

# Fresh from the Farm

**Grade Level: 1-3**

**Approximate Length of Activity: One class period**

## Objective

### Teacher

1. Illustrate the importance of supporting agriculture.
2. Demonstrate the use of money.
3. Have students experience a farmer's market.

### Students

1. Learn the concept of a farmer's market.
2. Learn how to exchange money.
3. Learn about supporting local business.

**Michigan Content Standards: (Math) M.UN.01.06; M.PS.01.07; M.UN.02.07; N.ME.03.21**

## Vocabulary

- **Barter**-to trade one thing for another without the use of money.
- **Goods**-manufactured articles or products.
- **Gourmet**-a person who can enjoy and appreciate fine eating and drinking.
- **Market**-a public place where people meet to buy and sell.
- **Organic**- relating to, producing, dealing in, or involving foods produced with the use of feed or fertilizer obtained from plants or animals and without the use of laboratory-made fertilizers, growth substances, antibiotics, or pesticides.
- **Produce**- fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Specialize**- to limit one's attention or energy to one business, subject, or study.

## Background

Farmer's markets got their start early in our nation's history when farmers began taking vegetables, eggs, cream, cheese, honey and other produce to the nearest town to trade for things they could not produce on the farm-a steel plow, cotton material for clothing, coffee, sugar and tea. If the farmer had produce left after trading was complete, he or she would take it to an area where an open market was set up and sell it directly to the city folk.

As cities grew, new stores were built, and farmer's markets began to lose customers. Many farmers stopped hauling their goods to town because they could not earn enough money to make it worthwhile.

Today there are 42 operating states that have farmer's markets. Some local growers specialize in particular crops, like herbs, special gourmet plants or organic plants. Farmer's markets have continued to grow in popularity because customers like to buy local crops. Local crops are often fresher than those available in grocery stores.

There are more than 170 city/municipal farmer's markets in Michigan.

According to Michigan.gov, "In 2005, the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, also known as Project FRESH, made fresh produce available to more than 38,000 (people). Over 761 Michigan farmers participated in the program, which grossed over \$538,000 in produce sales."

## Materials Needed

- Pictures of fruits and vegetables from magazines
- Plain grocery bags
- Grocery ads
- Fake money
- Copies of "Fresh from the Farm" worksheet

## Activity Outline

1. Read the background information.
2. Set up a pretend farmer's market, and have students "buy" and "sell" and practice counting back change.
3. Bring in grocery store produce ads and have students compare prices.
4. Compare grocery store produce prices to farmer's market prices. Brainstorm reasons for price differences.
5. Pass out copies of "Fresh From the Farm" worksheet and have students visit a farmer's market in the area.
  - As an alternative to visiting a farmer's market, divide your class into two groups.
  - One group should play the role of a farmer at a farmer's market, and the other group should have the job of interviewing the farmers to complete the worksheet.
  - Have the farmers cut pictures of produce from magazines or draw pictures of various fruits and vegetables and display them in baskets for sale. The assigned farmers should research their produce so they can answer interview questions.
  - Students should switch roles so everyone can participate equally.

## Discussion Questions

1. What is a farmer's market?
2. What is the difference between "buy" and "sell"?
3. What does it mean to specialize?
4. Name some of the produce sold at farmer's markets in Michigan.

## Related Activities

1. The lesson “Profit from Pumpkins” located in the math section of this curriculum guide.
2. The lesson “Be a Food Explorer” located in the health section of this curriculum guide.
3. The lesson “By the Pound” located in the math section of this curriculum guide.
4. The lesson “Plant Parts We Eat” located in the science section of this curriculum guide.
5. Activities related to social studies
  - Ask students to share gardening experiences and discuss what gardeners do with gardening surpluses.
  - Plan a field trip to your nearest farmer’s market or assign a visit as homework or an extra credit assignment.
  - Acquire a map of your town, and help students locate the farmer’s market on the map in relation to your school.
  - Read and discuss the background information about the history of farmer’s markets.
  - Discuss the difference in bartering and paying cash for food and other needs.
  - According to Michigan.gov, “In 2005, the Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program, also known as Project FRESH, made fresh produce available to more than 38,000 (people). Over 761 Michigan farmers participated in the program, which grossed over \$538,000 in produce sales.” Discuss why it would be a benefit to the citizens of Michigan.
  - Invite a representative from a nearby farmer’s market, and answer students’ questions. Prepare questions ahead of time.
  - Interview a produce manager from a local grocery store to find out how much local produce is sold there.
  - Interview the cafeteria manager at your school to find out how much local produce is used in students’ meals.
6. Activities related to language arts
  - Have students design posters that could be used to advertise the local farmer’s market. Contact your local city hall or chamber of commerce to find dates and times when the market is open.
  - Have students write newspaper style accounts of their trip to the farmer’s market.

## Book Resources

1. Michigan Farm Market and Agricultural Tourism 2008 Directory
2. “Squashed” by Joan Bauer
3. “McMummy” by Betsy Byars
4. “Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes” by Rosalind Creasy
5. “Fresh from the Farm” by David Weisner

*Acknowledgement: Adapted from “Fresh from the Farm,” Oklahoma Agriculture in the Classroom.*

# Fresh from the Farm

Directions: Complete this sheet when you visit the farmer's market.

Name of farmer's market \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Write the names of at least five fruits and vegetables found at the farmer's market today.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write the names of the produce you saw for which the following statements are true.

We eat the root. \_\_\_\_\_

We eat the stem. \_\_\_\_\_

We eat the leaves. \_\_\_\_\_

We eat the flower. \_\_\_\_\_

We eat the fruit. \_\_\_\_\_



Write the name of one fruit or vegetable that is sold by the basket.

Write the name of one fruit or vegetable that is sold by the bunch.

Choose one vegetable sold by several different farmers. Visit three different farmers, and write down the price of the vegetable you have chosen for each one. Then average the price.

Name of vegetable \_\_\_\_\_

Price 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Price 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Price 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Average Price: \_\_\_\_\_