

America the Bountiful

Purpose: Students will gain an understanding of U.S. agriculture and use state maps of ag commodities to recognize patterns in land features, vegetation, climate, population and transportation.

Time: 2, 60 minute sessions

Level: 2-3

Materials:

- Large print-out of United States Agricultural Regional Map
- Copies of Top Five State Commodities handout
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons



Minnesota Social Studies Standards and Benchmarks

- 2.3.1.1.4 Use maps, photos, or other geographic tools to answer basic questions about where people are located.
- 3.3.1.1.2 Create and interpret simple maps of places around the world, local to global; incorporate the TODALS map basics, as well as points, lines and colored areas to display special information.
- 4.3.2.4.1 Name and locate states and territories, major cities and state capitals in the United States
- 4.3.4.10.1 Describe how the location of resources and the distribution of people and their various economic activities have created different regions in the United States and Canada.
- 4.3.4.10.2 Analyze the impact of geographic factors on the development of modern agricultural regions in Minnesota and the United States.

Background

The astonishing bounty of grains, meats, produce and beverages that Americans enjoy is easily taken for granted. Throughout our nation's history most people were aware of the role that agriculture played in their lives. Many Americans worked the land and agriculture meant survival. Agriculture still means survival, but many people have lost their connection to the land and growing plants and raising animals. Today less than 2% of all Americans work in production agriculture or "farming." This small group produces enough food to feed our nation as well as people across the world. On average, one American farmer produces enough food to feed 155 people. The agriculture industry has many related careers involved in processing, distribution, marketing and consumerism. One out of every five jobs in the United States depends of agriculture in some way. It is the nation's largest industry as well as the leading industry in many states.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) divides the US into 10 main agriculture production regions. Each region differs in soil type, terrain, climate, distance to market and storage and marketing facilities. Students will use a list of the top five commodities produced in each state as well as maps of the USDA agricultural regions to identify the common themes in each region. They will also discuss and determine the environmental factors, physical features, and human developments that have caused these themes to be evident.















Procedure

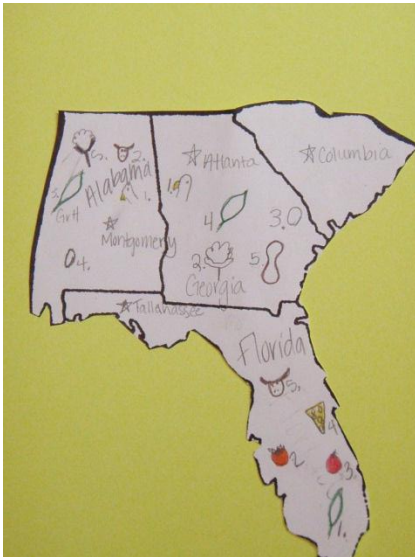
Prior to this activity, enlarge the US Agricultural Regional Map (using a copier or tracing with a projector.) Cut the map into the ten marked regions.

Session 1

Divide the class into ten groups. Assign a region to each group of students and provide them with the cutout of their region. Ask students to write the name of their region on the back of their map.

Commodity Key

Symbol	Commodity	Symbol	Commodity
	Almonds		Hay
	Apples		Hogs
	Aquaculture		Horses/mules
	Barley		Lettuce
	Blueberries		Maple Products
	Broilers		Mushrooms
			



Ask students to label each state and place a star and label each state capital in their region. You may also want the students to label features such as mountains, bodies of water, major highways, etc.

1. Ask students:
 - a. What is a commodity? (A quantity of goods to be bartered traded or sold. Examples of agriculture commodities are grains such as corn, soybeans, wheat; produce such as lettuce, peas, apples; meat such as pork, beef; animal products such as milk and eggs)
2. Distribute the Top Five Commodities Produced in Each State worksheet to each group. Ask groups to highlight the states in their region. (Note GrH stands for greenhouse).
3. As a class, create a list of all the commodities included in the top five lists for all states. Also as a class decide on a symbol for each commodity. Explain to students that they will all use the same symbols for their map key. *Teaching Tip: To save time the instructor can create a Commodity Key ahead of time with symbols already determined for each commodity. (See picture of example to the left.)*
4. Once commodity symbols are decided upon, instruct groups to draw the symbols for the top five commodities in each state for their region. Also tell students to use numbers to designate the place that each commodity ranks.
5. Have students answer the following regional questions as a group:
 - a. What is the name of your region?
 - b. What are the names of the states in your region?
 - c. What do the states in your region have in common?
 - d. What patterns do you see in the commodities grown in your region?
 - e. What factors help explain these patterns?

Session 2

1. One at a time, ask groups to name and attach their regions to a large open space on the wall or whiteboard – all maps should fit together to create a U.S. map. Each group should present the information they have gathered such as name of their region, names of states, capitals, commodities and other features you may have assigned.
2. Ask students to look at the completed map and discuss what information it tells them. Some discussion questions include:
 - a. Why do you think states are arranged into these 10 regions?
 - b. How do the commodities in your region compare with the commodities in other regions?
 - c. What patterns do you see among the commodities across the country?
 - d. Which commodities are seen least often? Why? What are the limiting factors?
 - e. Which states grow oranges? Cotton? (Any other commodity you want to discuss!)
 - f. What surprised you most about what is grown in different states?

- g. How do regions work together to make commodities available to all people in the United States?
3. Explain to students that agriculture exists because we as humans have needs and our basic needs are met by agriculture. Ask students to help create a list of needs and wants. What is the difference? Hopefully all students will become aware of the fact that we all need agriculture. The agriculture industry produces the raw resources for food clothing and shelter. Some facts to share:
 - a. America's farmers and ranchers produce 16% of the world's food on just 7% of the world's land.
 - b. One American farmer produces enough food for 155 people.
 - c. Agriculture is more than just farmers – it includes ag business managers, plant and animal scientists, food chemists, commodity brokers, journalists, nutritionists, economists, teachers, consultants, and many other occupations.

Additional Activities

- Have students create graphs for their region or the entire U.S. of the top commodities produced.
- Have students determine how commodities would be moved from one state capital to another and discuss why this would happen.
- Compute the commodity cash receipts from the top five states, the bottom five states, and states within a certain region.

Adapted from Utah Agriculture in the Classroom

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651/201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

TOP FIVE COMMODITIES PRODUCED IN EACH STATE (in millions of dollars)

State	#1 Commodity	#2 Commodity	#3 Commodity	#4 Commodity	#5 Commodity	Rank	Cash Receipts
Alabama	Broilers	Cattle/Calves	GrH/Nursery	Eggs	Cotton	28	\$4,166
Alaska	GrH/Nursery	Hay	Potatoes	Cattle/Calves	Dairy Products	50	\$3
Arizona	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	Lettuce	Hay	Cotton	29	\$3,420
Arkansas	Broilers	Rice	Soybeans	Cotton	Cattle/Calves	13	\$7,138
California	Dairy Products	GrH/Nursery	Grapes	Lettuce	Almonds	1	\$36,575
Colorado	Cattle/Calves	Dairy Products	Wheat	Corn	Hay	17	\$6,290
Connecticut	GrH/Nursery	Dairy Products	Eggs	Aquaculture	Tobacco	43	\$564
Delaware	Broilers	Corn	Soybeans	GrH/Nursery	Dairy Products	39	\$1,004
Florida	GrH/Nursery	Oranges	Tomatoes	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	11	\$7,646
Georgia	Broilers	Cotton	Eggs	GrH/Nursery	Peanuts	16	\$6,814
Hawaii	GrH/Nursery	Sugarcane	Coffee	Cattle/Calves	Macadamia Nuts	45	\$533
Idaho	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	Potatoes	Hay	Wheat	21	\$5,682
Illinois	Corn	Soybeans	Hogs	Cattle/Calves	Dairy Products	7	\$11,679
Indiana	Corn	Soybeans	Hogs	Dairy Products	Eggs	10	\$7,776
Iowa	Corn	Hogs	Soybeans	Cattle/Calves	Eggs	3	\$19,729
Kansas	Cattle/Calves	Wheat	Corn	Soybeans	Sorghum Grain	6	\$11,729
Kentucky	Horses/Mules	Broilers	Cattle/Calves	Corn	Soybeans	25	\$4,432
Louisiana	Sugarcane	Corn	Cotton	Rice	Cattle/Calves	33	\$2,710
Maine	Dairy Products	Potatoes	Blueberries	Eggs	GrH/Nursery	41	\$684
Maryland	Broilers	GrH/Nursery	Dairy Products	Corn	Soybeans	36	\$1,972
Massachusetts	GrH/Nursery	Cranberries	Dairy Products	Sweet Corn	Apples	47	\$450
Michigan	Dairy Products	Corn	GrH/Nursery	Soybeans	Cattle/Calves	19	\$5,741
Minnesota	Corn	Soybeans	Hogs	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	5	\$12,538
Mississippi	Broilers	Cotton	Soybeans	Corn	Aquaculture	27	\$4,342
Missouri	Soybeans	Cattle/Calves	Corn	Hogs	Turkeys	14	\$6,920
Montana	Cattle/Calves	Wheat	Barley	Hay	Dairy Products	34	\$2,394
Nebraska	Cattle/Calves	Corn	Soybeans	Hogs	Wheat	4	\$14,556
Nevada	Cattle/Calves	Hay	Dairy Products	Onions	Potatoes	44	\$553
New Hampshire	GrH/Nursery	Dairy Products	Apples	Cattle/Calves	Sweet Corn	48	\$184
New Jersey	GrH/Nursery	Horses/Mules	Blueberries	Peaches	Eggs	40	\$946
New Mexico	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	Hay	Pecans	Onions	30	\$3,058
New York	Dairy Products	GrH/Nursery	Apples	Corn	Cattle/Calves	24	\$4,447
N. Carolina	Broilers	Hogs	GrH/Nursery	Tobacco	Turkeys	8	\$8,691
N. Dakota	Wheat	Soybeans	Cattle/Calves	Corn	Sugar Beets	22	\$5,490
Ohio	Soybeans	Corn	Dairy Products	GrH/Nursery	Eggs	15	\$6,898
Oklahoma	Cattle/Calves	Hogs	Broilers	Wheat	Dairy Products	23	\$5,158
Oregon	GrH/Nursery	Cattle/Calves	Dairy Products	Wheat	Hay	26	\$4,365
Pennsylvania	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	Mushrooms	Corn	GrH/Nursery	18	\$5,760
Rhode Island	GrH/Nursery	Dairy Products	Sweet Corn	Aquaculture	Potatoes	49	\$70
S. Carolina	Broilers	GrH/Nursery	Turkeys	Cattle/Calves	Corn	35	\$2,028
S. Dakota	Cattle/Calves	Corn	Soybeans	Wheat	Hogs	20	\$5,734
Tennessee	Cattle/Calves	Broilers	Cotton	GrH/Nursery	Corn	32	\$2,741
Texas	Cattle/Calves	Cotton	GrH/Nursery	Dairy Products	Broilers	2	\$19,075
Utah	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	Hay	Hogs	GrH/Nursery	37	\$1,340
Vermont	Dairy Products	Cattle/Calves	GrH/Nursery	Hay	Maple Products	42	\$674
Virginia	Broilers	Cattle/Calves	Dairy Products	Turkeys	GrH/Nursery	31	\$2,950
Washington	Apples	Dairy Products	Wheat	Cattle/Calves	Potatoes	12	\$7,450
W. Virginia	Broilers	Cattle/Calves	Turkeys	Dairy Products	Eggs	46	\$480,
Wisconsin	Dairy Products	Corn	Cattle/Calves	Soybeans	Potatoes	9	\$8,858
Wyoming	Cattle/Calves	Hay	Hogs	Sheep/Lambs	Sugar Beets	38	\$1,066

Agricultural

Map

• • •

