***Lesson: Apples- Commodity and Organic***

**Purpose:** Imagine you are watching a presidential debate where two candidates are heatedly arguing their opinions on an important issue. After listening for a few minutes, you begin to realize that some of the things being said by the candidates do not sound quite right. You do some digging of your own into the topic and realize that the candidates are debating with inaccurate information, yet millions of people are being influenced by their words. With any issue, whether political or agricultural, it is important to know the facts of the topic so your opinion can be well supported. One of the big issues in the agricultural community right now is the topic of organically grown foods being either better or worse than traditionally raised foods. Knowing the information about how these foods are raised differently can give you more educated base to stand on in your discussions. Let’s take a closer look at this topic with apples.

**Directions:** Access the commodities and products tab on the AgMRC website (<http://www.agmrc.org>) and find the link to the Fruit profile page. Utilize information located here to answer the questions below:

1. According to the AgMRC website, the leading apple-producing states are “New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, California, and Virginia”. What do you think could explain why apple production tends to be high in northern U.S. states? (Hint: Think climate.)
2. According to the USDA “U.S. apple growers received 29 cents per pound in 2011 for fresh market apples”. Using this data, how many pounds of apples would need to be sold in order for an apple producer to earn $45,000 from a particular orchard?
3. According to the USDA, what allows an agricultural product to be certified as “organic”?
4. According to data obtained from 2008 production statistics, Washington state produced just under $119 million in organics apples while California produced only $6.5 in organic apples. What are two reasons you think that explain the vast differences in production capacity (as measured in sales)? (Hint: Think about things such as climate, production capacity, etc.)
5. Why do you think that “qualified [USDA] inspectors conduct annual on-site inspections” of organic apple orchards?

**Reinforcement activity: Pros and Cons**

For this activity you need to continue your research into traditional and organically grown apples. Choose one of those two production methods and create a list of Pros and Cons to compare it to the other production method. You should have at least five Pros and five Cons identified.

**Production Method Chosen: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Compared to: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Pros** **Cons**