



..... WEST VIRGINIA

**FARMERS
MARKET**

..... ASSOCIATION

FARMERS MARKET FIELD TRIP GUIDE

Mission:

To strengthen West Virginia farmers markets through education, coordination, and infrastructure that supports producers, serves communities, and strengthens local food systems statewide.

Vision:

A thriving market feeds all tables.



New Roots Community Farm – Fayetteville, WV



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Trip Preparation & Planning

Why a Farmer's Market?

West Virginia Farmers Markets are vibrant community spaces where local farmers and producers sell directly to consumers. These markets offer youth an opportunity to fully experience local food systems and to connect more deeply with what they are learning and eating. Colorful fruits and vegetables overflow throughout the market, encouraging children to taste, explore, and ask questions directly to the farmers who produce their food.

Find your
local market!



Planning Your Visit

- Contact the local farmers market manager to express your interest in scheduling a field trip.
- Ask about any specific guidelines or requirements for school groups.
- Confirm the market's operating hours and peak vendor days.
- Inquire whether a vendor or market representative is available to provide a guided tour or educational talk for students.
- Review any safety, supervision, or purchasing guidelines with students prior to the visit.

Trip Preparation & Planning

Transportation

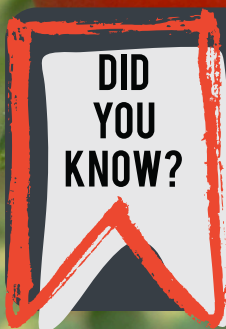
Some markets may be within walking distance; others may require bus or car transportation. Check with your local market to plan parking for a bus in advance!

Costs

There is no fee to attend a farmers market. Costs apply only if purchasing food. Many vendors accept cash, though some may accept cards. Prices vary by market and season.

Safety

- Review student allergies in advance and avoid purchasing allergen-containing foods (especially peanuts and tree nuts).
- Ensure students wash hands before eating and wash all produce before consumption.
- Keep students in small, supervised groups and recruit parent chaperones.
- Farmers markets can be busy—maintain close supervision at all times.



Many West Virginia markets are hyper-local, like the Morgantown Farmers Market, which requires all produce to be grown within 50 miles of the market.

Trip Preparation & Planning

HOMEMADE JAMS

Timing

Markets operate on specific days and hours, often seasonally. Confirm times with your local market manager or check listings through the West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

Seasonality

Produce availability changes throughout the year. Visiting markets in different seasons helps students learn which foods grow locally at different times.

Permission Slips

Send permission slips home 1–2 weeks in advance. Include trip details (location, departure/return times, any costs) and request allergy and emergency contact information.

What to Bring & What to Wear

Provide student name tags and encourage bright-colored shirts for visibility. Closed-toe shoes are recommended for comfort and safety.

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

West Virginia's farmers markets have seen growth, with the number of registered markets and stands nearly tripling from 93 in 2019 to 341 by 2025.

Pre-Trip Lesson & Activity

Purpose and Lesson Overview

Pre-field trip activities help students build background knowledge and excitement before visiting the farmers market. By learning how fruits and vegetables grow and participating in hands-on activities like planting seeds, students begin to understand the journey of food from seed to harvest. This preparation helps youth make stronger connections during the farmers market field trip by recognizing the role of farmers, understanding where fresh foods come from, and engaging more meaningfully with what they see and experience at the market.

Before visiting the farmers market, students will plant seeds and learn how fruits and vegetables grow. This hands-on activity helps students understand where food begins and prepares them for what they will see at the market.



Pre-Activity Questions:

- Have you ever seen or eaten a fruit or vegetable that came directly from a farm or garden?
- What do you think a seed needs to grow into a plant?
- Where do you think the fruits and vegetables in a grocery store or farmers market come from?
- Why do you think it's important to eat fruits and vegetables?

Pre-Trip Lesson & Activity

**Activity:
Seed Planting**

Materials:

- Small pot or cup
- Potting soil
- Small shovel or scoop
- Water
- Vegetable seeds
- Small samples of the vegetable for tasting (optional)

Instructions:

- Gather students and explain the activity: they will plant seeds to see how fruits and vegetables grow.
- Show the seeds and ask: What is a seed? Pass seeds around for observation.
- Ask what seeds need to grow, then explain: soil, water, sunlight.
- Have students take turns planting seeds:
 - Make small holes in soil
 - Place seeds in holes
 - Cover with soil
 - Water lightly

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

Many farmers markets accept SNAP/EBT benefits, making fresh, healthy food accessible to more people.

Pre-Trip Lesson & Activity

Reflection Questions:

- What did you learn about how seeds grow into fruits or vegetables?
- How did planting your seed help you understand where food comes from?
- What was surprising or interesting about the plant you planted?
- How do farmers help get fruits and vegetables from the farm to the market?
- How will watching your seed grow at home or in the classroom help you notice things at the farmers market?

Optional: Grades 6-12 Activity



Create a “Seed to Market” Diagram

Objective:

Help students visualize the journey of food from seed to farmers market.

Instructions:

- Draw a flowchart or diagram showing each step a fruit or vegetable takes from the farm to the market.
- Include stages such as: planting, growing, watering, harvesting, packing, transporting, and selling at the market.
- Encourage students to add labels, arrows, and illustrations to show the process clearly.
- Discuss how each step impacts the freshness and quality of the produce.

Farmers Market Etiquette

Visiting a farmers market is a fun way to explore fresh foods, meet local farmers, and learn about healthy eating. To make sure everyone has a great time, follow these simple rules!

Be Friendly

Say hello and thank you to farmers and vendors. Smile and be polite!

Ask Before Touching

Only handle produce or other items if a vendor says it's okay.

Stay with Your Group

Stick with classmates and chaperones.

Use Polite Voices

Keep your voice friendly so everyone can enjoy the market.

Try, Don't Waste

Taste samples if allowed, and only take what you can eat.

Ask Questions & Have Fun

Learn about food, recipes, and enjoy exploring!

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

In West Virginia, volunteers
manage 44% farmers' markets.

Interactive Market Activities

Overview

Interactive Market Activities give students hands-on experiences at the farmers market, including scavenger hunts, vendor interviews, market walks, and optional tasting or lunch activities. Designed for all ages, these activities engage students in discovering where food comes from, encourage curiosity, and provide opportunities for learning through observation, inquiry, and social interaction.



Objective

Students will explore how fruits and vegetables grow, interact with local farmers and vendors, understand the benefits of local food, and practice observation, math, and social skills.

Materials Needed

- Folders or clipboards
- Pencils
- Colored pencils or markers
- “Market bag” props or grab bag items (for K–5 activity)
- Calculator or notepad (for older students doing market math and budgeting)

General Field Trip Tips for All Grades

- Discuss payment options (cash, credit, EBT, WIC, SNAP/FMNP).
- Emphasize polite behavior, asking questions, and trying new foods.
- Allow about 30 minutes of structured exploration, with extra time to observe and wander.

Interactive Market Activities

K-1

Focus:

Exploration, Observation, & Sensory Engagement

Market Walk & Observation:

- Take a slow walk through the market aisles.
- Encourage students to look, touch, and smell (with permission) fruits, vegetables, and other items.
- Ask guiding questions:
 - What colors do you see?
 - What smells are strongest?
 - Which fruits or vegetables feel smooth, bumpy, or rough?

Grab Bag Game:

- Fill a bag with small items or pictures of fruits and vegetables.
- Students take turns pulling an item and identifying it.
- Discussion prompts:
 - Who grows this food?
 - Where do you think it comes from?
 - Have you tried this before?

Sensory Exploration Station:

- At one spot, allow students to touch, smell, or gently examine items under supervision.
- Ask questions like:
 - How does it feel?
 - Does it smell sweet, sour, or fresh?

Interactive Market Activities

2-5

Focus:

Interaction, Inquiry, & Math Skills

Vendor Interview:

In small groups, students visit a vendor and ask questions.

Example Questions:

- What do you grow on your farm?
- What is your favorite fruit or vegetable and why?
- How do you bring food to the market?
- How do you know when a fruit or vegetable is ready to sell?

Encourage students to take notes or draw quick sketches of interesting items. Discuss what they learned with the class afterward.

Market Math:

Practice real-life math skills with the produce.

- Weigh fruits or vegetables and compare sizes.
- Estimate total cost of items.
- Practice adding prices or calculating change (with pretend or real money if vendors allow).

Encourage students to work in pairs or small groups to make it collaborative.

Interactive Market Activities

6-8

Focus:

Critical Thinking, Research, and Food Systems Understanding

Vendor Interview & Storytelling :

Students work in small groups to ask in-depth questions of a vendor, such as:

- How do seasonal changes affect your crops?
- What is the biggest challenge you face as a farmer?
- How do you grow your food sustainably?
- How do you decide which crops to plant each year?

Encourage students to take notes, sketch interesting produce, or record observations. After interactions, students share stories about what they learned and reflect on the challenges and successes of local farmers.

Food Label Investigation:

Investigate food labels to explore origin and sustainability.

- Choose items at the market (or from signs) and note:
 - Where it was grown
 - Whether it's local, organic, or imported
 - How far it traveled
- Compare items and discuss:
 - Which is more sustainable and why
 - How travel or farming methods affect cost or environmental impact

Encourage students to work in pairs or small groups and share their findings with the class.

Interactive Market Activities

9-12

Focus:

Advanced Research, Economics, & Sustainability

Vendor Research & Interview Project:

- Assign small groups to research a farmer or vendor before the trip.
- Ask detailed questions on: crop rotation, sustainability practices, and market logistics.
- Students present findings after the trip.

Local Food Systems Analysis:

- Compare distances produce travels from farm to market vs. grocery store.
- Discuss environmental, economic, and health benefits of buying local.

Market Math & Budgeting Exercise:

- Students calculate total costs of hypothetical purchases for a week.
- Compare prices across vendors and discuss budgeting strategies.

Food Policy Debate & Reflection:

In small groups, research a topic about local food systems, such as:

- Buying local vs. imported produce
- Supporting sustainable farming
- Farmers markets and food equity

Observe vendors and collect examples at the market. Share arguments and reflections with the class, using real observations to support points.

Nutrition Education

Why a Farmers Market?

- **Freshness and Flavor:** Local produce is often picked the same day, so it's fresher and tastier than grocery store items.
- **Variety:** Farmers markets often offer unique varieties of fruits and vegetables not found in grocery stores.
- **Community Connection:** Shopping at a farmers market helps students connect with the people who grow their food and their local community.
- **Support Local Farmers:** Buying directly from farmers puts more money back into the farm and the local economy.
- **Seasonal Learning:** Students can observe how seasons and weather affect crops.

Common Questions Students May Ask:

- **Is this food organic or GMO?**
 - Many farms follow organic methods but may not be certified due to cost. Encourage students to ask the farmers directly about their growing practices.
- **Why not just buy this at the grocery store?**
 - Grocery store produce is often grown to last long distances, which can affect flavor and nutrients. Farmers markets offer fresher, more flavorful options and more variety.
- **How do I cook this?**
 - Farmers are the best resource for recipes and preparation tips. Students can also ask other shoppers for ideas or use local cookbooks.
- **How do I store this? How long will it last?**
 - Farmers can share storage tips for their produce.

Post-Trip Lesson & Activity

Purpose and Lesson Overview

This lesson helps students reflect on their farmers market field trip while strengthening their understanding of where fruits and vegetables come from and why healthy eating matters. Through discussion, observation, and tasting activities, students connect their real-world market experience to food systems, nutrition, and agriculture. Students will explore different fruits and vegetables, share their impressions of the market, and practice thoughtful reflection about the foods they tried.

Lesson Objectives

- Reinforce understanding of where fruits and vegetables come from and how they grow.
- Recognize the importance of healthy eating.
- Practice observation, tasting, and reflection skills.
- Share feedback about their farmers market experience (optional).



Pre-Activity Questions:

- Where did you go on your field trip?
- Who did you meet at the farmers market?
- What foods or products did you see at the market?
- Did you see any fruits or vegetables you had never seen before?

Post-Trip Lesson & Activity

Activity:
**Taste Passport &
Sampling Activity**

Materials:

- Tasting Passport (one per student)
- Stamps or stickers
- Small cups or sample containers
- Napkins
- Bite-sized pieces of fruits and vegetables purchased at the market
- Crayons or markers
- Pictures of fruits and vegetables for classroom display
- Chart paper or board

Instructions:

- Prepare fruits and vegetables ahead of time by cutting them into small, bite-sized pieces.
- Distribute a Taste Passport to each student.
- Pass out one fruit or vegetable sample at a time.
- After students taste each item:
 - Give them a stamp or sticker in their passport.
 - Allow time for students to color the page for that fruit or vegetable.
- While students wait for the next sample, discuss the food using questions such as:
 - What do you like or dislike about this fruit or vegetable?
 - Have you tried this before?
 - Where do you think it came from?

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

**Farmers market in West Virginia
see over 17,000 weekly visitors.**

Post-Trip Lesson & Activity

Reflection Questions:

- What fruit or vegetable did you enjoy tasting the most? Why?
- Did you try something new today? What was it like?
- What did you learn about where fruits and vegetables come from?
- Why is it important to eat fruits and vegetables?
- How are farmers markets different from grocery stores?

Optional: Grades 6-12 Activity

Food Journey Investigation

Instructions:

Choose one fruit or vegetable you saw or tasted at the farmers market. Research and map the journey that food takes from seed to the market.

Include information about:

- How the crop is planted, grown, and harvested.
- Where it is grown and whether it is local or imported.
- The steps involved in getting the food from the farm to the farmers market.
- Any sustainable farming practices used to grow or transport the food.

Students may present their findings by creating a short report, poster, or class presentation.

Extension Option:

- Compare prices for the same produce among different vendors and discuss food economics.
- Examine food labels and origins to learn where foods come from.
- Discuss how supporting local farmers affects the community, environment, and local economy.

Partner Implementation Report

Use this form after events, monthly during active programming, or after field trips. It should be completed by the partner organization (not participants) and serves as the primary source for implementation counts. Please provide your best estimates!



Scan Me!



***GROWING FARMERS MARKETS.
NOURISHING COMMUNITIES.***



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