

# Farming the Great Land

## **Materials**

- 12-month calendar
- Alaska map
- Photocopies of blank map

## **Objectives**

Illustrate how little of Alaska is used for farming compared to the amount of land in the state; understand concept of an acre.

## **Suggested grade levels**

3-6

## **Alaska Content Standards**

Language arts B3; Math A1-3; C1-2; D1-2; E1-3; Geography A1-2; B1; C1-3; D1

## **Terms to Define**

acre  
arable



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## **Introduction**

Look at a calendar. Most years, there are 365 days. Imagine that each of the squares on the calendar is an acre of land — a piece of ground about 100 yards long and 50 yards wide, like a football field.

Alaska has so much land that each day of the year on the calendar represents 1,000,000 (one million) acres. But some of that land is too cold, too wet, too dry, too rocky or too remote to farm. Other land has been used for homes, businesses, factories, schools, roads and other structures.

Now look at 15 days on the calendar (have students help you count out 15 days from the current day). Each of those represents how much land could be used for farming. That means the land has good soil and other characteristics that makes it good farming land.

Of course not all of it is in areas that can easily be reached. Some of it is tied up in state and federal lands, including parks, and Native lands.

Now look at just today. That is how many acres — 1 million — that is farmed in Alaska. Just 1 million of 365 million. Is it easy to see why it is important to take care of that soil?

## **Directions**

Color on the map the 1 million acres where you think it may be. How do you know how much to color? The amount of land farmed in Alaska is about one-fourth (25 percent) of the acreage of Kodiak Island, which is about 4 million acres.

*Help students find Kodiak Island on the Alaska map and their map sheets.*

## **Discussion points**

Where is the arable (that means you can farm it) land more likely to be? *Help students understand that while it is scattered around the state, it is not near or above the Arctic Circle, along most of the coastline, nor within the mountainous regions.*

Are the farm lands located near population centers? Why?

Why are different crops farmed in different areas?

## **Related lesson on CD**

“Earth’s Valuable Soil”



# How much land in the Great Land?

- ¥ Total acres = 365 million
- ¥ Arable acres = 15 million
- ¥ Acres farmed = 1 million

Remember: and acre is about the size of a football field.

