

4. Farmers Markets!

We are all familiar with grocery stores and supermarkets. There are also many other food distribution networks, however, including farmers markets (public markets), which constitute a supply source that is solidarity-based, responsible, advantageous and more enjoyable for both the producers and the consumers! The students will play a game in class involving role-playing and simulating a farmers market. The game will allow them to discover this more direct method of selling food and make them aware of the difficulties sometimes faced by Quebec consumers and farmers.

Learning Objectives

Have students:

- Understand how food is sold to consumers.
- Recognize and favour direct selling methods.
- Understand the role of small food merchants and farmers, as well as the realities and obstacles they face.
- Start thinking about the main criteria influencing our daily food choices.
- Become aware of food choices that can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

Materials

- Two or three copies of the grocery list information sheets (Appendix 1).
- Two copies of the information sheets for the different types of food vendors (Appendix 2).
- Food vendor posters created beforehand by the students.
- Monopoly money (optional).
- Food vendor costumes (e.g., straw hat, and checkered shirt) (optional).

Areas of Learning

English, mathematics and science.

Did you know?

- While some food companies earn profits of over 150% on some products, farmers receive only 0.7%.
- In the last 100 years, the number of farms in Quebec has dropped from 200,000 to 30,000.
- If every week, a Quebec family were to replace \$20 worth of imported food purchases by the same value in local produce, over 100,000 jobs could be created.

Lesson Plan

Tell the students that they will be role playing a farmers market in class and explain how it will work. The shoppers will be buying according to their grocery lists, which will be made based on the food items required to prepare a meal. To sell their produce, the vendors (farmers and one grocer) will try to influence the shoppers' choices.

- Divide the students into two groups: the first will be the vendors (10 students) and the second, the shoppers.
- Divide the vendors into five sub-groups (two students per sub-group) and give each sub-group a different vendor sheet (Appendix 2).
Ask the sub-groups to prepare their stalls (visual), their characters (costumes and roles), and to develop their strategies for selling their produce to the shoppers.
- Next, divide the shoppers into four sub-groups and hand out their grocery list information sheets (Appendix 1). Ask each sub-group to prepare their grocery shopping list and to determine their buying criteria such as price, quantity, quality, freshness (e.g., distance traveled), organic certification, solidarity with local farmers and small merchants (e.g., is the price received by the farmer fair?), contribution to preventing chronic diseases (such as diabetes), etc.
- Explain to the shopper sub-groups that they each have a set budget for their purchases (See Appendix 1). If monopoly money is used, hand out \$30 to each

shopper sub-group (in small denominations). Announce the opening of the market. The shoppers will start negotiating with as many vendors as they wish, gathering information and buying. Continue the game until all of the shoppers have finished making their purchases.

Integration

Discussion phase. Ask the following questions:

- Buyers: Did they enjoy the experience? What did they buy and why? Did they manage to find food items that matched their criteria? What are the food criteria for people suffering from diabetes? Did they make healthy food choices? Was it easy to choose?
- Vendors: What did they sell? Was it easy to sell their produce? What produce was the hardest to sell and why? Did they enjoy negotiating the price of the produce for small amounts of money? Using the Appendix 2 sheets, calculate together the difference between the selling price and production cost of the produce sold by the vendors. Was there a big profit margin?
- Now discuss the main differences and main advantages of shopping at a farmers market (where there are local merchants and small producers), compared to shopping at a supermarket, such as:
 - the connection and direct contact with the farmers and producers.
 - direct support for the farmers and producers.



- prices often lower than at the supermarket.
- freshness.
- variety of produce and colours.
- less transportation and fewer intermediaries in the food distribution chain.
- etc.

Have the students realize that they can influence their family's food choices: What are the criteria, in their opinions, that determine their family's food choices? Should other criteria be considered? Where do their families buy their food? Do they encourage small producers and local merchants (See "Take Action")?

Enrichment

Ideas for complementary activities:

- Creating a balanced menu based on the food items sold in the class's farmers market.
- Setting up a farmers market in the school yard with student vendors who have prepared food items such as applesauce and jams, etc. (be careful about allergies).
- Staging a real farmers market by inviting local farmers to come and offer tastings of their produce and to interact with the community.
- Doing research on the life cycle of a food item, from the seed planted by the farmer to the final product purchased by the consumer.

- How do plants grow?
How are they harvested? Who handles the transportation of the crops from the farm to the distribution company or processing plant? Where are food products wrapped? Who manufactures the packaging? Who handles the distribution of the product to the grocery store?

Take Action!

To encourage students and their families to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and to explore the sources of the foods they eat, suggest that they:

- Visit the vendors in a farmers market or consider supporting a family farmer in the Community Supported Agriculture network at: <http://www.equiterre.org/agriculture/paniersBios/index.php>.
- Discover farm tourism by attending food fairs and festivals, visiting farms, going to farms where you pick your own (apples, etc.), visiting economuseums, etc. See: <http://www.equiterre.qc.ca/agriculture/alimentation/agrotourisme.php>.
- Opt for their small neighbourhood grocery stores or specialty merchants, rather than the large supermarkets.

References

- www.agrireseau.qc.ca/marches
- <http://equiterre.qc.ca/agriculture/index.php>
- <http://www.atestrie.com> (regional solidarity market)
- Your local farmers market

Appendix 1 🍅 Grocery List Info Sheet – Group 1

You are the parents of two beautiful children six and eight years old. You need to buy groceries for one day. You are missing a few food items for your meals. You enjoy going to the farmers market and buying produce directly from local producers, even though, in your opinion, it's a little more expensive than the grocery store. The experience is so much more stimulating!

Your children and you enjoy getting to know your farmer and being able to visit his or her farm every summer. The visit is always fun and gives you the opportunity to discover how the vegetables that you eat all year long are grown in the fields.

What you need to buy:

- Goat's cheese with fine herbs.
- 10 slices of smoked ham.
- 3 large red tomatoes.
- 1 container of strawberries.
- 1 litre of milk.

Your budget for these purchases is \$25.

Appendix 1 🍅 Grocery List Info Sheet – Group 2

You are a couple and you are senior citizens. You need a few groceries. You really enjoy going to the market because it gives you the chance to speak directly to the vendors as well as socialize. You're on a limited budget, but you want to buy as much as possible at the market. So you use your negotiating skills to get the lowest prices possible for your food.

What you need to buy:

- Steak for two people.
- Some potatoes.
- A 2 lbs. bag of carrots.
- A 5 lbs. bag of apples.

Your budget for these purchases is \$15.



Appendix 1 🍅 Grocery List Info Sheet – Group 4

You are a university student living alone in an apartment. You have a small grocery budget, but you want to buy organic food.

What you need to buy:

- Organic meat for one meal.
- 1 head of organic broccoli.
- 1 container of cape gooseberries (ground cherries).
- 1 container of strawberries (budget permitting).
- 1 litre of milk.

Your budget for these purchases is \$17.

Appendix 1 🍅 Grocery List Info Sheet – Group 3

You are a young professional couple (a doctor and a teacher). You need to buy some groceries because you're having your friends over for dinner. You want to impress them with fresh food of high quality.

But you also need to be careful about the food items you buy because one of your guests suffers from diabetes and has to watch what he eats. So you need to make sure that the foods you buy are not too rich in sugar, fat or salt.

You think it's important to buy directly from local producers, because their produce is fresh and unprocessed.

What you need to buy:

- Meat for four people (beef rump roast, salami, etc.).
- 1 green vegetable.
- 2 cheeses.
- A 5 lbs. bag of apples.
- 2 litres of milk.



Appendix 2 🍅 Vendor Info Sheet – Mr. Fruitful

Your Produce

- You are a conventional (non-organic) local fruit farmer.
- Some of the fruit you are selling this season are watermelon, cape gooseberries (ground cherries), strawberries, apples and pumpkins.

Sale

- You sell the surplus of your produce at the farmers market, as most of your harvest is sold to the supermarkets.
- You come to the market not only to sell your harvest surplus, but also because you enjoy selling directly to the consumers.

Price of Produce

The following is a price list for the produce you sell at the market. The middle column gives the suggested selling price for your produce (it's the prices you hope to get). The column on the right shows the production cost for the same produce.

Produce	Suggested Selling Price	Production Cost
1 container of cape gooseberries	\$3.50	\$1.50
1 container of fall strawberries	\$2.50	\$1.50
1 large watermelon	\$6.00	\$3.00
5 lbs. of apples	\$4.00	\$2.50

The difference between the suggested selling price and the production cost is the vendor's profit: your earnings (salary).



Appendix 2 🍅 Vendor Info Sheet – Mr. Bovine

Produce

- You are the only producer of certified organic meat in the area.
- You have a herd of beef cattle, a herd of sheep and some pigs.
- You use the services of a butcher who lives 15 minutes from your farm. Your livestock is transported to the butcher's for slaughter and preparation of the meat.

Sale

- Because you are an organic meat producer, you are required to follow a strict set of rules to be certified and to ensure the quality of the meat. You may, therefore, sell your meat for a slightly higher price.

Price of Produce

The following is the price list for your produce at the market. The middle column gives the suggested selling price for your produce (the price you would like to receive). The column on the right gives the production cost for each food item.

Produce	Suggested Selling Price	Production Cost
1 organic beef rump roast for 4 people	\$18.50	\$12.50
1 organic beef steak for 2 people	\$14.00	\$9.50
100 g of salami	\$7.99	\$3.25
100 g of bacon: 4	\$4.99	\$2.75
10 slices of organic ham	\$4.50	\$3.00
1 organic lamb chop	\$3.50	\$2.75

The difference between the suggested selling price and the production cost is the vendor's profit: your earnings (salary).

Certification

The fact that you are certified organic means that your animals spend most of their lives outdoors in the pasture. You do not give them any growth hormones. You do not administer any anti-biotics to your livestock as a preventive measure, only in case of a major illness. In such a case, the livestock in question is kept separate from the rest of the herd and there is a waiting period that must be complied with before sending the livestock to slaughter.



Appendix 2 🍅 Vendor Info Sheet – Mz. CheeseMaker

Produce

- You are the owner of a herd of milk goats.
- You make goat's cheese using the milk from your goats.
- You're not certified organic, but your farming methods are very ecological.
- You care for your livestock with natural products as much as possible and use anti-biotics only as a last resort. The goats stay outside during the summer, and come inside only to be milked and when it starts to get colder.

Sale

- You sell goat's milk and cheese right on your farm (you are on a busy road and many of your customers stop off at your farm) and at a farmers market.
- You need to sell a lot of produce at the farmers market to be able to survive financially.

Price of Produce

The following is a price list for your produce at the market. The middle column is the suggested price list for your produce (the price you would like to receive). The column on the right gives the production cost for each item.

Produce	Suggested Selling Price	Production Cost
1 litre of goat's milk	\$2.50	\$1.75
1 plain goat's cheese spread	\$4.00	\$2.75
1 pot of fresh thick cream	\$6.50	\$3.75
1 goat's cheese with fine herbs	\$4.25	\$3.00

The difference between the suggested selling price and the production cost is the vendor's profit: your earnings (salary).



Appendix 2 🍅 Vendor's Info Sheet – Mrs. Carrot

Produce

You have been a vegetable farmer in the area for 25 years. You have always used chemicals (chemical fertilizers and pesticides) to grow your vegetables. You don't want to modify your practices, arguing that "you're too old to change." Organic farming seems too complicated and you don't see how it would improve the quality of your vegetables.

Sale

You sell most of your vegetables directly to food supply chains such as Provigo. You come, all the same, to the market to sell any harvest surpluses. You can sell these surpluses for a higher price, because the chains take part of your profit margin.

Price of Produce

The following is a price list for the produce you sell at the market. The middle column gives the suggested selling price for your produce (it's the prices you hope to get). The column on the right shows the production cost for the same produce.

Produce	Suggested Selling Price	Production Cost
2 lbs. of carrots	\$1.50	\$0.50
2 lbs. of red beets	\$1.50	\$0.50
5 lbs. of potatoes	\$3.00	\$1.25
1 head of broccoli	\$2.00	\$0.75
1 greenhouse tomato	\$1.00	\$0.75

The difference between the suggested selling price and the production cost is the vendor's profit: your earnings (salary).



Appendix 2 🍅 Vendor Info Sheet – Mr. CornerGrocer

Production

Unlike the other vendors, you are the owner-operator of a grocery store, and you are not a farmer.

- You sell local Quebec produce, because a lot of people have requested it.
- You buy directly from farmers and other food producers and resell it to consumers.
- You buy in large quantities to keep the price as low as possible for the consumers.
- There are other grocery stores in the area where you sell your wares.

Price of Produce

The following is a price list for the produce you sell at the market. The middle column gives the suggested selling price for your produce (the price you hope to receive).

The column on the right shows the initial purchase price (when you bought the items from the producers).

Produce	Suggested Selling Price	Initial Purchase Price
1 litre of cow's milk	\$2.25	\$1.75
1 beef rump roast for 4 people	\$14.00	\$9.00
1 beef steak for 2 people	\$10.50	\$7.00
10 slices of ham	\$3.50	\$2.25
100 g of ribs	\$0.95	\$0.60
100 g of smoked meat	\$2.35	\$2.00
1 lamp chop	\$3.00	\$2.00

The difference between the suggested selling price and the production cost is the vendor's profit: your earnings (salary).

