



# From Field to Table

**Grade Level:** Pre Kindergarten – Grade 3

**Objectives:** to investigate how the food we eat arrives at our table (the steps from farmer to supermarket to our home)

**Materials:** pictures of food system components provided in a separate document *Field to Table Clipart* (pickup and transport trucks, farms, factories, warehouses, people, stores, farmers' markets); glue sticks, markers, large sheets of newsprint cut into pieces manageable for groups of three or 4; fresh carrot or picture of a carrot

**Time Allotment:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Advance Preparation:** copy and enlarge materials; cut out the pictures for the younger students, provide older students with scissors

**Laying the Groundwork:** Beyond knowing that an apple grows in a tree or a carrot grows in the ground, most children in urban centres do not know where food comes from. Few have actually eaten a carrot right out of the earth! The majority of our food travels a long way to reach us, and children think that food “comes from the supermarket”. In the summer and fall we are fortunate enough to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables growing close to home, maybe even in our own backyard! But of course, adults know that the process to get something as simple as a raw carrot from the field to our kitchen is much more complicated, involves many resources, and costs. This activity may be the first step in children understanding our complicated food system. Take it where you are comfortable with the age and understanding of your students.

**Explorations:** Divide the class into small working groups; the youngest grades might choose to make one collage. Begin by asking your students how food gets to their dinner table. Hold up a carrot, and ask the class to brainstorm all the steps it took to get this carrot to them – planting, tending, harvesting, sending to market, transporting, processing (even as simple as washing the dirt off), packaging, wholesaling and advertising. Record their answers and make some connections with arrows. Ask them to think about things such as the sun, soil and water (natural resources), labour, machines, gasoline to run the machines and transport the vegetables beyond the farm, factories to process and package the carrots.

Ask each group to make a collage of the steps (in sequence) that it takes for the fresh carrot to get from the farmers' field to their kitchen. Perhaps one group will be buying their carrots from the farmers' market, another from the grocery store, and even another from a farm stall on Valley Road. Be available to help with the group discussions to steer them in the right direction.

This activity has been prepared for The Big Crunch, October 2009.

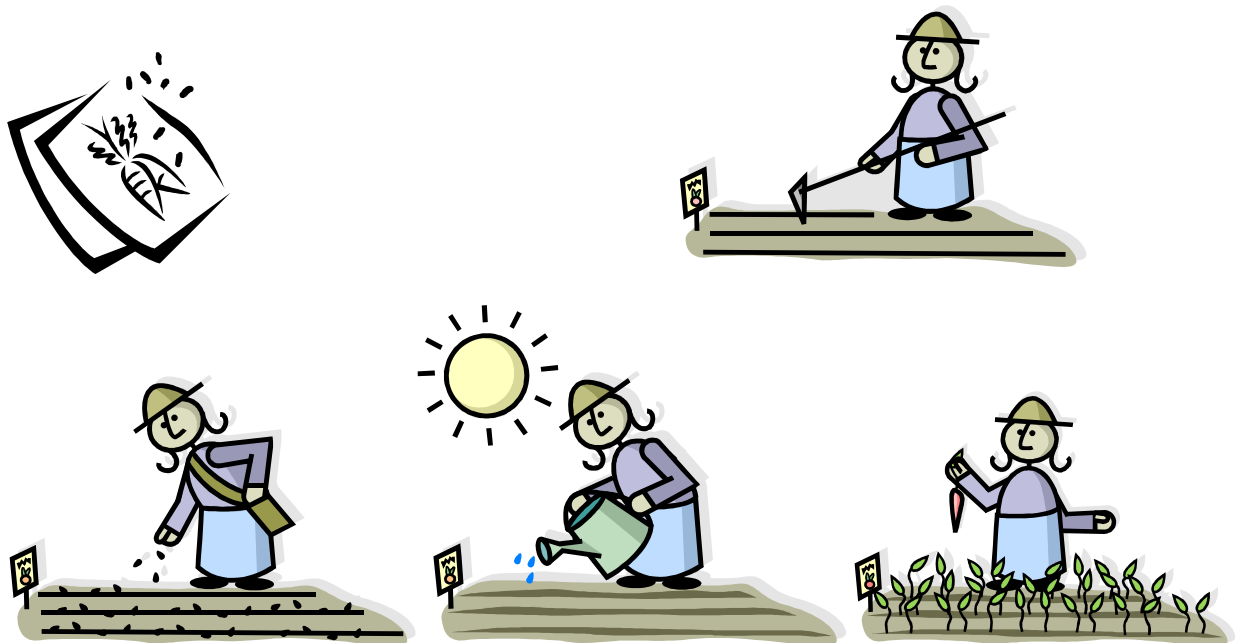
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**Making Connections:** Ask the students for their reactions to the activity? Did they realize so much went into food's production? Do they know anyone who does any of these jobs? What were the common steps in all the collages? Which collage was the most simple? Why? What might happen to their system when one or more of its parts are changed or removed. For example, the farmer retired or sold his farm to someone who was not going to grow carrots, the farmers' market closed for the winter or the local grocery store closed. How can we ensure that carrots will be there when we want to purchase them? (support our farmers, farmers' markets) Chances are that the food that had the simplest collage was the locally grown carrot – it had travelled the least and was probably the freshest of all the choices!

Can they think of other foods that contain carrots? (processed foods such as carrot baby food, mixed frozen vegetables, vegetable soup, a muffin mix, etc.)

The carrots supplied by CHEP are from Medernach's Farm in Cudworth Saskatchewan, 100 km from Saskatoon. See *Getting to Know a Farmer* for more information on their farm.

**Branching Out:** Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes can use this activity to learn sequencing. Ask the class (or small groups) to put the pictures in order from seed to carrot - package of seeds, person tending/watering, picking. Try drawing this out on a large sheet of paper, and then cut the paper into the shape of a carrot lying on its' side!



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