***Lesson 2: Christmas Trees- Teacher’s Guide***

**Estimated Time for Completion- 90 minutes**

**Student Learning Objectives:**

* As a result of this lesson the student will…
  + Develop a deeper understanding of Christmas tree production and marketing.
  + Become familiarized with marketing trends in commercial Christmas tree production.
  + Understand the role of Christmas tree plantations in the agritourism sector.

**Purpose:** If you celebrate Christmas, decorating is likely one of your traditions around the holiday. Many decorations are traditional for the Christmas season, but perhaps no decoration is more common than the Christmas tree. Decorated with bright lights, sparkling tinsel, and various other meaningful ornaments, a Christmas tree can truly become the centerpiece of a home. Natural Christmas trees even provide a pleasant aroma that cannot be found in a manufactured replica. But just what does it take to get the Christmas tree into your home?

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

1. The AgMRC notes that “the top five tree producing states in 2009 were… Oregon… North Carolina… Michigan… Pennsylvania… and Wisconsin”. Why do you suppose that these areas are well-suited for producing high numbers of Christmas trees? (Hint: Think climate and geography/forest land.)

* Note: In order to answer this question, students will have to rely on their previous knowledge regarding U.S. climate and geographical systems data and information.

1. What makes “plantation production” the ideal method with which to produce Christmas trees?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Forestry” link.
* Select the “Christmas Trees” link.
* Look in the “Production” section to find the desired information.

1. The AgMRC refers to many Christmas tree plantations as a sector of agritourism. How do you think that a marketing system could capitalize on the agritourism experience? (Hint: Think about the “cut-your-own” plantations.)

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Forestry” link.
* Select the “Christmas Trees” link.
* Look in the “Marketing” section to find the desired information.
* Note: For this question, students may have to consult information regarding the definition of “agritourism” and how it can be applied.

1. What man-made tree-like product do Christmas tree producers have to compete with every year for decoration activities?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Forestry” link.
* Select the “Christmas Trees” link.
* Look in the “Marketing” section to find the desired information.

1. Why do you think consumers “will be seeking live trees that are unique in size… and appearance”? What could producers do to meet these consumer demands?

* First, select the “Commodities and Products” link.
* Then select the “Specialty Crops” link.
* Select the “Christmas Trees” link.
* Click on the blue “Christmas Trees” link in the “Overview” section to expand the page.
* Look in the “Trends” section to find the desired information.
* Note: To answer this question, students will be required to apply the information found in the “Trends” section to the producer perspective.

**Reinforcement activity: Tree salesperson**

For this activity, you will need to come up with a one minute sales pitch for a Christmas tree. Your pitch needs to be concise, yet detailed. You need to make sure your audience understands why your product is superior to a store bought, fake Christmas tree. You may need to spend some time familiarizing yourself with the Christmas tree production process to understand why it is more beneficial to buy your tree than one from the competition. Think ahead of time about what concerns your customers might have, and try to address those concerns in your sales pitch. For example, one concern might be that in the long run it might be more cost efficient to purchase a reusable tree compared to your tree, which is just thrown out after the holidays.