

A New Neighborhood Farmers Market



Across the street from a sandwich shop and a fried chicken joint, a greenmarket sprouts up every Wednesday in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx in New York City. The market is a welcome sight in an area that does not have many options for people to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

“The lettuce is not as fresh at the grocery store; that’s why I come here,” said Jennifer Gillette as she paid for four heads of lettuce. Gillette is a vegetarian who lives in the neighborhood.

Mott Haven, a neighborhood in the South Bronx, is located in one of the poorest areas in the country. In other New York City neighborhoods greenmarkets are more common, but in the South Bronx there are not many places to buy healthy, organic food.

The summer of 2012 was the first time that the Youthmarket set up shop in this section of the Bronx, on 3rd Ave. between E. 148th and E. 149th Streets. The Youthmarket is part of a larger organization called GrowNYC, which helps make neighborhoods better by setting up farmers markets, community gardens, and recycling in the city.

Since opening in July 2012, the market has attracted a lot of attention from local residents who live in the area. Many people are excited that there is now a fresh produce market nearby.

When the wind shifts, the smell of cilantro floats across the sidewalk, calling attention to the bright red radishes, purple potatoes, and juicy plums. At the market you can also buy red and green peppers, mushrooms, squash, and apples. The food comes from nearby farms just outside the city limits.

There is one whole table just for corn, which people buy in bulk, sometimes 10 or 15 ears at a time. Corn is the most popular item. The market sells 400 to 500 pounds of produce each Wednesday.

Ryan Morningstar, who helps run the Youthmarket, said that about 12 to 18 percent of the money they make comes from government assistance like food stamps. Food stamps help people buy food if they can't afford it themselves. On its opening day, the market made \$216.50 from food stamps alone, a record high for GrowNYC Youthmarkets across the city. The Mott Haven market makes a total of around \$700 a week.

"When you bring in fresh food, people want it," said Morningstar.

The market also accepts other government food assistance, such as the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which allows low-income residents to get "fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables," explains the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services website.

Greysie Johnson's four-year-old daughter loves apples and bananas, but until recently Johnson wasn't using her government checks because she didn't know what they were for. She said that she started getting the checks in the mail, but since she didn't know what they were she didn't use them.

Then she found out that the checks were like free coupons for her to buy fresh fruit and vegetables. She learned that once her daughter turns five years old, she will stop getting the checks. Johnson didn't want the money to go to waste, so she started using the checks to buy fresh vegetables and fruit for her daughter.

"It's an easier way to give her what she wants," said Johnson. When the checks stop coming, though, she said she will go back to shopping at grocery stores, where the vegetables and fruit are not as fresh and healthy.

Delphia Omborura, a hair stylist who works in the area, loves to shop at the farmers market in Mott Haven. On a Wednesday afternoon last September she bought four bushels of large red beets to juice in a blender at home. She said that beets are more expensive in a regular grocery store. Omborura had a water bottle filled with homemade beet juice in her purse.

Mamie Jackson also likes going to the farmers market. She said that she likes the fresh look of the produce at the market, which looks different from what the grocery stores sell. "I'd rather wash the dirt off a cucumber," she said. "The ones at the grocery store are sprayed with a lot of stuff to make them look shiny."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kinds of food can people buy at the farmers market in the Mott Haven neighborhood?

- A fried chicken and sandwiches
- B hot dogs and hamburgers
- C chicken and fish
- D fruits and vegetables

2. What does this passage describe?

- A This passage describes a grocery store where people can buy cheap organic food.
- B This passage describes a market where people can buy fresh, healthy food.
- C This passage describes a poor neighborhood in the South Bronx where it is dangerous to shop.
- D This passage describes a man who uses food stamps from the government to buy apples.

3. Government assistance encourages some people to shop at the farmers market in Mott Haven.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A Jennifer Gillette shops at the farmers market because the lettuce there is fresher than the lettuce at her grocery store.
- B Greysie Johnson uses checks from the government to buy fruit and vegetables at the farmers market.
- C Delphia Omborura buys bushels of large red beets at the farmers market to juice in a blender at home.
- D Mamie Jackson likes the fresh look of produce at the market and washes dirt off the cucumbers she buys there.

4. Based on information in the passage, what is a reason that some people shop at the farmers market in Mott Haven?

- A The fruits and vegetables at the farmers market are fresher than the fruits and vegetables at grocery stores.
- B There are not enough grocery stores in the Mott Haven neighborhood to supply the people there with all the food they need.
- C People in Mott Haven are tired of food from sandwich shops and fried chicken joints, so they are going to the farmers market instead.
- D The produce from grocery stores in the Mott Haven neighborhood is making people sick, so they are looking for new places to shop.

5. What is this passage mainly about?

- A food stamps and other government food assistance
- B a vegetarian named Jennifer Gillette who likes fresh lettuce
- C a farmers market in a neighborhood of New York City
- D the health risks of eating fruit and vegetables from grocery stores

6. Read the following sentence: "Mamie Jackson also likes going to the farmers market. She said that she likes the fresh look of the **produce** at the market, which looks different from what the grocery stores sell."

What does the word **produce** mean in the sentence above?

- A food that has been grown by farming
- B items that have been made in factories
- C meat or fish that has been cooked by a chef
- D products that are built and sold in large numbers

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

The farmers market in Mott Haven sells several different kinds of vegetables, _____ lettuce, green pepper, and squash.

- A instead
- B consequently
- C previously
- D including

8. What is the Youthmarket?

9. Name at least two reasons given by people in the passage for shopping at the Mott Haven farmers market instead of at a grocery store.

10. Suppose that the Youthmarket set up a farmers market in another neighborhood where there was no farmers market before. Would people living in that neighborhood be likely to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables because of the farmers market? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the passage.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 1200

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8. What is the Youthmarket?

Suggested answer: The Youthmarket is part of a larger organization called GrowNYC, which helps make neighborhoods better by setting up farmers markets, community gardens, and recycling in New York City.

9. Name at least two reasons given by people in the passage for shopping at the Mott Haven farmers market instead of at a grocery store.

Suggested answer: Students may name such reasons as the freshness of the produce, government assistance, the healthiness of the food, and the lower price of some of the food compared with that in grocery stores.

10. Suppose that the Youthmarket set up a farmers market in another neighborhood where there was no farmers market before. Would people living in that neighborhood be likely to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables because of the farmers market? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the passage.

Suggested answer: Students may argue that people in the neighborhood would be likely to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, pointing out that a farmers market could make fresh produce more accessible and affordable to residents. Students may also argue that people in the neighborhood would not be likely to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. Students may point out that the neighborhood could already have plenty of grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables at low prices and that in a rich neighborhood, government assistance would probably not contribute to people buying fresh produce from a farmers market.