruits and veg have to be grown in green houses when the weather is cold and that uses vast amounts of water and energy.

**Mum:** That's true when I was little you could never get strawberries in the winter

**Dad:** So fruit and veg are bad too? As well as meat. What do we eat then? Air? Or maybe straw, like a cow.

**Lila:** No Dad. Cows eat a feed made from soya beans. We've already established that.

**Mum:** Keep up.

**Dad:** I've had just about enough of this.

**Enrique:** I like your fighting spirit. With people like you behind us we can help the farmers like Pedro who struggle to make a living and feed their families.

**Dad:** Hold on, what -

**Enrique:** Many of the 1.3 billion smallholders and landless agricultural workers live on or below the poverty line.

**Mum:** Oh that's terrible.

**Lila:** I wish we could help them.

**Jake:** There must be something we can do.

**Enrique:** On average the UK wastes seven million tonnes of food a year. That's sixty pounds a month on food and drink, in the bin.

**Mum:** That's such a lot of waste.

**Enrique:** But the world is eating more than ever and demand is increasing rapidly.

A South American Businessman flanked by Bodyguards approach Carlos' father Pedro

**Businessman:** Hey you, stop standing about chatting. Demand is increased. We need to grow more soya beans for the UK



- Pedro:** But sir, there's nowhere left to grow it.
- Businessman:** Then we'll have to cut down more forest.
- Lila:** But you can't! What about all the animals and people that live here?
- Businessman:** You and your family want to eat burgers don't you? Burn it.

*A group of workers 'set fire' to the forest. The 'Slash and burn' approach, used to destroy the forest quickly, can be created with sound effects and movement.*

MUSIC: SLASH AND BURN.MP3

The forest burns.

SFX FIRE.MP3

- Enrique:** You must go; it isn't safe here now.
- Lila:** But we have to help them.
- Dad:** Come on, come on. We've got to go.
- Lila:** But Dad!
- Dad:** There's nothing we can do.
- Lila:** What's going to happen to them?
- Enrique:** Pedro's small farm will get taken over by a bigger farm. They will use big machinery to harvest the crops. This will make the farm more efficient and feed the demand but there will be fewer jobs.
- Eartha:** Carlos and his family will work very hard but remain poor. And demand will increase and more rainforest will be destroyed. This will not change. Unless we change.

*The computer screen goes black. Eartha's face disappears*

*Carlos and his family and the other poor workers carry heavy bags of soya bean all labelled UK off stage, they look very tired. They are watched over by the Businessman. Sorrowful music could accompany this.*

MUSIC: STILLNESS AND DESTRUCTION.MP3

*The Howard family are silent, haunted by what they have seen. Lila is crying*

### Scene 3

*Davida and the crowd of cheering public return.*

**Davida:** Jake? Jake? Howard family are you there?

**Jake:** Yes I'm here.

*Cheers from the public*

**Davida:** Major malfunction this end. The computer had a serious virus and had to be replaced. Sorry. All went haywire. Anyways glad you're okay.

**Lila:** Where did Carlos go?

**Davida:** Carlos who?

**Dad:** The boy and his family, from South America.

**Davida:** Shall we get on with dinner then? What's on the menu tonight Mum?

**Mum:** Burgers.

**Davida:** Super. We all love burgers don't we?

*The crowd cheer. The family look sheepish*

**Jake:** They've gone cold.

**Davida:** Hello? Are you there?

**Dad:** We're here.

**Lila:** What will happen to Carlos?  
(to Dad)

**Dad:** Let's just do this and then we can find out.

**Lila:** I don't feel very hungry.

**Dad:** Come on. Mum's made this lovely meal.

**Davida:** Speak to me people.

**Jake:** What's going to happen to Carlos?  
(shouts)

**Davida:** Howard family are you preparing for eviction?

*Public crowd boo, wave their placards etc.*

**Dad:** No we are not. We are going to do this. Right?

*The others nod at Dad, unconvinced. They sit round the table.*



**Davida:** How's dinner? Taste nice? Juicy burger? Lovely meat?

**Lila:** Of course it tastes nice. It's burgers. We all love burgers. But does anyone think about the implications our love of burgers is having on our planet?

The public crowd boo.

**Mum:** Lila. will you just eat your dinner please. No fuss.

**Lila:** I can't Mum. Not now. I'm sorry. I know it's a waste. I'm sorry.  
Davida, how do you feel about the fact that our food system is destroying the environment upon which future food production depends?

**Davida:** Gobbledygook people!

Laughter. More boos.

**Davida:** Are you turning vegetarian on us Lila?

**Lila:** It's not as simple as turning vegetarian. The soya bean is in so many other products that we eat. It's about make proper choices. Not relying on processed convenience foods that are full of soya that is being grown thousands of miles away destroying vast parts of the rain forest.

**Davida:** But sweetie we haven't all got time to cook a meal from scratch. We need to eat don't we? Convenience food is the only choice for some people.

Cheers from the crowd.

**Lila:** Yes but we don't need to eat them every day. We could eat veggie a few days a week. There are millions of people and animals whose lives are being destroyed by our choices. If we carry on the planet will not be able to cope.

**Davida:** It's a big old planet. I'm sure it's quite able to cope!

Crowd laugh at Lila

**Jake:** Hey. Enough! She's right. Stop booing her. If you knew how bad things were you would listen to us.  
This is happening right now while you sit at home in front of your TV eating your meaty dinner.

Cheers from the crowd.

**Davida:** It's got nothing to do with us. We're fine. We have enough food. We have great choices.

Cheers from the public.



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**Jake:** Fine you carry on like that. But it won't be like that forever.  
And you might get ill too from all the meat you eat. If we start making the right choices now - shopping wisely, not wasting food - we can make a difference. We can help the planet and not eating so much meat and processed food means we'll be healthier too.  
Now isn't that something to cheer about?

*The crowd slowly come round to agree with Jake. They cheer him and boo Davida away.*

*The public storm the house in celebration. Musical fanfare.*

SFX FANFARE.WAV AND FANFARE FIREWORKS.WAV

Glitter and streamers.

## Scene 4

*Enrique is with them and the farmers from South America and Carlos and his family.*

**Enrique:** I think the Howard family have proved tonight they are the rightful winners. Mr Howard would you like to step forward to collect your prize?

Cheers from everyone.

**Dad:** Actually Enrique we have something to say –

**Mum:** We would like to donate our money to help Pedro and his family and other small holders like him.

**Lila:** We have so much and they have so little.

**Jake:** And it's up to us to work together and help each other and this planet we live on.

**Enrique:** This a big cash prize, are you sure?

**Dad:** Completely sure. As a family are all in agreement. For once.

*Davida returns with a large plate of burgers*

**Davida:** Well said Howard family! I never doubted you for a second. Who's for a celebratory burger?

**Jake:** Me please! I'm totally starving I haven't had my dinner yet.

Jake takes one and tucks in.

**Davida:** Notice anything?

Jake shakes his head, takes another bite.

**Mum:** It's not made of Amazonian bugs is it?

**Davida:** It's a veggie burger.

**Jake:** Really?  
It's delicious!

**Enrique:** Maybe there's hope for us yet...

*Celebratory eating, dancing....*

MUSIC: I LOVE LEGUMES.MP3

## The End