

# WORLDVIEW

Take Home Reading

The organic markets in Mexico offer many different products including fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products, honey, coffee, baked goods, preserves, mole, tortillas, tostadas and medicinal plants.



## Mexico Organic Markets

Carla Hernández is a young girl from Guadalajara, México. Her mother sells organic produce at the market in Guadalajara, Jalisco. Carla is like many other youngsters in Mexico, whose parents have become a part of the organic movement in Mexico. In the late 1980s, consumer demand for organic products – free of toxic residues, genetically modified organisms, contaminated water, and other harmful elements - began to increase dramatically in the countries of the Global North. This demand could not be satisfied by Northern production alone and, as such, many countries in the Global South responded by developing

their own organic agriculture sectors. In Mexico, this process began with foreign agents contacting Mexicans, like Carla's mother and soliciting specific organic products, generally from regions where the use of chemical inputs was traditionally low or non-existent.

Señora Hernández is also part of a movement to keep organic produce in Mexico by creating local markets instead of exporting all the organic crops.. There are a growing number of local organic markets that have been opened in communities across the country, not just in Guadalajara, Jalisco. They are supported by committed producers and consumers and in many cases these markets are also linked to universities or non-governmental organizations. Still the work of Señora

Hernández at the market is quite different than the mainstream organic sector. These community markets are not merely organic, but they also offer goods that are produced locally by small scale producers.

## The story of the Guadalajara Market

Each Saturday from noon until 2pm Carla accompanies her mother into town to sell organic vegetables and other products. She had heard her mother tell their customers that the market had not always existed like it does now. One day upon their arrival at the market, Carla's curiosity began to get the best of her and she asked her mother how the market came to be. "Well," began her mother, "In 1996, an Eco-shop was organized by the Ecologist Collective of Jalisco. This shop offered organic, recycled and biodegradable products, workshops and lectures on relevant topics, a small library, and a café that served vegetarian dishes using primarily organic ingredients. You see this shop became so popular that there was a workshop one day with people all the way from Europe. It was at this workshop that



### Baked goods at the market...

Many of the foods at the market are baked and prepared at the market like the sweet treat, called tartaletas, shown in the picture above.



"These markets also act as a small cultural gathering, where musicians, singers, dancers and others come to entertain."

the idea of the market came to be.

The shop was closed in 1999 and replaced by the Circle of Responsible Production and Consumption Market, which we participate in each Saturday." Satisfied with this answer Carla nodded and ran after some of the other children scooting between the booths.

There are about 15 other participating vendors at the market, meaning that there are other children around for Carla to play with. Games of hide and seek often take place with children hiding in between the different booths, camouflaged by products offered at the market, like fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products, honey, coffee, baked goods, preserves, mole, tortillas, tostadas, medicinal plants. A consumer could even find compost materials, and information on many environmental topics. The patrons are very devoted, particularly as many have been involved with the initiative since the days of the Eco-shop, and many local farmers are also involved in workshops on organic agriculture offered by the Ecologist Collective. In 2005, the Eco-shop reopened its doors in order to provide a space where people can buy organic products during the week

## WORKING TOGETHER

### The story of the Guadalajara Market



**Meeting Market Demands**  
When the demand for organic products outgrew the rate of production in the Global North many countries in the Global South responded by developing their own organic agriculture sectors.

creating greenhouses gasses.

Falls Brook Centre supports the establishment of local organic markets in Mexico, where consumers can buy local organic products. There are many small organic producers in Mexico as well as in Canada who cannot produce enough for an export market but do want to sell locally and so, farmer's markets are thriving. Here in New Brunswick one of the star attractions in Fredericton is our Boyce Street Farmer's market. Markets can be found throughout New Brunswick, in Sackville, Woodstock, Perth-Andover, and many other cities. In Mexico, Falls Brook Centre

As Canadian consumers there are a few questions we can ask ourselves to better understand how food gets to our plates. Where does our food come from? How often do we read the label? Mostly in New Brunswick we grow potatoes, but we like having tomatoes, pineapple and other exotic fruits during our cold winter months. We export 85% of food grown in Canada and then we import 80% of our food needs. This translates to a lot of air transport, ground transport and moving food around the world, using up fossil fuels and

supports 11 local markets which are doing very well, giving small farmers an outlet for their products. These markets also act as a small cultural gathering, where musicians, singers, dancers and others come to entertain. They cluster around a courtyard and the market people provide food sampling, and mini-workshops on how to plant seeds, how to preserve food and other activities that encourage people to spend half the day enjoying the market.

## Discussion Questions

**CURRICULUM CONNECTION - GRADE 12- World Issues 120**

1. According to the reading, what gave Mexico the opportunity to enter the expanding international organic market? How does this practice relate to sustainable agricultural practices?
2. How is the international aid given by the Canadian government improving the organic market's movement in Mexico?
3. a) What are the advantages of farming organically? Mention what economic, social or cultural empowerment benefits (it could be a health or gender derived benefit)? b) What are the disadvantages of doing so?
4. List the fruits and vegetables mentioned in the story? Can we reasonably produce some of them here in Canada? We import and export food to other countries, what are the reasons for this? [Relate to the idea of global village].
5. Research climate and vegetation in Mexico. Reflect how geographical differences create diverse conditions to cultivate different products.

