**MEET OUR FARMERS**

**Goal:** Meet the Big River Farms farmers. Learn about the life of a farmer and all the skills needed to be a farmer.

**Anticipatory Questions**: What do farmers do on the farm? What do they have to know? What kinds of skills and knowledge does a farmer need to have? Would you like to be a farmer?

**Introduction**: The most important part of a farm is the farmer. The farmer does all the work to make a farm produce food. The farmer makes decisions about how to farm that affects the quality of the food, the environment and the health of the people that buy the food from that farm. Farmers have to have a lot of energy because farming is a lot of work! They have to farm smart so that the work is planned out well and they don’t get too tired, and that they make enough money on their farm to make a living. Every farmer is different and farms in a different way. Some people become farmers because their families have been farming for generations and they want to be farmers, too. Some become farmers because they want the independent lifestyle of a farmer and to work outside with plants and animals. Others want to farm in a way that produces healthy foods without chemicals that harm the environment. We would not have food without farmers. Not all of our farmers were born in this country. Some farmers have moved here because their people were badly treated and had to escape to stay alive. Some farmers moved here because they could not find enough land to farm or a way to make enough money to stay alive. Some of the farmers at Big Woods Farm are here because they know how to be good farmers in their country but need to learn how to farm in a new country that is very different than where they came from, and has a different language that they have to learn. But all farmers are the same in one important way: they love to farm. They love to work independently without someone telling them what to do all day every day. They love watching a seed grow into something wonderful to eat. They love watching a baby animal being born and raising it to be an important part of the farm.

They love working outside in the fresh air, under the sun or clouds or rain or whatever weather comes their way because the farm needs sun and rain for plants to grow. Farmers work hard and are very proud of what they produce. There is a joy to providing healthy food for their own families and to sell to other families.

**Lesson Preparation:** Find out which farmers will be working at their plot that day, and ask them if they would be willing to meet with our visitors. Tell them what type of questions will be asked. Make arrangements with an interpreter, if possible. Show the visitors the farmers’ countries of origin on a large world map.

**Lessons**: Meet the farmers at Big River Farms

* 1. Where did our farmers come from? Use a world map to place each farmer’s country of origin.
  2. What part of the growing cycle are they in, and what type of work has to be done?
  3. What are they growing? What produce is new to the visitors and how is it prepared?
  4. Why do they choose to be farmers?
  5. What do they have to know to be farmers? Discuss all the skills that a farmer has to have, and make a list. (Examples: Smart planner, physically strong, able to recognize many types of plants at all stages of growth and how to take care of each type of plant as it grows, mechanical and carpentry skills, veterinarian skills, math skills to measure portions to be sold and figure out how much to sell each portion to gain a profit, marketer/vendor, book-keeper, tax preparer.)
  6. Ask our visitors if they would like to be a farmer, and why.