

GLOBAL MARKET

Grades 4-6 | 1 Class Period



OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will map where strawberries are produced throughout the United States as well as around the world. They will define the terms "import" and "export" in their own words.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do seasons impact what foods are available in Massachusetts?
- What are some of the positives and negatives that go along with importing and exporting food around the country and the globe?

MA STATE FRAMEWORKS

Nutrition and Balanced Eating [3.1.NE]

4. Describe how cultivation, trade routes, and regions affect food supply, and how food production affects nutrition-related decisions.

MATERIALS

- U.S. map
- World map
- Internet access
- Journals or paper

PROCEDURE

Warm Up

Strawberry season in Massachusetts is from late May to early July. Ask students how, if this is true, do we have strawberries in the grocery store in September or February? Give them time to discuss and answer. Some students may know that strawberries come from other parts of the United States. If not, ask them about other fruits like oranges or lemons. Ask them if they have ever seen those types of trees growing in Massachusetts.

Main Activity

Give students a map of the United States and have them label states where strawberries are grown. The [Strawberry Production](https://bit.ly/2025-Strawberry-Production) handout (<https://bit.ly/2025-Strawberry-Production>) lists the top ten states that produce strawberries. Have the students shade the states in red. Next, create a chart showing the top 5 strawberry producing states.

Note that how production is measured (acreage, pounds produced, or value of the crop) affects the ranking of states after #1 California & #2 Florida). Include the amount of strawberries produced and research when the berry harvest occurs.

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PROCEDURE, Cont.

Part II

Define the terms import and export.

Have students research the following questions and record their findings:

- From what states does MA **import** strawberries?
- To what states does MA **export** strawberries?
- Are the strawberry imports "fresh?"
- How long can strawberries last from the time of harvest until the time of purchase in the grocery store?

Next, introduce the idea of international imports and exports. Give students a world map. Ask students to read *Strawberry Import/Export* article (attached) and research online to learn more about the strawberry market.

Have them create their own key for the map and show countries that grow strawberries, countries that import strawberries, and countries that export strawberries. They should be aware that some countries will fit into more than one category. Based on the information learned, have students evaluate how the US fits into the global market in strawberry production. Students will create a display (digital or printed) showing what they have learned about imports and exports of strawberries, nationally and internationally.

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HANDOUT

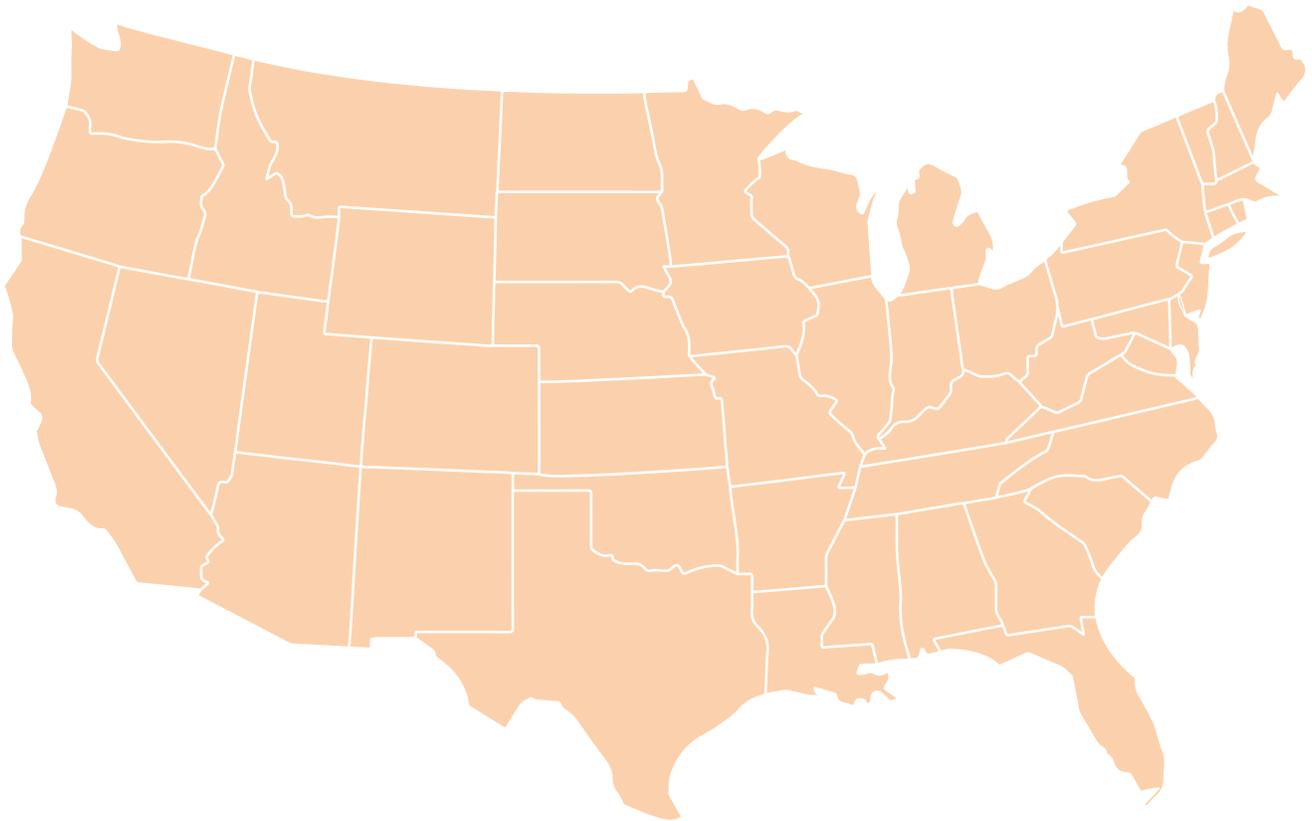
WORLD MAP



GLOBAL MARKET

HANDOUT

UNITED STATES MAP



GLOBAL MARKET

HANDOUT

STRAWBERRY IMPORT/EXPORT



Strawberries and Trade: How Strawberries Travel Around the World

Strawberries are one of the most popular fruits in the United States. People enjoy them fresh, frozen, in smoothies, or on desserts. While the U.S. grows a lot of strawberries—especially in California and Florida—we also trade strawberries with other countries to make sure they're available all year long.

U.S. Strawberry Exports: Sharing Our Strawberries

The United States is one of the top countries in the world when it comes to selling (exporting) fresh strawberries to other nations. In 2023, the U.S. sent over 160,000 metric tons of strawberries to other countries (a metric ton is 2200 pounds so that's more than 350 million pounds!) valued at \$500 million. Most of our strawberries go to Canada, which buys over 90% of what we export. That's because it's close by and wants fresh, high-quality fruit. Other places we send strawberries to include:

- Mexico
- Japan
- South Korea
- United Arab Emirates

Strawberry exports usually happen in the spring and early summer, when California is harvesting nearly 90% of all U.S. strawberries.

U.S. Strawberry Imports: Bringing in Strawberries When Ours Aren't Ready

Even though we grow many strawberries, the U.S. also buys (imports) a lot of them—especially in the winter, when it's too cold in most states to grow strawberries.

In 2023, the U.S. imported over 170,000 metric tons of strawberries, worth more than \$600 million. Most of these strawberries come from Mexico, where the warm weather allows strawberries to grow from November to March, filling the gap before California's harvest begins. Some frozen or processed strawberries also come from Chile, Peru, and Poland.

Why Trade Happens: Seasons and Supply

Strawberries don't grow all year in one place. So, trading strawberries between countries helps everyone enjoy them throughout the year.

- In winter, we import strawberries from Mexico.
- In spring and summer, we export U.S.-grown strawberries.

This system helps farmers sell their crops and gives shoppers fresh fruit, no matter the season. But it also brings up questions about the environment, worker conditions, and fair trade.

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HANDOUT



STRAWBERRY IMPORT/EXPORT

Trade Rules and Challenges

Strawberries are an important crop, so the U.S. government keeps a close eye on strawberry trade. Thanks to agreements like the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), it's easier and cheaper to trade strawberries within North America.

Still, there are sometimes disagreements. Some U.S. farmers, especially in Florida, say that Mexican strawberries are too cheap and hurt their business. Meanwhile, stores and customers like having affordable strawberries all year.

Massachusetts Strawberry Information

Strawberries are an important seasonal crop in Massachusetts, offering students and educators a hands-on opportunity to learn about local agriculture, plant biology, and the food system. The state has more than 100 farms growing strawberries, producing over 700,000 pounds annually, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture. The strawberry season in Massachusetts is relatively short, typically lasting from early June to early July, but it plays a big role in connecting communities with fresh, locally grown food. Many farms offer pick-your-own experiences and educational tours, making strawberries an ideal crop for school field trips and farm-to-school programs. Because they are one of the first fruits to ripen in New England, strawberries can spark discussions about growing seasons, pollination, and the importance of eating with the seasons. Massachusetts mostly exports apples and cranberries, so strawberries are grown more for local enjoyment than international trade.

Conclusion: A Global Journey for a Local Favorite

The United States grows and trades strawberries to make sure people can enjoy them all year long. We export strawberries when we have a lot, and we import them when we don't. This system connects farms, stores, and families around the world—and shows how something as simple as a strawberry can be part of a big global story.

Sources:

United States Department of Agriculture. Vegetables 2023 Summary. National Agricultural Statistics Service, Feb. 2024.

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. "Massachusetts Agricultural Facts."

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. Census of Agriculture – Massachusetts State Profile: 2022.