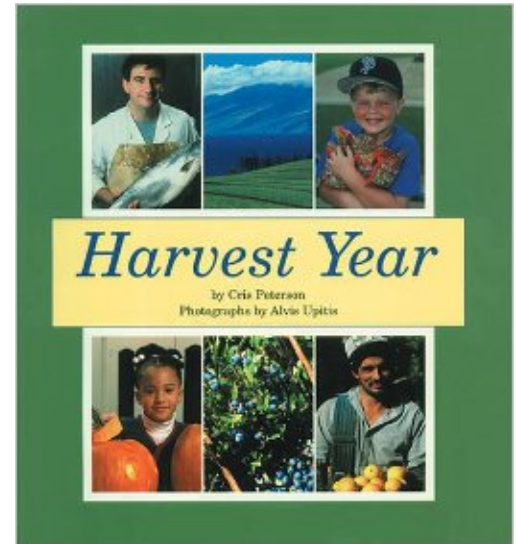


January 2017 Book of the Month

Harvest Year

By: Cris Peterson

Harvest Year is a wonderful showcase of top commodities from each state. Many different commodities are represented, and also, many forms of agriculture are represented; from livestock farming to fish farming, fruit production to grain production. *Harvest Year* explores the agricultural diversity of our nation, and introduces the reader to commodities they might not have the pleasure of seeing in person. The reader is able to see each commodity at its starting point on the farm as it is ultimately being grown for us (the consumer) to enjoy!



Fun Facts:

- In 2016, the American Farm Bureau's annual survey concluded that the average cost of a Thanksgiving meal will cost less than \$5.00 per consumer. The meal would include turkey, bread stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls with butter, peas, cranberries, a veggie tray, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, and coffee and milk. ¹
- Turkey production in North Carolina has declined since its peak in the mid-1990s; however, 1.2 million pounds of turkey was produced in 2013, valued at \$769 million. ⁴
- California is the top strawberry producing state; the production is valued at \$1.86 billion, annually. ² North Carolina's strawberry production was valued at \$23 million. ¹
- In 2015, \$133.1 billion worth of American agricultural products were exported around the world. The United States sells more food and fiber to world markets than we import, creating a positive agricultural trade balance. ³
- North Carolina produces more tobacco and sweet potatoes than any other state, and ranks second in Christmas tree cash receipts and the production of hogs and turkeys. ⁵

Activities

Mapping the Commodities

United States

Use a map of the United States to illustrate where the commodities introduced in *Harvest Year* come from. Students may draw the commodities or find pictures and paste onto the map.

North Carolina

Provide a map of North Carolina with each county outlined (example can be found in **Links**). Have students research the top commodities of each county and draw or attach pictures to the map. The [North Carolina Agricultural Statistics by Commodity website](#) produced by the USDA is a helpful resource (full

link can be found in **Links**). What are the top commodities found in North Carolina? How do these commodities rank nationally?

Top Ten Dodecahedron (a STEM activity) ⁶

Using the [dodecahedron template](#) found in the **Links** section below, construct a large dodecahedron (YouTube also has video tutorials). Students will use the information they researched in the **Mapping the Commodities** activity to write a list of North Carolina's top 10 commodities. Students can write, draw or include a picture for each commodity on each "face" of the dodecahedron. To learn the top ten commodities, have students pass the dodecahedron back and forth. As they catch the dodecahedron, have them read the commodity where their thumb lands on the dodecahedron. Then, ask them to report the rank of that commodity in North Carolina.

Commodity Research

Have students choose a commodity covered in *Harvest Year*, and ask them to research that commodity in order to create a life cycle for that commodity. Encourage the students to choose a commodity that they may be unfamiliar with. If it is a plant, how is it planted and harvested? If it is an animal, what is required to raise that animal? Where does the commodity originate from? If not in the United States, how did it get here? What are the obstacles farmers face with this commodity (is it a seasonal crop, is it grown year round, special needs, any prominent pests, etc.)? Ask students to compile their research on a poster to present to the class.

Commodity Classification

Read *Harvest Year* to the class, and have each student make a list of the plant commodities mentioned. After the list is complete, ask students to separate into two categories: fruit or vegetable. There will be a few commodities that may or may not fit into those two categories. Discuss with the class to determine how those plants should be classified (grain, fiber, etc.). Also, there could be discussion about whether a commodity is actually a fruit or vegetable. For those commodities, allow the students to separate into teams and have a debate about the classification. Allow each team to research their debate points. If students change their mind, encourage them to discuss their reasoning.

Links:

- Dodecahedron template
http://www.korthalsaltes.com/model.php?name_en=dodecahedron
- Map of NC Counties
<http://d-maps.com/m/america/usa/carolinenord/carolinenord/carolinenord50.gif>
- North Carolina Agricultural Statistics by Commodity
https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/North_Carolina/Publications/County_Estimates/index.php
- Cotton Harvesting in North Carolina - Drone View
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcycswUSF6Q>

Sources:

1. <http://www.fb.org/newsroom/thanksgiving-dinner-ticks-down-to-less-than-5-per-person>
2. <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/statistics/>
3. <http://www.fb.org/newsroom/fast-facts>
4. <http://demography.cpc.unc.edu/2014/11/25/nc-in-focus-turkeys/>
5. <http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/general/overview.htm>
6. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/467037423839484593/>
7. http://www.korthalsaltes.com/model.php?name_en=dodecahedron