

Farmers' markets

Explore the four attractive images on our poster to widen the children's awareness of how farmers market their produce in different parts of the world

Using the poster

Create a market stall by placing a table underneath a wallboard and taping two tall garden canes securely to the front legs. Pin some attractive fabric, with a colourful African print or contrasting stripes, from the top of the wallboard and tape it tightly to the canes to form an awning. Attach the poster to the wallboard and surround it with the children's artwork of farming produce inspired by their own recollections and the poster images. Write captions underneath the artwork, dictated by the children. Arrange examples of containers shown on the poster, such as blue mushroom baskets and woven baskets and provide a range of plastic common and exotic fruits, vegetables and fish for the children to explore and sort. Entitle the display 'Markets around the world'.



Activities across the curriculum

Personal, social and emotional development

- Explain to the children that the markets in the poster are places where farmers take the items that they have grown or caught to sell to others. Draw their attention to the African market. Do they recognise any of the exotic fruits? Buy examples of these fruits such as a watermelon, mango and pineapple. Check for food allergies and dietary requirements, then invite the children to smell, feel and taste the fruit.
- Discuss the poster together and encourage the children to notice cultural differences, such as the clothes worn by stallholders and shoppers, the range of familiar and exotic produce, and the way that the goods are sold.

Communication, language and literacy

- Focus on the people in each image. What might they be talking about? Explain that for many people visiting a market is a good time for a chat with friends and neighbours. Invent a conversation between the African women as they purchase their fruit.
- Look at the homemade signs on the image of the Bullring market stall in Birmingham. What do they tell us? Ask the children to make some price and name labels for a role-play market stall (see Creative development).

Mathematical development

- Look at the image of the Turkish fishmonger's market and draw attention to the large scales at the back of the stall. Provide the children with a range of scales, including a bucket balance and some kitchen scales with a dial, together with some real or plastic fruit and vegetables to weigh for selling at a role-play stall. Introduce language associated with quantity as they play.
- Look at the fish on the poster and ask the children to point to the biggest. Help the children to cut out a range of fish of different shapes and sizes from scrap vinyl flooring and make comparisons between them using appropriate mathematical language.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- Explore similarities and differences between the market images. For example, most markets have an awning to protect staff, customers and goods from the weather but the African market is simply a table in the open. Notice the differing locations, for example, the centre of a town, the edge of a country road and a canal side.
- Look at the ways of displaying the produce in the poster, for example, a marble slab, mushroom baskets, wooden crates, enamel dishes and woven baskets, and discuss the range of materials.

Physical development

- Look at the image of the Bullring market stall and explain that it is constructed from metal rods linked together. Encourage the children to use construction equipment involving rods, nuts and bolts to design a market stall for some dolls.
- Invite the children to name the vegetables for sale at the Bullring market stall. Which of these vegetables have they eaten? With parental permission, organise a visit to a local vegetable stall to buy some vegetables to make soup or salad.

Creative development

- Use the poster as inspiration for different role-play market stalls from around the world. Consider together the appropriate resources needed for each one, for example, African fabrics to dress up in or large crates to form the shape of a narrowboat.
- Look at the image of the narrowboat selling farming produce on a canal and use recycled plastic margarine tubs to create narrowboats to float on the water tray. Encourage the children to use them to sell plastic produce made from beads and display them in cut-down yoghurt pots.

Jean Evans is an early years consultant and author.

