

Lesson 3

Nebraska Does Business with the World



OVERVIEW: This activity looks at the extensive connections between Nebraska and the international economy. Recent census results indicate that more than 30% of Nebraska's firms are involved in international trade.

- Nebraska's exports totaled over \$2.3 billion in 1999.
- Nebraska exporters sell to almost 140 countries worldwide each year.
- The largest category of Nebraska exports is food products, which totaled slightly over \$1 billion in 1999, or 44% of all state exports.
- The top three markets for Nebraska exports in 1999 were Japan (27.1%), Canada (25.1 %), and Mexico (11.8%).

Students, in this lesson, will have the opportunity to investigate specific Nebraska companies that export and their international ties, some in their own city

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS: The students will learn about:

1. international trade
2. exports

OBJECTIVES: The students will be able to:

1. describe the effects of international trade on Nebraska companies.
2. identify the countries involved in trade with Nebraska firms.
3. list the major products exported abroad by Nebraska firms.
4. develop case studies of international firms using the examples provided.

NEBRASKA STANDARDS:

8.3.5, 8.3.7, 12.4.16, 12.4.17, 12.4.18, 12.4.23, and 12.4.26

MATERIALS:

1. Access to the local Chamber of Commerce
2. Examples of Nebraska Companies in International Trade, Teacher Resource or Student Handout
3. Finding Nebraska Firms Involved in International Trade, Student Handout
4. International Company Survey, Student Handout

PROCEDURE:

1. Inform students that they will be investigating local companies involved in international trade through a survey. Ask students to list local companies they think are involved in international trade. The teacher can use the information on the Examples of Nebraska Companies in International Trade as either a handout or as an overhead to aid in this discussion. Ask students the following questions as part of the discussion:
 - Why would a Nebraska company choose to sell its products in the international market?
 - What problems do you think a company might face if decides to try sell in the international market?
 - How have the local communities been affected by the activities of these companies?
 - How does this international trade affect the people and countries that receive these products?
2. Inform students that they will be investigating local companies to find out more about their involvement in the international economy. Distribute copies of the student handouts entitled Finding Nebraska Firms Involved in International Trade and the International Company Survey. Assist students in preparing the cover letter and surveying of local companies. If necessary, use the Examples of Nebraska Companies in International Trade as a guide to finding local companies, or have students select companies not listed on the handout.
3. Have students prepare a brief report and presentation on the business they chose to research. Encourage the students to compile their information into charts, tables, graphs, and visuals (posters, bulletin boards, or transparencies). On a world map, indicate where

the companies trade in the world. On the map, pictures may be used to indicate the products traded. Another map might be drawn to indicate the methods and routes of transportation that would be used to get the products from Nebraska to other parts of the world where they are sold.

4. After presenting their research findings, ask students the same questions posed at the beginning of this lesson to see if their perceptions have changed as a result of this investigation.
 - Why would a Nebraska company choose to sell its products in the international market?
 - What problems do you think a company might face if decides to try sell in the international market?
 - How have the local communities been affected by the activities of these companies?
 - How does this international trade affect the people and countries that receive these products?



Teacher Information



Examples of Nebraska Companies In International Trade

American Tool Companies Inc. - DeWitt
Baldwin Filters - Kearney & Gothenburg
Beef America - Norfolk & Omaha
Behlen Manufacturing - Columbus
Bison Manufacturing - Neligh
Cabela's - Sidney
ConAgra, Inc. - Omaha
Dale Electronics - Columbus
First Data Resources - Omaha
Henningsen Foods - David City, Norfolk, Omaha & Ravenna
International Beef Packing, Inc. - West Point
International Sensor Systems Inc - Aurora
ISCO - Lincoln
Lindsay Manufacturing - Lindsay
Lozier Corp. - Omaha
M.G. Waldbaum Co. - Omaha
MDS Harris Labs - Lincoln
Mutual of Omaha - Omaha
Omaha Steaks - Omaha
Sandhills Publishing - Lincoln
Sand Livestock Systems - Columbus
Skylark Meats Inc. - Omaha
Union Pacific Corp. - Omaha
Valmont Industries - Valley

This is partial listing only, updates can be found on the International Trade Directory at: <http://international.ded.state.ne.us/tr-home.htm>



Your role in this class project is to investigate a Nebraska company that is currently involved in international trade. In order to locate a company in your area, you should consult International Trade Directories from your Chamber of Commerce. Once you have determined a company you would like to research, send a cover letter, explaining that this is a class project, and the prepared survey. Your letter should be sent to the attention of the International Marketing Department. The following is an example of a letter you might want to use or you can prepare your own. Make sure you use the traditional business letter format.

Date
Company
Address
Attention: International Marketing Department

Dear (Company Name):

This questionnaire is part of an economics unit called *Nebraska and the World* that we are currently studying in our class at _____. I am writing to you in hopes that you can help our class determine links between Nebraska and the international economy. Once the surveys are returned, our class will compile the results and interpret the data to help us better understand how our state and the world are interdependent. On behalf of my class, I would sincerely appreciate it if you would take time to answer a few questions and return this survey to us by _____. If you have any printed material on your company, its objectives, and/or history, we would appreciate a copy of this as well. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely Yours,

Student Name
School Name
Address



Name of Company: _____

Number of Company Employees: _____

Major Type of Goods or Services Produced: _____

Please answer the following questions:

1. Does your company produce products to be sold on the international market? If so, in what countries or regions of the world?
2. Why did your company choose to sell internationally?
3. Does your company use imports to produce its products? If so, what areas or regions do these products come from?
4. Is any part of the manufacturing done outside of the U.S.? If so, where?
5. Where are your corporate headquarters? Do you have any offices abroad?
6. Approximately what percentage of your profits comes from international sales?
7. What impact does international trade have on the community where you are located?
8. What do you feel students at our school need to know to prepare us for doing business in an international economy?

When completed, please return to:
(Student Name and School Address)