

European Agriculture

Social Studies

Materials

- ◆ Copies or transparency of *European Agriculture Map*

Background

The social studies core asks students to trace the development of modern Europe, its culture, boundary changes and events from 1900 to the present. Few students will have an understanding of the rich agricultural past and present of Europe which has influenced the world since the beginning of established civilizations.

Europeans have a different “relationship” with their food. Meals are an experience, a cultural exchange, rich with tradition and historical significance. In direct contrast, Americans (although they love food) rarely savor the event of dining. Americans approach food as utilitarian, something to deal with in order to move on with other things. What creates these cultural differences? The investigation begins by examining the agricultural history of this continent.

First, have your students examine the effects of war and political unrest in the last century in Europe. How many countries have experienced battles on their own soil? How many people have starved because of food shortages? How many nations have been unable to maintain a food supply because of lack of transportation or processing facilities? Nearly every country on the entire continent has faced a food supply emergency. In some countries, hunger has been responsible for the death of millions.

The close-to-home impacts of war have developed an intense desire for each nation to be sovereign: self-sufficient and able to feed its own people. This national feeling of autonomy has developed a culture which revels in celebrating its own local ethnic foods, traditions, land and other natural resources. In fact, historical food shortages have led to strict trade policies. European countries have formed alliances to protect and ensure quality processing and the transportation of commodities. Agricultural products are heavily regulated and new scientific developments such as genetically modified foods are viewed with scrutiny.

Studying the European Agricultural Map can help students develop a deeper understanding of the importance of modern European economics. The maps are 11” x 17”, printed in two-colors. The major agricultural commodities have been identified in each country. The back page has more specific information about each European nation, comparisons to U.S. agriculture, and homework connections. An 8.5” x 11” copy is provided here, but one free copy is available to Utah teachers and classroom sets can be purchased from the Utah AITC office for \$3 (www.agclassroom.org/ut).



Time: 1 hour

Grade Level: 6

Social Studies, Standard 1

Students will understand how ancient civilizations developed and how they contributed to the current state of the world.

Objective 1

Explain why physical geography affected the development of early civilizations.

Indicator c—Compare maps of these ancient civilizations to current political maps and make inferences about the continuing affects of physical geography on cultural development.

Objective 4

Analyze how the earliest civilizations created technologies and systems to meet community and personal needs.

Indicator a—Identify innovations in man-made structures over time (e.g. irrigation, roads, building materials) and their influence on meeting needs.

Social Studies, Standard 4


Students will understand current global issues and their rights and responsibilities in the interconnected world.

Objective 2

Explore current global issues facing the modern world and identify potential solutions.

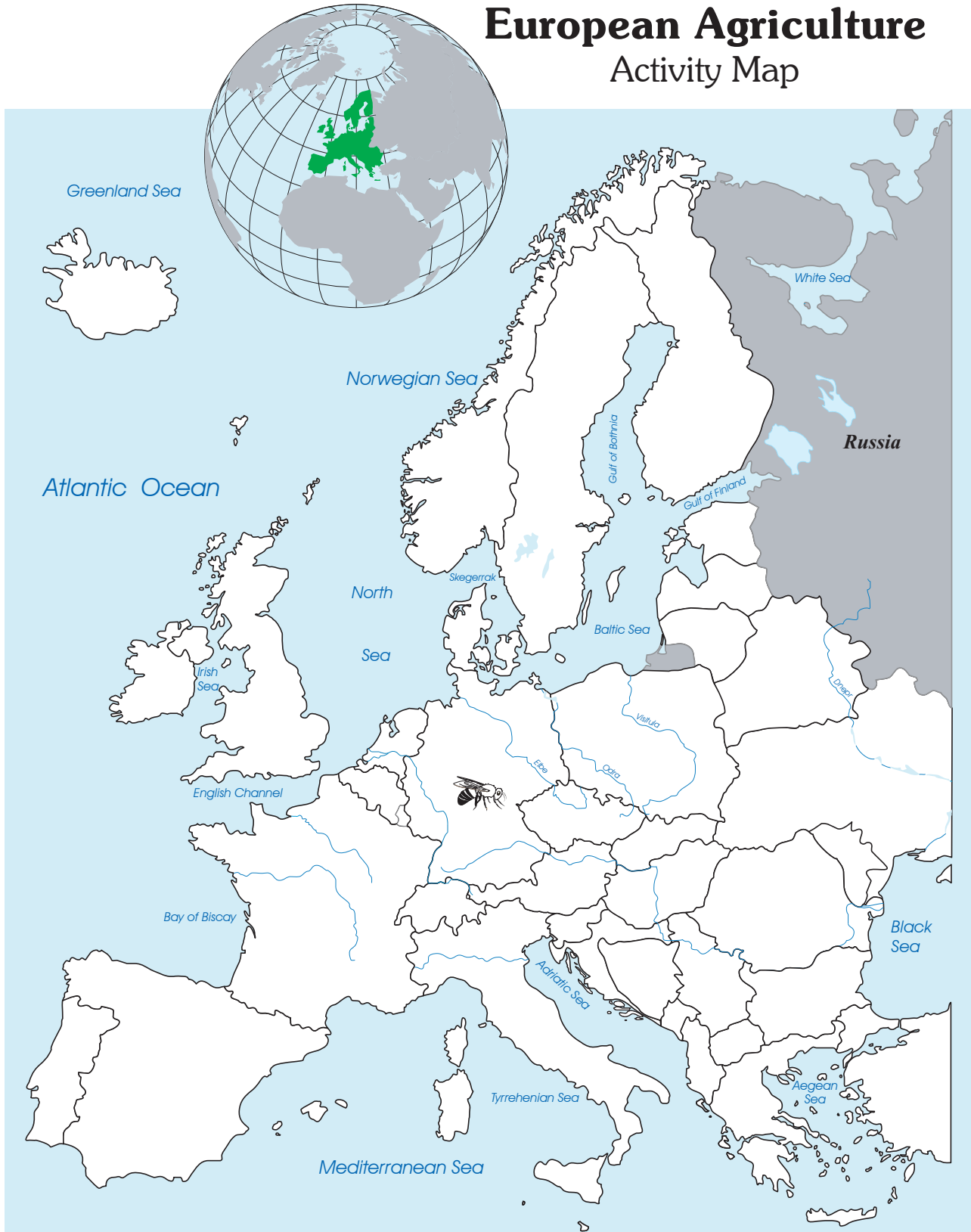
Activity Procedures

1. Have students identify the major commodities of countries and discuss how those countries may trade goods or services for additional needed food sources, transportation, or processing.
2. Explore European news papers online to identify current issues related to food supply or agriculture (web sites to review: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/>; <http://www.francedaily.com/>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/default.stm>). Have students compare and contrast how often agricultural issues appear in European newspapers and American newspapers. Is there a significant difference in the amount of public interest towards food and agricultural issues between them?



Teacher Notes:

European Agriculture Activity Map



Major Agricultural Product Legend

Product																
Product	Apple	Sunflower Seeds	Timber	Grapes & Wines	Potatoes	Sugar Beets	Pears	Oats	Tobacco	Rye & Barley	Fish	Hogs	Olives & Olive Oil	Cotton	Dairy	Sheep
Top Country	Turkey	France	Sweden	France	Netherlands	Germany										

Utah Agriculture in the Classroom, www.agclassroom.org/ut