Farm to School in the Northeast

Making the Connection
For Healthy Kids and Healthy Farms

A Toolkit for Extension Educators and other Community Leaders

Cornell University Founded A.D. 1865

New York School Nutrition Association

NY Farms!
Building Farmer-Consumer Connections in the Empire State

Disclaimer

The tools, resources, and organizations referenced herein reflect a broad interest in farm to school and community-based food systems generally. The views expressed in these resources are not necessarily reflective of, or endorsed by the Cornell Farm to School Program, Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY Farms!, and the New York School Nutrition Association. The project team acknowledges the existence of a diversity of viewpoints related to this emerging area of work and believes that, in the spirit of fostering an open and thoughtful dialogue, exploration of these viewpoints is essential to sound food system decisions in our Northeast communities.

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Cornell Farm to School Program

The Cornell Farm to School Program, in the Division of Nutritional Sciences of Cornell University's College of Human Ecology, is an applied research and extension program committed to developing strategies and disseminating information to increase the amount of locally grown food served in New York's schools, colleges and universities. The Cornell Farm to School Program has provided important support for the creation of farm to school connections in New York State: connecting interested school food service professionals and farmers, facilitating local farm to school networks, conducting applied research and extension programming in support of farm to school, and helped found the New York State Farm to School Coordinating Committee. Visit the Cornell Farm to School Program online at: http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/

New York School Nutrition Association (NYSNA)

Formerly the New York School Food Service Association, the New York School Nutrition Association is a professional association of K-12 school food service professionals. The mission of the Association is to "provide members with opportunities and training necessary for successful child nutrition programs." Dedicated to this mission, the NYSNA has been a strong supporter of farm to school in New York and nationally, developing and supporting legislation, promoting educational opportunities, and serving as a founding member of the New York State Farm to School Coordinating Committee. Visit NYSNA online at: http://www.nyssfsa.org/

New York Farms!

NY Farms! is a broad-based, statewide coalition of organizations, individuals, businesses, agencies and institutions, committed to the future of New York's farms and families. The mission of NY Farms is to strengthen New York agriculture and food systems through a partnership to:

- Create public awareness of the importance of farming;
- Promote agriculture and food system literacy;
- Foster consumer loyalty to New York farm products.

NY Farms! has steadfastly supported and promoted the farm to school movement in New York State as a founding member of the New York State Farm to School Coordinating Committee, and through research and education, the promotion of NY Harvest for NY Kids Week, and the facilitation of local farm to school connections. Visit NY Farms! online at: www.nyfarms.info.

Forward

On roughly 7.6 million acres or 25% of the state's land area, New York farmers annually produce an abundance of high-quality farm and food products. These fruits, vegetables, and field crops and dairy and meat products are the mainstay of good health, and as Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, I have a keen interest in helping New Yorkers connect to this healthy food and rich agriculture system.

Associations between farms and schools through the cafeteria and the classroom can enhance the quality of food served and help individuals make healthy choices. With over 1,000 school districts and more than 400 colleges and universities in New York State, public institutions have the capacity to forge valuable relationships with regional agriculture producers, processors, and distributors to the benefit of local populations. Where increases in childhood and adult obesity rates present challenges to communities, farm to cafeteria programs offer practical solutions that improve the nutritional quality of the meals consumed by students in their cafeterias and dining halls.

These initiatives are in development not only in New York State but also regionally and nationally as educators design long-term action plans for enhanced food systems literacy, agricultural vitality, and societal health. *Farm to School in the Northeast: Making the Connection* supports these efforts. Designed as a toolkit, it has been developed to assure success in beginning and continuing farm to cafeteria programs. One of the strengths of *Farm to School in the Northeast* is that the intended audience is Cooperative Extension Educators. These professionals are based in counties throughout the Northeast, with expertise in food and agriculture, nutrition, health, and education. With access to research-based information from the region's Land Grant institutions and well-established regional and community-based partnerships, Cooperative Extension Educators are well-positioned to connect school districts and colleges with local and regional farmers, food processors, and distributors. This toolkit will increase the capacity of these educators to facilitate additional development of farm to cafeteria programs.

I encourage youth, adult, agriculture and nutrition professionals, and other community leaders to use this resource to strengthen emerging farm to school connections. Working together, educators, food service directors, farmers, processors, suppliers, teachers, students, and others can support our regional food and agriculture systems and enhance the health of our young people.

Helene R. Dillard, Ph.D.
Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Introduction

Purpose of the Toolkit

This resource was designed to enhance the extension educator's farm to school skills in order to help K-12 schools and colleges connect with their local food system through their food service and their classrooms. If your area of focus is agriculture, nutrition, food security, community development or a related issue area, getting involved with farm to school can add a rewarding element to your extension program. Resources in this toolkit will help you:

- identify existing capacities, opportunities and challenges unique to each cafeteria, dining hall, and school food system
- build essential relationships between key stakeholders
- develop strategies for improving school and college meals and linking with local farms.
- set goals and measurable benchmarks and evaluate progress

We hope this resource will also be helpful for other community leaders interested in improving the health of children and the sustainability of the food system through farm to school connections.

As an extension educator or other community leader, you may be personally compelled or called upon in your community to work with schools to enhance the nutritional quality of meals served through school and college food service. Farm to School initiatives provide an example of a promising environmental school nutrition reform that helps schools provide fresh fruits and vegetables to students while giving economic support to area farmers, and increasing students' awareness of the connections between farms, health, and community.[1] According the Center for Food and Justice, in 2003, 400 in 20 states schools nationwide were purchasing food from local farms.[2] Farm to School aims to increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables by: (1) increasing their access to a wide variety of locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals; and (2) connecting the cafeteria to the classroom and the farm through nutrition and food education.

As schools across the country are implementing federally mandated wellness policies designed to address the obesity epidemic, they will be looking for innovative ways to make positive changes in food service and nutrition education programs. Farm to School programs offer a comprehensive approach to implementing and further refining these wellness policies.

Farm-to-college programs connect colleges and universities with producers in their area to provide local farm products for meals and special events on campus. According to a survey conducted by the Community Food Security Coalition, food service personnel, students, and to a lesser extent, management companies are the primary initiators of farm to college programs. These programs may be small and unofficial, mainly involving special dinners or other events, or they may be large and well-established, with many local products incorporated into cafeteria meals every day.[3] These programs also regularly include educational components.

Because farm to school programs address critical health issues faced by today's youth and economic issues faced by farmers in a competitive market, this approach fits well with Cooperative Extension's program. Engaging with schools and colleges to develop farm to school links may be an effective way to reach key target audiences.

Outcomes

By developing strong connections between farms and school cafeterias and college dining halls, we support the following outcomes:

1. Increased access and exposure to fresh and local foods for K-12 and college students
2. Increased intake of fruits and vegetables by K-12 and college students
3. Enhanced and diversified local markets for agricultural producers in the Northeast; increased markets for valued added products
4. Increased nutrition, health, and agricultural and food system literacy

Objectives

This toolkit was developed with the following objectives in mind:

1. Increased awareness of the benefits, challenges and opportunities related to farm to school programs.
2. Increased capacity for developing partnerships and coalitions within communities of interest.
3. Increased skills for developing a successful farm to school plan with district(s)/college(s), distributors, farmers and other local partners.
4. Greater inclusion of farm to school strategies in federally mandated school wellness policies.
5. Ultimately, increased access to and consumption of fresh and local foods for K-12 and college students.

Overview of the Toolkit

The Farm to School Toolkit is organized by sections, each representing key steps needed to create and sustain successful farm to school connections. While the steps are organized in an order that makes sense to us, you will be the best judge of how to proceed through them. You might find that you will pick and choose sections in a different order than we've presented them – one that better fits the needs of your school and community. This is your toolkit to use as best fits your needs.

Chapter 1. Farm to School Basics This chapter provides an introduction to farm to school – what does it mean? Who does it benefit? Why bother?

Chapter 2. K-12 Food Service and College Dining Realities In this chapter you will find important information about the realities of food service, school meals programs, and the recently mandated school wellness polices.

Chapter 3. Building Relationships Farm to School programs do not just happen because a determined educator, parent, student, or food service director wants to serve more locally produced food. Communication, understanding, negotiation, and building trust are needed to make farm to school connections work. This section contains resources to help you understand and develop relationships with farm to school stakeholders to achieve a shared vision and goals.

Chapter 4. Needs Assessment A farm to school needs assessment can be one outgrowth of the process of building successful partnerships. For farm to school programs to work, it is critical that they not be implemented in a vacuum. Here you will find checklists of "things to know" and from which key stakeholders you need to seek the information. This section includes guidelines for interviewing key stakeholders and is designed to help you understand their interests and needs relating to a farm to school partnership. Remember, as you complete your needs assessment, you will undoubtedly discover new questions to be resolved. This is a normal part of the needs assessment process. A thorough needs assessment will help you identify the most appropriate first (or next) steps in making your farm to school connections, and the resources needed to do so.

Chapter 5. Making the Cafeteria Connection In this section, you will find tools for planning, implementing, and evaluating farm to school projects. These tools include action plan templates, guides to resources, and evaluation forms – all designed to help you follow up on the outcomes for your needs assessments. These tools were informed by actual interviews with real food service and dining directors in New York State. Before going further, it is important to note that although evaluation usually is thought of as something to do at the end of a project *it should be considered at the beginning*! Evaluation entails a systematic assessment of operation and/or outcome of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit goals, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy. If you know at the outset what you will want to measure, you will be better able to establish your goals, objectives and strategies.

Chapter 6. Beyond the Cafeteria Farm to school programs seek to not only serve locally produced food but to also have their students understand the many reasons they do so. There are growing numbers of curricula, including some focused on Northeastern agriculture and the food system, that help build this understanding, reinforcing the use of local foods in the cafeteria. Links to websites with this information are provided in this section.

Resources for Going Further These resources have been developed and compiled to help you in your work with schools and colleges. Here you will find references to additional tools, research, and resources that may be of interest in farm to school work. These resources are provided as supplements to the tools provided within each chapter's "Toolbox."

Glossary In the Glossary, you will find a list of terms commonly used in discussions of farm to school and their definitions within this context.

References *– All of the references cited in the toolkit are listed by section at the end.*

This toolkit can be used in conjunction with other school health assessment tools such as the School Health Index[4]. This toolkit does not attempt to evaluate the entire school health environment; rather it focuses on those aspects of the school environment that are important in forming farm to cafeteria connections.

How to Use this Resource

This resource is designed to provide the necessary background on farm to school to increase your capacity as an extension educator or community leader to work with school districts and colleges in your county to develop links with local farms.

Step 1: Familiarize yourself with the entire toolkit so that you know what is available for your use and what you might offer to interested stakeholders.

Step 2: Read through the **Farm to School Basics** thoroughly. If you have further questions, you are encouraged to investigate some of the tools included at the end of each chapter and the resources included in the **Resources.** The **Glossary** will also help in your understanding of farm to cafeteria concepts.

Step 3: Once you feel you have a general understanding of farm to school and of the realities of K-12 or college food service, consider organizing or helping to organize a partnership-building meeting with farm to school stakeholders in your community of interest. Use the resources in **Building Relationships** to help get a meeting organized and well-attended.

Step 4: Read through the **Needs Assessment** chapter so that you are familiar with the topic areas that will be covered when you meet with the food service or dining director and other farm to school stakeholders. You may be able to complete some of your needs assessment at your first organizing meeting.

After you have read the **Basics**, **Building Relationships, and Needs Assessment** chapters and reviewed the **Resources** section, you will be prepared to begin working with a school district or college and a stakeholder partnership, or to more effectively support ones you may already be working with.

Step 5: Next, work with these groups to implement the needs assessment. Use the interview guides (provided in copier-ready format) to gather the information needed to get a clear picture of the food service operation, a farmer's readiness and capacity to market to a school, or a distributor's ability to source and supply locally grown foods to the school or college.

Step 6: After completing an interview, review the information and summarize your findings on a **Needs Assessment Summary Worksheet** found in the **Needs Assessment** chapter. You will make note of most pressing need and, using the tools provided in Chapter 5 and in the **Resources**, identify resources for addressing those needs. You will also work with your farm to school partners to develop action steps to address these needs. From this worksheet, you will then describe action steps to meet the top five needs that you have identified. Use the **Action Plan Worksheet** to record the top needs, identified resources, and suggested action steps.

Step 7: This completed Action Plan worksheet should be given to the food service director or other stakeholder(s) that you have interviewed. By reviewing this worksheet with the food service director or other stakeholder(s) that have been interviewed and members of your farm to school partnership, you will be able to identify together, who will take responsibility for each action and to establish a target date by which each action will be completed. In this way you will be providing an easy way for all involved to evaluate how well the plan is carried out.

Step 8: In the **Making the Cafeteria Connection**, there are several short sample evaluation questionnaires for you to use as a farm to cafeteria project gets underway. These will also provide useful guidance in terms of strategies school food service directors, farmers, and distributors can pursue to create successful farm to cafeteria connections.

Step 9: As you develop, take, and evaluate your action steps, be sure to review Chapter 6, **Beyond the Cafeteria** so that you are familiar with ways to make the farm to school connection both in and beyond the cafeteria, through innovative classroom-based educational resources and instruction.

Reminder:

Developing Farm to School programs, even the smallest in scope, can be challenging and even frustrating at times. However, the opportunities are endless and the outcomes, when achieved, highly rewarding. Celebrate *each* success along the way and make the most of the journey, enjoying the camaraderie you develop with partners, and keeping in mind the students, farmers, and communities who will benefit from your progress.

Chapter 1. Farm to School Basics: Understanding What It Is All About

Farm to School: The time is right

There isn't a school district in the country right now that isn't looking at how it could better address the overall well-being of each child that walks through the door every morning and at how it can better meet the interests of the larger the community. Schools are well-recognized as a critical environment for addressing child health.[12] School food service directors are being asked to lead the charge against childhood obesity. The food served to the nation's children is coming under increasing scrutiny with added fats, sugars, and salt being called out. Parents are starting to ask why school meals can't contain more whole and locally-grown foods. College students are looking to the dining halls as the best place to create change – change in health, change in agriculture, and change in the entire food system.

Source: USDA On-line Photography Center </www.usda.gov/oc/photo/opclibra.htm>

Developing links between local farms and schools surfaces as a great way to address all of these interests. And indeed, an increasing number of schools from California to the tip of Long Island, NY now provide successful models.

State surveys show that food service directors in K-12 public schools and colleges are increasingly aware of farm to school and are interested in developing this model in their cafeterias and dining halls.[345]

What is Farm to School?

Farm to School refers to the promotion and use of foods produced by local farmers in meals served in cafeterias of K-12 schools, colleges, and universities, and related educational efforts to increase nutrition, health, and agricultural and food system literacy. Farm to School is a part of the broader "Farm to Cafeteria" movement, which also includes the use and promotion of locally produced foods in cafeterias of hospitals, nursing homes, businesses and other institutions. Local foods can be used in a salad bar set up in the cafeteria, as part of the main dish in the hot lunch, or as a side dish.

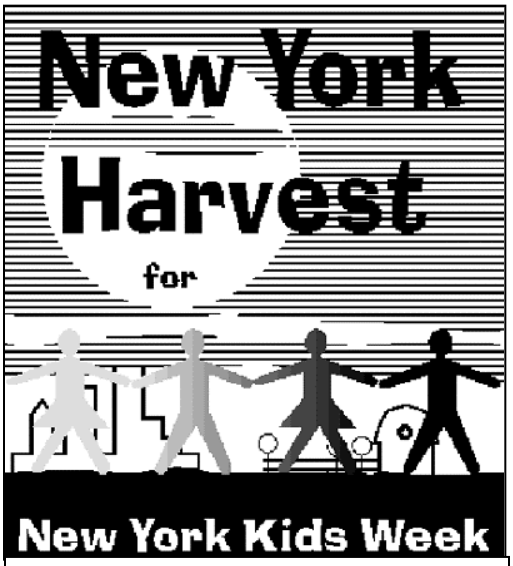
Farm to School is…

- Local food featured in school / college meals
- Farmers' market salad bars
- Nutrition Food system education in the classroom
- School gardens and garden-based learning
- Farmer visits to schools and college dining halls
- Student and food service staff visits to farms
- Harvest events

In the Northeast [6], a region known for its distinct seasons, fruits and vegetables each have specific harvest periods. But thanks to advances in storage technology, many are available for extended periods and, with freezing, canning, and drying, local fruits and vegetables can be enjoyed throughout the year. Further, in addition to fruits and vegetables, there are many other local foods from the Northeast. Our region produces a wide range of animal products (milk and cheeses, meats, eggs and poultry), grains, and legumes – foods from all the food groups. (For a consumer food guide based on Northeastern farms and food, visit the Northeast Regional Food Guide website: http://nefoodguide.cce.cornell.edu/).

Farm to school programs vary in size and design, typically starting small and evolving based on the resources and commitment levels of interested parties in a given school or college. For some K-12 school districts, the Farm to School program consists of a "Harvest Festival" during which a wide variety of foods produced by local farmers are showcased. In New York State, "Harvest Festivals" are often developed and supported through the state's New York Harvest for New York Kids Week. During this week-long celebration of local farm products, held in late September/early October, New York schools are encouraged to provide their students with opportunities to taste the flavors of the fall harvest and engage their students in learning about local foods and the farmers that produce them. In other K-12 schools, local food is served in cafeteria meals throughout the year, including, what may be the easiest school meal program in which to include local foods, the summer feeding program, and sold during school fundraisers. (In the Chapter 2 Tool Box, see "Farm to School Fundraisers" and "Going Beyond Chocolate – Fun Fundraising Ideas"). For some of these schools, Farm to school programs go beyond the cafeteria to include school gardens and classroom nutrition education related to food and/or agriculture.

At the college level local foods have also been featured in harvest celebrations as well as showcased during official college administration events and during meals served to visitors, alumni, and trustees at meetings and conferences. In college cafeterias where local food is served year round, several seasonal food festivals might be held throughout the year. During these festivals, students are presented with educational materials designed to build awareness of the connections between their food, local farms, and the community in which their academic institution is based. At some colleges, food is also sourced from campus-based student farms for use in their dining halls.



Poster for New York Harvest for New York Kids Week. In use since 1997

Farm to School programs can be as diverse as the local foods served within them and represent a way to show case local "flavor". The programs provide a great opportunity to get those creative juices flowing and can provide your school and local community with a new excitement for food and the farmers that produce it. (For more about Farm to School Basics, see "Chapter 1 Tool Box," "Frequently Asked Questions About Farm to School" and "Northeast Farm to School Research.")

Context for Farm to School in the Northeast

The Obesity Epidemic

Childhood and adult obesity in the United States is now a well-recognized health crisis. Among children and teens ages 6-19, 16% (or more than 9 million kids) are overweight. That's triple what the proportion was in 1980.[7] It is estimated that about 70% of overweight adolescents will become overweight adults, increasing their risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer.

- Among school-aged children, aged 6–11 years, the prevalence of overweight increased from 4.0% to 18.8%
- Among school-aged adolescents, aged 12–19 years, the prevalence of overweight increased from 6.1% to 17.4%.[8,9,10]

Table 1. Prevalence of Overweight* Among U.S. Children and Adolescents

Overweight[1] Among U.S. Children and Adolescents (Aged 2–19 Years)				
Ages	1971–1974	1976–1980	1988–1994	2003–2004
2 through 5	5%	5%	7.2%	13.9%
6 through 11	4%	6.5%	11.3%	18.8%
12 through 19	6.1%	5%	10.5%	17.4%

* Sex-and age-specific BMI ≥ 95th percentile based on the CDC growth charts

Current Diets versus Guidelines

The dietary guidelines recommend 2 cups of fruit and $2^{1/2}$ cups of vegetables per day (for a 2,000-calorie intake)[11] but most children don't come close to achieving this recommendation. According to a 2003 survey conducted by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, only 22% of young people eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables per day.[12] Many of those who do still don't follow what we can call a healthy diet. Fat-laden French-fried potatoes alone constitute approximately 23% of all vegetables consumed.[13]

Over 60% of U.S. children and adolescents exceed recommended limit for dietary saturated fat.[14] Only 39% of children ages 2-17 get the recommended 20-25 grams of dietary fiber per day.[15]

It is well-established that diets rich in fruits and vegetables are associated with multiple health benefits, including decreased risk for some types of cancer[16,17,18], cardiovascular disease, diabetes,[19] and obesity.[20] High fruit and vegetable intake may help prevent cancers initiated at the onset of puberty.[21]

With the latest recommendations released by the Institute of Medicine on nutrition standards schools may soon be required to decrease total and saturated fat, eliminate trans fat, and make other changes to increase the nutrient density of school meals.[22]

Mega Market: Schools and Colleges in the Northeast

With nearly 21,000 K-12 schools[23] and over 550 colleges in the northeastern states – and with most of them serving meals to hungry students every school day – these institutions collectively represent an enormous largely yet untapped market for farmers. Table 2. shows the number of K-12 schools in each state that participates in the National School Lunch Program.

On any given day 5,541,183 first to twelfth-graders will choose a reimbursable meal for lunch served in the cafeteria of one of the 20,728 participating schools in the Northeast. The number of students eating school lunch is even greater when those students opting for ala carte items are added in. The amount of revenue in the form of federal reimbursement for lunch alone is $349,187,985 for the northeast region.

Table 2. Number of Schools Participating in National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and Value of Federal Reimbursements by States in the Northeast.

State	Schools in Breakfast Program	Reimbursment Value	Schools in Lunch Program	Reimbursment Value
Connecticut	547	$57,364,081	1,112	$12,282,010
Delaware	211	$4,381,234	216	$15,340,295
Maine	614	$5,583,691	726	$21,089,916
Massachusetts	1,602	$25,453,277	2,362	$96,741,993
Maryland	1,236	$22,839,534	1,535	$90,392,722
New Hampshire	400	$14,265,969	508	$14,265,969
New Jersey	1,601	$33,038,301	2,666	$139,470,746
New York	5,160	$110,937,922	5,966	$456,243,991
Pennsylvania	2,744	$47,502,994	3,888	$214,231,015
Rhode Island	424	$5,023,236	451	$20,066,117
West Virginia	731	$15,881,733	757	$44,760,475
Vermont	309	$2,969,609	344	$9,269,677
Washington, D.C.	180	$3,946,404	197	$15,122,372
Total	15759	$349,187,985	20,728	$1,149,277,298

Source: Data was compiled from Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) annual report, "State of the States: A Profile of Food and Nutrition Programs Across the Nation." http://www.frac.org/Press_Release/03.15.06.html.

The College Dining Revolution

By linking teaching, research and, in the case of Land Grant Univeristies, extension, college campuses are emerging as fertile environments for creating positive social change. And the college dining hall has become much more than a place for hungry co-eds to just fuel up. “From local, organic, humane, and Fair Trade option in cafeterias, coffee shops, and restaurants to experiential programs and classes, campuses are offering students not only an opportuniy to change their diet but also the chance to learn about how their choices affect the larger food system.”[24] Increasingly college and university dining services are making local sourcing part of their business plan. Even very large universities, such as Cornell University, which serves nearly 27,000 meals a day during the academic year, are taking steps to support local farmers. "Cornell Dining is committed to the local community and to working collaboratively with its produce vendor to increase its commitment to local farmers. There is no better way to start dialogue between farmers, Chefs and Ithaca Produce than over a meal - we are delighted that we were able to showcase some of the wonderful products available in this community."[25]

One of the ways dining services are making this commitment is to include geographic preference in their contracts with suppliers (something that is not allowed at the K-12 level). Indeed, contracts with suppliers represents a powerful tool for accessing locally grown agricultural products. In 2003, Cornell Dining included in its produce contract the following: “Campus Life Department’s goal is to use at least 20% New York State grown produce. Vendor will provide a list of all NYS produce suppliers who currently supply the Vendor. Vendor agrees to commit to purchase produce items when available from this vendor list. Include detail on how other local produce suppliers can be added to the list, and the process and requirements to do business with the vendor.”[26] In addition, by choosing recipes that call for locally produced foods, and using them along with seasonal menus that reflect regional agriculture production, dining directors and chefs can more easily partner with local producers.

Table. 3 Number of Colleges and Universities in the Northeast by State.

State	Colleges and Universities
Connecticut	23
Delaware	5
Maine	20
Massachusetts	76
Maryland	37
New Hampshire	17
New Jersey	30
New York	154
Pennsylvania	129
Rhode Island	11
West Virginia	20
Vermont	19
Washington, D.C.	18
Northeast Total	559

Source: U.S. Universities by State. http://www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state/[27]

Mary Hendrickson, a rural sociologist with University of Missouri Extension, lists the main benefits students seek in this dining conversion:

* Locally grown food is fresher and doesn't have to travel far, which means a longer cooler or shelf life while cutting down on fuel consumption and harmful engine emissions.

* The universities have first-hand knowledge of the farmers who grow the food.

* The students have healthier food that isn't treated with chemicals or additives.

* Valuable relationships are formed between local consumers and farmers that can rebuild a food-supply infrastructure."[28]

One of the advantages colleges have over K-12 public school food service is in how the dining service is financed. While the budget is not unlimited by any means, there is usually much more flexibility to make decisions that respond to student interests in local, organic, and fair trade.

Several college dining programs have been established with the goals of developing stable and profitable markets for producers, providing students with healthy, tasty, and nutritious food, educating students, staff, and faculty about the food system and implications food choices have on that system.

Kenyon College in Ohio has established an initiative called "Food for Thought" to build a sustainable local market for foods produced in and around Knox County, Ohio. This initiative Directed by the Rural Life Center at Kenyon College, "is developing a countywide food system to enable area farmers to market their products to individual consumers and institutional buyers including schools, hospitals, restaurants, grocery stores, and caterers."[29]

One of the most celebrated university efforts related to local sustainable food systems is the Yale Sustainable Food Project founded in 2001 by Yale students, faculty, and staff, President Richard Levin, and Alice Waters. "The Project seeks to nourish a culture in which the pleasures of growing, cooking, and sharing food are integral to each student's experience at Yale. The Project was established with the understanding that many of the world's most important questions regarding health, culture, the environment, and the global economy are deeply connected to what we eat and how it is produced. Food cannot stand apart from agriculture, the environment, or the communities where it is grown. The Project's work underscores Yale's ability to advance local, national, and international dialogue on these global issues."[30]

The process of instituting such dramatic changes in university dining procurement provides a rich opportunity for learning. For class credit, a group of ten students at Grinnel College in Iowa undertook a semester long investigation of the justification and opportunities of increasing the quantity of locally-produced food served in the college dining halls. The project focused on seven topics: environmental impact, nutrition, dining service logistics, producer logistics, economic impact, student opinion, and local foods at public schools.[31]

Grinnel's statement about local food is reflective of a growing number of college dining services: "Grinnell College believes that locally grown food has many advantages. Food that is grown and processed close to where it will be consumed can be fresher, healthier and more flavorful. Purchasing locally grown items supports local businesses and farmers and reduces transportation costs, environmental impact, and the use of preservatives. In light of these benefits of locally grown foods, Grinnell College will make reasonable efforts to identify and makes purchases of affordably priced local food products that reflect the College's commitment to environmental responsibility. In seeking local food, the College will

use a three-tiered definition of local, placing the highest priority on food that comes from Poweshiek County and the surrounding counties (Tama, Benton, Iowa, Keokuk, Mahaska, Marion, Jasper, and Marshall), followed by prioritizing food from the state of Iowa, and then food from the Central Plains region."[32]

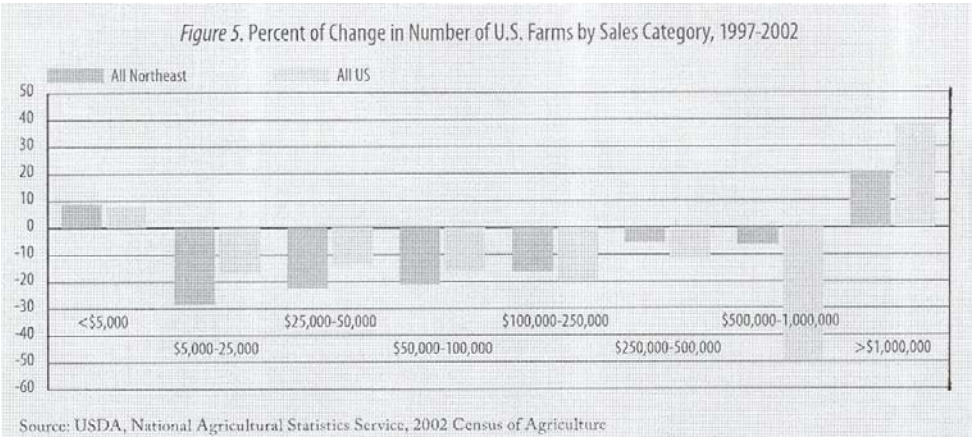
These are but a few of a growing number of farm to college programs that are providing models for other institutions of higher learning dining services considering greater engagement with their local food and agriculture system.

With 559 colleges and universities in the Northeast region and increasing interest on the part of students and dining services to link with local and sustainable food systems, the potential for farm to college in our region is substantial.

Farms and the Northeast Food System

Trends in agriculture in the Northeast largely parallel the nation with respect to farm size and number and the total number of acres in agriculture. Farms in the Northeast, however, "are generally smaller in acreage. By far the most alarming statistics related to an increasingly bi-polar structure of agriculture – more very small farms and very large farms and a disappearing agriculture of the middle."[33] Figure 1 shows the change in number of farms by sales volume, between 1997 and 2002.

Figure 1. Percent Change in Number of U.S. Farms by Sales, 1997-2002.



For these reasons, many feel that agriculture in the Northeast is at a critical juncture. On one hand, the farm crisis that reached its peak in the 1980s is still going on. Farms continue to decline in number and farmland is still being converted to other uses. On the other hand, the Northeast is on the leading edge of promising trends happening in all of American agriculture.

Farms in the Northeast are increasingly diverse. Across the country, immigrant farmers and women are the fastest growing sector of farmers today.[34] "Together, these groups are able to produce special crops for growing ethic and niche sectors of the Northeast, from specialty cheeses to lemon grass and tomatillos."[35]

Both the new crises and new opportunities in Northeast agriculture are mostly the result of the expansion of urban areas in recent decades. As the urban fringe expands outward it puts economic pressure on farmers because their land has dramatically increased in value.

Farmers who use a lot of land as part of an extensive, efficient operation need relatively cheap land to make a profit from their work.

This urbanization, in addition to falling agricultural prices, has shrunk the farming sector in the Northeast over the past few decades. According to the Census of Agriculture, over 5 million acres were lost from agriculture in the Northeast between 1978 and 1997, representing over one-sixth of all farm land. The number of farms in the region declined by over 26,000, or 16%, in the same time period. The 1997 Census of Agriculture showed that the number of farms went up slightly between 1992 and 1997, suggesting these downward trends may be coming to an end. Table 4 shows the change in farmland acres since then – from 1997 and 2002 – in each state in the Northeast, and in the U.S.

Table 4. Change in Farmland Acres, 1997-2002

State	Farmland Acres in 1997	Farmland Acres in 2002	Percent Change
Maine	1,313,066	1,369,768	4.3%
New Hampshire	463,383	444,879	-3.9%
Vermont	1,315,315	1,244,909	-5.3%
Massachusetts	577,637	518,570	-10.2%
Rhode Island	65,083	61,223	-5.9%
Connecticut	406,222	357,154	-12.1%
New York	7,788,241	7,660,969	-1.6%
New Jersey	856,909	805,682	-5.9%
Pennsylvania	7,819,648	7,745,336	-1.0%
Delaware	589,107	540,080	-8.3%
Maryland	2,193,063	2,077,630	-5.3%
West Virginia	3,698,204	3,584,668	-3.1%
Northeast Total	27,085,878	26,410,868	-2.5%
U.S. Total	954,752,502	938,279,056	-1.7%

Source: Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. Northeast Farms and Food. Understanding Our Region's Food System. October 2006.

In general, farmers in the Northeast have sought to make their operations competitive by linking themselves more closely with their buyers. For some larger-scale farmers, that means consistently meeting the strict specifications of food processing companies. For

others, mostly smaller-scale farmers, it means cultivating relationships with restaurateurs, specialty stores, and household shoppers who appreciate their high quality products and extensive knowledge.

In addition, the proximity of most rural regions in the Northeast to cities and towns gives people in farming families more opportunities to earn income from off-farm work. Increasingly, many family farmers across the U.S. rely on other incomes to sustain their operations in lean times. Also, the availability of non-farm work helps new farmers begin farming on a part-time basis and gradually transition to full-time farming.

The Promise of Farm to School to Meet Health and Food System Challenges

Farm to School projects have the potential to provide multiple benefits – to students, farmers, and communities. The mutually beneficial relationship that can develop between farms and schools is considered a strategy for building community food security.[36] Community food security has been defined as, "a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.[37] When these projects are highly integrated combining local farm products served in the cafeteria with nutrition education in the classroom and hands-on experience in school gardens the potential for positive outcomes is maximized. But even single events featuring locally grown fruits and vegetables can provide benefits and lead to an expanded program.

Improved Diets for Students in the Northeast

Establishing healthful diets – one's that are rich in a diversity of fruits and vegetables – in childhood is important for life-long well-being. Eating habits are formed in childhood and often persist into adulthood.[38,39] Helping children establish good eating habits takes some effort in today's environment which offers so many high fat, high sugar and high salt choices and low prices. Since preference for fruits and vegetables in children is influenced by availability, variety, and repeated exposures[40] schools are a perfect place to help instill good dietary habits.

When students are offered a variety of attractive fruits and vegetables that are promoted in school cafeterias, they consume more of them.[41] Farm to school, with its focus on local, fresh, minimally processed fruits and vegetables offers schools an exciting way to positively impact children's diets and their health throughout their lives.

The emphasis on fresh, as well as stored, or minimally processed (peeled, sliced, diced, frozen, no added fats, sugars, salt) fruits and vegetables in farm to school programs can also help youth achieve and maintain a healthy weight into adulthood. Evidence suggests that replacing energy dense foods (high calories per weight of food) with foods of lower energy density, such as fruits and vegetables, can be an effective part of a weight management strategy.[42]

Source: USDA On-line Photography Center: www.usda.gov/oc/photo/opclibra.htm

Schools participating in Farm to School projects have experienced increased participation in the school meal program. When farm fresh products are on the menu, instead of prepackaged, highly processed fruits and vegetables children will eat more.[43][1] A New York Times article, featuring the Promise Academy in Harlem, describes a child who after seeing Swiss Chard for the first time only one month before, ate three helpings when it was offered in her cafeteria. The following quote reflects the food preference transformation she underwent during her first few months of meals at the Promise Academy: "I was like, 'I don't want to eat that…[b]ut I had to, because there was nothing else. Then it was like, 'This is good.'" [44] Multiple exposures are important: a child needs to be offered a food between 7 and 14 times before habits will change. The more a child is exposed to healthful foods the greater the likehood these foods will be consumed.

Increased Access to Farm Fresh Foods

In many communities, especially low-income communities, access to wholesome fresh fruits and vegetables is often limited. Many families rely on the school meal program to provide their children with a healthy and nutritious lunch. For low-income families, in particular, what their children eat in the federally reimbursable school meal often represents a significant part of their daily food intake. Providing local, fresh, or minimally-processed fruits and vegetables, and other wholesome farm products in school meals increases children's access to these important foods. The healthier school meals are, the better the potential health outcomes for all students.

When locally produced fruits and vegetables are offered as part of the school's reimbursable meals or with a la carte items, schools are supporting the health of their students and potentially improving their academic outcomes. Well-nourished students tend to perform better academically than poorly nourished children, scoring higher on standardized achievement tests. Given that the majority of our nation's youth have less than optimal eating habits, this creates a tremendous challenge for meeting achievement outcomes. Farm to school programs can help address this issue. This link between nutrition and academic achievement stems from an inadequate consumption of key food groups. Coupled with an over-consumption of saturated fats and refined sugars, a low intake of nutrient rich foods, deprives children of essential vitamins, minerals, fats, and proteins that are necessary for optimal cognitive function.[45,46]

[1] It is important to acknowledge that value-added processing is essential for farm to school connections, especially in areas such as the Northeast with short growing seasons. In this Tool Kit we make a distinguish between "minimally" processed foods (cut, washed peeled, frozen, and otherwise preserved) and "highly" processed (where nutrients and fiber are lost and fats, sugars, and salt are added).

At the college level, the use of foods from local farms, or in some cases student run farms, in the meal program is providing wholesome foods and opportunities to learn about agriculture and sustainability. The same opportunity exists when K-12 schools combine menu changes, school gardens and integrated curricula that address food and farming education.

Market Development Local Farmers

One of the outcomes of farm to school programs is the development of new markets for small and mid-size farms in the Northeast. Nearly a decade ago, the USDA Small Farms Commission recognized the importance of strong connections between consumers and producers in their recommendations for ways the USDA could better respond to the needs of small farms. "When farmers and consumers communicate face-to-face, through farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture, or direct marketing to restaurants, a unique farmer-consumer relationship can develop, giving the small farmer a competitive advantage and giving consumers assurance that their food purchases are returning value to the farmer, the environment, and their community."[47]

Mid-size farms ag in the middle citation. benefits of schools service more local products from the Northeast is that it helps support farmers in the region as they make a transition to a new kind of farming. With family farms in decline in the Northeast, market development is increasingly important. Farm to school programs can provide an additional, alternative, and steady market for our region's family farmers. Marketing locally and directly to schools can be an effective way for small- to mid-size farms to diversify their sales and enhance their bottom line. Because of the large volume of food needed by schools every day, farm to school projects offer farmers an opportunity to sell large quantities on a consistent basis. Once a relationship is established with a school, farmers can plan their crops accordingly to better meet the anticipated needs of food service.

Positive Economic and Social Impacts

Farm to school links can bring economic and social benefits to communities. When farm sales stay within a community, the local economy can benefit from through what's known as a "multiplier effect" the re-circulation of dollars orginally spent on food in the local economy multiple times before eventually leaving the community. Farmers benefit the most when schools buy directly from them, thereby retaining the entire food dollar instead of losing a share to a distributor. But, distributors are an important part of the farm to school picture: most schools will obtain only a fraction of their food directly over the course of the year.

Farms that are economically viable play an important role in the economic, social, and civic affairs of a community. Farms provide jobs, pay taxes, and keep working agricultural land open. Farmland has its own set of local benefits that can include lower cost of community services, open space, scenic vistas, diversified wildlife habitat, greater food security, and flood control. Farms often contribute more in taxes than they require in services, whereas suburban development usually costs more than it generates in taxes. On average, for every dollar in revenue raised by residential development, governments must spend $1.19 on services, thus requiring higher taxes. For each dollar of revenue raised by farm, forest or open space, government spends 37 cents on services.[48]

Every new dollar generated by agricultural production in New York State, brings in an additional $.40 to $.80 of production output to the state, and every new job creates an additional 1.11 to 3.68 jobs in the state, depending on the agricultural sector.[49]

When purchasing directly from local farmers, food service directors have the opportunity to ask about agricultural practices and those practices that are good for the environment as well as the community.[50]

Decreased Reliance on Fossil Fuel for Transporting Food

The existing global system of food transportation and distribution requires enormous amounts of energy and other resources. Before reaching your table, the average food item in the United States will travel 1,500 miles.[51] This is an energy-intensive and inefficient system that creates serious environmental problems. Consider the following food and energy facts:

1. Only about 10% of the fossil fuel energy used in the world's food system is used in production; the other 90% goes into packaging, transportation and marketing.
2. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, the 1999 energy bill for marketing food in the United States totaled $21.6 billion, accounting for 3.5% of retail food expenditures.
3. The current food production and distribution system expends 10-15 calories of energy for every one calorie of energy produced.

When farm sales are made within the community they generally use much less energy. By creating markets within the region, farmers can make a substantial, positive effect on the environment by reducing energy needs for transportation, packaging, and marketing. When vehicles travel shorter distances less refrigeration is required, less fuel is needed and fewer ozone-depleting gases are emitted. This is good for our health and the health of the planet.

Community Food Systems

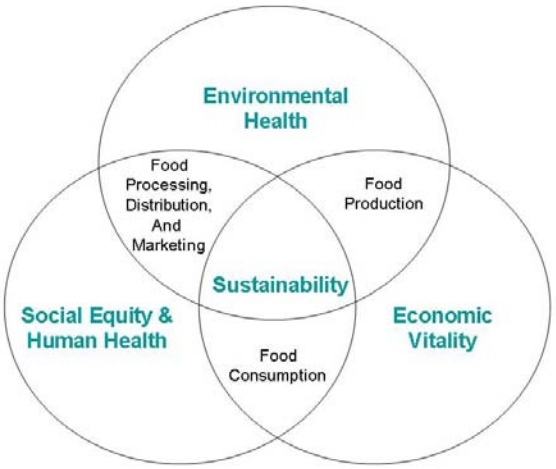
Farm to school connections are one of several efforts underway to reestablish and strengthen local, sustainable food systems (Figure 2). Some refer to these as community food systems. According to Steven Garrett and Gail Feenstra, a community food system is where "sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular geographic location." [52]

<u>Goals of a Community Food System:</u>

- Improve access by all community members to an adequate, affordable, nutritious diet;
- Supporting a stable base of family farms that use production practices that are minimally chemical and energy-intensive, and emphasize local inputs;
- Generating marketing and processing practices that create more direct and beneficial links between farmers and consumers, and to the extent possible reduce resources used to move food between producers and consumers;

- Developing food and agriculture-related businesses that create jobs, re-circulate financial capital in the community, or in other ways, contribute to the community's economic development;
- Improving working and living conditions for farm labor such that farmers and farm workers can be fully contributing members of the community;
- Creating food and agriculture policies that promote local food production, processing and consumption. [53]]

Figure 2. Community Food Systems



Source: Garrett and Feenstra. 1999. *Growing a Community Food System.* Community Ventures Series. WREP0135.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Food and Society Initiative refer to community-based food systems as "locally-owned and controlled, environmentally sound, and health promoting."[54]

Increased Agriculture Literacy and Food System Awareness

With less than 2% of the U.S. population directly involved in food production, most students have limited understanding of where food comes from and how it gets from farm to school. Few people (including children or college students) have a family farm connection or the opportunity to learn how vegetables, fruits, grains, and dairy foods are produced and how farm animals are raised.

Farm to School projects can help increase awareness of the economic, social, and environmental contributions made by local food systems. Farm to school projects provide a link to the local food system. "When local food systems are enhanced, farms are more economically viable, farmland is more likely to be preserved for agricultural purposes, and less energy is required to transport food over great distances, and people from all economic classes have greater access to healthy foods."[55] Through hands-on experiential learning, students can gain an appreciation for the importance of and relationships between a healthy diet, healthy farms, and healthy communities. And, through farm to school programs, they can gain an awareness of how their daily food choices play a role in each.

One way to strengthen acceptance of local foods that are introduced in the cafeteria is to integrate classroom education with your farm to school program. Research shows that when children have the opportunity to engage with food in hands-on explorations, such as

growing and cooking they are more likely to taste those foods and develop a habit of eating them with multiple exposures.[4] Children are also more likely to change behaviors when they are motivated by an outcome that has meaning for them, such as the health of the natural environment.

Food and farming education can be integrated into all subject areas, meeting state standards and providing students with a fun and familiar topic as a way to explore math, science, social studies, literacy, and health. Health literate citizens, with an appreciation for the interrelationships between food, farming, environment and human health, are more likely to advocate for food choices at school, home and community that support health and wellbeing in all of these domains.

Enhanced Public Image for Schools/Colleges

There are many benefits of farm to school programs for schools and colleges, including increased participation in school meals, excitement and pride in the kitchen, improved health and academic performance of students, and an improved public image.

By focusing on local, fresh, high quality foods, food service directors can expect increased rates of student participation in school meals. To assure acceptance of new foods, some food service directors and/or teachers conduct taste-tests in the classroom or cafeteria. When students have a chance to taste new foods before seeing them in the cafeteria, they're more likely to choose them in the cafeteria as part of the reimbursable meal.

Food service workers are often pleased with the quality of foods that come from local farms and get additional enjoyment from preparing them. Excitement generated in the kitchen from the use of local foods has been reported by schools participating in FTS projects. Cooking skills and creativity can be shown off and pride can be increased.

When schools and colleges buy fresh food grown by local farmers it sends the message that they care about the quality of the meals they serve. Food service is seen as supporting the health and academic wellbeing of their students. It also shows that they are doing their part to support local farms and other food-based businesses, such as processors and distributors, through their food procurement practices. This can create good will toward the school and especially its food service operation.

The idea of improving children's nutrition and supporting local farms is easy to "sell" as a local media story. The more positive media coverage a project receives, the more support generated from the school administration, school board, parents, teachers, food service staff, and the local community.

Chapter 1 Toolbox

Toolbox

Frequently Asked Questions About Farm to School

What is Farm to School?

Farm to School involves the promotion and use of locally produced foods in meals served in cafeterias of K-12 schools, colleges, and universities, and related educational efforts to increase agricultural and food system literacy. Farm to School is a part of the broader "Farm to Cafeteria" movement, which also includes the use and promotion of locally produced foods in cafeterias of hospitals, nursing homes, businesses and other institutions. Farm to school programs can involve: farmers' market salad bars, winter root vegetables or hearty soup stations, catering projects (mostly at the college level), school gardens, and classroom food-based education.

What is DoD Fresh?

Through the Department of Defense Fresh pilot program that began in 1994, food service directors can use federal commodity dollars to purchase state-grown produce from DoD buyers. The DoD Fresh Program increasingly gives preference to small, and mid-size family farmers within the states in which it operates. The Department of Defense's (DoD) Defense Supply Center's Produce Business Unit operates 10 regional Produce Buying Offices. The Produce Business Unit also oversees a roving staff of field buyers who purchase products directly from growing areas. The DoD Fresh Program is operational in 43 states. Additional information on the DoD Fresh Program is available in the DoD Fresh Fact Sheet and online at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/dod/default.htm

Adapted from the National Farm to School Program Website

Does New York State participate in the DoD Fresh Program?

Yes. New York State was added to the list of states receiving funds to participate in the DoD Fresh program. The program started in 2003-04 school year in the state's largest school district – New York City. That year children in the public schools of New York City enjoyed apples, apple slices, and pears that were grown by New York farmers. The great success of the pilot program facilitated the expansion of the program in 2004-2005 to include 150 school districts in Syracuse and Binghamton. Last school year (2004-2005) New York children in K-12 schools were served over $1.5 million worth of fruits and vegetables grown by New York farmers and purchased through the DoD Fresh program. Over 40% of the program money allocated to New York was spent on in-state farm products. Apple slices, apples and potatoes were the items purchased for New York City Schools and two distribution warehouses upstate.

The 2005-06 school year is the third year of the program and two more distribution areas were been added. Mini Carrots, Bartlett Pears, Apples, Apple Slices and Potatoes were offered to almost 300 districts through this program.

Do Farm to School programs improve children's diets?

Farm to School programs focus on increasing the amount of locally grown/raised foods into the school meals program. The foods targeted in FTS programs tend to be whole "nutrient-rich" foods. Foods typically emphasized in FTS programs are fresh or freshly stored fruits and vegetables, other plant-foods (grains, beans and legumes), local meats, dairy products and eggs.

Is there a farm to school program in my area?

We have information on colleges and school districts in New York State. Your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office may also be aware of farm to school programs in your area. For states besides NY you can also contact the National Farm to School Program Manager directly for the most up to date information.

How can a farmer sell to a local school?

Farmers can call and make an appointment directly with a local school district. Take your business materials (price and crop list, business card, references) and perhaps a sample for the Food Service Director. Or you can inquire about existing farm to school programs that might connect you to a group of farmers that sell or deliver together. Your local or state agricultural organizations or agencies are also able to help you find useful resources on selling to local schools. (Adapted from the National Farm to School Program Website)

How can schools obtain local foods?

Schools can theoretically obtain local foods through a variety of channels, including: Purchases at a farmer's market; purchase of local food through your usual distributor; purchase of local food through a farmer (with other districts, on your own, or through a farmer cooperative); cultivation or growing of food through a school garden.

I'm a parent. How can I get a farm to school project going at my child's school?

The first step is to familiarize yourself and other parents with the school lunch program at the school. Try to gain an understanding of the school lunch program to better prepare yourself for starting a project. Also familiarize yourself with local agriculture, what is available? When is it available? The next step is to contact the food service director. Food service directors can be wonderful and necessary allies in making successful farm to school projects. Share with the food service director about farm to school, but also show that you understand how difficult it is to add anything new to the food service operation. Costs are a huge concern particularly related to labor, acknowledge those concerns and reference ways that farm to school doesn't need to cost more. Allow for a food service director to review the material you have presented and provide them with the contact information of food service directors that have been involved in successful farm to school projects in their state. Then get back in touch with the food service director and answer any additional questions they may have. If you do not know the answers refer them to a local farm to school program or to the national farm to school coalition. If the cafeteria does not seem like an option, farm to school projects can involve harvest events, local food fundraising or in-class curricula. Finding teachers or administrators interested in these farm to school projects is another avenue of pursuit.

I'm a food service director. How do I find locally grown foods?

Visit the local farmers market in your area to connect with local farmers. Other agencies that work with farmers such as Farmers Market Associations, Farm Bureaus and Cooperative Extension Services can also provide a listing of farmers in the area. Look at the "Farms and Farmers" section on your state page on this website.

What foods are produced in New York State?

A variety of foods are produced in New York State. A chart of available produce by season is online at the New York State Agriculture and Markets website:
http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/HarvestCalendar.html

Is it legal for schools to purchase locally grown foods?

Yes. Food service directors are not allowed to include the state or county that a product is grown in their specifications. However, there is nothing illegal about letting supplier know of an interest in locally grown foods in general. Also, food service directors are allowed to specify precise varieties of fruits or vegetables that are commonly grown in the Northeast region. While this won't guarantee that the product will be from a local farm, it increases the likelihood.

Where can I look for funding to support a farm to school program?

In June 2004, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act was passed, which includes Farm to Cafeteria legislation under Section 122 entitled, "Access to Local Foods and School Gardens." The legislation will create a seed grant funds up to $100,000 to cover the initial costs of Farm to Cafeteria projects, including equipment, nutrition education, and school gardens. Other federal and state funding streams are available to support farm to school programs through the 2002 Farm Bill Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program, USDA Community Food Security projects, and through the Department of Health Nutrition Network programs respectively. In addition, you can also approach local foundations and private businesses in your community to contribute cash or in kind to the project. For example, a natural foods market may donate salad bar and kitchen equipment, a trucking company may donate the services of a truck etc. All these donations are vital to reducing the costs and making the program viable. *(Adapted from the National Farm to School Program Website)*

Where to Find Farm Products

The Department of Agriculture & Markets: Your state Department of Agriculture and Markets should be able to provide you a listing of farmers.

The State Promotional Campaign: Your state Department of Agriculture and Markets may have additional listings of farmers, food processors and others actively engaged in their state-wide promotional or branding campaign.

Cooperative Extension: Every state has a land grant university and associated extension systems. Contact your extension agent or educator to find local farms and food businesses.

Farm Bureaus: Some Farm Bureaus are actively engaged in promoting local agriculture and may have listings of farms available.

Chambers of Commerce and Tourism & Visitors Bureaus: These agencies may have maps and brochures available of farm stands, farmer's markets and U-Pick operations.

The Farmers' Direct Marketing Association: This is a national organization with state chapters. Check in your state for farmers participating in the Association.

Northeast Organic Farmers Association: State Chapters maintain a listing of certified organic members.

In addition you may be able to find farmers by searching the following National databases:

Farm to Table at http://www.farmtotable.org/
Eat Well at http://www.eatwellguide.org/search.cfm
New Farm Locator at http://www.newfarm.org/farmlocator/index.php
Local Harvest at http://www.localharvest.org/
Pick Your Own at http://PickYourOwn.com

Where to Find NY-Grown Farm Products for Wholesale Purchases

Ask your suppliers for New York-grown products. Talk with the vendors who supply you fresh produce, meat, dairy, eggs, juices, frozen and canned goods, about your desire to buy New York grown. Ask them to identify their sources of NY farm products. Give them a copy of this flier.

New York Apple Association
PO Box 350 Fishers, NY 14453
585-924-1629
www.nyapplecountry.com

NY Beef Industry Council
PO Box 250, Westmooreland, NY 13490
315-339-6922
www.nybeef.org

NY Beef Producers Association
3 Second St., Camden, NY 13316
315-245-3386
www.nybpa.org

NY Berry Growers
14 State St., Bloomfiled, NY 14469
585-657-5328
www.nysbga.org

NY Cheese Manufacturers
4520 Haskell Rd., Cuba, NY 14727
(585) 968-1552
www.newyorkcheese.org

NY Christmas Trees
646 Finches Corners Rd., Red Creek, NY 13143
315-754-8132
www.christmastreesny.org

NY Corn Growers Association
2269 DeWindt Rd., Newark, NY 14513
315-331-7791
www.nycorn.org

New York State Dairy Foods, Inc.
201 So. Main St., Suite 302, North Syracuse, NY 13212
315-452-6455
www.nysdfi.org

NY Dairy Goat Breeders
5683 Cheningo-Solon Pond Rd., Cincinnatus, NY 13040

NY Deer Farmers
125 Williams Rd., Candor, NY 13743
607-659-4635
www.negamemeat.com or www.ndef.org

NY Food Processors
16 Loretta Dr., Suite 100, Spencerport, NY 14559
518-352-7766
www.nyfoodprocessors.org

NYS Small Scale Food Processors Association
109 Brown Rd., Oxford, NY 13830
607-843-8243
www.nyssfpa.com

Empire State Honey Producers Association
273 Randall Rd., Lisbon, NY 13658
315-322-4208

NYS Horse Council
44 Eggleston Rd., Westport, NY 12993
518-962-2316

NYS Horticultural Society
PO Box 462 Geneva, NY 14456
315-787-2404

NY Llama and Alpaca Association
12 Marion Pl., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518-587-5140

NYS Maple Producers Association
647 Bunker Hill Rd., Salem, NY 12865
518-854-7669
www.newyorkmaple.com

NY Pork Producers
12 North Park St., Seneca Falls, NY 13148
315-568-2750

Empire Sate Potato Growers
PO Box 566, Stanley, NY 14561
585-526-5356
www.empirepotatogrowers.com

NYS Poultry Association
PO Box 821, Ithaca, NY 14850
518-463-8644

Empire Sheep Producers Association
284 Finnegan Rd., Canton, NY 13617
www.sheepgoatmarketing.com

NYS Vegetable Growers Association
PO Box 70 Kirkville, NY 13082
315-687-5734

NY Wine and Grape Foundation
350 Elm St., Penn Yan, NY 14527
315-536-7442
www.newyorkwines.org

Delivery Options to Consider for Farm to School

Direct from the Farm: If a farmer is in close proximity to the school, it might be the most economical and efficient for the farmer to drive the product directly to the school. If there is a significant distance to the school, then the cost of delivering to the school should be added to the invoice as a delivery charge by the farmer.

Pooled Delivery: If there is a collection of farms that are working with a larger school district, then pooled delivery may be an option. One farmer may be in charge of gathering product either at all individual locations, or at a central meeting point, to then take all the product to the school district. This option is successful if farmers are willing to trust one another and cooperate, know who is best capable and most efficient at making the delivery, and willing to agree to a workable delivery schedule.

A Local Distributor: Using a distributor in a local area may be an option. You will need to contact the distributor well in advance to make arrangements for the school growing season. Because large distributors are often not interested in making small deliveries, a small company is best suited for this job.

Food Banks: Food banks and gleaners perhaps work the same farms and travel the same roads that your route will require. FoodLink in Rochester is working in the Finger Lakes region to arrange for pick-ups and drops along their existing routes. Other food banks and food rescue organizations may be interested in helping in the same capacity.

School Personnel or Parent Volunteer: It might actually be more economical for the school district to hire a designated driver to make on-farm pickups. Perhaps this service can be performed by a parent volunteer if the volume is small enough.

Foragers: Schools that are committed to buying local may employ a forager, an individual who travels from farm to farm looking for and purchasing product on the school's behalf. A forager is often employed by larger school districts, smaller school districts working collectively, or colleges.

Getting a Farm to School Program in Your School: A Checklist for Parents

The New York Farm to School Program is designed to connect local farms and farm products to New York classrooms and cafeterias by integrating agricultural production, school food procurement, and school curriculum. The goal is to develop a healthy, community-based, community-supported school food system. As parents you are in a unique position to help.

1. Determine if your school is participating in:
   - o New York Harvest for New York Kids Week
   - o Farm to School
   - o Kids Growing Food
   - o Agriculture in the Classroom

2. Eat Breakfast or lunch at school with your child:
   - o See what the meals are like.
   - o Notice the atmosphere.
   - o Keep track of the time.

3. Visit your school:
   - o Determine what foods and snacks are currently being sold.
   - o Talk to administrators, food service staff, and teachers about the nutritional values of foods sold and served and if any is local.
   - o Determine who makes the food purchasing decisions and contact that person.
   - o Ask if nutrition education is part of the curriculum.

4. Recruit other interested people to help:
   - o Parents
   - o Teachers
   - o Students
   - o PTA members
   - o Food Service Staff
   - o Doctors and/or Nutritionists
   - o Local farmers
   - o Extension or Farm Bureau
   - o Others

5. Learn what others have done regarding:
   - o School Nutrition Policy
   - o School Wellness Policy
   - o School Vending Policy
   - o School Fundraising Policy

6. Set standards for nutrition and local procurement for:
   - o vending machines
   - o snack bars
   - o ala carte lines
   - o school stores
   - o fund raisers
   - o athletic events
   - o before/after school programs
   - o classroom rewards
   - o school function
   - o other school venue

7. Work to improve:
   - Nutritional quality and range of choice in the school.
   - Kid appeal of school meals.
   - Setting good examples/ being a good role model.
   - Introduction of new foods.

8. Make connections to local agriculture:
   - Visit a Local Farm or Orchard.
   - Attend a Farmers Market.
   - Outreach to Farm Bureau or Cornell Cooperative Extension in your county.

9. Encourage Active Learning Through:
   - Field Trips to Farms
   - Field Trips to Museums or Discovery Centers
   - Farmer Visits to Schools
   - Student Run School Stores
   - School Gardens

10. Work to Broaden the School Classroom Curriculum:
   - Nutrition Education
   - Agricultural Literacy

Developed by NY Farms! For more info call 607-659-3710 or visit us on line at www.nyfarms.info

Department of Defense Fresh Program Fact Sheet

In 1994, the Food and Nutrition Service began working with the Agricultural Marketing Service and other agencies in and out of government to explore options for providing more fresh fruit and vegetable products to schools. This meeting led to talks with the Department of Defense, Defense Personnel Support Center, now known as the Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP) to enter into a pilot project to supply fresh fruit and vegetables directly to schools along with their deliveries to military installations or other sites in the United States. An agreement was signed by administrators of the Food and Nutrition Service, Agricultural Marketing Service, and DSCP in August 1995 authorizing the program.

The pilot project began in School Year (SY) 1995 with eight States participating, allocating a portion of their commodity entitlement funds toward the program. Produce valued at $3,259,367 was delivered to schools that year. Due to the favorable response from States participating in the pilot, the program was opened up to all States. The program increased each year until allocations for SY 1998 reached $20 million, and $25 million in SY 1999 through SY 2002. The 2002 Farm Bill doubled spending to $50 million in SY 2003, where it is today (SY 2006). At this time, 43 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam are participating in the program using commodity entitlement funds.

Because of the success of the entitlement program for schools, it was expanded to include purchases for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, which in SY 2005 spent $3,944,560 on produce. School lunch programs were also given the opportunity to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables directly from DSCP using Section 4 and 11 funds. During SY 2005, 18 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam ordered an additional $20,023,993 of produce with these funds.

DSCP operates a nationwide system to purchase and distribute a wide variety of high quality fresh produce to military installations, Federal prisons, and veterans' hospitals. Either States or their schools place orders directly with DSCP's field offices for a variety of available, American-grown fresh products. A few of the 874 currently available products include various types and pack sizes of: lettuce, salad mix, white mushrooms, broccoli, alfalfa sprouts, watermelon, apples, oranges, lemons, honeydew, nectarines, kiwi fruit, strawberries, pineapples, pears, celery sticks, kale, cantaloupe, red grapes, collard greens, cucumbers, carrots, avocado, tomatoes, peaches, spinach, radishes and bananas. States can and do limit the types of products their schools may order.

Through the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been able to offer schools a wider variety of fresh produce than would normally be available through USDA purchases. States and schools are extremely pleased with the quality, condition, and appearance of the products, and they are excited about the extensive selection. Deliveries are frequent and on time, and the cost is reasonable. In Fiscal Year 2004, USDA was the Department of Defense's second biggest customer, accounting for 16 percent of its produce business, after the commissary system, which formed 69 percent.

USDA Fruit and Vegetable Program Fact Sheet

To promote fresh fruit and vegetable consumption among the US schoolchildren, the Nutrition Programs Title of the 2002 Farm Act provided $6 million for USDA to award to schools through a Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program (FVPP) for the 2002-03 school year. The four states selected to participate in the original pilot were Indiana, Michigan, Iowa and Ohio. Twenty-five elementary and secondary schools in each state and seven schools in the Zuni Pueblo of New Mexico benefited from the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables through the program.

The program has been popular with students and administrators, raised student preference for a variety of fruits and vegetables and improved student eating habits. USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) was responsible for evaluating the pilot. The publication, "Evaluation of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program: Report to Congress" (Available at: http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/efan03006/), provides the results of ERS's review, based on analyses of administrative school records, December reports, February reports, site visits to schools, focus groups, interviews, and a conference of pilot program managers, other pilot staff, and policy stakeholders.

Following the evaluation, this program was made permanent via the enactment of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. In October 2004, the USDA awarded $9 Million to promote fruit and vegetable consumption in schools by continuing and expanding the program. Through the expansion schools in Washington, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, the Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota and the Intertribal Council of Arizona students will receive the many benefits attributed to this program.

As of Fall 2005, the following states and reservations are included in the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program:

1. Indiana
2. Michigan
3. Iowa
4. Ohio
5. Zuni Pueblo of New Mexico
6. Washington
7. North Carolina
8. Pennsylvania
9. Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Reservation of South Dakota

Intertribal Council of Arizona students

**This fact sheet is adapted from information available at:
http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/ChildNutrition/fruitandvegetablepilot.htm

Northeast Farm to School Research

Farm to School in New York State: Survey Results

- 25% of the food service directors (FSDs) reported purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables directly from a farmer.
- 72% reported purchasing local (NY) foods either directly from a farmer or from a vendor.
- Apples, potatoes and lettuce were among the most frequently named "top five whole fresh fruits and vegetables purchases"– all NY crops.
- The majority of FSDs purchased several fruits and vegetables fresh during the weeks they are available from NY farms and most of those who haven't are interested.
- Nearly 88% of FSDs felt that schools support the local economy and community by purchasing local foods.
- Over half felt local purchases would benefit students by increasing their access to fresh fruits & vegetables, and improving their diets.
- Over half indicated that if more local products were available partially processed they would be more likely to purchase them.
- The concerns most frequently cited were reliability of supply, delivery, and cost. 33% reported participating in NY Harvest for NY Kids Week.

Source Wilkins, Jennifer (2004)
Examination of the Connection between Farmers & School Cafeterias in New York State (FDSRVCS). Report. Cornell. University. August

Buying Local Foods: A Survey of College and University Dining Directors

From: Azuma, Andrea Misako. (2003) Farm to college in New York State: A survey of college and university dining directors' attitudes, current practices, and the potential for local food purchases.

- Dining directors are primarily concerned with quality, consistency, safety, likelihood of sales, and customer requests when choosing what to buy.
- Dining directors consider reliability of vendor, quality of products sold, directive from contract management company, prices, and ease of ordering determining who to buy from.
- A small percentage of directors currently purchase from local sources.
- Congruence exists between NYS agriculture supply and current college purchase behaviors.

Purchasing New York Farm Foods for School Meals: A Report to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets on Regional Farm-to-School Meetings

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets contracted with NY Farms! to organize regional Farm-to-School meetings across New York State, the report findings were written by Glenda Neff in 2003

The following comments about food items were heard at all the regional meetings:

- Two products are definitely at the top of the list at all schools – apples and potatoes. Some schools offer fresh apples every day in every cafeteria.
- Fresh potatoes are used less often than frozen, which are provided to schools by USDA donated foods. Interest in a “low-fat french-fry” was high. The potato wedges, oven-roasted for the tasting, were met with very positive feedback at the pilot schools and at these meetings.
- Baked potato is seldom on the menu, once per month on average. They need small-sized whole potatoes, EG 90-120 ct. per case.
- “Salt potatoes” are popular with students. These are small potatoes, cooked whole.
- Fresh apples are preferred at smaller sizes.
- Sliced fresh apples are an ideal product for elementary school children. There is also a desire to offer them in vending machines. The current price of packaged fresh sliced apples is too high, about double the cost of fresh whole apples. Shelf life is also sometimes a problem. Some schools will do the apple slicing in their kitchens, with peel left on. Then, inconsistent size of apples is not a problem.
- Apple cider in 4 oz. portion size for meals; 8 oz. containers for a la carte, is desired.
- Pears are popular with students. Schools would like to get fresh, ripe pears from NY growers.
- Seedless grapes are well-liked by students. As with the apple slices, the preferred packaging is single portions. We need to get information about seedless varieties being grown in NY State to distributors and school food service.
- After potatoes, carrots are the next big volume item, with most all schools saying they buy baby-cut carrots, some in single portion bags. Carrot and celery sticks are also purchased.

- Cauliflower and broccoli are being served raw, with ranch dressing dip. Some schools will cut up whole heads, but florets are preferred by many. One Food Service Director said he would like to get mixed cauliflower and broccoli florets.
- Lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, and green peppers are used in salads, subs and sandwiches, taco bars. Some schools buy whole heads of iceberg lettuce, others prefer salad mix.

Farm to School Projects in New Jersey

- The following products are commonly bought through farm to school programs: Peaches, tomatoes, peppers, watermelon, potatoes, and salad mix. Regional minimally processed items: cider (from Pennsylvania), apple slices, fruit leathers, and fruit juice (from New York).
- In New Jersey, all 2,653 schools that participate in the national school lunch program may receive local produce at one time or another as part of the DoD Fresh Program. Because of seasonality, local produce is not available year round; preferential purchasing of New Jersey products through this program occurs primarily in the fall. In FY2003, the amount of locally grown produce distributed to NJ schools in September through October was approximately 400,00 pounds. In FY2004, over 600,000 pounds of locally grown produce were distributed to NJ schools from September through December.

Farm to School Projects in Connecticut

- The following products are commonly bought through farm to school programs: At least five varieties of lettuces and greens (including hydroponic lettuce), cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, onions, peppers, radishes, tomatoes, pears, peaches, strawberries, watermelon, and at least three varieties of apples.
- Approximately 24 farmers and 14 school systems (districts) were involved in the School Meals From Connecticut Farms initiative in 2004.

Farm to School Projects in Massachusetts

- The following products are commonly bought through farm to school programs: Apples, strawberries, blueberries, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, turnips, butternut squash, eggs and maple syrup.
- The University of Massachusetts Amherst is now delivering local produce to six school districts in western Mass. Purchases are as high as $700 per week for one district." Berkshire Grown, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting local agriculture, is arranging to sell to a number of private schools.
- The Local Hero School Network is already serving as a catalyst for farm to school expansion. CISA facilitates connections between farmers and school districts. There are approximately twenty schools within the network, some already in contact with local farmers. Six schools in Orange and Athol school districts will purchase fresh produce from local farmers during the 2004-2005 school year.

Farm to School Projects in New Hampshire

- New Hampshire apples and cider are commonly used in farm to school programs. Some schools are also incorporating foods such as lettuce, eggs, blueberries, bread, and cheese.

Farm to School Projects in Vermont

- The following process is followed for integrating local foods into schools in Vermont. Milk and dairy products are introduced first and then raw products such as carrots, onions, potatoes, parsnips, and cabbage are also used in the participating cafeterias. Locally produced lettuce when in season is also used for fresh green salads and on salad bars.

Listing of Farm to Cafeteria Relevant Videos

DIRT: The Next Generation

This video is the story of a diverse group of teenagers who break through stereotypes they had about each other to become a close-knit community learning leadership, public speaking and farming skills. The 22-minute video is a glimpse into the spirit of The Food Project from the eyes, words and voices of the young people who have experienced the program. An ideal way to learn more about The Food Project, this youth-produced video will also serve as a springboard for discussion about a model that is thoughtfully and creatively challenging youth to build a better future for themselves and their communities. Available for $15 online at: http://www.thefoodproject.org/buy/Internal1.asp?id=144

Food Doesn't Grow in the Supermarket

This 30 minute video (teacher's guide included) allows the viewer to accompany the ill-informed "City Guy" on his humorous and educational journey to a dairy, cranberry and vegetable farm in New Jersey. Actual family members living and working on the farm are interviewed about farm life, their product and their work. Available for $10 from:
NJ Agricultural Society
PO Box 331
Trenton, NJ 08625
phone: 609 - 292 - 8897
fax: 609 - 292 – 3978

Lunch Matters

This video and companion booklet, showcasing the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's award winning lunch program, provides step by step instruction on how to start a farmers market salad bar in a school cafeteria. Addressed in the video and booklet are specific recommendations on how to successfully promote the concept of a farmers market salad bar with key school and community leaders, how to develop appropriate food purchasing and delivery procedures in cooperation with local farmers market managers, and how to calculate the amount of labor needed to operate an individual salad bar program. The booklet also includes several attachments that can be used as reference material by school food service personnel, including sample menus, a prospective equipment list, and examples of operational cost analyses, participation rate records and production records. The video and booklet are available for a handling fee of $5.00 to school districts and organizations that wish to start a farmers market salad bar. To place an order, please contact Dona Richwine at richwined@smmusd.org.

The Ag in the Classroom National Resource Directory

A wide variety of agriculture related videos can be easily found through the advanced search option at: http://cerp.cornell.edu/directory/search_advanced.asp

Young Agrarians: Changing the Face of Agriculture

This 26 minute video documents a new breed of agriculturalists as they explore the opportunities and barriers to success in small-scale farming. Interviews with farmers, educators, and young entrepreneurs combined with footage of diverse working landscapes offers an inspirational look at the future of agriculture in America. The video and accompanying Resource Guide are appropriate for all ages, but are geared toward high school and college-age youth with an interest in agricultural careers. Available for $25 from: www.environment.nau.edu/youngagrarians

What Will We Eat?

A 26 minutes in length video that was shot in Michigan, Iowa, Pennsylvania, and Missouri. It features John Ikerd and Fred Kirschenmann as its principal on-camera narrators with Michael Hamm and John Biernbaum from MSU as well. "What Will We Eat?" offers both the story of how we lost access to healthy local food…and how we are getting it back. It is available in either DVD or VHS formats. It costs $25 postpaid and comes with an Action Guide to help use it effectively. To order, please send a check for $25 to Christopher B. Bedford at #6543 Hancock Road, Montague, MI 49437.

Risk Management and Insurance Considerations for Farmers Selling Direct

Try to identify how and where risks might exist. By doing so you can consider how any risks can be eliminate or reduced and prepare a contingency plan in case something does go wrong. There are many ways direct farm marketers can get into legal trouble. Here are the eight common pitfalls according to the Drake Law Center:

- conducting a “commercial” business in an area not zoned for such use
- not carrying sufficient liability insurance
- allowing unsafe conditions to exist on your property when customers are allowed to visit
- selling processed foods which have been produced at an unlicensed facility
- failing to observe rules designed to protect food safety and quality
- selling more products at your stand which were produced by others than you raised yourself
- failing to comply with labor rules
- failing to comply with record keeping and paperwork rules for tax or labor laws

The Drake Law Center also recommends making six phone calls before you begin direct farm marketing:

- The local land use planning authorities
- Your insurance agent
- The state food inspection and licensing officials
- The state labor commissioner
- The state department of agriculture and marketing
- Your attorney

Insurance

There are at least two types of insurance you’ll want to carry. In addition there other policies or riders you’ll want to consider such as the Frozen Foods Rider just in case your electricity goes out!

General Liability Insurance: Commercial General Liability covers four types of injuries:

- bodily injury that results in actual physical damage or loss
- property damage or loss
- personal injury (slander or damage to reputation)
- advertising injury (charges of negligence that result from the promotion of your own goods or services)

Product Liability Insurance:
The basic premise of product liability is that companies have a duty to protect consumers from potential hazards, even if the damage is primarily caused by consumer negligence or deliberate misuse. Courts have held that manufacturers generally have more innate knowledge about their products, so it falls on them to assume financial responsibility for injuries and property damage. Product liability cases generally fall along three separate lines. The first consideration is a design flaw. The second consideration is manufacturing liability. The third line of reasoning is called "failure to warn." Modern product liability laws enacted in the 1960s work on the principle of "strict liability," which means manufacturers bear much more responsibility for the safety of their products, even if some consumers use the product irresponsibly.

Chapter 2. K-12 Food Service and College Dining Realities

Schools or colleges and universities may or may not be a place that you have worked in and the school lunch program might be unfamiliar territory. This section is designed to help you better understand school food service and college dining. (Refer to "Resources for Going Further" for additional sources of information related to the USDA school meals program.)

K-12 Food Service Finances and Food Purchasing: How does it work?

School food programs are run as market-driven, nonprofit operations with some reimbursement from federal and state sources and in most cases no financial support from local districts. In other words, the food service operation in K-12 schools is usually a financially independent and self-sustaining unit in the school. The school district's general fund is rarely used to help finance school meal programs.

Most public K-12 schools participate in the National School Lunch Program, which provides federal financial assistance to over 100,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions nationally. In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in afterschool educational and enrichment programs to include children through 18 years of age. The Food and Nutrition Service administers the program at the Federal level. At the State level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.[1]

This federal assistance program is available to public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions. "School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the lunch program get cash subsidies and donated commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price lunches to eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in afterschool educational or enrichment programs."[2]

In order to receive federal reimbursement school lunches must meet the the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, specifically they can provide no more than 30 percent of total calories as fat, and must have less than 10 percent from saturated fat. "Regulations also establish a standard for school lunches to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories."[3]

While school lunches must meet Federal nutrition requirements, decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by the local school food service directors.

Cost to the Child versus Reimbursement Rates

The amount paid for a "full-price" school lunch varies from school to school but generally ranges between $1.50 and $2.00. For breakfast, the amount paid ranges between $.45 and $1.05. The cost of a "reduced-price" meal also varies between school districts. Federal law puts a 40 cent limit on the amount that can be charged for a reduced price lunch and reduced priced breakfast. However, here again, this can vary from state to state. In New

York, a child can be charged a maximum of 25 cents for a reduced priced lunch. The state reimbursement for these meals is increased to make up the difference.

State and Federal Reimbursements

In addition to what is paid by the students, the food service operation receives state and federal reimbursements for each meal served in a 3-tiered payment system – free, reduced, and full-priced meals – for lunch and for breakfast. School districts in areas with a high rate of household poverty, will have many students who quality for a free school breakfast and lunch. Children from families with incomes at or below 130% of poverty qualify to receive a free lunch. For a family of 4 this means $26,000 (7/06-6/07). Children from families with incomes between 130-185% of poverty qualify to receive a reduced price meal and can be charged no more than 40 cents for a school lunch. For a family of 4 the household income needs to fall between $26,000 and $37,000 in order for the children to qualify for reduced price school meals.

Table 5 shows the amount of reimbursement paid to schools by the federal government and the state of New York for each lunch served. As this table suggests, districts with higher rates of participation in free and reduced lunches may have more money to work with than districts with lower participation rates. Current federal and state reimbursement rates for New York State are show below.

Table 5. Federal and New York State Reimbursement Rates for School Lunch

SCHOOL LUNCH	FEDERAL SUPPORT in $ (2007-2008)	NYS SUPPORT in $ (2007-2008)
Free	2.47 – 2.49	0.065
Reduced	2.07 – 2.09	0.215*
Paid	0.23 - 0.25	0.065

Source: Food Research & Action Center. Child Nutrition Fact Sheet: National School Lunch Program. Updated 2007.

Thus, because of federal and to a lesser extent state reimbursement for each free or reduced-price meal served, poorer school districts often have larger budgets for special programs like farm to school. However, there has not been a substantial increase in the federal reimbursement rate for about 15 years. In general, state and federal reimbursement rates have not kept pace with rising costs of producing meals.

All food service operation expenses at a K-12 school are paid through meal fees and federal and state reimbursements. The total amount received through these venues must cover food costs, indirect costs such as cafeteria aides, electrical costs, garbage, labor, benefits, repairs and replacement of equipment and supplies.

In addition to the money paid by students and the federal and state reimbursements received, schools participating in the federal breakfast and lunch programs are entitled by law to receive commodity foods from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), called "entitlement" foods, at a value of 16.75 cents for each meal served. Schools can also get "bonus" commodities as they are available from surplus agricultural stocks.[4]

Given the need to keep costs lower, most schools cannot afford to do without the free commodities that are supplied by the federal government. Any where from 10% to 20% of total annual food costs may be subsidized by Commodity Foods. Thus, USDA commodity foods play an important role in keeping food costs low. Given the current realities of how food service is financed in most schools, reliance of these Commodity Foods is likely to continue. It is important to know which foods the schools in your area are receiving through this channel to be able to explore potential substitutions to more nutrient-rich choices on the Commodity list.

Decreasing budgets have left school food service directors in a bind that has grave implications for child health. With dwindling options for generating revenue and cutting costs, food service directors often decrease staff thus dimishing food preparation and serving capacity and increasing reliance on more highly processed, pre-prepared foods. Unfortunately, the loss of cooking "from scratch" often means poorer quality food and less nutrition for school children. Chef and food service director Ann Cooper believes that "while most schools continue to try to meet better nutrition guidelines, they're still not measuring up, and many actually contribute to the crisis we've seen emerging over the last decade. Food is not respected; rather, it is something that must be made and consumed with increasing speed."[5]

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Program.

Through a partnership between the USDA and the Department of Defense (DoD) schools in selected states† can receive fresh produce purchased through DoD. USDA has also worked with schools to help promote connections with local small farmers who may be able to provide this fresh produce. In the DoD Fresh Program, a portion of the Commodity benefit can be used to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables. This is important because for each school breakfast and lunch school food service directors serve, their budget permits them to spend only between 3 –20 cents on the fruit and vegetable portion of the meal. (See "Chapter 1 Tool Box," "DOD Fresh Program Fact Sheet" and "USDA Fruit and Vegetable Program Fact Sheet" to learn more about these federal programs.)

Despite the fact that the school food service must operate as a financially independent entity, food service must have administrative and district support to succeed. Other burdens that school food service providers may face include limited kitchen equipment, labor shortages, and high labor costs. One of the highest costs to schools is the cost of labor and benefits. This is one of the reasons for an increasing reliance on more highly processed, ready-to-heat foods in food service. There are basically two types of kitchen configurations in schools. One is a central kitchen where foods are prepared in one location and sent out to receiving kitchens where foods are served. The other type is an on-site prep kitchen where all food is prepared and served. These barriers must be considered in order to be successful and remain at break-even levels.

Summer Food Service Programs

The summer feeding program is an ideal time and place to use locally grown foods in school breakfasts, snacks or lunches.

Follow a few suggested steps to incorporate these foods into your menu and increase the amount of locally grown foods you are using.

1. Meet with local farmers or cooperative extension staff to identify what foods will be available in July and August or check out your state's seasonal availability calendar.
2. Get district administrative support
3. Research and follow commissioner's regulations on purchasing and procurement policies.
4. Purchase and menu the items that are available.
5. Train staff on preparation.
6. Plan and execute student activities to highlight local foods.

College Dining 101

Unlike K-12 public schools, college dining operations have much more flexibility in what they offer and have a customer base that is often actively looking to the food service as a place to enjoy meals that are not only delicious, nutritious, and skillfully prepared, but also reflect environmental, ethical, and social values. Since 2000 an increasing number of college dining services – Evergreen State College in Washington State, the Berkeley School at Yale, and Kenyon College in Ohio, to mention a few – have been featured in newspaper articles and in radio and television stories for their "food revolutions." The food served in college dining halls is becoming a visible part of university recruitment strategies. University administrations have woken up to the realization that students are looking not only for a great education but for a total student life experience that is meaningful and enjoyable. The food they eat everyday is an important part of that experience.

Food service at the college level is financed differently than K-12 schools. Students can purchase a "meal plan" as part of the total cost of attending college per semester. As students (and more importantly, their parents!) visit campuses, food choices and meal packages will enter the mix of factors leading the students to a final decision of where they will attend college. The financial costs of those meals, the food choices offered, the health benefits, and the experience will all play a role in the decision making process.

College dining services are more likely than K-12 schools to be run by an outside food management company such as Sodexo, ARAMARK, Marriott, Chartwells, and Bon Appetit. This additional layer of management need not be a barrier to doing a farm to school project, but will often require working with the actual dining service to develop a working relationship with this external entity. It will also require an understanding of which decisions are made within the food service operation and which are made at the regional corporate level. As interest in local, organically-grown, and fair-trade foods has increased on college campuses, these management companies have begun to review their traditional business practices in order to accommodate such customer interest. Several have developed a sustainability mission as part of their overall business strategy.

According to a national survey conducted by the Community Food Security Coalition, farm to college programs are initiated primarily by food service personnel and secondarily by students. The study also found that students play a variety of important roles in these programs such as: providing promotional and educational outreach, researching sources of local foods, and planning local food events and tastings. Farm-to-college programs provide several important benefits, including: supporting local farmers, the community and the economy; providing high quality food; mitigating environmental impacts; and boosting public

relations. (For more results of this national survey, see: http://www.farmtocollege.org/about.htm#graphs)

Since many college dining directors are not accustomed to buying from local farmers and may not be familiar with sources, some are hiring "foragers" to scout the local area. (See the Toolbox at the end of this chapter for a "College Dining Food Forager" position description.). Food foragers can determine what is grown in the area, by whom, in what quantity, and when local food is harvested and available for purchase by the college. Equipped with a truck, foragers can also provide the vital service of delivery from farm to college kitchen.

Because they serve very large quantities of food, colleges and universities offer a significant opportunity to support local farms by purchasing locally grown food. Flexibility enables college dining service directors to develop farm to school programs more quickly than K-12 schools. In some areas, the development of "purchasing clusters" that involve colleges and nearby K-12 schools is starting to take hold. This could be a win-win for schools, colleges, farmers, communities and students of all ages.

Farm to School and Wellness Policies

As you prepare to develop a K-12 farm to school connection, be sure to familiarize yourself with your school wellness policy, the development of which was recently required through federal legislation. The Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act in 2004 includes a provision that required each educational agency participating in a federal school meal program to establish, and have in place for the 2006-2007 school year, a local school wellness policy. (Public Law 108-265 Section 204).

The law requires that these policies must, at a minimum:

1. Set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

2. Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day.

3. Assure that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture.

4. Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.

5. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in development of the local wellness policy.

Wellness policies can be designed to incorporate farm to school approaches to food service. By including language encouraging the purchase and use of locally grown fruits and vegetables in the school meals as well as classroom-based nutrition and food system education, wellness policies can provide another mechanism to support the development of a farm to school program in your school or district.

Several model wellness policies have been developed by government agencies and organizations. (For more on school wellness policy, see "Chapter 2 Toolbox," School Wellness Policies" and "Resources," which includes sections on Health and Wellness in Schools"" and "Food and Wellness for going further.")

Getting Started

With this background, the tools at the end of this chapter, and in "Resources for Going Further", you are now ready to take the next step in making a farm to school connection – building relationships. Have fun!

Chapter 2 Toolbox

Toolbox

Frequently Asked Questions About School Food Service and College Dining

What is the national school lunch program?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in nearly 100,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to more than 28 million children each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after school educational and enrichment programs to include children through 18 years of age. The Food and Nutrition Service administers the program at the Federal level. At the State level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities. For additional information on the National School Lunch Program see the NSLP Fact Sheet at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/AboutLunch/NSLPFactSheet.pdf or the Food and Nutrition Service website at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/default.htm

How is food service funded in K-12 public schools?

Food service is often financially independent. In other words, food service is self-supporting, with no district funding, which means that the general fund is not used to support the school meals program. In many schools the higher the rate of free and reduced lunches the greater the budget. Another important financial aspect is the utilization of commodity foods from USDA where 10%-20% of food costs may be subsidized.

What are competitive foods?

USDA defines competitive foods as foods offered at school, other than meals served through USDA's school meal programs—school lunch, school breakfast, and after-school snack programs. The USDA has defined two categories of competitive foods:

(1) **Foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV).** Current program regulations prohibit the sale of FMNV in the food service areas during the school meal periods. The regulations do not prohibit their sale outside the food service area at any time during the school day. States and local school food authorities may impose additional restrictions.

(2) **All other foods offered for individual sale.** Regulations do not prohibit the sale of these foods at any time during the school day anywhere on the school campus, including the school food service areas. These foods range from second servings of foods that are part of the reimbursable school meal to foods that students purchase in addition to or in place of a reimbursable school meal, such as a la carte sales and other foods and beverages purchased from vending machines, school stores, and snack bars.

For more information on competitive foods, please see the CSPI website: http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/Foods_Sold_in_Competition_with_USDA_School_Meal_Programs.pdf

What are “commodity foods” and why do schools use them?

In addition to cash reimbursements, schools are entitled by law to receive commodity foods, called "entitlement" foods, at a value of

16.75 cents for each meal served in Fiscal Year 2006-2007. States select entitlement foods for their schools from a list of various foods purchased by USDA and offered through the school lunch program. Bonus foods are offered only as they become available through agricultural surplus. The variety of both entitlement and bonus commodities schools can get from USDA depends on quantities available and market prices. The type and quantity of bonus commodities distributed by USDA in a given year is dictated by agricultural surpluses and market conditions. Bonus products donated in previous years include: applesauce and slices, beef roasts, dried fruit products, fresh pears, frozen apricots, nonfat dry milk, orange juice, pork products, salmon and turkey. During SY 2004, USDA purchased over $700 million worth of commodities for Schools/Child Nutrition Programs. These commodities totaled over 1.1 billion pounds.

For more information on commodity foods in the NSLP please see the FNS Fact Sheet at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/pfs-schcnp.pdf

Typical Varieties of Fruits & Vegetables Grown in the Northeast

This resource is intended to provide information on varieties known to grow in the Northeast, but for certain crops this list will be out of date as soon as it is printed. For up to date information on varieties grown in the Northeast, please see the following crop specific websites:

- For Vegetables: www.nysaes.cornell.edu/recommends/
- For Berries: http://www.hort.cornell.edu/extension/nursery
- For Grapes: http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/reisch/bulletin/table/tableindex2.html
- For Peaches and Nectarines: http://www.cas.psu.edu/docs/CASDEPT/Hort/TFPG/tables/table1-22.htm
- For Apples: http://www.nyapplecountry.com/varieties.htm

Tree Fruit

Apricots
Goldcat
Harcot
Harglow
Hargrand
Horogem

Japanese Plums
Fortune
Friar
Methley
Obilinaya
Shiro
Vauier

Cherries
Attika
BlackGold
Cavalier
Emperor Francis
Hedelfingen
Hudson
Kristin
Rainier
Regina
Sam
Summit
Schmidt
Ulster
WhiteGold

Peaches and Nectarines
Allstar
Autumnglo
Babygold 5
Bailey
Beekman
Blazing Star
Blushing Star
Bounty
Canadian Harmony
Candor
Contender
Cresthaven,
Cullinan
Derby
Early Loring
Ernie's Choice
Flamin Fury
Flamin Fury 24-007
Flamin Fury 25
Flamin Fury 27A,
Flavortop
Harbelle
Harcrest
Harmony
Harrow Dawn
Harrow Diamond
Jerseyglo,
Jerseyqueen
Laurol
Loring
Lovell
Madison
Norman
Parade
Redhaven
Redkist
Rich May
Royal May
Salem
Sentry
Summer Serenade
Sunhigh
Triogem

Plums
Fellenburg
Castleton
Empress
Italian
Long John
Mirabelle
Oullins
Rose Goge
Stanley
Valor

Apples
20 ounce
Acey Mac
Baldwin
Braeburn
Cortland
Crimson Crisp
Crispin
Empire
Fortune
Fuji
Gala
Ginger Gold
Golden Delicious
Golden Russet
Golden Supreme
Honeycrisp
Idared
Jonagold
Jonamac
Jonathan
Keepsake
Lady
Liberty
Lodi
Macoun
McIntosh
Monroe
Newtown Pippin
Northern Spy
Paula Red
Red Rome
R.I. Greening
Sansa
Spartan/Spartamac
Spigold
Stayman/Winesap
Tydeman

Pears
Bartlett
Beurre Bosc
Beurre D'Anjou

Chojuro
Clapp's Favorite
Colette
Moonglow
Red Anjou Pear
Seckel

Grapes

Alden
Buffalo
Catawba
Concord
Delaware
Diamond
Edelweiss
Esprit
Fredonia
Golden Muscat
Kay Gray
New York Muscat
Niagara
Ontario
Price
Seneca
Sheridan
Steuben
Swenson Red
Van Buren
Villard blanc
Yates
Seedless Grapes
Canadice
Concord Seedless
Einset Seedless
Himrod
Jupiter
Interlaken Seedless
Lakemont
Marquis
Mars
Neptune
Reliance
Remaily Seedless
Saturn
Suffolk Red
Vanessa
Venus

Blueberries

Berkeley
Bluecrop
Blueray
Burlington
Coville
Earliblue
Jersey
Rancocas
Rubel
Weymouth

Raspberries and Blackberries

Red Raspberries
Autumn Bliss
Boyne
Canby
Caroline
Fallgold
Killarney
Prelude
Heritage
Latham
Reveille
Taylor
Titan
Black Raspberries
Dundee
Jewel
Purple Raspberries
Brandywine
Royalty

Strawberries

Allstar
Earliglow
Honeoye
Idea
Jewel
Kent
Lateglow
Northeaster
Raritan
Redchief
Sparkle
Tribute
Tristar
Veestar

VEGETABLE VARIETIES

Asparagus

Jersey General
Jersey Giant
Jersey King
Jersey Knight
Jersey Supreme

Beans - Dry and Snap

Dry beans
Light Red Kidney
CELRK
Chinook 2000
RedKanner
Dark Red Kidney
Cabernet
Montcalm
Red Hawk
Black Turtle Soup
Black Knight
Black Velvet
Jaguar
Midnight, T39
Snap bean varieties
Fresh-market green beans
Provider
Minuette
Hialeah
Florence
Opus
Strike (BCMV)
Derby
Eagle (BCMV)
Bronco
Roma II (Italian)
Fresh-market wax
Gold Mine
Gold Kist
Indy Gold

Beets

Detroit Dark Red
Red Ace
Ruby Queen
Crosby (greens or roots)

Cabbage, Broccoli, Cauliflower, and Brussels Sprouts

Fresh Market Green Cabbage
Pacifica
Charmont
Morris
Atlantis
Blue Gem
Fresco
Green Cup
Blue Vantage
Ramada
Blue Pack
Gideon
Bravo
Cheers
Emblem
SuperElite
Vantage Point
Fresh-market, Red Cabbage
Red Jewel
Royale
Red Rookie
Super Red 80
Super Red 83
Ruby Perfection
Storage, Cabbage
Masada
Saratoga
Storage #4
Avalon

Rona (red)
Autoro (red)
Huron
Loughton
Amtrak
Bartolo
Lectro (red)
Crown
Zerlina
Chinese cabbage, heading
Blues
Tango
Manoko
Optiko
Chorus
Chinese Cabbage, Leafy
Joi Choi
Prize Choi
Mei Qing Choi
Cauliflower
Amazing
Sentinel
Apex
Minuteman
Cumberland
Fremont
Candid Charm
Serrano
Icon
Starbrite
Guardian
Minuteman
Shasta
Broccoli
Premium Crop
Packman
Baron
Everest
Regal
Green Valiant
Major
Sabre
Ritol
Brussels sprouts
Oliver
Prince Marvel

Carrots

Long, slender Imperatortype varieties are desired for fresh market. Blunttipped Nantes varieties are preferred for sliced, processed products, and blocky Chantenay or Danvers types are used for dicing.

Celery

Cucumber

Slicing
Encore
Raider
Speedway
Dasher II
Thunder
Turbo
Meteor
Striker
Marketmore 76
Marketmore 86
Pickling
Earlipik 14

Melon

Earlisweet
Sweet n Early
Starship
Superstar
Gold Star
Saticoy
Athena
Classic
Cordele
Pulsar
Earli-Dew (honeydew)

Pumpkin

Jack-B-Little
Wee-B-Little
Baby Bear
Baby Pam
Trickster
Spooktacular
Touch of autumn
Oz
Smoothee
Pick-a-Pie
Mystic Plus pm
Hybrid Pam
Racer
Gold Standard
Tom Fox
Merlin pm
Magic Lantern pm
Sorcerer
Gold Strike
Aladdin pm
Gold Gem
Howden
Gold Medal
Appalachian
Gold Rush
Prizewinner
Atlantic Giant

Summer Squash

Zucchini
Zucchini Elite
Revenue
Senator
Dividend
Milano
Tigress
Seneca
Gold Rush
Straightneck Yellow
Seneca Prolific
Multipik
Goldbar
Scallop
Peter Pan (green)
Sunburst (gold)
Crookneck Yellow
Freedom III
Sundance

Winter squash

Fresh
Table Ace
Tay Belle
Table Queen
Sweet Mama
Waltham
Ambercup
Puritan
Zenith
Processing
Boston Marrow
Golden Delicious
Watermelon Variety
Seeded
Yellow Doll
Sugar baby
Sangria
Crimson Sweet
Seedless
Crimson Trio
Millionaire

Eggplant

Black Magic (purple black, oval)
Dusky (purple black, pear oval)
Special Hibush (purple black, pear oval)
Classic (purple, elongated oval)
Kiko (purple, elongated oval)
Ichiban (purple, slender oriental type)
Little Fingers (purple, slender oriental type)
Rosita (rose pink, elongated oval)
Neon (rose pink, pear oval)

Ghostbuster (white, oval)

Lettuce and Endive

Butterhead (Boston)
Ermosa
Nancy
Buttercrunch
Summer Bibb
Tania
Esmerelda
Dark Green Boston
Cos (Romaine)
Dark Green Cos
Green Towers
Ideal Cos
Parris Island Cos
Crisphead (Iceberg)
Great Lakes
Ithaca
Onondaga
Raleigh
South Bay
Leaf
Grand Rapids
Red Sails
Tierra
New Red Fire (red)
Sierra (red)
Slobolt
Waldmann's Green
Endive
Florida Deep Heart
Full Heart Batavia
Green Curled Ruffel
Salad King

Onion

Mars (red)
Renegade
Redwing
Corona
Viceroy
Sweet Spanish types
Candy
Ebenezer
Stuttgart
Beltsville Bunching
Southport White Globe
White Portugal
White Sweet Spanish
Early Yellow Globe strains
Norstar
Arsenal
Hustler
Early Yellow Globe strains
Benny's Red (red)
Precedent
Gazette
Mars (red)
Ricochet
Mambo (red)
Pennant
Festival
Millennium
Duration
Bradley
Endurance
Crusader
Criterion

Peas

Market
Early Freezer 680
Progress No. 9
Edible pod, round
Sugar Snap
Super Snap II

Peppers

Bell
Red Knight
Merlin
Conquest
King Arthur
Ironsides
Early Sunsation
Lexington
Valencia
Lafayette
Aristotle
Boynton Bell
Bell Captain
Paladin 4
X3R Aladdin
X3R Sir Galahad
X3R Camelot
X3R Wizard
Legionaire
Commandant
Bell Tower
Frying
Key Largo
Cubanelle
Sweet Banana
Hot
Eastern Rocket
Surefire
Hungarian Wax
Jalapeno
Habanero

Potatoes

Allegany
Andover
Atlantic
Chieftain
Eva
Genesee
Keuka Gold
Norland
Norwis
Pike
Reba
Redsen
Russet Norkotah
Salem
Snowden
Superior
Yukon Gold

Spinach

Spring Market
Melody
Tyee
Coho
UniPack 151
Fall Market
Fall Green
Melody
Samish
Coho
UniPack 151
Overwinter
Vienna
Coho
Unipack 151
Processing
Melody
Tyee
Vancover

Sweet Corn

Early
Jester II
Sweet Chorus
Second Early
Chippawa
Temptation
Bon Appetit
Double Choice
Midseason
Sweet Rhythm
Confection
Mystique
Gourmet Sweet 275
Mira 002
Mira 003
Wizard
Sweet Symphony
Candy Corner
Main and Late
Xtra Tender 277
Bojangles
Xtra Tender 278
Absolute
Accord
Snowmass
Obsession

Cabaret
Delectable
Precious Gem
Sensor
Bandit
Silverado
Zenith
Polaris
Lancelot
Silver King
Brocade
Even Sweeter
Tango
Argent

Tomatoes – Field (Not greenhouse/hothouse varieties)
Ground culture
Spitfire
Sunrise
Mountain Spring
Sunbright
Mountain Delight
Sunbeam
Mountain Fresh
Mountain Pride
Trellis
Sunleaper
Mountain Spring
SunGem
Sunbright
Mountain Delight
Sunbeam
Mountain Fresh
Mountain Pride
Plum
LaRoma
LaRossa
Cherry
Sun Gold (orange)
Sweet 100
Mountain Bell

Turnips and Radishes
Turnips
Purple Top White Globe
Shogoin (for greens)
Just Right
Radishes
Cherry Belle
Improved Red Prince
Sparkler
Scarlet Knight

How to do Taste-Testing: A Quick Guide

Taste-Testing Objectives:

1. Students are able to identify vegetables, fruits and other products grown in gardens and on local farms.

2. Students are more likely to consume these foods at school and at home.

Planning:

Before the taste-testing begins meet with students to determine which foods they have not tried. Secondly, meet with local farmers to find out what foods are available locally or reference a seasonal availability calendar to determine what is available.

Taste-Testing Activities:

Invite classes of students or students in the cafeteria on their lunch or breakfast break to taste and rate 'new' fruits, vegetables and other products. This may be done in a number of ways:

1. Cubing fresh fruits and vegetables
2. Creating recipes made with local foods
3. Make a large salad of unusual vegetables
4. Make frozen drinks from local fruits
5. Compare different varieties of one food, ie; apples
6. Obtain value added products like cheese or yogurts
7. Dried fruits mixed with nuts or seeds
8. Make small sandwiches with veggies only
9. Oven bake different types of potatoes
10. Have students add fruit to a favorite cereal or snack
11. Review edible plants in display then have students choose a sample
12. Slice veggies, serve with low fat dressing
13. Make salsa or sauce, try on cracker

Students can try small tasting portions and then rate these samples. If items are discovered to be popular they can be added to the School Lunch Menu.
Brainstorm with students other ways to add fruits, vegetables and other local products to their diet. Poll and graph results of testing.

**Some foods which may be available in your area: peas, cauliflower, asparagus, potatoes, cabbage, spinach, parsley, corn, turnip, rutabaga, beet, squash, tomatoes, onions, apples, pears, grapes, berries, cherries, cheese, yogurts, jams, jellies, dressings, salsa, and juices.

Sample Notice of Intent to Purchase Fresh Fruits & Vegetables Locally

The _____Board of Education is seeking to purchase the following items directly from farmers/producers/growers for the 2004-05 school year. These amounts are per month for 10 months (Sept 04 to June 05). The district will receive quotes on the following items on __[day of week]___by [time] prior to the week of _[dates]_____.

Full Year Cost Items-example

Apples (Empire)	4 cases
Potatoes	100 lbs.

Seasonal Items-example

Broccoli	2 bags	Tomatoes (6x5)	3 cs.
Spinach	# 3 bags	Carrots #	4 cs.
Lettuce cs.	5 cs.	Onions #	____
Cucumbers	_____	Peppers	2 lbs.
Pears (120)	10 cs.	Cauliflower	10
Peaches cs.	1 cs.	Apricots	____
Cabbage	_____	Cherries	____

Use subject to availability of product and menu requirements. The district is required to obtain products from the farmer(s) that submit(s) the lowest price(s). Delivery would be to the school at the address between [time] and [time]. Payment from approved invoices shall be paid [e.g., thethird Tuesday of the month] following delivery. For further information contact [name] , [title] at [phone] or [e-mail] or [fax] by [date] .

We encourage you to contact us by date if you are interested in selling items to the district or if you have additional questions. **NOTE:** This is a sample notice – Districts should incorporate their own information/specifications to meet their needs.

Menu and Recipe Sources

Menus and Recipes available for food service: A listing of sources and websites

Star Chefs

This website includes everything from recipes to menus for gourmet feasts. It is fairly easy to find the recipes in quantity and if you have an ingredient in mind you can search for an appropriate recipe. Potentially appropriate cafeteria recipes are available through the following sources.

Ann Cooper: http://www.starchefs.com/
Accessed on March 16, 2006

VT Food Education Every Day

This website includes recipes to scale that use Northeast products and that have been tested in schools and are in compliance with HACCP.
http://www.vtfeed.org/tools-resources/pdfs-recipes/recipes.html
Accessed on May 3, 2006

Food, Family & Fun - A Seasonal Guide to Healthy Eating

Team Nutrition, USDA
A collection of seasonal recipes from some of the nation's top chefs that are healthy, easy, affordable, and that parents and children can make together.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Students/Food_Family/index.html
Accessed on March 16, 2006

Edible Schoolyard Recipes

http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/kit_lessons.html
Accessed on March 16, 2006

Rethinking School Lunch Guide

In the Food and Health Section of this guide there is a section on Seasonal Lunch Menus. Available online in PDF format at:
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/pdf/rethinking_food-health.pdf
Accessed on March 16, 2006

Jamie Oliver's School Dinner Recipes

These recipes are based on what happened when Chef Jamie Oliver took charge of a London borough which serves 20,000 school meals a day. The recipes are for 5 servings and are not to scale.
http://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/cats/school_dinners_recipes.php
Accessed on March 16, 2006

School Nutrition Association Recipe Database Menus and Recipes available for food service: A listing of sources and websites

This database contains recipes searchable by ingredients, quantity and meal. Through the advanced search users can search by food group, nutrient or meal theme.
http://docs.schoolnutrition.org/recipes/advanced_search.asp. Accession: March 16, 2006.

Farm to School Fundraisers

With limited budgets, many schools engage in fund raising for special programs or trips. Selling local or in-state products is an excellent way to bring in needed funds while supporting local farms and agriculture.

For example, Superintendent Michael Wendt of Wilson School District recently invited local growers and processors to display and describe their products at a superintendent's conference day. Wendt hopes to see more local products incorporated in school fundraisers. Products displayed in Wilson included apples, jams and jellies, dried fruits, and salad dressings.

One local farmer, Jim Bitner of Singer Farms, described a fundraiser that he has been involved with. Each fall, he sells and delivers bulk apples and plastic bags to a local school. He also loans the school a scale so that students can package the apples into 3-pound bags, and sell them for a 300% profit. In this way, students earn money for special projects while learning about and supporting local agriculture. As an added bonus, the local apples are tasty and nutritious.

Each year at a school in Cincinnati the school carnival, "May Fete", food is a featured and is one way in which the school raises money through the event. In 2004, "May Fete" featured home-made and home-grown foods. An enthusiastic parent took on the organizing role of the event and included students in various aspects of the event. In total 105 students were involved in "May Fete" and the school made a higher profit than they had the year before. (Adapted and excerpted from Feeding Young Minds: Hands-on Farm to School Education Programs).

Other fundraising ideas:

- Selling local maple syrup products
- Selling local cheeses
- Selling popcorn grown locally
- Selling pounds of apples
- Selling local sausage or other meat products
- Selling locally grown pumpkins during the harvest season

Going Beyond Chocolate... Fun Fundraising Ideas

Sports Tournaments and Competitions: Charge a registration entry fee and an admission rate for spectators. Events to consider might include a golf tournament, 3 on 3 Basketball, badminton, horseshoes, croquet, chess/checkers.

Pledges: Students ask sponsors to make a pledge per lap completed, book read, (etc.). Popular "thons" include: walk-a-thon, read-a-thon, jump-rope-a-thon, dance-a-thon.

Sales: Consider selling items that benefit buyers and sellers in the local community. See what local farmers will provide you a discount to allow you to sell their product at retail price. Shy away from sales of candy bars and junk food. Consider instead: plant sales, seed packets, flowers, Christmas trees, wreaths, crafts, candles, pet treats, books, cookbooks, calendars, note cards, photographs, t-shirts or items with your logo.

Fairs: You can sell "space" at your facility (generally 10'x10') and bring in vendors for a craft fair, art show, or rummage sale. You may wish to preview items or vendors to ensure a level of quality. You'll want to make sure vendors provide a certificate of insurance. The publicity and advertising to attract buyers will be your responsibility.

Raffles: You can get donated or purchase items to be raffled off. A bicycle, outdoor furniture, grill or other item that has wide appeal and a high value is a great choice. Ticket prices can vary from $1 to $100 depending upon the item. There is usually a specified number of tickets sold with higher priced raffle tickets.

Gift Baskets: If you have small scale food processors in your area, try to work with them. You can create an "all food basket" or a themed basket which might include non-food items such as pot-holders, wooden spoons, placemats, or candles.

Community Split: You will need to work in cooperation with a local retailer. In this case, a percent of the proceeds generated during specific hours at a particular retailer is given to the school. It is your responsibility to get as many people into that retail establishment or restaurant during the scheduled time.

School Events: These are events that may be held at the school and admission charged. Events might include: spelling bee, science fair, talent show, art show, plays, karaoke night, dinners, barbeques, dances, magic show, or an activity focused youth-fair.

Willing Workers: Why not put the kids to work? The following activities can be a pay-for-service provided by older students. These activities include: a Car Wash, Gift Wrapping, Rent-A-Worker, Singing telegrams, and Waitressing.

Other Ideas to Consider: Host a conference or teach a workshop. Invite a local photographer in to take portraits. Hold a recycling drive. Silent or live auctions can be held as a stand alone event, or in conjunction with other activities. A coin drive could include a "Penny Pitch" or a "Fill the Jar". Book signings, with the author donating a percentage of on-site sales is an option. Community field trips to out of town destinations are popular and lucrative.

Wellness Policies

Policy Suggestions

K-12 Schools may be at varying stages in designing their wellness policies. This section shows how an existing policy can be modified to include farm to school and points to model wellness policy resources that incorporates farm to school.

This section is adapted from Tools for Promoting Local Purchasing & Farm to School Activities: Sample Wellness Policy Language for Schools by the California Food & Justice Coalition. Available at: www.foodsecurity.org/california

Below are policy suggestions that promote policies that support local purchasing and other farm to school activities as part of your school districts' wellness policy. We encourage you to pick and choose the recommendations here that make the most sense for your district. You can use any of these policy statements individually or as whole sections, depending on where your district is and what changes you want to make. Pursuing farm to school strategies is only one step toward creating a healthy school environment and the language in this tool is intended to be only a part of a comprehensive policy that addresses a school's many needs.

STEP 1: Inquire if the district has made any progress in developing a school wellness policy.

One place to start is the district superintendent's office. In the process of this fact-finding you'll meet school personnel and others that will most likely be involved in drafting a wellness policy.

STEP 2: Play an active role in the development of the wellness policies. If the process is already underway, become part of the planning group. If they have not yet started, help bring together the important players from the school and the community – including school administrators, food service staff, teachers, parents, students, and community representatives. Use the policy ideas mentioned here to help start the conversation.

STEP 3: Draft a policy that fits the needs of your school district. The federal and state standards will be your starting point. Use this tool and other model policies listed in the resources section to determine what other issues you want your district's policy to address. Present this to your school board for adoption.

STEP 4: The true test of an effective policy is how well it's implemented. Develop an evaluation plan so you can ensure that the policy is being implemented the way it was intended.

Sample Language for School Wellness Policy

Use any of these sample policy statements individually or as whole sections, depending on the interest of your district.

Wellness Policy Requirement I: Set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

Nutrition Education

- Each school shall establish a school garden to be used as an outdoor classroom for nutrition, science, and other lessons.
- Nutrition education messages from the classroom will be modeled in the cafeteria and across campus by offering locally grown food whenever possible in the following ways:
    - Within the reimbursable meal program.
    - Through in-cafeteria marketing and nutrition education, such as taste -tests and activities that explain where the food comes from.
    - In vending machine sales
- Staff shall integrate experiential activities – such as gardening, cooking demonstrations, farm and farmers' market tours, and classroom visits from farmers and farm workers - into existing curricula at all levels.
- School food service, in partnership with other departments and community organizations will work to creatively market and promote locally produced food to students, through activities such as:
    - Featuring food grown in the school garden in the cafeteria through sampling and inclusion in school meals based upon availability and acceptability.
    - Developing cafeteria themes relating to local farmers and products grown in the region.
    - Hosting farmers' markets or farm stands on school grounds during lunch or after school for students, staff and the community.
    - Developing creative campus fundraisers based on healthy food items - such as produce and seedling sales.

Physical Activity

- The district encourages and approves the use of a school garden as a venue for physical activity during the school day.
- The district recognizes that farm visits and school gardens can offer physical activity opportunities, as well as agricultural education, by engaging students in activities such as planting, harvesting, weeding, and composting. Teachers and students are encouraged to take advantage of these physical activity opportunities during the school day as well as through field trips and after school activities.

Wellness Policy Requirement II: Establish nutrition guideline for all foods available on campus during school day.

- The Child Nutrition Services Director shall develop and implement a plan to integrate organic foods or foods produced with minimal pesticide use into the meals served to students.

- The Child Nutrition Services Director shall develop and implement a plan to eliminate potential harmful food additives and processes.
- Schools are encouraged to offer fresh, seasonal locally grown produce at every location on the school site where food is sold and at all school sponsored events and activities.
- Meals served within the federally reimbursable meal program must be designed to feature fresh and minimally processed fruits and vegetables, from local sources to the greatest extent possible.

Wellness Policy Requirement III: Assure that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture.

- The Child Nutrition Services Director will review the school wellness policy and ensure that it is not less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture or state law.

Wellness Policy Requirement IV: Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.

Evaluation of farm to school programs shows that including locally sourced farm products within the school lunch program and offering interactive nutrition education in the classroom and cafeteria helps to meet both nutrition and financial goals of schools' meal programs. Offering students local produce has been shown to increase participation in the school lunch program, which increases students' consumption of fruits and vegetables, and also generates increased revenue for school food service. When evaluating the effectiveness of these elements of your school wellness policy you should be sure to reflect on these factors.

- An annual review will be conducted to measure the impact and implementation of the wellness policy. The review will look at:
    - What percentage of food was purchased from local sources.
    - What was the budgetary impact of increasing local purchasing.
    - Where do opportunities exist to increase purchases of local and seasonal items.
    - What impact has local purchasing had on participation in the school meal programs and fruit and vegetable consumption of students.
    - Frequency and effectiveness of nutrition education activities involving the school garden, farm visits and other agricultural based activities.

Wellness Policy Requirement V: Involve parents, students, representatives of the school authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in development of the local wellness policy.

In addition to diverse district and community representatives, there are significant benefits to involving members of the farming community when developing school wellness policies around farm to school. Farmers, representatives from organizations that represent farmers,

agricultural industry representatives, master gardeners – they can all help you to know what is in season when, what you can grow in your garden and how you can use in your cafeteria or on campus, how to implement a composting program and how to work with farmers in a mutually beneficial way.

- The wellness policy committee must include representatives from the local agricultural community, such as farmers, representatives from organizations that represent farmers, farmers' market representatives and agriculture industry representatives. The team should also include food and nutrition professionals such as representatives from community organizations that work to promote local foods, local public health professionals, chefs and master gardeners.
- A team of district and community representatives will be established to support the food service director and teachers in implementing local purchasing and other farm to school activities on an on-going basis.

See the "Resources for Going Further" section for additional information on wellness policies

Position Description: College Dining Food Forager.

The job description below is an actual position announcement that was posted on various listserves by the Yale Sustainable Food Project at Yale University in February 2007 for applicants interested in becoming a "Coordinator/Forager".

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Coordinator/ forager

Organization: Yale Sustainable Food Project at Yale University
Schedule: 20-hrs./ week, weekdays with the occasional need to work on weekends
Duration of Position: One-year (grant based)
Compensation grade: Hourly wage based on experience.
Location of Position: New Haven, CT. Onsite, at farms, and at local processors

Brief overview of Job:
The goal of the Sourcing Coordinator's position is to significantly increase the quantity of locally-grown sustainable food purchased by Yale University for the next fiscal year and the foreseeable future. To that end, the Sourcing Coordinator will work with Yale University Dining Services (YUDS), local farmers, processors, and distributors to develop local supply, and to increase the percentage of local, sustainable food in the dining halls through both sourcing and menu planning. Applicants should have a minimum of 2-3 years experience in agriculture and/or the sustainable food field. Ideal candidates will have culinary expertise or institutional dining experience. The position is 20-hrs./ week with an hourly wage based on experience.

More detailed description of essential duties and responsibilities:
A. Work closely with YUDS to align Yale's food demand and menus with Connecticut farmers' supply and crop plans

1. Identify and quantify Yale's annual needs, highlight where Yale's demand is not met by local supply, and generate a "wish list" for local farmers to help them meet Yale's needs;
2. Determine key areas where processing or new product development would help YUDS to use more locally-grown food (e.g. just-in-time produce peeling and cutting, IQF processing, sauces and fruit preserves);
3. Hold collaborative conversations with farmers to convey Yale's needs, and solicit farmer input about what they can best grow;
4. Aid culinary team with creating menus that take advantage of local produce availability and Connecticut growers' production capabilities.

B. Aid local farmers in exploring new production techniques and with financial planning needs

1. Provide access to information and expertise for farmers regarding crop varieties, planting calendars, season extension, pastured livestock production, processing, and crop storage. Help farmers convert to organic practices
2. Assist growers with financial services and planning needed to meet Yale's produce demands by working with Yale professors and volunteer students.

C. Work with local farmers, processors and distributors to measurably increase the amount of local food available for purchase by Yale

1. Find ways to assist farmers' with product consolidation and redistribution;
2. Facilitate the creation of relationships between farmers, processors, and distributors to create new products like jams, sauces or frozen produce;
3. Manage logistics, trouble shoot, and make certain that growers, processors, distributors and chefs have access to necessary information and expertise to solve any problems that arise.

D. Evaluate and Institutionalize

1. Oversee the measurement and tracking of Yale's local purchasing in concert with the Culinary Director;
2. Create a basic work plan/ calendar of activities to drive purchasing conversations in future years and to serve as a potential aid to other institutions attempting similar endeavors.

Measurable goals of position:

- percentage increase of local, sustainable food in Yale's dining halls
- number of dollars spent by Yale in the local agricultural economy
- number of relationships and commitments established for new products like salsa, jam or tomato sauce (goal: 6)
- number of farmers adopting either season-extension techniques or pasture-based meat/egg production (goal: 3)

Qualifications:

Minimum required:
Bachelors Degree
Two - three years experience on farms or in the sustainable food field.
Strong culinary background.
Preferred:
Institutional dining experience a bonus.

Minimum Skills and abilities (required):
Ability to manage several projects and relationships concurrently;
Strong critical thinking skills;
Superior interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills;
Ability to work independently and collaboratively;
Must be able to work well with Yale staff and students, local agriculture community, and food processors and distributors;
Knowledge of regional/seasonal eating and grasp of overall food and local agriculture issues;
Comfortable with Microsoft Word and Excel.

Other (physical requirements, certifications or licenses, pre-employment drug test, working conditions, etc.)
Minimum required:
Driver's license and vehicle for transportation to farms and processing/distribution facility.

Chapter 3. Building Relationships: Cultivating Stakeholder Partnerships

Farm to School Stakeholders

While serving locally produced food in school cafeterias and college dining halls might sound simple, it is usually far from it. Developing farm to school connections is no easy task and can present several challenges. The key to successfully overcoming these challenges is strong partnerships with on-going communication and cooperation based on trust and understanding. No one can develop, implement and evaluate farm to school projects alone and there are several people who play key roles in the school or college food system.

Key farm to school stakeholders include: farmers and food service directors, food service contract management company representatives, food distributors, and processors. Beyond these primary decision-makers, other stakeholders can make or break efforts to create farm to school links. These "movers and shakers" include: school administrators, students (i.e. college student organization members and k-12 student council members or committees), parents (i.e. representing parent-teacher organizations, college advisory committees, etc.), School wellness or nutrition committee members, school and college board members, and teaching staff are all important players in the farm to school program development and implementation process.

A very important first step in building successful Farm to School relationships is taking time to learn who the stakeholders are, *before* engaging them in the process. The following section provides descriptions of the roles these stakeholders may play in making farm to school connections.

Beyond these key partners, leaders of agriculture organizations, representatives of commodity organizations and policy makers play an important supportive role in making farm to school connections succeed. As an Extension Educator, you are perfectly positioned to help bring the right stakeholders together to initiate, strengthen, or redirect a farm to school project.[1]

As an extension educator or other community leader, you may receive an increasing number of inquiries from various stakeholders – especially in areas where interest in farm to school is increasing. An Inquiry Form is included in the Toolbox at the end of this chapter to help you keep track of these contacts.

Key Farm to School Stakeholders: Roles and Challenges

Of the many individuals and groups that have a stake in making farm to school connections, none are more critical than food service and college dining directors (or food service management companies), farmers, processors, and distributors. These stakeholders play a central role in establishing farm to school connections and making them work.

Food Service Directors.

As the key decision-makers in food procurement, menu planning, staffing and overall management of K-12 food service operations, food service directors are key stakeholders in creating and maintaining farm to school connections. The food service director is responsible for serving meals that meet the nutritional requirements set by the USDA, within tight budget constraints (See Chapter 2), typically with the expectation that their program be self-sufficient, and in some cases, a source of revenue for the school – all while striving to meet the food preferences of the students they serve.

Farm to School Partners

Key Stakeholders
- K-12 school food service or college dining directors
- Food service management company representatives
- Farmers
- Distributors
- Processors

Movers and Shakers
- School or college administrators
- Teachers and teaching assistants
- School wellness or nutrition committee members
- Students
- Parents
- School board members

Supporters
- Leaders of agriculture organizations
- Commodity organization representatives
- Policy makers

Emerging Roles for School Food Service Directors.

Increasingly food service directors are being asked to do their part to address the obesity problem among youth. At the same time many are developing an appreciation and understanding of the contributions both economically and ecologically that healthy farms can make to communities. Seeing a connection between human health, diet, and local farms, food service directors seek a greater understanding of the ways they can tap into local agricultural resources in their food service programs. More specifically, in order to make farm to school connections, they need to understand things like: the diversity of crops grown and animal products available from area farmers, the form in which they can be delivered, the potential frequency of deliveries, the price range that will cover the cost of production plus income for the farmer, the harvest and availability periods for local produce. From distributors, they need to understand the potential for sourcing from a given geographic area, or according to variety and quality standards. The ability to take all of this information and turn it into a farm to school connection hinges, to a large extent, on the budgets they have to work with.

Challenges for Food Service Directors

While there are multiple benefits to making strong links between farms and schools there are real challenges for food service directors. Food service directors face challeges everyday to satisfy federal requirements, protect the bottom line, and satisfy their customers. When

considering a farm to school program, these challenges can loom even larger. Fortunately, there are strategies that can be used to overcome these challenges with careful planning and creativity.

Food costs. The cost of food is a very real concern for food service directors. At the K-12 level, the entire food service operation (including food costs) is financed through low per-meal prices charged to students plus state and federal reimbursements. (For details, see Chapter 2). The establishment of a farm to school program often increases food service expenses, especially at the beginning. However, local food does not always cost more than food coming through national distribution sources, and can sometimes even be cheaper, particularly when increasing shipping prices are taken into consideration. Furthermore, buying from local farms can reduce food costs since there is often higher "yield" – that is, the local produce is more usable produce per delivery because the quality is higher – and therefore there's less waste (another cost savings).

It is important to note that farm to school programs have also boosted participation in the school lunch program due to improved taste, actually leading to increased revenues for the school. Food service operations can also purchase some local foods that cost more by instituting cost-saving measures in other areas: composting, adjusting portion sizes, etc. Ultimately, it takes a committed director to do comparisons, talk with distributors and local growers about their financial needs and limits item by item, and to think about the financial costs and benefits of sourcing foods locally in the context of the overall food service program.

Kitchen facilities and labor requirements. Increasing the use of more whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables may require additional record keeping, equipment, and preparation than the food service operation is either used to or equipped to handle. No matter how many sources food is procured from, food service directors will need to keep track of order and delivery dates, bills and receipts.[2] The need for some processing – washing, trimming, slicing, peeling, etc. – is common and, unless done by the farmer or a processor (as noted below) may place additional demands on limited food service staff. Occasionally, additional staff training is needed as well as additional preparation and storage space.

Availability and supply of local foods. One of the most important things food service directors need to learn about before they can implement a farm to school program, are sources of local food. Finding farmers who are interested in selling to schools and vendors who will supply foods grown by local farmers can be difficult, particularly for food service directors in urban areas, where farmers are not as visible as they might be in a rural area. Ironically, it is often more challenging for schools in rural regions to access fresh fruits and vegetables through vendors, because they are off of distributors' main routes.[3] In any situation it may be difficult to find farmers and establish a relationship. As Marc Foley, executive chef for Bon Appetit Management Co.'s operations at Washington University said, "It's hard to create the relationships with farmers. It's hard to sustain. Part of it is the skepticism on the part of farmers." Some farmers say they have been "burned" by restaurateurs or chefs who promise to buy their produce or meat, only to find they have changed their minds. So, it's important to build trust from the beginning and for both parties to follow through.

Those food service directors with access to a local farm may find it preferable to go directly through the farmer, rather than trying to access the product through a vendor, and do so at

a lower cost. However, this requires a strong commitment on the part of the director to either arrange to pick up the products or have them delivered. While this works well for some, it may be perceived as too burdensome by others, ultimately influencing the long-term sustainability of the procurement arrangement.[4]

Food service directors can find local farmers by contacting their local Cooperative Extension offices, state department of agriculture, farm and farmer organizations, and other institutions that are currently using local foods. They can also visit farmers' markets and talk with farmers there, connect with any "buy local" effort that may be in their region or state, and talk with their distributors about their interest in local foods. It is important to realize this research will take time and, for some, may at times seem almost impossible.[5]

Seasonality of Local Harvest. Here in the Northeastern United States, our most abundant harvest season falls in the summer when school is not in session. There are, however, several weeks in the fall when some fruits and several vegetables are available from local farmers. Food service directors need to become familiar with the seasonal availability of these foods in their areas. In addition, there are several hearty root vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots and a few fruits that store very well making them available for many months of the year. As more local value-added products become available schools will be able to expand their options for purchasing local foods. At the same time, schools that operate a summer feeding program and colleges that provide summer dining service can take advantage of the entire harvest season. Menus can be adjusted to accommodate seasonal variation. Finally, while fruits and vegetables are available seasonally, other local foods – meat, poultry, dairy products, and grains – are available year-round.

Length of lunch periods. For a variety of reasons, including the need to squeeze more teaching time into the school day, the time children are in the lunchroom is decreasing. Serving more whole foods in the more limited time allotted to lunch may be perceived as challenging and may require particularly creative food preparation and service options.

You may have noticed that some of the things food service directors need to understand and work with, like harvest season limitations and payment are the same issues of concern to farmers. Recognizing these shared concerns reinforces the importance of communication between farm to school stakeholders, and these two partners in particular.

College Dining Directors

Like their K-12 counterparts, college dining directors are key decision-makers in food procurement, menu planning, staffing and overall management of college dining. Dining directors cater to an increasingly discriminating customer-base – today's college student. They are responsible for providing a quality meal service that appeals to a diverse clientele and can help recruit potential students. Increasingly college dining directors are asked to respond to a range of student interest issues – from nutrition, taste, sustainability, ethics and justice – through their food procurement. As noted in Chapter 2, the food served in dining halls is seen by prospective students (and their paying parents!) as an important variable in the choice of which college or university to attend. (See "Sample Farm to College Project Mission Statements" in the Toolbox).

Because of these concerns, college dining directors have many of the same needs as their K-12 counterparts. They, too, need to understand the diversity of crops grown and animal products available from area farmers, the form in which they can be delivered, the potential

frequency of deliveries, the price range that will cover the cost of production plus income for the farmer, and the harvest and availability periods for local produce. From distributors or food service management companies, they need to understand the potential for sourcing from a given geographic area, and meeting variety and quality standards.

To help build this understanding and cultivate relationships with local farmers, some colleges are starting to hire "foragers" who seek out and buy local foods. For those institutions that can afford extra staff, "foragers" can be valuable additions, minimizing the additional time otherwise put on the dining service staff for food procurement.

Having the luxury of adding new staff reflects one important way in which college dining directors differ from their K-12 counterparts. Because meal plans are covered through students' expense packages, college dining directors are relatively less constrained by budgets than K-12 food service directors. However, although they do have greater financial flexibility, costs cannot be discounted and are one of the barriers to farm to school cited by college dining directors[6].

Food Service Management Companies

Seen as a cost-saving strategy, increasingly college dining services, and to a lesser extent K-12 food service operations, are no longer self-operated, but are managed by an external food service management company. Under this kind of food service management, the food service staff, from the director to the cooks, cashiers, and dishwasher are usually (but not always exclusively) employees of the company and not the school or college. Decisions about food purchases, vendors, and menus are likely to be more driven by how they impact the bottom line when food service is contract-managed than when self-managed. However, management companies that perceive a strong interest in farm to school on the part of their clientele – the school or college administration, wellness committee, students, and parents – are usually willing to make meaningful changes in their procurement strategies.

Because more and more colleges and school food services have been moving toward outsourcing food service management to these companies, these entities have a critical role to play in the development of farm to school nationwide. Food service management companies share many of the same concerns as distributors. For example, they will be concerned with costs and may find the need to source from several farmers more time consuming than being able to work with one broker. However, they are different in that they not only see that food is delivered to the institutions they serve, but they are also responsible for preparing and serving that food. Thus, presumably they should have a strong understanding of the needs of the institution and its goals in connecting to farms. Because of this relationship, food service management companies may be willing to absorb additional costs related to sourcing local foods, at least in the beginning, in order to remain competitive and secure their contracts with an institution interested in having local foods served.

Increasingly food service management companies are showing leadership in the area of sustainable and local food systems. For example, Bon Appetit, which is based in Palo Alto, California, has food-service contracts with 190 accounts in 26 states, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Duke University. Central to the Bon Appetit corporate mission is to buy most of the food it serves within 150 miles. "Our goal is to do an entire cafeteria with local foods," says Marc Foley, executive chef for Bon Appetit Management Co.

Farmers

Because they grow and harvest foods of interest to K-12 schools and college dining services, farmers provide the foundation for all farm to school projects. In some cases, farmers minimally process, or "add value", to their crops before marketing them. Farmers market either directly – delivering products to nearby schools/colleges – or sell crops wholesale to a vendor who in turn distributes to school districts or colleges. Sometimes groups of farmers form marketing cooperatives to maximize volume. This enhances their ability to collectively meet the demands of large institutional food service operations. When forming farm to school connections, farmers may face a number of challenges.

Challenges for Farmers

Cost of Production versus Price Offered. If schools and colleges are to become a viable market for farmers, they need to be paid more than what it costs to plant, tend, harvest, wash, pack, and, if applicable add-value, to their crops. Farmers, in other words, need to make the cost of production plus something for profit. It is important for farmers to understand the financial constraints of food service and explore the range of acceptable prices to charge for any given item. Likewise, food service managers need to understand all the costs involved for a farmer to supply food to the school. Through an open dialogue between farmers and food service directors, a price acceptable to both parties can often (but not always) be reached.

Growing Season versus Learning Season. It is important to note that even when equipped with information about delivery requirements, payment schedules, and packing specifications, meeting the needs of a food or dining service can be challenging for farmers, particularly those in the Northeast, where the school year coincides only to a limited extent with the local harvest. Seasonality of fruit and vegetable production can be limiting for farmers who are interested in selling to schools. Farmers, suppliers, and food service directors need to communicate about what the farm produces and when and in what quantities the products are available. They can also work together to plan what and how much should be planted. When farmers are in the midst of the growing season, moreover, they will be very busy and may be difficult to reach. They may not have time to return calls in the middle of the day, when most people conduct business and will look to farm to school partners to understand and work with their schedule, contacting them at night, if necessary.7

Moreover, although, while the harvest period can be very short for many fruits and vegetables, thanks to advances in long-term storage, the availability period for many produce items extends through much of the school year. Farmers who grow good storage crops can help food service directors understand the difference between harvest and availability periods so that they can plan menus accordingly. Furthermore, farms produce

much more than fruits and vegetables! Dairy products, grains, meats, eggs, dry beans, and legumes may be available from local sources and not be constrained by the change in seasons.

Whole Foods versus Value-Added. While the limited harvest season can be a challenge, it may also present opportunities. Although schools are increasingly interested in fresh fruits and vegetables, because of the harvest season and their consumers' preferences, they still have a need for value-added processing. This might be as basic as washing and trimming, or be more involved like slicing, peeling, or dicing, and preparing for long-term storage. Farmers who are able to either invest in some value-adding equipment or contract with a processor will have more opportunities with schools.[8] For example, farmers might work with schools to supply value added products like sliced apples, potato wedges, or more traditional value added products like honey, maple syrup, and jams. The establishment of new product lines, moreover, may provide farmers with opportunities for increased sales in other outlets. Even without the establishment of new product lines, farmers might build into their contract with the school, a new marketing strategy. For example, if they have a roadside stand, they might ask that the school forward information about the food being sourced from their farm, along with their contact information, to students and their families. In return for the marketing publicity, the farmer might be able to provide the school with a discount on products purchased.

Tip: Overcoming Challenges with Pre-season planning meetings.

Winter is the best time for farmers to meet with food service directors to discuss possible products that he/she may be able to grow/raise and the expected volume that will be needed. As school food service and dining directors develop a relationship, they can work together and try various crops in small quantities at first, with farmers agreeing to plant and food service agreeing to purchase. In this way, the risk is minimized and shared with a small commitment.

Schools and Colleges: An Unfamiliar Market

In order to work successfully with a school food or college dining service, farmers need to know a variety of logistical details about how the food service works. These include: frequent menu items, legal requirements, price range per item, food preparation and storage capabilities, pack size, item size, quality specifications, expectations for delivery schedule, and payment schedule. Having this kind of information is very important because while differing expectations can lead to frustration, and project failure, for both the farmer and school food service, common understanding can lead to exciting opportunities.

Delivery Requirements. Schools often expect deliveries on a set day and time of day. When farmers are selling direct to more than one school or more than one market, this can be a challenge. If the challenge is not met, food service staff will be left without the products they expect to feed the children and college students they serve. In addition, while the quantity required by a district at any one time can be more than one farmer can supply, the quantity can also be smaller than is cost effective for a farmer to deliver.[9] While these delivery issues are real, they are not insurmountable. Farmers and food service directors need to communicate about each others' needs and realities. Together, they may be able to come

up with simple solutions that make the sale possible; in some circumstances, for example, the food service director, might be willing to pick up the product from the farm. In other cases, the farmer might work with a distributor with whom the school already has a contract to get products to the school. Although going through a distributor may increase the cost of food otherwise sold directly from the producer to the food service and lower the profit margin for the farmer, "distributors generally offer farmers and school districts more delivery and payment options" than that provided through direct sales.[10] Farmers need scales to weigh their produce, correct box sizes for packing, and proper invoices.

Required Pack Sizes. Schools are used to receiving produce packed consistently so when they order a certain number of units they know what they'll be getting. Farmers with little wholesale or institutional food service experience will need to be educated on what these units are and work with schools to deliver the products in a way that meets the needs of food service.

Payment Schedules. Most farmers who sell directly to individual customers are used to getting paid immediately. Schools, colleges, and other institutions, however, don't work this way. When selling to schools, farmers should expect a delay in payment of 30 to 60 days. By talking with one another, and understanding each other's constraints, these schedules can sometimes be adjusted; farmers and food service directors may be able to work out a more flexible payment plan that meets both of their needs.

How Schools Pay Bills:
School Board policy varies from district to district, but below is the general process that a district follows:

1. The board of education requires a review of invoices and board approval of all requisitions before payment can be made.
2. Based on the time of month when the Board of Education meets, which depends on the particular district, payment may take up to 45 days.

How Colleges Pay Bills:
Colleges may require a purchase order before payment can be issued. If a purchase order is required, payment may take 30-60 days.

The Value of Cooperatives

While providing products in the quantity, quality, and regularity needed by schools may be a challenge for some farmers, farm to school connections can provide opportunities to build fruitful farmer-farmer partnerships. If one farm can't supply weekly deliveries of a product, on an ongoing basis, they may be able to coordinate their planting, growing season, and delivery schedule with other farms to meet the demands of food service. These "cooperative marketing" relationships may lead to other cooperative ventures, including added purchasing power as a cooperative for things such as seed purchases, packing supplies, and even liability insurance, which for individual farms can be cost prohibitive in the amount required by schools.[11]

Processors

Here in the Northeast, the importance of food processors in expanding the use of locally produced, often whole, foods cannot be over-stated. These key farm to school stakeholders transform a whole product from its harvested state into a form that is usable at the school or college level. K-12 school food service and, to a somewhat lesser but still substantial extent, college dining operations have come to rely on more highly processed food as

cooking "from scratch" has become less common in many institutions. To make farm to school a viable option for schools and colleges, locally produced foods will need to have some "value-added" processing done before delivery. Minimal value-added processing, from simply washing, slicing or dicing whole potatoes, or trimming and chopping greens, shedding cabbages, peeling and slicing carrots can make the difference between product being accepted or denied by a food service or dining director. In some cases the farmer is also the processor – adding value to his/her farm products.

As schools have moved increasingly toward the use of convenience foods – such as pre-assembled meal items – they have reduced investment in food preparation equipment and labor. The ability to cook from "scratch" – whether or not a school has a "scratch kitchen" – can be a determining factor in how much food the food service can handle directly from a farm. Processors, therefore, can play a critical role in bridging the gap between whole foods in their harvested form and the form needed for the school kitchen.

Processors need to know the kinds and extent of value-added processing needed by food service operations. Like farmers and distributors, they also need to know and understand insurance, payment, and delivery requirements for the school. Processors may also approach a farm to school partnership not through food service but through a farmer, who's processing needs they meet. In this case the processor will need to understand the farmers' supply capacity and delivery schedule. Thus, like a distributor, processors play an important role linking farms to food services and are important players to include in a farm to school partnership.

Food distributors

While getting locally grown food from farms to area schools and colleges may seem straight-forward, distribution is proving to be one of the biggest challenges to scaling up farm to school connections across the country. Some farmers are able to serve as both producer and distributor, but for most this doesn't make financial sense. This is also not an effective method for urban centers. Therefore, established distributors (or suppliers) can serve as a crucial link between producers and the institutional consumers – food service directors and college dining directors – making sure food is delivered, when needed, and in desired quantities.

Challenges for Food Distributors

Understanding of Food Service Director needs and goals. While many distributors already source local products when they can, for others it may be a relatively new concept (Coleman 2005). One of the first things a food distributor may need to do is gain a better understanding of what K-12 and college food service directors are trying to accomplish with

their programs and how distribution can help facilitate those goals. While distributors have a general sense of what food services do, they may not be as familiar with farm to school and how it fits within the context of any one food service director's program. Once distributors understand these goals they can think about how they are or could be prepared to help food service meet them.

Understanding of local and regional food systems. Before distributors are able to help meet food service directors' needs, they may have to increase their understanding of their local and regional agriculture system. If a distributor does not have established purchasing relationships with local or regional farms, it will be necessary for them to do some research to understand the types of farms within an area, the types of products they have available, and when these products are available. This will require some time and research and can be aided through existing resources, including Cooperative Extension Associations and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets lists of producers.

Costs. Once a distributor is aware of local resources, it is possible to begin assessing the financial feasibility of tapping into these resources. As is the case for farmers and food service directors, it will be impossible for a distributor to be a partner in making farm to school connections unless doing so is financially feasible. Discussions held in regional meetings between producers, K-12 food service directors, and distributors interested in farm to school suggest that, in some cases, feasibility relates to the size of distributors. Small distributors expressed interest in procuring local foods for their clients, but were often unable to attend the regional meetings, because doing so cut into their profit margin. Middle size distributors attended the meetings and also expressed interest in doing so, but emphasized that because they operate on very tight margins, there would need to be adequate demand for local products in order for them to make local sourcing a priority. Larger distributors were also open to helping to make the farm to school connection, but indicated that they prefer to have products brought to a single location, where it is easier for their brokers to purchase it from.[12]

The economics of working with multiple producers is, in some ways, a double-edged sword for distributors; while having to pick up from multiple farms can be too costly, they actually prefer to work with several suppliers in order to comparatively shop for better prices, quality, and greater availability.[13]

Demand. Closely related to distributors' concerns about cost, is their concern about demand. Distributors describe getting mixed signals from school food service directors about local products, seeing overall demand as limited. In other cases, distributors express concern that demand for local foods is inconsistent, varying in accordance with prices of commodity foods and seasonal availability. Distributors are concerned that if they supply locally-sourced products to K-12 food service programs during a season when they may be cheaper than commodity foods, when the prices go up, the food service director will go back to sourcing the commodity products. Because demand is limited and not greater and more consistent, distributors say that it doesn't make sense for them to put a lot of resources into sourcing local products.

Others see the demand for locally sourced food growing and, take the approach that if they make local products available, they will be ahead of competitors in a growing market: "A distributor who offers an array of NY-grown farm products throughout the year, and tells the school what farms it buys from will have a competitive advantage."[14] Evidence that food

service will, within limits, purchase products labeled as local even when the costs of doing so are higher than for products sourced from outside a local region supports this approach.

Having noted some of the concerns that farmers, food service directors, and distributors and food service management companies have in making the farm to school connection, it is worth reiterating the importance of communication, particularly between these three key parties. Regional meetings held in New York to understand some of the challenges and opportunities in establishing farm to school connections from the perspective of members of these three groups, demonstrate that "the more successful growth and expansion of purchases have occurred when the distributors, growers, and food service directors sit down to communicate, identify obstacles and work out solutions."[15]

Facilitators

Farm to School Movers and Shakers

Beyond the "Key Stakeholders" described above, there are several others who play important roles in making the farm to school connection. While not directly involved with the actual exchange of food between farmers and school/college food service operations, they have strong interests in students, schools and colleges as institutions, diet and health, and food and agriculture, and can therefore help facilitate farm to school connections.

School Administrators. Superintendents, business administrators, principals, members of Boards of Education, and others responsible for the well-being of the school.

At the K-12 level, budgets and accountability are two of administrations' top concerns and thus, things necessarily taken into consideration when farm to school opportunities are presented to them. Because of these concerns it is very important that food service directors keep accurate records, and follow appropriate accounting procedures and bidding rules and regulations. It is also important that directors work with their farm to school partners to honestly discuss costs with administrators and communicate benefits of farm to school connections to districts.

Some of these benefits include opportunities to: improve the health and academic outcomes of students; financially support the communities; develop new and/or stronger relationships between the school and community members; and, consequently, enhance teh school's public relations. Many administrators understand that by supporting local farms and distributors, schools help keep and recycle tax dollars within the community. As such, schools can be seen as giving these dollars back to the communities in which they are based and through which it is supported. It is important to add that even if a school is unable to source food from within its district, if it is sourced from within New York State, for example, the purchase still contributes to the NYS tax base, which in turn, funds NYS public schools.

Additionally, as school personnel connect farmers, processors and distributors, parents, and other stakeholders, through the development and implementation of a farm to school program, members of the school district not previously acquainted often get to know one another and develop a sense of community. [16] When a school serves as a catalyst for this type of relationship building it is usually seen in a favorable light by community members.

In addition to building community among farm to school program stakeholders, such programs regularly provide opportunities for showcasing these positive relationships through

the media. School news venues (websites and mailings) as well as local papers are great resources for letting parents and community members know about the positive outcomes of these school-based efforts. Through relationship building and outreach, farm to school efforts can help administrators build support for the school district. This support can be very important to K-12 schools, particularly in New York, where community members go to the polls to support or defeat school budgets.

College and University Administrators. College or university presidents, deans, and trustees, department chairs, program directors and others responsible for setting direction, developing a vision, fund-raising and ensuring the well-being of the institution.

College and university administrators, like their K-12 counterparts, are concerned about their institution's image within the community, making public relations very important. The "publics" to which the institution markets itself represent a relatively more diverse group of interests than the public at the K-12 level. For example, K-12 schools typically market themselves to students, their families, and other district residents, all of which reside in the same geographic area. Colleges and universities, on the other hand, market themselves to students, their families, local communities, alumni, and state policy-makers. Because farm to school programs have the potential to simultaneously serve the interests of these diverse groups, farm to college initiatives represent very good public relations opportunities for college and university administrators.

A growing cadre of students entering college has a healthy interest in the food system and in sustainable production. In response to this interest, an increasing number of universities have local or sustainable food programs. Thus, farm to college initiatives are increasingly more visible in marketing materials targeted at potential students.

Many of these food savvy students and their predecessors who are now alums, have a broader interest in general sustainability issues. It is important to them that their alma maters take measures to decrease their ecological impacts on the Earth and promote social justice. These campus stakeholders are approaching administrators to formally ask them to adopt such measures. The use of local foods, produced in ecologically sound ways, and bought at a price which is fair to the farmer, is one way in which college and university administrators can demonstrate their commitment to both of these types of issues.

As in the case of K-12 schools, the purchase of local foods is also a way for institutions of higher learning to demonstrate their commitment to the communities in which they are based. For example, by promoting farms selling to their dining services, during events open to the public, college and university presidents can drive home the importance of the community's economic well-being.

At the same time, because public relations can be soured by bad publicity, it may be important to reassure college administrators that locally produced products meet necessary health and safety standards and that they are purchased in a manner consistent with the institution's typical business transactions.

School Teachers. Because of their critical role in facilitating learning among young people, K-12 teachers are important partners to engage when making farm to school connections. Whether they know it or not, teachers have a stake in farm to school because: (1) they typically care about the overall well-being of their students, (2) diet quality and nutritional

status is associated with a child's ability to focus and learn, and (3) students see teachers as role models.

You are likely to find many teachers who are concerned about the dietary issues their students face and who are aware of the link between personal health, the food students consume at school and at home, and academic performance. A fewer number of teachers may also have an understanding of the positive impact that buying locally grown foods can have in their community. These teachers are in a good position to help advocate for farm to school by supporting changes in the cafeteria, integrating food studies into classroom curricula and providing outreach to parents. For many teachers, farm to school and its underlying concepts will be a completely foreign idea. They, themselves, may have poor eating habits and a lack of understanding about how diet, overall health and academic performance are related, let alone why we should care about who grows our food. Before these teachers are likely to embrace the vital role they can play in a farm to school program, they will need to be educated and engaged. Utilizing teachers who are already aware and passionate about farm to school to educate reluctant teachers can be a useful strategy.

In addition, many schools report a disconnect between what happens in the cafeteria and the classroom. Farm to school provides an exciting opportunity to link these two important components of a child's school experience: academic learning and school food nutrition. Those teachers who perceive physical and emotional distance between the classroom and the school food service may want to know what eating more locally sourced foods in the cafeteria has to do with what they teach in the classroom. They may also be concerned that the incorporation of locally produced foods into school meals will take time away from classroom instruction. For example, requests to do taste-tests in classrooms or to integrate agricultural and food systems information into curriculum may be perceived as infringing on instructional time that is needed to meet other educational requirements. Similarly, students, particularly younger ones, used to eating finger foods, may be unfamiliar with the etiquette of eating more whole foods (i.e. using utensils, serving themselves at salad bars, and practicing good manners throughout), and teachers may not want the responsibility of helping them to acquire these skills. It will be important to work with teachers to address their specific concerns and to provide them with opportunities to get to know and appreciate the role food service personnel and healthful meals play in the educational process of their students.

One way to address these concerns is to help teachers see requests to connect their classroom time to their students' local food experience as opportunities to enhance their instructional program. Chapter 6 illustrates curricula that have been successfully integrated into the classroom, providing children with important opportunities to explore, cook and taste new and healthful foods while meeting local and state learning standards. Several of these programs include a parental component designed to improve the knowledge and food preparation skills of parents to encourage healthful eating practices in the home environment. Curricula exist that allow teachers to integrate food and food system concepts into classroom learning in varying degrees of intensity. Because food is a universal need for all humans, there is a rich heritage from which to draw creative lesson plans to address learning standards in all subject areas. Providing teachers with proven models will help to alleviate concern that integrating food explorations will compete with other mandated learning objectives and can, instead, demonstrate that food is a powerful (and fun!) learning tool.

As with cafeteria staff making the farm to school transition, it will be important to provide teachers with opportunities for training that helps them develop their professional program. Providing advanced educational credits for this training can be an important incentive that will prompt reluctant teachers to try something new. Teachers' fears about farm to school interfering with instruction time for older students can be alleviated by establishing student clubs or committees that help make the farm to school connection outside of the classroom.

Finally, another reason teachers may be interested in farm to school connections is the allure of having healthier and more creative meals at their own disposal. If they are not already purchasing meals through the cafeteria, they may want to do so if they experience new meals on the menu as being healthy and tasty and perceive doing so as supporting local agriculture.

K-12 School wellness and nutrition committee members. As part of the 2004 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act (discussed in Chapter 2), all school districts were required to establish wellness committees. These committees are responsible for establishing guidelines and policies on the nutrition standards for school meals, ala carte items, and food sold outside the cafeteria and available during after school programs.

School wellness or nutrition committee members, including school nutritionists and nurses, other health professionals, can be invaluable for identifying leaders within the school who should be involved in the various aspects of developing a farm to school connection. By virtue of their roles on these committees, moreover, these individuals can be ideal candidates for your farm to school partnership. They will most likely share your concerns about increasing the nutritional content and desirability of food served in schools and may also already be familiar with the farm to school concept, meaning they may be able to help the partnership hit the ground running.

At the same time, because of their familiarity with the school food program, school wellness and nutrition committee members may be concerned that parents won't accept the new foods on their children's trays or that teachers will feel imposed upon by the changes that a farm to school program may entail. Work with them to assess support from parents and teachers. Help them understand and be prepared to articulate the connections between local food, community, and student health & achievement. Encourage them to see farm to school as a potentially positive and healthy way to support the community.

College Faculty. The college learning environment is dynamic. University faculty, in fulfilling their responsibility for facilitating learning among college students, have opportunities to engage students in projects that incorporate real life experiences for course credit.

For professors teaching courses that relate at all to the food system, the college dining service provides a built-in laboratory of study perfectly suited to such student engagement. The numerous issues and questions raised by efforts to shift institutional food procurement toward locally and sustainably grown/raised food products are relevant to many areas of study.

Those with a disciplinary focus on economics, nutrition, public health, food service management, organizational development, business administration, horticulture, marketing, agricultural economics, sustainable agriculture, food system change, and farm business management, for example, may see farm to school connections within their institution as opportunities to build applied learning modules into their curriculum. Those faculty members

most excited about incorporating farm to school in course content are those who (1) embrace sustainability and local economies to begin with and those who (2) see a link between farm to school and the classes they teach. Faculty members can play important roles in fostering student support for farm to school connections, as a faculty advisor to student committees, and with administrators as well, who will likely give greater credence to student movements supported by faculty members, than those acting on their own.

K-12 Students. As members of food-related organizations or nutrition and wellness committees, students can reflect the interests, concerns, awareness, and food preferences of the entire student body (i.e. college student organizations and K-12 after school programs, student council or committees).

Although K-12 students are not typically known as the farm to school activists that college students are, they can be important partners in making the farm to school connection. For example, younger students may find taste-tests fun and become great promoters of new foods among their peers, helping to provide food service with important insights into what foods might be accepted or rejected. Involving young students in this way provides them with important educational and leadership opportunities. Because children are so easily influenced by one another, their capacity to advocate for targeted (locally grown) foods is enhanced by providing them with multiple exposures and direct engagement in the growing, harvesting, cooking and eating of those same foods.

Children have an immense influence on one another as well as others regarding food choices. It was a group of upper elementary students from across the country, working with community groups, that pressured McDonalds to move from Styrofoam to paper packaging. Whether it's with a big corporation or walking down the food isles of a grocery store with their parents, educated children can positively advocate for healthful food choices.

Older students, who may have a better sense of nutrition and health, are important stakeholders in a farm to school partnership as well. Like their younger counterparts, they can help food service understand student preferences and help promote new foods within the cafeteria. These students will also have greater exposure to civic lessons and may be able to embrace the social and economic benefits of supporting local farms and businesses through the school. With free periods during their school day, and opportunities to establish student clubs, groups, or government councils, there are a lot of ways in which older students can be engaged in making farm to school connections. They can also serve as positive role models for younger students. It can be a source of great pride for an older student to mentor and teach children in earlier grades all they have learned about food, farming, nutrition, cooking and eating healthful foods. The more children are educated and engaged with food related topics throughout their school years the greater their capacity will be to understand, interpret and actively participate in promoting farm to school concepts in their school, home and larger communities.

College Students. Through their involvement in issue-focused student organizations, college students are increasingly organized to express the interests, concerns, awareness and food preferences of the entire student body.

Increasingly, student organizations are forming around food and food systems issues as students leave high school with a greater understanding of the links between diet, personal health, and the health of the planet. Fair trade, farm worker rights, environmental

sustainability, small farm, local foods – are common themes for such groups. College student organization members can provide valuable input on the goals of a farm to college project. These groups also regularly work with faculty advisors who can be valuable resources in their own right. As noted above, faculty provide important links to administrators and also provide scholarly resources in support of the effort.

In addition to providing input on the goals of a farm to college project, student groups have provided important intellectual and physical sources of support for farm to school projects, developing and implementing surveys, and developing and promoting educational materials about local foods, the farms they come from, and their connection to communities. They've also helped make the connections between farms and college dining directors, identifying farms for the directors and, when necessary to get the ball rolling, driving to farms to pick-up and deliver products to the campus.

When enlisting members of student organizations, as with all farm to school program partners, it is important to be sure that these individuals understand the challenges and opportunities dining directors and farmers face as they develop farm to school connections. While students may understand the benefits a successful farm to school partnership offers, they may be less familiar with the logistical realities involved in serving hundreds – more likely many thousand – meals per day. By including them as active members of a farm to school partnership, you can provide them (and all members) with opportunities to understand farm to school from the perspective of the key players (farmers, college dining, distributors) and others.

Parents and other Community Members. (i.e. representing Parent-Teacher organizations, college advisory committees, etc.). One thing that all parents have in common is their desire to have healthy children. Along with parents, other community members also value the well-being of the children and adults within the school community. Parents and even other community members often have an established understanding of school politics, policies, and programs, making them poised to assist or even lead the charge in establishing farm to school connections.[17]

Parents have been integral to the development of several farm to school connections throughout the country, particularly those initiated outside of the school system, by non-profits.[18] Perhaps one of the reasons parents have played such an important role is because they come to the farm to school table wearing multiple hats and, as such, have access to multiple resources. Parents are first and foremost their children's caretaker and advocate, but they are also taxpayers, school volunteers, professionals, and concerned community members. As such, the benefits and challenges related to farm to school may be more obvious to them than to others who may be approaching it from a single perspective. Parents' concerns may include:

1. The nutritional quality of the food consumed by their children at school, both in cafeteria meals and outside the cafeteria such as food from vending machines, before and after school programs, school fundraising, classroom rewards, athletics and other school events;

2. The relationship between school food and their children's health and well-being, particularly within the context of the growing obesity epidemic;

3. The relationships between the food their children eat and their ability to learn;

4. School taxes and the services being provided at school, including the content of the

curriculum being taught in the classroom, opportunities for exercise & nutrition education, extra-curricular activities, and community service, and;

5. The well being of their community, including the local economy, the natural environment, and, perhaps, the role that farms play in both.

In addition to having these concerns, as parents, taxpayers, and members of the school community, parents have the power to see that these concerns are addressed. They can approach food service, school administrators, and school boards with suggestions for change; they can volunteer in the classroom or cafeteria to help put changes into motion; and they can support these goals outside of the school by supporting local farms, and modeling desired dietary and exercise behaviors.

Like all other members of a school community the level of knowledge and skill to advocate for farm to school related changes will vary among parents. There will likely be a need to educate and engage parents and other interested community members in becoming more familiar with the links between nutrition, school food, health, and student academic performance, as well as making a connection between the food we consume and the health of local farms, communities, and the natural environment. The more informed parents are the more they can contribute to the building of a strong and sustainable farm to school program.

Supporters

In addition to farm to school stakeholders that help facilitate connections between farms and schools, there are others which have an interest in supporting these connections, more indirectly. We end our section on Farm to School stakeholders with a brief description of some of these stakeholders.

Leaders of agricultural organizations *– represent and are often responsible for communication to large groups of producers; may provide promotional services for their members as well. These leaders can help schools, colleges, distributors, and processors identify local sources of foods and help their members understand farm to school opportunities.*

Representatives of commodity organizations *– primary mission is to represent the marketing and promotion interests of producers of a particular crop or product – such as apples, beef, vegetables, etc. These leaders can also help schools, colleges, distributors, and processors identify local sources of foods and help their members understand farm to school opportunities.*

Members of environmental, anti-hunger, sustainable agriculture, and other similar grassroots organizations, including faith-based groups *– have deeply held beliefs and, often, programmatic activities, that are supportive of farm to school connections. They may also have a track record of organizational success, with an established infrastructure on which to draw in helping to support farm to school connections.*

Policy makers *– school food service operations at all levels are influenced by and must adhere to policies. These can be at the institutional, local, state, or federal level. It is important to become aware of what some of these policies are and how to engage your legislative representatives in developing them to best serve farm to school connections.*

Building a Stakeholder Partnership

Building a Stakeholder Partnership

By now, you may have guessed that communication and education are key to building a successful farm to school project. Once you've identified individuals and groups who have a stake in making your farm to school connection, the next step is to get a sense of each stakeholders' understanding of farm to school and, then, to actually start to bring these stakeholders together into an effective partnership that can make that connection happen.

Before bringing stakeholders together, it is helpful to talk with them individually so that they have a personal connection to you and an understanding of what you are hoping to accomplish. This one-on-one meeting is also a good time to assess their understanding and commitment to farm to school and to identify any concerns they may have about engaging in a farm to school project.

After you've touch based with and gotten to know your farm to school stakeholders individually, you are ready to begin to develop your partnership. In order to ensure that a partnership truly gels, it is important that those you've recruited feel vested in the partnership. In other words, you want those you've recruited to feel committed to your farm to school efforts and to pursuing those efforts as a team. One way to foster this sense of camaraderie and commitment is to work with the group to help them get to know one another, and develop a shared vision, mission, and plan of action.[19]

Farm to school stakeholders will be best prepared to create and sustain farm to school connections when they understand what is involved for each member of the partnership and everyone is comfortable communicating and working with each other to make it happen.

Below are some ideas to help you forge your stakeholder partnership:

1. Host a Farm to School "Show and Tell" designed to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to get to know one another, their interests in farm to school and their goals for a potential partnership.
2. Develop a contact list of "Show and Tell" participants and distribute it to them to encourage them to engage one another on their own.
3. Host educational events such as:
    a. School food luncheons, giving participants an opportunity to see what the school feeding program is currently like and the opportunities and challenges therein with respect to meeting their goals.
    b. Tours of farms that are or have expressed an interest in marketing to schools so that stakeholders can understand the opportunities and challenges farmers must work with.
    c. Host tours of other schools' lunch programs, school garden programs, agricultural literacy or nutrition education programs.
4. Invite "Show and Tell" participants to a second meeting for the purpose of identifying a shared vision and mission statement for a farm to school project and formalizing the partnership in pursuit of these goals. (See "Chapter 3 Tool Box," "Facilitating Farm to School Meetings" and "Vision and Mission Overview.")

5. Continue meeting and providing educational opportunities as needed to work towards your vision.

Once you've gotten to know your potential stakeholders, recruited some of them to your partnership, and worked with them to identify a shared vision and mission, you are ready to begin assessing your capacity for fulfilling that vision and identifying an action plan for doing so. Tools to help you assess your capacity and identify goals and an action plan are the focus of Chapter 4.

Chapter 3 Toolbox

Toolbox

Farm to School Inquiry Form

Name E-mail Address

Mailing Address

Town State Zip code Phone Number

Establishment (School District/College/County)

Are you interested in farm to school?
Yes___ No___

Are you interested in farm to college?
Yes___ No___

Stakeholder group caller represents:
__ Farmer
__ Distributor
__ Food Service Director
__ College Dining Director
__ Parent
__ Student
__ Press or Media Representative
__ Other: _____

Reason for the contact:
__ Want to further develop a Food/Wellness committee
__ What help planning and facilitating a stakeholder meeting
__ Would like more information about local purchasing
__ Want to start a farm to school/college project
__ Want someone to give a presentation
__ Seeking funding
__ Other: _____

Please add any additional notes or comments:

___/___/_____ Date

Facilitating Farm to School Meetings

Excerpted and adapted from "Facilitation Skills, Tools, and Techniques – Resource Book." TFC Associates. (2005); and Kalb, M. (2005) Farm to School First Organizing Meeting.

Role of a facilitator

Effective facilitation of meetings can yield great results and will assure that your group moves toward its goals. As a facilitator your role is to make sure the process allows for optimum participation of group members, to intervene when the group is violating working agreements, and to help manage conflict or clear up misunderstandings that can develop in the group. A facilitator keeps the atmosphere in the group conducive to accomplishing the task and makes sure that a process is being followed to keep the group on task.

The facilitator is the person who helps a group accomplish its tasks by guiding or supporting its communication, interaction, learning, and decision-making processes. The focus is on process management as opposed to education or training. In contrast to a facilitator, an educator is someone who teaches; providing information and knowledge in a particular area; and a trainer is someone who provides knowledge and guides the development, practice, and application of abilities and skills.

Facilitators need to keep aware of the "boundaries" in which the group will be working:

- Task – What is our task?
- Time – How much time will we take for each agenda item?
- Agenda – What is our agenda?
- Turf and Territory – Where you meet, but also the psychological turf. Whose group is this?
- Internal Structure – Who will do what and play what role in the group?
- Membership – Who's in and who's not?
- Culture – How will we "be" together in this process?

Active Listening Responses

One of the key features of facilitation is listening actively. Active listening can reflect feelings or content, clarify through paraphrasing or asking questions, and summarize the main points. Particular phrases and questions are used for each:

1. Reflect feelings or content

a. "It sounds like you're pretty happy about the idea of getting produce directly from a farmer."
b. "Seems like it was really tough when that happened."
c. "So as you told us, you're proud but a little anxious too?"
d. So, in your words, '.....'. Is that it?

2. Paraphrase or Ask Questions to Clarify

a. "What you seem to be saying is...."
b. "What I'm hearing is...."
c. "Can you say more about.....?"
d. "Did I understand you to be saying....?"
e. "Would you remind us of when that happened?"

3. Summarize the Main Points

a. "So today you'd like us to talk about…"
b. "Let me summarize what I heard so far."
c. "So on one hand …but on the other…."
d. "I think I've head several things that are important to getting a farm to cafeteria connection established here: first….., second….., third, …."

Creating an agenda

What you include on the agenda will stem from the purpose of the meeting. Each agenda item will have one or more purposes such as:

- Inform (give information)
- Gather information (ask questions and solicit answers from the group)
- Analyze/Solve Problems (understanding an issue)
- Make decisions
- Coordinate Activity

While "relationship-building" is not an agenda item, it is often a desired and inevitable outcome of a meeting. This is an important outcome for the successful development of farm to school projects.

Who to Invite

School Representatives
School food service staff
Nutritionist
Principals
Teachers
Students
Parents, PTA
Nurse
School Board members

Farmers and Places to Find Them
Farmers' Markets, Internet
4-H groups, feed supply stores
U.S. and State Departments of Ag.
Roadside Stands/U-Pick/CSAs
Commodity boards and commissions
Farm Bureau, Cooperatives
Cooperative Extension, Small Farm
County fairs, farm equipment shows

Community and Government Agencies
Environmental organizations
Sustainable agriculture groups
Anti-hunger, food security organizations
County health and nutrition staff
U.S. and State Departments of Agriculture
County Agriculture Commissioner
City Council members
Representatives from local congressional and state representative offices

Suggested agenda items for an initial farm to school meeting:

I. Introductions
II. Why a Farm to School Project – Benefits for students, farmers, community
III. Examples of Farm to School Projects in the Northeast – what's working
IV. Assessing the Current Situation
  A. Farmer Issues – crops, seasonality, marketing channels, production costs, value-added Processing, transportation and delivery, ability to meet demand
  B. School Issues – present buying practices, kitchens, storage and prep areas, labor costs, equipment, food budget, wellness policy, administrative support

C. Partnering with Others – are there joint projects happening now (e.g., school gardens, cooking classes, nutrition education, local business, health and agriculture organizations and local government).

V. Envisioning a Local Farm to School Project – given local resources, what can be done? What barriers exist to starting a project and how can they be overcome? What other potential partners should be part of the process?

VI. Forming a Working Group and Assigning Tasks

VII. Set Next Meeting Date

Sample Farm to College Project Mission Statements

Kenyon College's "Food for Thought: A Local Food Initiative"

Food for Thought is an initiative to build a sustainable local market for foods produced in and around Knox County, Ohio. Directed by the Rural Life Center at Kenyon College, this collaborative effort is developing a county-wide food system to enable area farmers to market their products to individual consumers and institutional buyers including schools, hospitals, restaurants, grocery stores, and caterers.

Food for Thought will benefit our community by:

- offering farmers a stable and profitable market for their products
- providing consumers with healthy, tasty, and nutritious food
- educating the public about their food choices, farming, and local rural life
- keeping more of the $120 million in annual food purchases within our county
- supporting independent businesses
- maintaining green space and rural character by sustaining family farms

Food for Thought will facilitate the purchase of local foods by:

- bringing together interested farmers, institutional buyers, and agricultural experts
- addressing issues including supply, processing, distribution, and quality control
- assisting farmers in tailoring their products to meet local market demand
- developing promotional materials to advertise local products
- preparing educational materials and public programs to raise consumer interest

The Evergreen State College Food Services Mission Statement

The goal of The Evergreen State College food services is to provide quality food presented in an attractive manner to the diverse range of individuals and groups that utilize the campus. We envision the partnership between the food service provider and the college to be integral to our mission.

As a partnership we strive to:

Provide a healthy, fresh and attractive food service that is responsive to the changing desires of students, staff, faculty, and guests.

- Engender community development and encourage campus involvement through communication, creative programming, and attractive facilities.
- Operate in a fiscally viable manner while providing affordably priced food.
- Educate the community in regards to nutrition, sustainability, and being a socially responsible consumer.
- Create relationships between food services and academic programs.
- Give students the opportunity to learn about the connection between local farms and the campus.

- Maintain a flexible catering program that meets the needs of Conference Services and tailors services to individual groups.
- Provide products and services convenient to the campus community

Vision and Mission Overview

A shared vision and mission are important because they often serve as a common point around which people with different interests and needs can rally, in an organized and focused manner, to achieve *common* goals. For example, although farmers, food service directors, and distributors all have different needs in a farm to school partnership, they can likely all share a vision of nutritious school meals created through locally sourced farm or food products and be committed to a mission of increasing farm to school connections towards this end.

There are lots of guides to developing vision and mission statements.[1] It is not our intent to replicate those resources here. However, because the purpose and characteristics of each are regularly confused, it is important to briefly distinguish between a vision and mission statement:

A *vision* statement is "a statement of your dream or ideal conditions." [2]
A *mission* statement is a statement of "what you do and why."

No matter what process you follow to create your vision and mission statements, it is important that they (1) represent input from all of your potential partners; and (2) are, in final form, a statement that all of these partners, and others that might become partners, agree with and can easily articulate. If your vision and mission statements meet these standards, your partnership members should always be clear about their purpose, making it easier for them to stay true to it.

Chapter 4. Needs Assessment: Assessing Your Farm to School Capacity

Now that you have a better understanding of who to include when planning a farm to school program in your community, there's another step before launching your project. This section provides assessment tools for going beyond the introductory phase of "getting to know" your stakeholders to working with them to explore local capacity for developing a farm to school program. These tools will help you work with each farm to school partner to identify their needs, limitations and resources. By understanding this capacity, you will be better prepared to implement a realistic plan of action designed to achieve an agreed upon vision.

The assessment tools in the Tool Box at the end this chapter are designed to will help you gather information from key farm to school stakeholders – people who, ideally, are already members of your partnership. Specifically, K-12 food service and dining directors, school administrators, farmers, distributors, and processors will be asked to respond to a series of questions designed to be asked over the phone or in-person.[1]

Information gathering to assess the needs of different stakeholders is critically important and can be done by an extension educator on behalf of a stakeholder partnership, or by individual stakeholders. Whether you are an extension educator or a stakeholder, it is important that the person conducting these assessments is comfortable asking questions, is a thorough note taker, and will effectively report the results back to the broader stakeholder partnership.

Preparing for the Needs Assessment

Prior to conducting any of the needs assessments, it is best to have a basic understanding of the local food and agriculture system. For example, it might be useful to know something about:

- the local fruit or vegetable farms
- any local food processing options
- availability of local food grading, washing and packing in the area
- availability of value added products made from local sources
- whether or not fresh fruits and vegetables can be procured through the Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Program.
- curricula that complement Farm to School

Members of your partnership will probably know much of the information you seek through this initial fact finding process. If not, see "Chapter 5 Tool Box," "Matching Needs with Resources – Flow Charts and Tables".

Before You Begin

Before contacting or meeting with a farm to school stakeholder (food service director, farmer, distributor, school administrator, parents, etc.) be sure to read through the questions you'll be asking. Think about what you might already know (and can therefore skip

over) and how you'll ask about each question. An interview will proceed more smoothly when it resembles a conversation.

At the end of each of the following assessments is a worksheet. These worksheets should be completed as soon as possible following the interview in order to identify and prioritize needs by topic. The worksheets are designed to help maintain a record of your work with the schools and provide the basis for the action plan that will be provided to your K-12 district or college farm to school stakeholder partnership.

The questionnaires in the Toolbox – for food service and dining directors, farmers, distributors, and school administrators – are designed to help you become familiar with the cafeteria or dining hall, and the school's willingness and ability (along with their needed partners) to make a farm to school connection. When this section is completed the educator and his or her partners should have an understanding of:

- The ability and willingness of a Food Service Director to incorporate elements of Farm to School.
- The potential of school partners for implementing elements of Farm to School.
- The support and level of commitment from the school community for implementation of Farm to School.
- The capacity of distributors to accommodate local cafeteria requests.
- The potential of supply from local farms and concerns local farmers may have regarding doing business with schools.
- The administration's disposition toward for Farm to School, including both locally sourced food and agricultural literacy and education.
- Who may be less favorably disposed toward the farm to school idea and what their specific concerns are.

Do I Need All of These Assessments?

Which and how many of the assessments you conduct will depend on your community interest, availability of stakeholders, and their willingness to participate. The most critical link to make and area about which to gain understanding will in most cases be the food service director and farmers.

Scheduling a Time to Talk

Since interest in developing a farm to school project may have come from outside the school or college, you will need to contact the food service director to make sure there is interest on his/her part in learning about such projects and in meeting with you to discuss the feasibility of implementing one.

Your first contact can be by phone, email, or via a letter. In this communication, ask if he or she has heard of farm to cafeteria to school (or "farm to college") and if not, describe what this is. Next explain that there is interest in developing a farm to school project at this school, and that you have been asked to provide advice, or to recommend a strategy for this

project. But, in order to do that, you need to learn about what they do, their challenges and needs. Ask if he or she would be open to meeting with you in person or on the telephone for a conversation lasting about 30 minutes. (See "Chapter 4 Tool Box," "Assessment Introduction: Sample Letter")

Assurance Statement

To provide reassurance to the food service/dining director about the kind of information that you are seeking, the following introduction to the interview is suggested.

"Thank you for agreeing to meet with me and to answer some questions designed to help determine how best to start a farm to school project in your district. I want to assure you that the information I am seeking is generally public information. If you feel at any time uncomfortable about answering a question, just tell me, and I'll skip to the next one. You are under no obligation to answer any or every question."

Important! Be sensitive to the privacy of all stakeholders by checking that it's OK to share with others what is said in any interview! If it isn't ok, be absolutely sure to respect their wishes. As you know, trust is the key to any partnership.

The needs assessments you will use with school food service directors, college dining directors, farmers, distributions and school administrators follow in the "Chapter 4 Tool Box." Feel free to remove, copy, and adapt as necessary to meet your needs.

Chapter 4 Tool Box

Toolbox

Assessment Introduction: Sample Letter

(for email or post)

Letterhead

Dear food service director,

As you probably are aware, more and more schools/colleges are beginning to include locally produced foods as part of their food service. This connection to local agriculture is called "farm to school". I have been asked by local community members for help in exploring the potential for a farm to school project in your school district/college dining service operation. [Or, if the food service director made the contact: "Thank you for your interest in learning more about farm to school. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to explore the potential for farm to school within your food service operation."]

In order to determine how best to get a farm to school project going in your district/college, and to advise you on how to focus your efforts, I would like to set up a half an hour to an hour meeting with you to learn about your food service operation. By learning from you, I will be better able to develop a set of priorities or "first steps" in developing a farm to school program at your school. These steps can be very small and low risk or quite ambitious depending on your interests.

In addition to talking with you, it would be most helpful to actually see your facility. This would help assure that the suggested action steps that I develop for you are realistic and achievable.

I would like to set up a time to meet with you within the next few weeks. I will follow up this letter/email with a phone call in the next few days. Please feel free to call me with any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Linda Local
Extension Educator
Phone
Email

K-12 Food Service Directors Needs Assessment

Farm to School in the Northeast

Needs Assessment

Food Service Directors

Date_____

Name _____ Email_____

School/District_____County _____

Address _____

City _____State _____ Zip code _____

Telephone_____ FAX _____

Basic Information

Total student enrollment _____

Number of schools in your district _____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High

Do you participate in USDA school meals program? YES_____ NO_____

Number of students on free and reduced breakfast/lunch program_____

On average, how many student lunches do you serve in a day? _____ ADP Average Daily Participation) rate: _____%

What is the price of lunch? Full price _____ Reduced _____

Do you have a summer feeding lunch program? YES_____ NO_____

If yes, how many children take part in it? _____

Do you participate in the DoD Fresh program? (if in a DoD area) YES_____NO_____

The Food Service Facility

Does each school in your district have a "scratch" kitchen? YES_____ NO_____

If no, how many are there and in which schools?_____

Do you have central kitchens that deliver to other schools? YES_____ NO_____

Do you have enough cold storage and/or dry storage space to accommodate an increased use of fresh and fresh stored fruits and vegetables? (Describe)

_____

Is your food service equipped to prepare whole fruits and vegetables? (Please list) (e.g. Do you have an adequate supply of knives, food processors, wedgers, peelers, slicers, etc.?)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Food Service Staff Skills, Experience and Interest

Number of food service staff: _____ Full Time _____ Part Time

Number with culinary training _____

Are there any time constraints on food preparation in the school? (Describe)

_____

_____

Do time constraints influence what you put on your menu? (Describe)

_____

To what extent is time a deterrent from using more whole fruits and vegetables in your lunches?

Large extent Moderate extent Small extent Time is not a deterrent

Is your staff adequately trained to prepare whole fruits and vegetables? If not, what training would be helpful? _____

_____

Are there any whole fruits or vegetables that you do not use because of the amount of prep time required? *(i.e. pumpkins, butternut squash, acorn squash)* ?_____

_____

Menus and Recipes

Do you have full control over menu development? YES_____ NO_____

If yes, What are your main considerations when developing your menu(s) *(Is it labor, Is it student preferences, Is it pricing)*? If no, how is it developed? _____

_____

_____

Do you develop different menus for different schools or districts? _____

Do you have a menu cycle? If so, for what time period? _____

How often are your recipes reviewed and revised?_____

Have you modified or changed recipes recently? If so,how? _____

_____

How are new items/recipes introduced to the students? Provide an example._____

_____

_____

Fruit and Vegetable Use and Procurement

What fruits and vegetables do you use most frequently in your school lunches? (Please list)

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Most schools require at least a small degree of processing in fruits and vegetables. Looking at your list above, describe the least processed form (*e.g. chopped, sliced, peeled, etc.)* in which you could accept each product for your food service. Circle any you have purchased whole (fresh or fresh stored).

Are there any fruits and vegetables you don't currently use but would like to?

YES_____ NO_____

If yes, which ones? _____

How would you describe your knowledge of what fruits and vegetables are grown locally?

Very good OK Need Help

What are some things that would make it easier for you to purchase local fruits and vegetables in the school? _____

_____

_____

How many produce deliveries do you get in a week? _____

_____

What, if any, flexibility do you have in your delivery schedule? _____

_____

Local Food Practices (By "local" we generally mean within your state, or region)

Do you purchase any of the fruits and vegetables on your menu locally?

YES NO Don't Know

If YES, which ones? _____

_____

If no, are there any fruits and vegetables you would like to get from local or regional sources? Which ones?_____

There are many ways to start using locally grown fruits and vegetables. For example, have you (or are you interested in….)

Let your supplier/distributor know of your interest in locally produced fruits and vegetables?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Purchased produce directly from a farmer?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Featured local food in a school event, special meal or harvest event?
For example, celebrating NY Harvest for NY Kids Week

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Developed seasonal menus, or recipes using local foods?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Are there any other steps besides these that you've taken to increase your use of local produce?_____

_____

_____

In your opinion, what barriers are there, if any, to your district's ability to purchase fruits and vegetables from your area? *(e.g. concern about cost, location, options provided by distributor, etc.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

School Community

Does your school hold any harvest, farm, or food system events? If so, what sorts of activities are involved?_____

_____

Does your districts wellness or nutrition policy include…. (please check all that apply)

- ❑ Restrictions on food served in vending machines?
- ❑ A soda ban on campus?
- ❑ Specifics on allowable competitive foods?

- ❑ Specifics on foods allowed in fundraisers or class parties?
- ❑ Specifics on foods children can bring to school?
- ❑ An emphasis on locally grown/produced food?

Does your school have a wellness committee? YES_____ NO_____

Are there other committees working on nutrition and food service issues? *(e.g. parent association)* YES_____ NO_____

Are you included in any of these committees? YES_____ NO_____

How would you decribe administrative, school board and community support for purchasing local products?_____

_____

Student preferences and involvement in food service

Do you have a process for learning about food interests of the students? YES_____ NO_____

If so, describe: _____

_____

What kinds of contact do you have with students? _____

Do you hold taste testings with students before new recipes or new foods are introduced in the cafeteria? YES_____NO_____ If so, describe: _____

_____

Where do you do taste testing? (e.g. in the cafeteria, a garden, or classroom)_____

Does anyone else in the district do taste testings with students? *(e.g. classroom teachers or food service director/staff) Yes* _____ *No*_____

What do you think would help kids at your school to eat more fruits and vegetables?

_____

_____

_____

Does your food service collaborate with classroom learning around food (i.e. classroom cooking demonstrations, taste-tests, etc.)? Describe:

_____

_____

_____

Your Farm to School Vision

What would you like to see in a Farm to School project in your food service?

_____

_____

What would help you get started with the process of using more locally grown foods in your cafeteria?

- ❑ Assistance in identifying local foods and potential sources
- ❑ Meeting with farmers, suppliers,
- ❑ Local purchasing connections
- ❑ Taste test plan
- ❑ Parent/volunteer training program
- ❑ Other: _____

Thank you!

Is there anything that you would like to add or ask?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

College Dining Directors Needs Assessment

Farm to School in the Northeast

Needs Assessment

College Dining Directors

Date _____

Dining Director Name _____

Email_____

College/University_____ County _____

Address _____

City,State,Zip _____ _____

Telephone_____ Fax _____

Basic Information

Number of students enrolled at your college/university _____

Public or Private institution ? _____

Is your dining service Contract Managed? YES_____ NO_____

If yes, which company? _____

How many dining halls? _____

On average, how many students participate in your college or university's meal Plan?_____

Which meals do you serve? Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner _____

Other food service?_____

Does your dining service operate in the summer? YES_____ NO_____

How many meals do you serve each day? Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner_____

The Food Service Facility

How much flexibility does each dining manager have in designing the menu at their particular location?_____

_____

Is food purchasing handled centrally or are some decisions made independently individual dining managers? *(As a first step a college may decide to implement farm to college in only one dining hall, but this would only work if they have some degree of autonomy in their ordering or menu design)* _____

_____

Describe the kiosks or food service station options that students have to choose from?_____

_____

Is your food service equipped to prepare whole fruits and vegetables? (Please list) (e.g. Do you have an adequate supply of knives, food processors, wedgers, peelers, slicers, etc.?)_____

_____

Is your cold and dry storage space currently used to capacity? (W*hen you are able to get in excess or additional fresh produce, can you find space for it?)*

_____

_____

Food Service Staff Skills, Experience and Interest

Number of dining service staff: Full Time_____ Part Time_____

Number with culinary training _____

What, if any, are the time constraints for your staff on food preparation in the college dining hall? (Describe)_____

_____

To what extent is time a deterrent from using more whole fruits and vegetables?

Large extent_____ Moderate extent_____ Small extent_____ Time is not an issue____

How do time constraints affect anything else you'd like to serve?_____

_____

Is your staff adequately trained to prepare whole fruits and vegetables?

YES_____ NO_____

If not, what training would be helpful?_____

What would you need to decrease the time spent prepping fruits and vegetables?

_____

Would additional training for your staff help? YES_____ NO_____

Are there any whole fruits or vegetables that you do not use because of the amount of prep time required? *(i.e. pumpkins, butternut squash, acorn squash)* _____

_____

Menus and Recipes

Do you have full control over menu development? YES_____ NO_____

If yes, what are your main considerations when developing your menu(s) *(Is it labor, Is it student preferences, Is it pricing)*? If no, how is it developed?

_____

_____

Do you develop different menus for different dining halls? YES_____ NO_____

What are your main considerations when developing your menu? _____

_____

Do you have a menu cycle? YES_____ NO_____

If so, for what time period? _____

How often are your recipes reviewed and revised?_____

Have you modified or changed recipes recently? YES_____ NO_____

If so, how? _____

_____

How are new items/recipes introduced to the students? Please describe._____

_____

_____

Fruit and Vegetable Use and Procurement

What fruits and vegetables do you use most frequently? (Please list)

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

Most college dining services require at least a small degree of processing in fruits and vegetables? Looking at your list above, describe the least processed form (*e.g.chopped, sliced, peeled, etc.)* in which you could accept each product for your food service?

Are there any fruits or vegetables that require such a significant amount of prep time that you are unable to use them? _____

Circle any you have purchased whole (fresh or fresh stored).

Are there any fruits and vegetables you don't currently use but would like to?

YES_____ NO_____

If yes, which ones?_____

How many produce deliveries do you need in a week? _____

*(Do dining halls make separate and possibly unique orders or is ordering coordinated centrally?)*_____

How many suppliers do you have for fruits and vegetables?_____

What flexibility do you have in your delivery schedule? _____

_____

Local Food Practices (By "local" we generally mean within your state, or region)

Do you purchase any of the fruits and vegetables on your menu locally?

YES_____ NO_____ Don't Know_____

If YES, which ones?_____

If no, are there any fruits and vegetables you would like to get from local or regional sources? Which ones?_____

There are many ways to start using locally grown fruits and vegetables. For example, have you (or are you interested in…)

Let your supplier/distributor know of your interest in locally produced fruits and vegetables?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Purchased produce directly from a farmer?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Featured local food in a dining event, special meal or harvest event?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Developed seasonal menus, or recipes using local foods?

□ Interested □ Have Done □ Not Interested

Are there any other steps besides these that you've taken to increase your use of local produce?_____

How would you describe your knowledge of what fruits and vegetables are grown locally?

Very good OK Need Help

In your opinion, what barriers are there, if any, to your college's ability to purchase local fruits and vegetables? *(e.g. concern about cost, quality, supply, location, options provided by distributor, etc.)*_____

_____
_____

What are some things that would make it easier for you to purchase local fruits and vegetables?_____
_____

College Community

Does your college/university have any student organizations, departments that teach food and agriculture systems (i.e. Teachers College, Columbia University's Department of Nutrition offers Nutritional Ecology) or clubs that focus on food, nutrition, agriculture, and/or sustainability issues?
YES_____ NO_____

If so, what are their concerns and interests related to your dining operation?

_____

_____

Have they expressed interest in meeting with dining? YES_____ NO_____

Have you participated in a harvest event? YES_____ NO_____

If so, what sorts of activities took place? _____

_____

_____

How would you describe administrative and community support for purchasing local products?

_____

_____

Your Farm to College Vision

What would you like to see in a Farm to College project in your food service?

_____

_____

What would help you get started with the process of using more locally grown foods in your dining halls?

- ❑ Assistance in identifying local foods and potential sources
- ❑ Meeting with farmers, suppliers, others
- ❑ Local Purchasing Connections
- ❑ Taste Test Plan
- ❑ Student "forager"
- ❑ Other? _____

Thank you!

Is there anything that you would like to add or ask?

_____

_____

_____

Distributor Needs Assessment

Farm to School in the Northeast
Needs Assessment
Distributor

Date _____

Distributor Name _____

Email_____

Company Address: _____

City,State,Zip _____

Telephone_____ Fax _____

1. Have you ever heard of Farm to School? Yes_____ No_____

2. Do you purchase any foods (fruits and vegetables) locally or regionally?
   If yes, which foods? _____
   If yes, which suppliers, producers, or farmers have you worked with?
_____

   If no, are you aware of any local farms you could purchase from?
_____

   If aware of any local farms, do they grow anything that the school needs?

_____

3. What has been your experience in working with farmers?_____

_____

What, if anything, has made it easier to work with them?

_____

What, if anything, has made it harder to work with them?

_____

4. What are the company criteria for working with farmers? _____

_____

5. Is there a way in which you can track products that are grown or produced within the state?

_____

Within 100 miles? _____

Within the country? _____

Thank you!

Is there anything that you would like to add or ask?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Farmer Needs Assessment

Farm to School in the Northeast

Needs Assessment

Farmer

Date _____

Farmer: _____ Email_____

Farm Name _____

Address: _____

City,State,Zip _____

Telephone_____ Fax _____

1. Have you supplied food to any local schools? YES_____ NO_____
   If YES, to which school(s) did you supply food?_____
   _____
   What foods did they buy from you?_____
   _____

2. What worked and what could have been better?_____
   _____

3. Did any distributors help get your product from the farm to a local school?_____

4. As far as you know, would requirements for insurance be a barrier for you?_____
   Please explain:_____

5. Are you able to deliver to a school, college or school district? Yes No

6. If yes, How far are you able/willing to travel to make deliveries to schools/colleges? _____

7. Are you able to do any grading, washing and packing? YES_____ NO_____
   If YES: Which foods? _____
   What time of year?_____

8. Do you have a flexible farm plan? (i.e. would you be able to augment what – or how much – you currently grow if it meant access to the local school/college market?) YES_____ NO_____

   Please explain: _____

   _____

9. If you could diversify or expand your production, what would you add to what you're currently doing? _____

   _____

10. Would you be interested in growing for your local school district(s) or college?

    YES_____ NO_____

    Please explain: _____

    _____

11. Do you have concerns about a payment schedule when working with a school district or college dining facility? YES_____ NO_____

    Please explain:_____

    _____

9. Are you able to be flexible in working out a payment schedule to work with a school? YES_____
   NO_____

Please explain: _____

_____

Thank you!

Is there anything that you would like to add or ask?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

School Administrator Needs Assessment

Farm to School in the Northeast

Needs Assessment

School Administrator

Date _____

Name _____

Title _____

School District/College_____County _____

Address_____

City,State,Zip _____

Telephone_____ Fax_____

Email_____

Basic Information

Have you heard about "farm-to-school" or "farm-to-cafeteria" projects?

YES_____NO_____ (If not, explain. If yes, confirm that his/her understanding is correct.)

_____

How do you think your food/dining service's use of locally grown fruits and vegetables might benefit or disadvantage your school/college?

_____

_____

Could you supplement funds if it were necessary to support purchasing local foods?

YES_____ NO_____

Please explain:_____

_____

Farm to School Involvement and Potential

Has your school participated in a local harvest or local agriculture event? (i.e. in New York State there is NY Harvest for NY Kids Week in the fall)
YES_____ NO_____ DON'T KNOW_____

If yes, please describe the activities._____

_____

If no, is this anything you'd be interested in for the future?_____

_____

Do you have an existing school health team/wellness committee? YES_____ NO_____

Are farm to school initiatives part of your policies? YES_____ NO_____

Do you think there might be interest in purchasing local fruits and vegetables as part of this policy? YES_____ NO_____

Please explain:_____

_____

Do you have any existing school food policies? YES_____ NO_____

If yes: What are they? _____

_____

Who were they developed by? _____

Could you identify several faculty, staff and parents, students that are leaders on wellness, agriculture or harvest issues within the school community?_____

Do you have any existing school wellness policies? YES_____ NO_____

If yes: What are they? _____

_____

Who were they developed by? _____

Is a wellness policy currently being worked on or being developed? YES_____ NO_____

If yes: Who is involved in the process? _____

What are the main issues being incorporated into the policy?_____

_____

Farm to School Supportive Curricula

Circle any of the following food and/or nutrition curricula currently used within your school:

Cookshop *Field to Table* *Ag in the Classroom* *Cooking with Kids*

Other: _____

Do you have a school garden or access to a community garden? YES_____ NO_____

Are there Ag in the Classroom or 4H Programs at your school? YES_____ NO_____

If not, are there parents that would support such programs? YES_____ NO_____

If not, are there teachers/staff that would support such programs? YES_____ NO_____

Are faculty and staff supportive and informed of wellness measures? YES_____ NO_____

Please explain: _____

Are parents involved in organizations supportive and/or informed of wellness measures?

YES_____ NO_____

Please expain:_____

Needs Assessment Summary Worksheet

Priority Level	Stakeholder	Description of Need

Chapter 5. Making the Cafeteria Connection: Implemention and Evaluation

Now that you've conducted an assessment of the capacity of your local school or college to develop a farm to school project, next steps moving towards your farm to school vision are to:

- analyze information gathered in the assessments to determine and prioritize needs and identify appropriate resources
- develop a set of reachable goals
- create and implement a plan for achieving these goals
- monitor and evaluate progress based on established goals

The tools included in this chapter are designed to help you move through these stages.[1]

Understanding Your Needs Assessment

Once you've interviewed one or more for your farm to school stakeholders – food service director(s), farmer(s), distributor(s), etc. – you're ready to "digest" the information you've gathered.

From Assessment to Strategies. Once needs have been identified and prioritized, the next steps are to determine if and how these needs can be best be addressed through resources – available in this toolkit, on the web, or through other sources – or through some other strategy, such as group meetings, policy change, or communication. The tools in this chapter are designed to help you through this process. The first tool – "Matching Needs with Resources – Flow Charts and Tables" is meant to help identify resources and offer a few strategies. The flow charts and tables are organized in pairs by stakeholder group. These are meant to be used with the Needs Assessment Worksheets (Chapter 4 "Tool Box").

On the left of the flow charts are needs that are commonly found and on the right resources are identified which your can use to start to address these needs. By combining the two tools you can begin to identify which resources will be the most useful and who will benefit the most from them.

The tables following the flow charts contain similar information, organized in table format. Like the flow charts, these guides help you to connect your needs assessment to an action plan. The resources identified in the guide may be found in Chapter 5 and in the "Resources for Going Further" section of the toolkit.

Defining Outcomes, Planning Action Steps

Once you've completed your assessments, worked through the flow charts or tables to identify resources and recommendations, you should be ready to start developing an action plan for making your farm to school connection. The next step is to put all of this information together, in a way that keeps you focused and on track.

The Action Plan template in the Toolkit is where you'll start to put ideas into action. A sample fictitious action plan is provided to give you an idea of what a completed plan might look like. These are designed to help you, together with other farm to school stakeholders,

prioritize which needs and recommendations you should address first, identify specific steps, assign stakeholders to take responsibility for completing individual tasks, and set a timeline (aka "X by Y") for completing.

As you complete the action plan template, remember that small, attainable and successful steps are vital to sustainable farm to cafeteria projects. Prioritize the needs based on feasibility, interest of stakeholders and other relevant factors, then identify the most appropriate Action Steps for the high priority needs. Although the template includes space for your top five action steps, you can include as many as you wish. No matter how many action steps you include, be sure to note who will complete the Action Step and suggest a date of completion.

Remember developing an action plan is best done as a group – the farm to school stakeholder partners that have been identified earlier. Actually, the process of developing an action plan together is a great way to develop the partnership! Once an Action Plan is drafted, be sure to circulate it to any members of the stakeholder partnership not involved in the draft for their input. Revise the action plan accordingly and then get going! Plans are meant to be adjusted, revised, as needed. Don't feel that anything is set in stone. Flexibility is essential. Once the plan is in place, monitor the team's progress on each of the action steps.

As you develop your action plan, it is important to remember that no two farm to school cafeteria projects are exactly alike and, because they should reflect local tastes and preferences, they probably should not be. In fact, Farm to School connections may include a range of activities with varying degrees of time and resources, commitment and involvement. For example, a well-established, comprehensive farm to school program may have its cafeteria procuring and serving local foods in school meals, conducting classroom based food and agriculture education, and engaging children and faculty in an after school garden and cooking program. On the other hand, a school making taking its first steps toward developing a farm to school program may simply participate in a harvest fair or sell regional products for a fundraiser.

To give you a flavor of the different levels of farm to school programs, three Farm to School "scenarios" are included in the Toolbox for you to consider as you develop your action plan. As you review these scenarios, keep in mind that the components of each are interchangeable and what makes any farm to school connection more or less complex is the degree and extent to which it simultaneously incorporates multiple components.

Monitoring and Evaluating Progress

If a farm to cafeteria connection is established between a local school or college and a local farm, that's great! But how do you know the connection is working and sustainable? Is your program successful? Are the goals that you, the school food service director or dining director, local farmers, distributors, and school administrators had in mind being met? Would you like to expand what you are doing by applying for external funding?

Getting the answers to these and other questions is important and a definite reason to conduct a project evaluation.

What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is the use of measures and observation to judge and improve the planning, monitoring, effectiveness and efficiency of a project or program.

Why evaluate your Farm to School program?

Evaluation may be the farthest thing from your mind when starting a farm to school program, but it should be planned for at the start of the project. Evaluating the success of any program (and even defining what is meant by success!) is an important part of the project development process. Evaluation is essential for making decisions about the short- and long-term goals, objectives, and activities of each program and so, should be included throughout the project development process.

Program evaluation is critical to understanding what impact the program is having – on students, food service, farmers, policy and the community. Evaluation also serves to inform the community at large about a program's successes and failures. Information gathered in a farm to school program evaluation is useful for making decisions about next steps to take, changes in program delivery and even program continuation. Evaluation is also critical for attracting interest and securing additional resources. Extension stakeholders are increasingly interested in program results. It is important for educators to develop, deliver, and evaluate high impact Extension programs. Without evaluation, it is difficult to determine whether program partners, including educators, are progressing toward mutually agreed upon goals.

Why Evaluate Your Farm to School Program?

1. To improve your project
2. To show your project can make a difference
3. To attract support and interest
4. To learn what works and what doesn't
5. To help others who want to start similar projects

Documenting impact is important for determining what is working and what is not; it allows timely adjustments and corrections to be made.

Who conducts the Evaluation?

The extension educator who partners with a school or college and other stakeholders, is in a good position to provide guidance and leadership in the evaluation, but it is important to include all members of your partnership. Since you, the extension educator, have used this toolkit to develop recommendations for the school or college, you are best prepared to develop a strategy for evaluation by identifying how close the program is to achieving established objectives. As the extension educator you should work with members of the partnership to help decide how and what to evaluate. Involving these program partners in not only establishing objectives but also in determining how and what to measure will help

assure that accurate and useful evaluation information is collected. At the same time, the more you can involve members of your partnership in planning for the evaluation from the beginning, the better they will understand your goals and the extent of your success in achieving them. (This will create a greater sense of ownership as well.)

When should the Evaluation be done?

Again, the most effective evaluations are those that are planned at the beginning of a project and conducted regularly or at planned points throughout the project. Knowing upfront what is to be measured helps assure an effective and useful evaluation. One of the most common mistakes made is waiting until the end of the project to develop and initiate an evaluation.

What needs to be included in the Evaluation?

The type of evaluation conducted will be determined in part by recommendations made to the school or college partnership and their plan of action. That said, some of potential evaluation components for farm to school programs include:

1. a record of local food purchases: items purchased, quantities, cost, and source.
2. impact of local purchase on the school food service operation
3. quality and dependability of supply
4. customer (student) response
5. roles of various stakeholders (e.g. farmers, food service, school administrators, parents, students, suppliers, etc.)
6. impact of and response to special events
7. acceptable district activities
8. farmer or distributor feedback
9. student surveys on taste preference and KAB (Knowledge, Attitudes and Behavior) such as actual consumption of local foods, intention to choose the local item.

Since there are many potential strategies that can be part of a farm to school and farm to college projects, as pointed out in the section with the farm to school scenarios above, the evaluation for one may be very different than another.

Example: Keeping record of local food purchases

Since the core of all farm to school and farm to college programs is the purchasing and serving of local foods and having these foods actually consumed by the students, keeping track of which foods were purchased, in what amounts and at what price, provides the basis for evaluating your program. Equally important is to assess how the process of purchasing and using local foods is working for food service staff, farmers, distributors, and others who might be involved. In other words, what impact is this change in procurement having on the food service operation, on customer (student) acceptance, and on the bottom line – for farmers and food service and dining directors?

To help decide which fruit and vegetable items to purchase locally, an assessment of current produce purchases, analyzed for each week of the school year, should be conducted prior to changing any purchasing patterns. By comparing current purchases to the availability of

fruits and vegetables grown in the state or region, schools can decide which of their current purchases can be replaced with local items. Farmers can then be identified and suppliers can be informed about what is available from local sources. Different fruits and vegetables may be identified throughout the local harvest and availability periods.[2] A school may choose to replace non-local oranges with local, in season apples. A school may also substitute out of season lettuce with in season cabbage.

An example of a tool used to determine which fruits and vegetables could be targeted for purchasing either fresh or fresh-stored is shown below – "Seasonal Use of Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables". The table shows a list of fruits and vegetables grown in the Northeast and the availability period for each. By determining first if these foods are already being used during these times and then if an opportunity for fresh, local substitution could be made is a good use of the table. The availability of local products from the other food groups – meats, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, grains, and beans – is not as seasonal in nature. If there are local producers of these products, schools should be able to source them.

Financial Analysys

Of course, even if everyone is on board with implementing a farm to school program, it still needs to make financial sense – for the school cafeteria, and for the farmers involved. Brillinger, Ohmart and Feenstra at the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (UC-SAREP) developed a detailed Fiscal Analysis Model for farm to school programs. This model – found in a larger case study of the Davis, CA-based farm to school program – details the various expenditures and sources of revenue that are needed to evaluate the financial aspects of a farm to school program.[3]

Chapter Summary

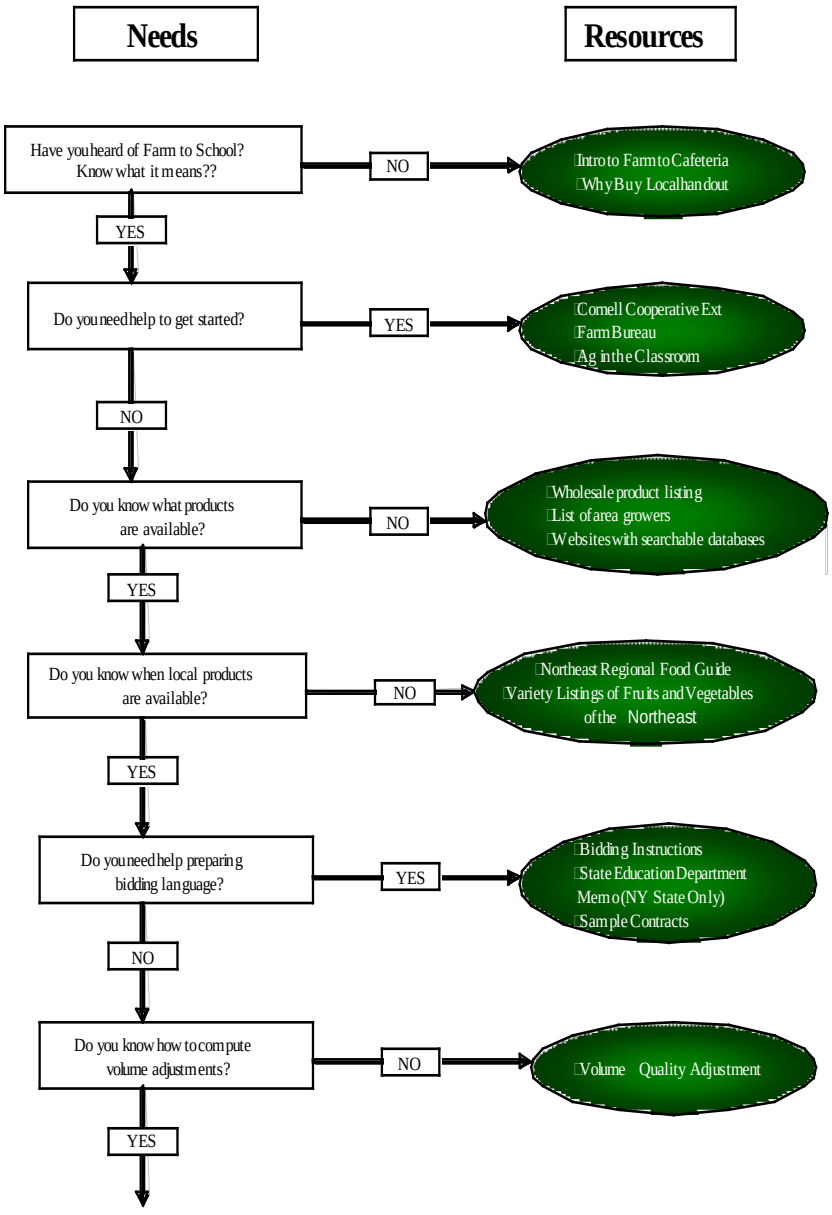
This chapter focused on planning, implementing and evaluating your farm to school project. Several tools have been presented to assist Extension educators and their farm to school partners in this project development process. Having focused on making the farm to school connection in this chapter, in the next and final chapter of the toolkit, we discuss strategies for going beyond the cafeteria into the classroom.

Chapter 5 Tool Box

Toolbox

Matching Needs with Resources – Flow Charts and Tables

From Assessment to Resources: Working with Food Service



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From Assessment to Resources: Working with Food Service

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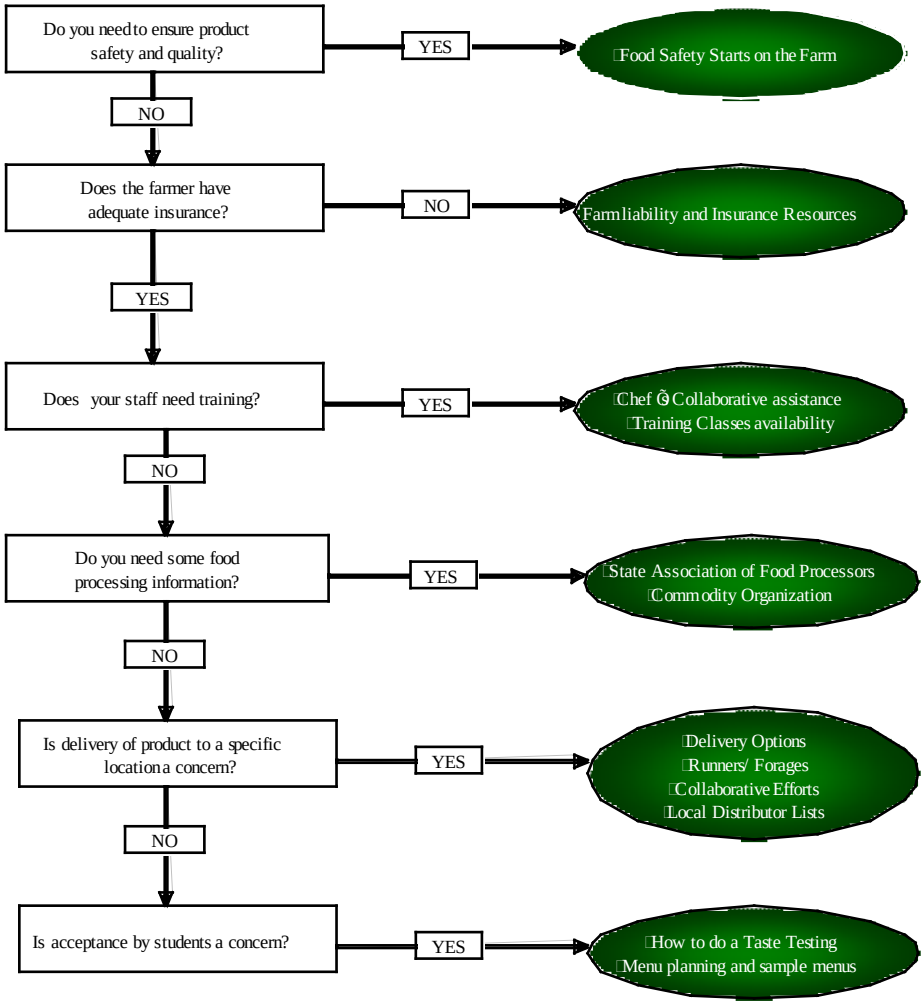


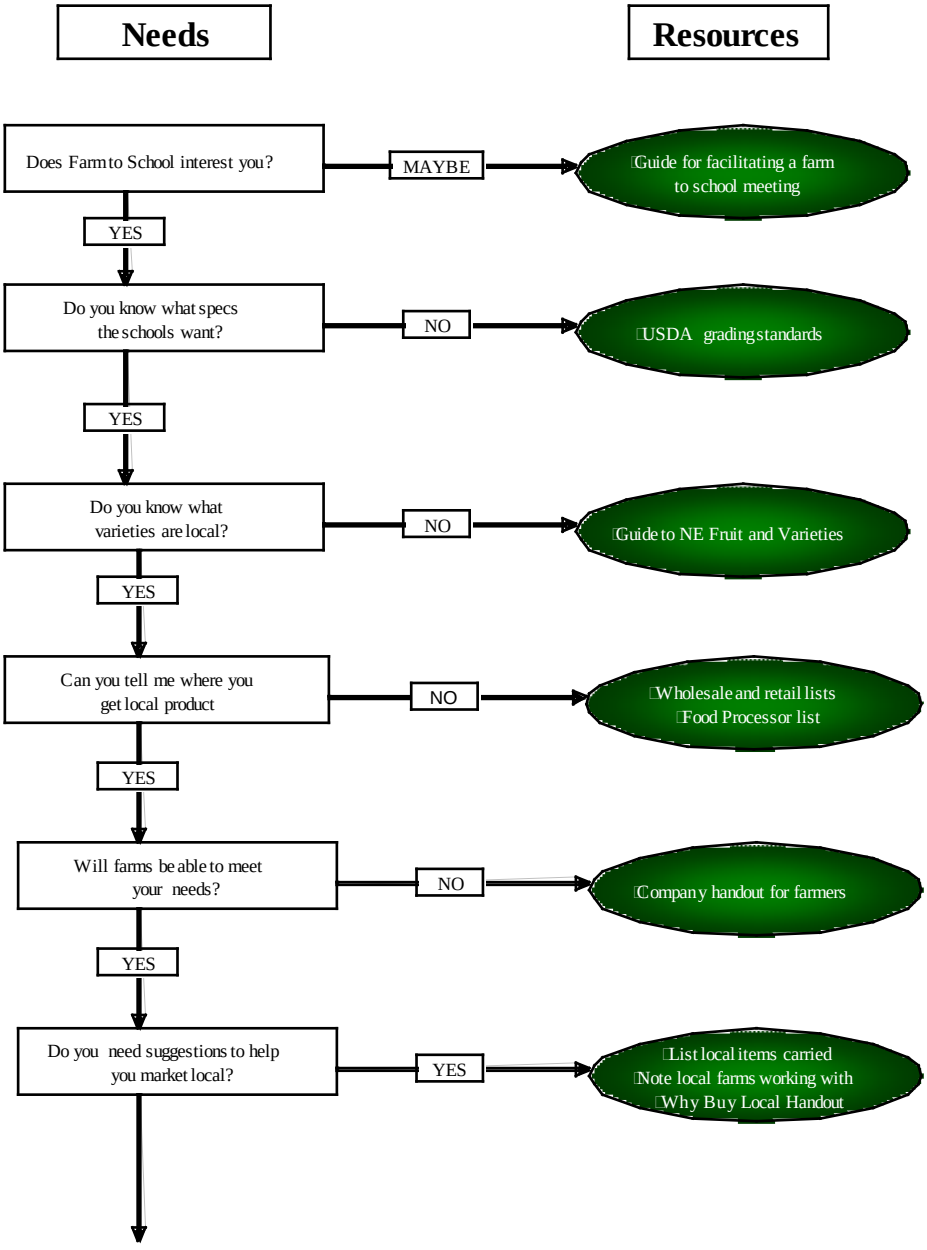
Need	Resource
Need to find out what's available in the Northeast and the quantity available in the Northeast	Wholesale listing
Need to find a farmer	List of state growers-State Ag & Markets Website
Need to know when certain fruit, vegetable or product is available in the Northeast	Northeast Regional Food Guide
Need more storage space	Cold Storage Association Listing
Need regular produce delivery right to back door	Central Delivery Option for a County Position Description for a Runner/Forager
Need more information and reasons for why farm to school is a good idea.	Why Buy Local
Need to get parent, student and administrative buy-in	Parent Resources
Need to make sure buying local follows bid requirements	State Education Department Memo
Need to make sure buying local or directly from a farmer meets stringent food safety concerns	Food Safety Starts at the Farm
Need to find a farmer that is adequately insured for my needs	Farmer Liability or Insurance Resource
Food service staff needs additional training to work with more whole food products	Chef's Collaborative Listing by Area Sustainable Food Systems LLC
Need partially processed product because staff, time and equipment are not available to deal with whole product	State Association of Food Processors or particular Commodity Organization
Need to make this worth my distributor's effort	Facilitating Farm to School Meetings, Sample Agenda, and Suggested Attendees (College and districts meeting together)
Need to know what varieties to specify when ordering through a distributor. Quotes received under current purchasing regulations cannot differentiate by geographical location, only by variety	Listing of Varieties of certain fruits and vegetables typical available in Northeast
Need to know what possibilities to include in a Harvest Event (have not held one before)	How to Plan a Harvest Celebration
Very concerned about obesity, but not clear	Why Farm to School Improves Diets and

about how farm to school directly addresses this	Addresses Child Obesity Concerns
Very concerned about local agriculture	Farm Bureau resources and Agriculture Extension Agent resources
Need to try taste testing, but haven't done it before	How to do Taste Testing with Kids
Need assistance getting kids to eat fruits and vegetables	How to do Taste Testing with Kids
Need to assess potential economic impact or change.	Excel sheet
Need to get student and administrative buy-in	Kiosk Signs, Food of the Month Flyers

Guide to Farm to School Resources for College Dining Directors

Need	Resource
Who can I purchase from locally?	List of state growers-State Ag & Markets Website
Need to find out what's available in the Northeast and the quantity available in the Northeast	Wholesale listing
Need to know when certain fruit, vegetable or product is available in the Northeast	Northeast Regional Food Guide
Need to get student and administrative buy-in	Social Marketing Resources
Need to make sure buying local is within my price range, How I can afford to buy local?	Volume Quality Adjustment
Need to make sure buying local or directly from a farmer meets stringent food safety concerns	Food Safety Starts at the Farm
Need to find a farmer that is adequately insured for my needs	Farmer Liability or Insurance Resource
Food service staff needs additional training to work with more whole food products	Chef's Collaborative Listing by Area
Need to make this worth my distributor's effort	Sample Agenda, Suggested Attendees, Meeting Facilitation Skills (College and districts meeting together)
Need partially processed product because staff, time and equipment are not available to deal with whole product	State Association of Food Processors or particular Commodity Organization
Need regular produce delivery right to back door	Central Delivery Option for a County Position Description for a Runner/Forager
Need to know what possibilities to include in a Harvest Event (have not held one before)	How to Plan a Harvest Celebration
Very concerned about local agriculture	Farm Bureau resources and Agriculture Extension Agent resources
Need to try taste testing, but haven't done it before	How to do Taste Testing

From Assessment to Resources: Working with Distributors



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From Assessment to Resources: Working with Distributors

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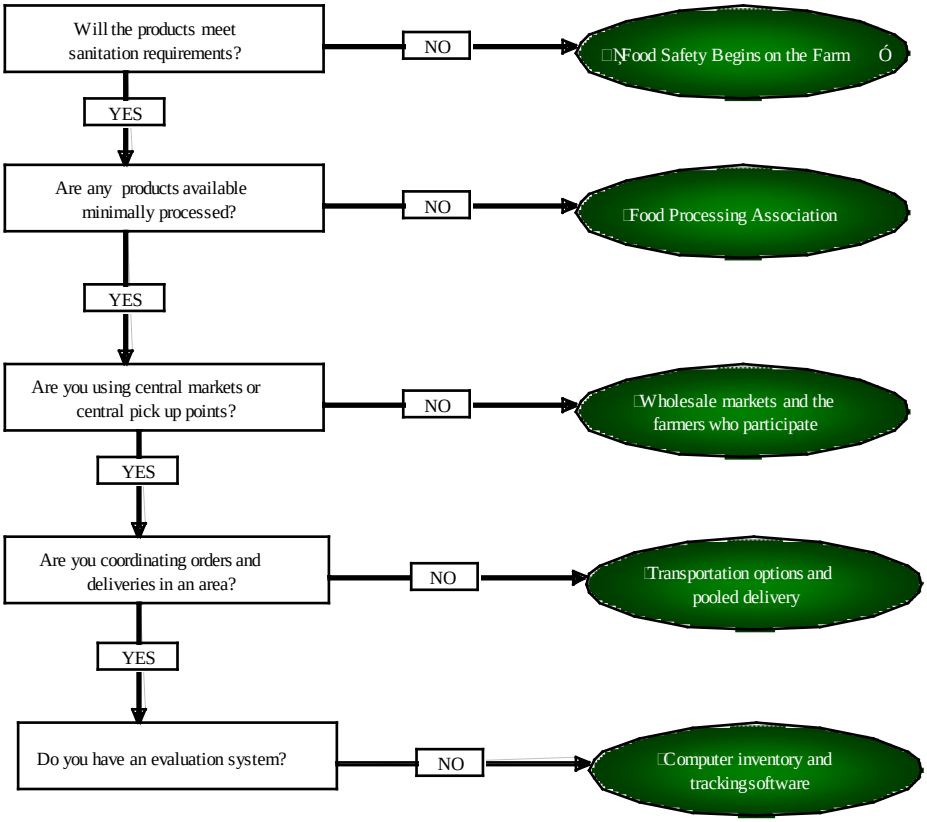
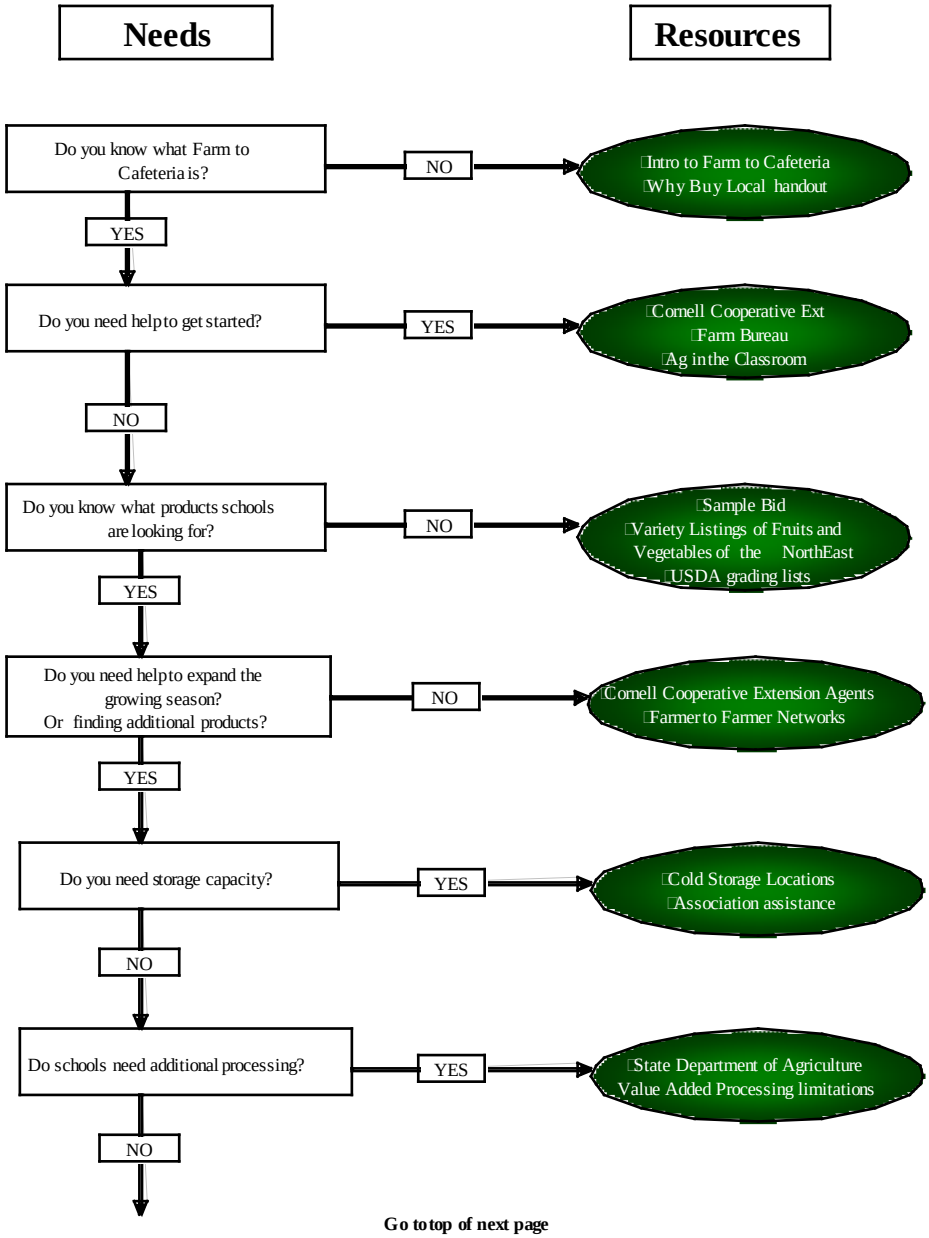


Guide to Farm to School Resources for Distributors

Need	Resource
Are farms and schools really interested and will the effort help my business?	Guide to facilitating a Farm to School Meeting
Who can I purchase from locally?	NE Regional Food guide Association list Wholesale list Retail list Food Processors list
Do any of these farms use brokers like Hunts Point?	Wholesale market options
How can I coordinate with orders and deliver within an area?	Options to multiple delivery points
Which varieties fit the schools need?	Varieties Grown in the Northeast
How can I make sure I won't get "stuck" with inventory?	Let schools know which local fruits and vegetables will be available within the next 6-8 weeks so that schools can plan menus with these foods.
Will schools seek out "LOCAL Distributors"?	Market yourself as supportive of agriculture Provide periodically-updated lists of what locally-grown items you carry, and the farms, packers, and processors who supply you
I'm concerned farms won't meet sanitation standards	"Food Safety Begins on the Farm"
Will farms be able to meet our requirements for packaging, inventory tracking, insurance, etc?	Requirements of Working with food service management companies
How can I tell if this is worth our efforts?	Computer inventory/ tracking software

From Assessment to Resources: Working with Farmers



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From Assessment to Resources: Working with Farmers

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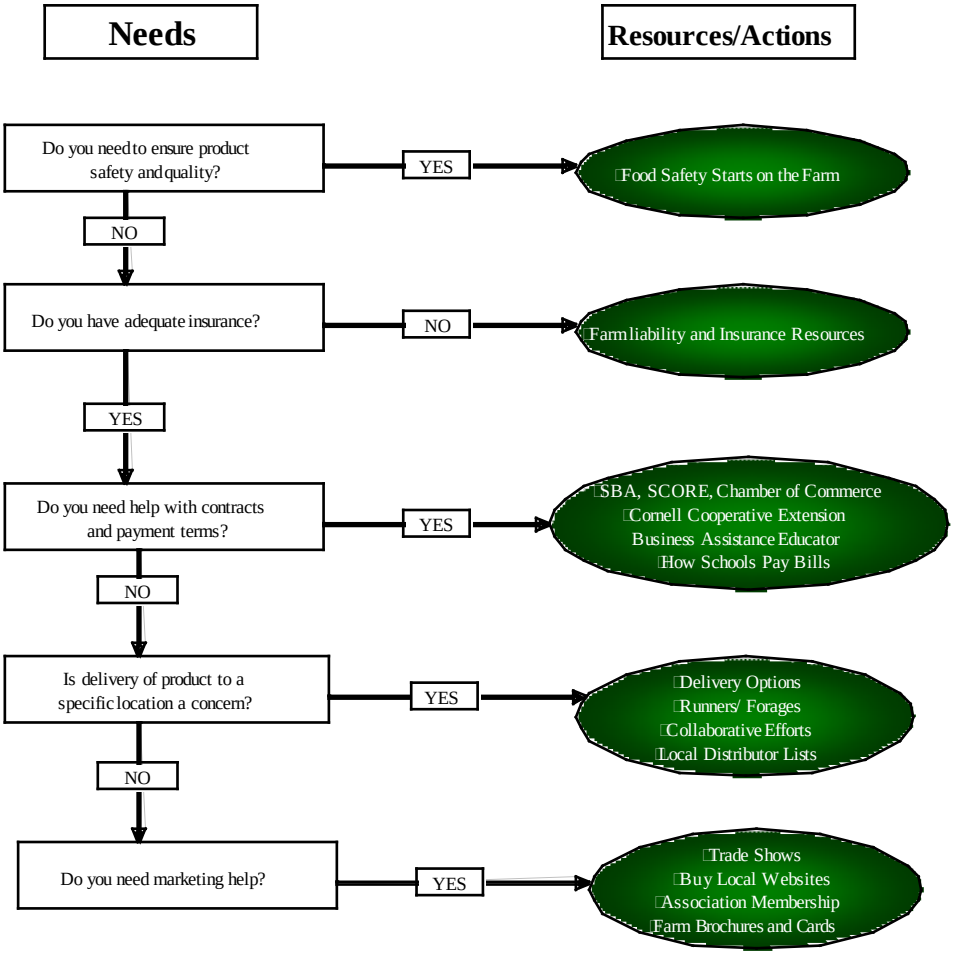
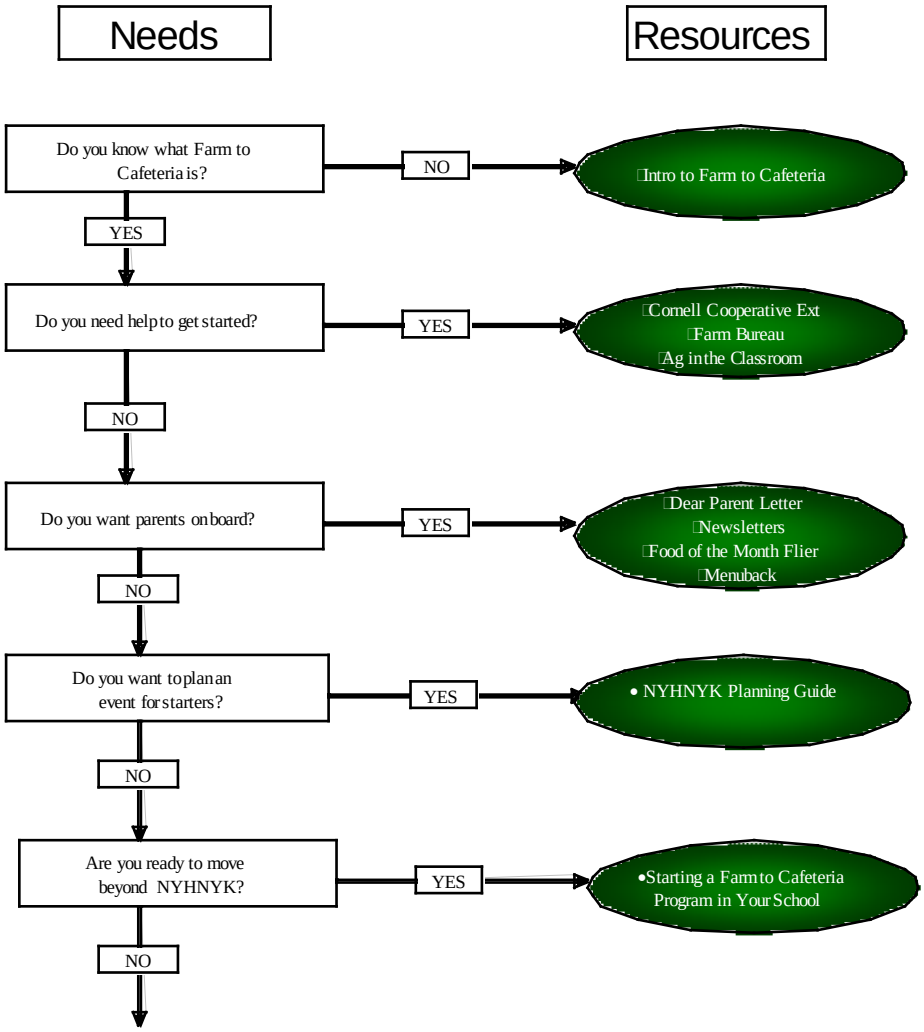


Guide to Farm to School Resources for Farmers

Need	Resource
How do I accept and process orders from schools?	SBA or SCORE or Chamber of Commerce
Why does it take so long to get paid?	How Schools Pay Bills
Will schools contract what they want me to grow?	USDA or FSA may be able to help with contract growing
What type of insurance will I need and where can I get it?	Ask distributor and/ or school what's required State Farm Bureau may be able to refer a local insurance agent
How can I get my product to schools?	Transportation options and pooled deliveries are possibilities in areas where multiple districts and colleges want to purchase local food
Do schools use a particular distributor?	School reference or distributor listing
What if I can't produce all the school needs? Are there other farms that I can partner with?	Local farm listings
What if I grow more than one school needs? What other schools may be interested?	State Department of Education
How can I market my farm as wanting to work with schools?	Trade Show attendance Membership with an association Farm Brochures and business cards for distribution
What should I grow that schools want?	School request Varieties of the Northeast Seasonal Availability Chart
How can I extend the growing season to better coincide with the school year?	Technical help from Cooperative Extension
Where can I store my perishable products?	Cold storage listings
What are the exact specifications that the schools need/want?	USDA grading lists
Will I be able to wash and pack myself and meet the schools requirements? The distributors?	Requirements of the State Dept of Agriculture
Do the schools need product further processed and if so who can do that?	State Association of Food Processors

From Assessment to Resources: Working with School Administrators



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From Assessment to Resources: Working with School Administrators

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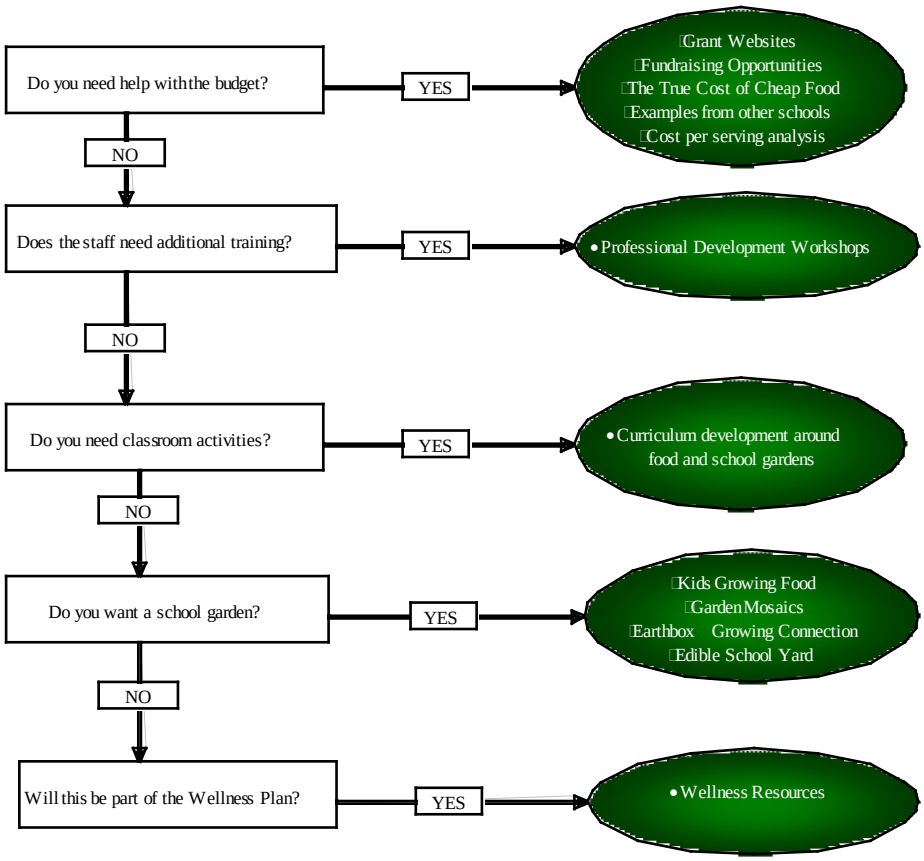


Guide to Farm to School Resources or School Administrators

Need	Resource
What is Farm to School?	Introduction to Farm to School
Where can I turn for help in planning an event in my school?	How to Plan a Harvest Celebration
What is a school wellness policy?	Wellness Resources
Will Farm to School be too expensive?	Grant websites Funding opportunities using local agricultural products The True Cost of Cheap Food Examples from other schools Cost per serving of quality nutrition
How can I get training for my staff?	Professional development workshops Chef's Collaborative Listing
What can be done in addition to the cafeteria?	Curriculum development around food and school gardens
What help is available for school gardens?	Kids Growing Food Garden Mosaics Earthbox Growing Connection Edible School Yard
Is there anyone in the community that can help?	County Cooperative Extension Offices 4-H Programs Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom
How can I get parents involved?	Dear Parent letter Newsletters Food of the Month Flyers Menubacks

Guide to Farm to School Resources

Action Plan Template and Sample

Action Plan

School District Name: _____

Date: _____

Priority Level	Identified Need	Resource(s)	Action Steps	By who?	By when?
1					
2					
3					
4					

Sample Action Plan

Priority Level	Identified Need	Resource(s)	Action Steps	By whom?	By when?
1	*Need to know when certain fruit, vegetable or product is available in the Northeast*	*Northeast Regional Food Guide*	*Identify two or three products that will be sourced locally when seasonally available*	*Food Service Director*	*One week from today*
2	*Need regular produce delivery right to back door*	*Varieties Grown in the Northeast*	*Specify a locally grown variety when you order through your usual supplier*	*Food Service Director*	*One month from now*
3	*Distributor uncertain about farm sources that can be purchased from locally*	*1. Association list* *2. Wholesale list* *3. Retail list* *4. Food Processors list*	*Contact 2 or 3 farmers to determine when and if their products can be integrated into your inventory*	*Distributor*	*One month from now*
4	*Need to know what can be done outside of the cafeteria.*	*1. Farm to Cafeteria related Curricula* *2. Farm to Cafeteria Fundraising Ideas*	*1. Review one farm to cafeteria curriculum* *2. Identify one fundraiser to be held during the current school year*	*1. Teacher or School Administrator* *2. Parent Teacher Organization or School Administrator*	*1. One month from now* *2. One month from now*
5	*Need to know more about school garden programs*	*1. Kids Growing Food* *2. Garden Mosaics* *3. The Growing Connection (Earthboxes)* *4. Edible School Yard*	*Review one of the following school garden projects. Determine the cost, possible funding sources and suggest who would be responsible for managing the school garden.*	*Teacher, School Administrator or Parent Teacher Organization*	*One month from now*

Farm to School Scenarios

1. Start-Up Program

- Participate in NY Harvest for NY Kids Week
- Distributor sources NY apples for district
- Apples, Pears or Potatoes are sourced through DoD Fresh
- Exploration of additional Buy Local opportunities

2. Developing Program

- Cafeteria-based Education
- Harvest Menus
- Community Awareness and Support
- School Farmers Market
- Farm to cafeteria integrated into district wellness policy

4. *Established Program: Farm to Cafeteria and Beyond* Seasonal Menus
(how many times is a recipe with local ingredients used?)
   - Access to local foods
   - Flexible/Intermittent Food contracts
   - Willingness to emphasize different foods at different times
   - Flexibility to change menus (independence)
   - Seasonal Menu Cycle

Goal of __ local products served August-November (or percentage increase)

- Access to local foods
- Flexible distributor(s) or local farmer(s)
- Summer Feeding Program
- Ability to use fresh form of fruits and vegetables

Goal of __ local products served May-August (or percentage increase)

- Access to local foods
- Flexible distributor(s) or local farmer(s)
- Summer Feeding Program
- Ability to use fresh form of fruits and vegetables

Goal of __ local products served December-April (or percentage increase)

- Access to local foods
- Flexible distributor(s) or local farmer(s)
- Knowledge of local items available during this time

Cafeteria Education

- Student and Teacher workshops that do taste testing of local food recipes with goal of increasing food choice among both students and teachers

- After school cooking programs to engage youth in healthy preparation of regionally and seasonally available foods

Classroom Education *based on existing standards*(Cookshop, Field to Table, Ag in the Classroom, LiFE Curriculum)

- Teachers have flexibility to do food based education in the classroom
- School views food based education as beneficial to students (Health, Education, Standards)
- School can/will provide support for additional classroom experience

Community Awareness and Support/student organizations and college courses and associated faculty

- College has student organizations that address food or agriculture issues
- Dining facility can accommodate local food
- If contract managed, company is willing to source locally
- Work with farmer to plan what will be grown to fit school's needs
- Value added
- Local Products featured in Vending/Ala Carte/School Store
- Farmer visits the school
- Experience in communicating with farmers
- Flexibility
- Coordination with teachers for non-traditional educational experiences
- School or community garden/ Kids Growing Food/ Greenhouse garden
- School Field Trips to Farms
- Farm to cafeteria integrated into district wellness policy
- Summer/Fall salad bar option
- Necessary equipment is available
- Available supply of seasonal fruits and vegetables

School Fundraisers with Local/State Products

- Ability to provide input into food-based fundraisers
- Interest in making fundraisers healthy and supportive of community

Local Foods Purchases Record

Once the school or college has identified which locally grown fruits or vegetables could be purchased during specific periods of the year, documenting actual purchases is the next and very important step. School administrators, school meals program budget managers, funding agencies and community supporters are all interested in the economic impact farm to school is having on the school and on the local economy. Keeping track of local purchases and their costs to the school is essential in making a solid assessment.

The form below was developed to track the quantity of fruits and vegetables purchased from in-state producers and the cost.

School District: _____Week: _____

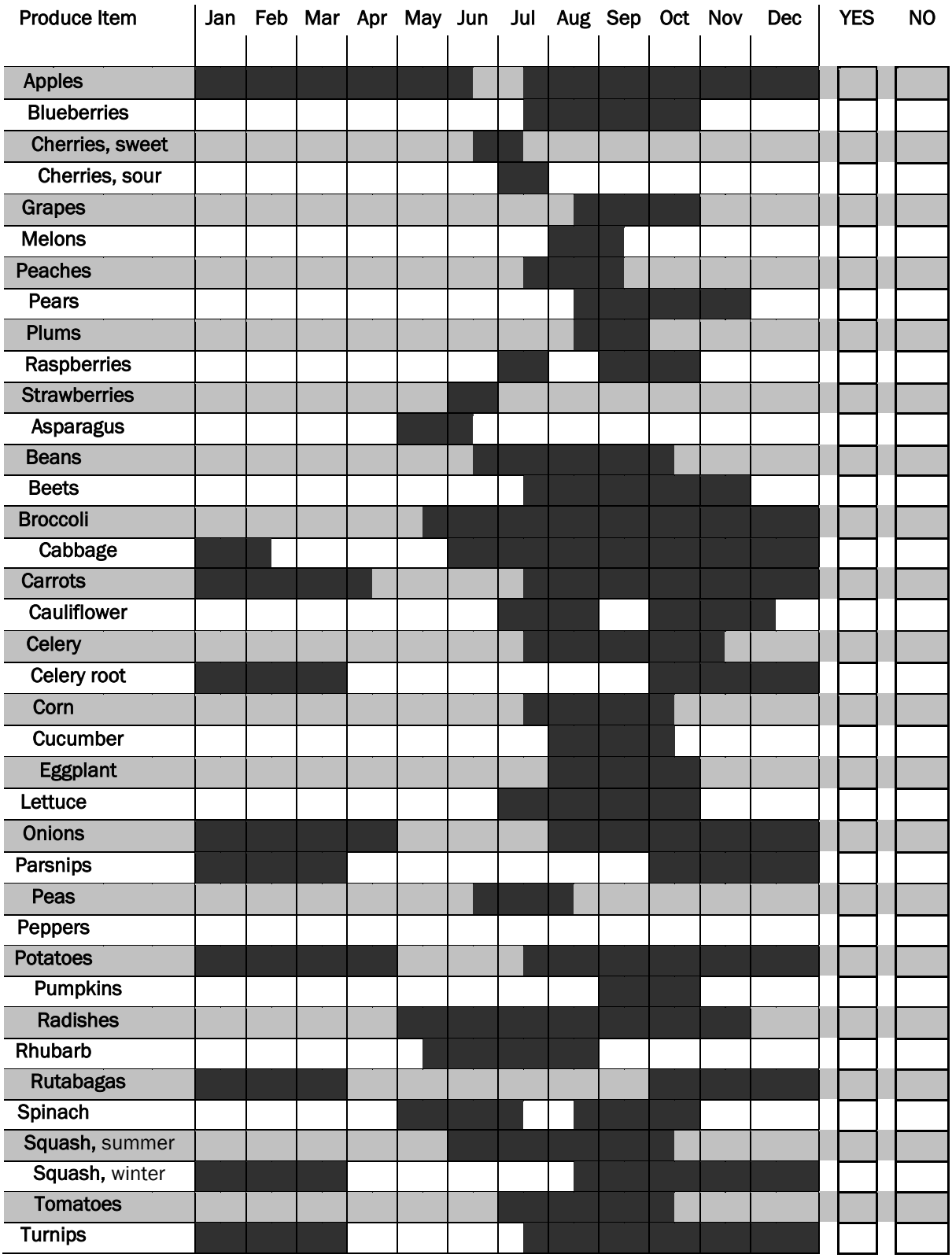
Item	Unit	No.of Units	Price/unit	Name of Supplier or Farmer	Comments: delivery, quality, service, use, acceptance, etc.

Seasonal Use of Locally Grown Fruits and Vegetables Assessment Form

For each of the fruits and vegetables listed below, over the past year have purchases of fresh produce during the availability period from any source been made? For example, did you purchase fresh blueberries from any source anytime from mid July through October?

Once the school or college has identified which locally grown fruits or vegetables could be purchased during specific periods of the year, documenting actual purchases is the next and very important step. School administrators, school meals program budget managers, funding agencies and community supporters are all interested in the economic impact farm to school is having on the school and on the local economy. Keeping track of local purchases and their costs to the school is essential in making a solid assessment.

The form on the next page was developed to track the quantity of fruits and vegetables purchased from in-state producers and the cost.


Produce Item
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
YES
NO
Apples
Blueberries
Cherries, sweet
Cherries, sour
Grapes
Melons
Peaches
Pears
Plums
Raspberries
Strawberries
Asparagus
Beans
Beets
Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Celery root
Corn
Cucumber
Eggplant
Lettuce
Onions
Parsnips
Peas
Peppers
Potatoes
Pumpkins
Radishes
Rhubarb
Rutabagas
Spinach
Squash, summer
Squash, winter
Tomatoes
Turnips

Assessing Yearly In-State Food Purchases

Example: Making the Farm to School Connection
Assessing Yearly Local Food Purchases

Spreadsheet of total use and value for getting more support.(How much money was spent on local food? To argue for increase in reimbursement rate for the state É)
Ongoing assessment money spent. Date, Food, Quantity and Price per unit, Source (Total at bottom)

Goods	Total Ordered	Total Cost	Potentially From in State	Potential Cost From In-state	Total ordered from In-state	Total Cost of Goods from In-state	Percentage actually from In-state
School Name							
Apple Slices	42	210	42	210	21	105	0.5
Apples	84	16.8	78	15.6	1.68	0.336	0.02
Potatoes	126	315	105	262.5	3.78	9.45	0.03
Pears	168	218.4	60	78	1.68	2.184	0.01
Cantalopes	195	838.5	35	150.5	3.9	16.77	0.02
Watermelon	252	504	42	84	75.6	151.2	0.3
Honeydew	294	294	49	49	58.8	58.8	0.2
Green Beans	336	672	80	160	33.6	67.2	0.1
Broccoli Florets	378	1890	126	630	56.7	283.5	0.15
Broccoli Crowns	420	1680	140	560	84	336	0.2
Cabbage	462	924	286	572	138.6	277.2	0.3
Carrots	504	1512	372	1116	100.8	302.4	0.2
Carrot Sticks	546	546	403	403	54.6	54.6	0.1
carrot cake	588	2940	434	2170	58.8	294	0.1
Cauliflower	630	3780	225	1350	94.5	567	0.15
Cauliflower (bags)	672	2688	240	960	0	0	0
Corn Ears	714	3570	170	850	0	0	0
Eggplant	756	756	162	162	151.2	151.2	0.2
Romaine Lettuce	798	0	342	0	79.8	0	0.1
Spanish Onions	840	2520	660	1980	84	252	0.1
Red Onions	882	4410	693	3465	88.2	441	0.1
Potatoes, Peeled	924	924	770	770	138.6	138.6	0.15
Potatoes, B White	966	5796	805	4830	96.6	579.6	0.1
Potatoes, B Reds	1008	2016	840	1680	151.2	302.4	0.15
0	1050	1050	325	325	157.5	157.5	0.15
Pumpkins	1092	6552	156	936	109.2	655.2	0.1
Spinach, Baby	1134	2268	324	648	170.1	340.2	0.15
Summer Squash	1176	1176	364	364	176.4	176.4	0.15
Totals:	17037	50066.7	8328	24780.6	2190.84	5719.74	0.12859306
0	0	0					
0	0	0		Do they Purchase from New York?			yes
0	0	0					

Process Evaluations: Assessing the experience of using local foods

There are other important factors to evaluate in a farm to school program. Determining the overall experience of the food service director in terms of purchasing, receiving, preparing, and serving locally produced foods should be on-going. These "check-ins" with the food service and dining directors are helpful for identifying frustrations or challenges they are facing and to then offer suggestions or changes for them to implement within their program.

The following one page check-in questionnaires are designed for use on the phone with the food service or college dining director. Copier ready versions can be found at the end of this section or and are available in downloadable form on the web at: www.farmtoschool.cornell.edu

Periodic Check-in With K-12 Schools

Farm to School Program
K-12 Food Service Check-in Form

Date: _____

School Name _____ in _____ district.

1. What local **fruits and vegetables** did you use in your food service this past month? (list items mentioned)

   For each food, did you get these items through a supplier or did you purchase them directly from a farmer? (circle one or both if applies)

   Supplier Farmer

2. What other locally produced food products (such as dairy products, meats, poultry, eggs, maple syrup, honey) did you use in your food service this past month?

   For each, did you get these items through a supplier or did you purchase them directly from a farmer? (circle one or both if applies)

   Supplier Farmer

3. Did you ask talk with your usual supplier about availability of local (state or regional) foods.
4. Did you seek out any other sources of local foods?
5. Have you talked directly with any farmer about what they grow and could provide
6. Did you encounter any difficulty in procuring local foods? (describe)
7. How would you describe the quality of the local foods that you served? Name the foods?_____

   Excellent Good Fair OK Poor

8. Did you do any sort of marketing to make students and the school community aware that locally produced foods were being served?

   Yes_____ No_____

   Describe: _____

9. How would you describe the reactions of the students to the local foods that you served?

   Ecstatic Enthusiastic Neutral Mildly Negative Other: _____

10. How did the price of the local items compare with similar items you would have received through national/regional distribution?

Periodic Check-in For College Dining

Farm to School Program
College Dining Check-in Form

Date: _____
College/University Name _____

1. What local fruits and vegetables did you use in your dining service this past month? (list items mentioned)

   Did you get these items through a supplier or did you purchase them directly from a farmer? (circle one or both if applies)

   Supplier Farmer

2. What other locally produced foods did you use in your dining service this past month? (list items mentioned)

   Did you get these items through a supplier or did you purchase them directly from a farmer?
   (circle one or both if applies)

   Supplier Farmer

3. Did you talk with your usual supplier about availability of local (state or regional) foods?

4. Did you seek out any other sources of local foods?

5. Have you talked directly with any farmer about what they grow and could provide

6. Did you encounter any difficulty in procuring local foods? (describe)

7. How do you communicate your interest in using local foods to your supplier?

8. How would you describe the quality of the local foods that you served?

   Excellent Good Fair OK Poor

9. Did you do any sort of marketing to make students aware of the locally produced items?

   Yes_____ No_____

   Describe: _____

10. How would you describe the reactions of the students to the local foods that you served?

    Ecstatic Enthusiastic Neutral Mildly Negative Other: _____

11. How did the price of the local items compare with similar items you would have received through national/regional distribution?

Evaluating Your Harvest Event

Farm to School Program
Harvest Event Evaluation

School District or School Name: _____
Name of the event: _____ Date(s): _____
What was the purpose of the event?
_____
_____
_____
_____

Who was involved in planning and conducting the activities?

How was it advertised/marketed?

What activities were included?

Who participated?

Which local foods were used and how were they prepared? (Use back if needed)

Food	Preparation
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Were they procured through a distributor, purchased directly from a farmer, or other?
_____ Distributor (please specify):
_____ Farmer (please specify):
_____ Other (please describe):

How was the event received?

What kinds of information was provided?

Telling the Story. These kinds of events make great public interest stories. The kinds of information gathered above is what people will want to know when they read about your event in your local paper or a school newsletter, or hear about it on the radio!

Featuring a Local Food in School Meal

Farm to School Program Evaluation
Local Food Featured in School Meals

School District or School Name: _____

Meal(s): _____ Date(s): _____

Grades served to: _____

Which local foods were used and how were they prepared? (Use back if needed)

Food	Preparation
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Were they procured through a distributor, purchased directly from a farmer, or other?

_____ Distributor (please specify):
_____ Farmer (please specify):
_____ Other (please describe):

Describe student reactions to the local meal.

What any information about the local food provided? YES_____ NO_____

If Yes, describe (or attach):

Were there any activities included to complement the serving of this local food?

How was the local food promoted, or marketed, and to whom?

Would you say that participation rate went up, went down, or was about normal on the day you served the local food? (Circle answer)

went up went down was about normal

Would you say that there was more food waste, less food waste, or about the same amount as on any other day? (Circle answer)

more less was about the same

Would you say that your food costs went up, went down, or was about normal on the day you served the local food? (Circle answer)

went up went down was about normal

Would you buy and serve this food (these foods) again?

Telling the Story.

These kinds of events make great public interest stories. The kind of information gathered above is what people will want to know when they read about your event in your local paper or a school newsletter.

Chapter 6. Beyond the Cafeteria: Making the Classroom Connection

This toolkit focuses on creating successful connections between locally grown food and school cafeteria's to promote access to fresh, wholesome foods while supporting the local agricultural economy in your community. While having a strong farm to cafeteria connection should serve as the core element of your farm to school program, there are additional components that your school can implement to create a comprehensive program that can reach all members of your school community.

Many opportunities exist beyond the cafeteria to engage children and adults in experiential learning that complements the local foods featured on the cafeteria menus. Taking advantage of opportunities to weave farm to school concepts across the school community can lead to a culture shift within the school that promotes food, nutrition and agriculture literacy, creating citizens that are better able to advocate for a healthful food environment inside the school, at home and in the community at large.

If you are wondering what the benefits may be of extending farm to school beyond the cafeteria, here are just a few:

1. The more a child is exposed to fresh, local foods the greater the likelihood that they will consume these foods in the cafeteria and in other settings.

2. Engaging children and adults in the growing, cooking and eating of healthful helps to develop a deeper appreciation for where our food comes from and why we should care about what we put into our bodies.

3. Nutritious diets can lead to greater overall health, improved academic outcomes and work performance for children and adults.

4. The earlier a child adopts healthful eating patterns the more likely they are to continue them through adulthood, both through the adoption of healthful eating patterns and through the mastery of knowledge and skills that promote healthful eating (i.e. scratch cooking with whole foods, nutrition education, food label reading, developing appreciation for supporting local farmers).

5. Engaging in hands-on, food-based learning can be both fun and educational for all members of the school community. For example, if you start a school garden it creates an opportunity for intergenerational exchange, allowing parents and grandparents to share their knowledge and skills and older students to mentor younger students. There are few things that can create community better than having shared in the process of growing, cooking and eating a delicious meal together.

Remember, there are no age limits on who can be a teacher and who can be a student when it comes to learning about and engaging in farm to school. You may have a janitor who grew up on a farm, a student whose parents are vegetable or dairy farmers, or a vice principal who loves to cook & share recipes using seasonal, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

As you identify key stakeholders you may find teachers who are excited about integrating food-based explorations into their curricula, parents who might like to lead adult cooking classes through the PTA using locally grown foods, or students who want to begin an after-school gardening and cooking program. We suggest that you start with projects where you already have motivated participants and let it grow from the there.

In the toolbox at the end of this chapter you will find curricula that can be utilized with students, adults and the community at large in a variety of settings. For the remainder of this chapter we will focus specifically on integrating food-based learning into the classroom as a means to support the farm to school programming happening in the school cafeteria.

Why integrate farm-to-school into the classroom

When children learn about how their food is grown and the job of farmers, they get invested and care. The more they know and care, the greater motivation they have to choose the local options in the cafeteria. Therefore, the classroom can encourage desired participation in the cafeteria and, likewise, changes in the cafeteria can reinforce and provide consistency with – as opposed to a contradiction to – classroom learning. The following are some things to consider when approaching teachers about incorporating farm-to-school concepts into the classroom:

1. It takes time and exposure to change children's palates. Food-based activities in the classroom can assist children with tasting and accepting unfamiliar foods, such as the locally sourced foods, that are being served in the cafeteria. In addition to increasing children's familiarity with new foods, classroom food explorations and tastings provide opportunities for children to be positively influenced by the modeling of healthful eating habits by teachers and classroom peers.
2. Nutrition Education should be age appropriate and theory-based. Nutrition education in the classroom should go beyond the teaching of healthy eating through the USDA Nutrition Pyramid, particularly among elementary-aged students. According to research, early elementary-aged children are better able to differentiate between healthful and unhealthful food choices when they are engaged with information and experiences from the real world, such as direct cooking experiences and exploring the environmental impact of the food system, rather than abstract concepts of nutrients as components of foods or the nutritional effects of foods.[1,2] In addition, because young people tend to see themselves largely immune to health concerns, focusing on the potential negative health impacts of certain foods has been found to be a less effective strategy than nutrition education which engages children to develop a sense of emotional concern and meaning for food-related concepts such as environmental health and local farming.[3,4] When children view their food choices as having specific consequences on goals which they view as meaningful, they may be more willing to alter their food choices in support of those goals.[5] Those studying farm to school programs have also found that “the more students can link what they eat with who grows it and where it comes from, the more likely they are to eat it.”[6] As

school food service strives to offer healthier choices, what children learn about in the classroom can be more easily linked to the cafeteria's efforts to source locally grown foods.

3. It is important for children to understand where food comes from and how it is grown. For many involved in making farm to school connections, the degree to which people have become disconnected from their food system is alarming. It is impossible to make informed, healthful decisions about the foods one consumes without a basic understanding of the interdependent systems that provide us with that food. As current and future food consumers it is essential that children learn that food comes from the earth, either directly from plants, or indirectly through animals that feed on other food produced by the earth. It is important for children to know how plants grow from seed to mature plant and to learn the science and thrill of planting, caring for and harvesting food directly. Such experiential learning can be achieved by growing in the classroom, starting a school garden and or collaborating with an existing community garden.
4. Cooking is becoming a lost art. Along with the disconnect about where our food comes from, many adults and children could benefit from learning to cook, from scratch, with whole foods. The school classroom is one place for developing and sharing cooking skills, and a particularly important place for children who are not being taught these skills at home. When children touch, smell, cook and eat local, seasonal foods in the classroom it builds familiarity to the locally sourced foods they will be exposed to in the cafeteria. Cooking and sharing recipes utilizing fresh, seasonal foods also creates a wonderful opportunity to incorporate parents and grandparents into the classroom.
5. Children benefit from developing an appreciation for the connections between the foods they eat, farms, communities, the natural environment and health in all of these domains. For many farm to school proponents, healthier diets is only one of several reasons for serving locally produced food in school cafeterias. As we've noted throughout this toolkit, the social, economic, and ecological benefits are also important reasons. While providing children with access to foods that support human, ecological, social and economic health is one important way that cafeteria's can serve up a healthy plate of education themselves, these concepts require a more in-depth exploration that is better suited for an integrated classroom curricula or teaching module.

   Many opportunities exist for the cafeteria and classroom to work cooperatively as well. For instance, foods being explored in a particular classroom unit can be highlighted on the lunch menu and likewise, new foods being offered in the cafeteria can be explored in the classroom to increase acceptance in both arenas.

Having identified some of the *reasons* why it's a good idea to extend the farm to school connection from the cafeteria to the classroom, here are a few ideas to get you started.

Strategies for Classroom-based Farm to School

There are entire curricula designed to integrate farm to school concepts into the classroom. Many of the ideas listed below can be found and are elaborated on in the curricula listed in the toolbox at the end of this chapter. These are appetizers to wet your whistle!

1. Classroom taste tests. An easy way to introduce local food into a classroom is by conducting food tastings. Food is a great educational tool and you can easily find lesson plans about a specific food's historical origins, nutritional importance, local source (how and where it's grown), and its contributions to the local economy. Whenever possible, highlight varieties and have children taste multiple kinds of a particular food. For example: apples and carrots come in several varieties each with its own appearance and taste. Kids (and adults, too!) can get excited to discover these differences. It's a tasty way to deliver a math, science, social studies or language arts lesson!
2. Agricultural and food systems literacy. See the "Resources for Going Further" section, as well as the Toolbox for Chapter 5 for lists of established and tested curricular modules designed to help K-12 students understand the food system, including those which meet state learning standards.
3. Cooking in the classroom. Cooking a healthy snack is a relatively easy and fun way to give children a hands-on learning opportunity that can be integrated into virtually every subject. If you want to incorporate cooking into the curriculum on a more regular basis check out the Resource section and Chapter 6 Toolbox of this toolkit for established curricula.
4. Growing food in school. In part, due to the Kids Growing Food program in Cornell University's Department of Education, there has been substantial interest in developing school gardens. From choosing the types of food to grow, to planning garden space, cultivating the seeds and plants, to harvesting, cooking and eating the fruits of their labor, school gardens are a wonderful way for students to develop life-long skills and apply concepts they are learning in school. At the same time they are receiving multiple exposures to new, healthful foods. As with agriculture, food systems literacy and cooking, many curricula exist to assist you with the integration of growing food into your classroom curriculum. Many schools, particularly in large cities, have developed successful relationships with community gardens as well.
5. Food System Fun. Field trips to any part of the local food system: farms, processing facilities, farmers' market, a restaurant or grocery store, including a short walk down the hall to the kitchen of a school cafeteria, can be incorporated into regular subject areas (such as science, health, and social studies) to achieve academic outcomes while providing opportunities to develop a better understanding of the links between agriculture, diet, health and community well-being. If budget constraints make field trips impossible, consider inviting food system representatives (farmers, chef's) to the school. Farm to school partners can also be engaged to participate in a school assembly where they can talk about their interest in and contribution to farm-to-school.

6. Agriculture and food systems projects as part of college courses. There is a wide range of university courses with content that is complementary to an assigned project that might focus on some aspect of an existing farm to college project. If there is no farm to college project, feasibility studies can provide valuable learning opportunities for students and result in a product that is very useful to the institution. An assessment of the capacity and diversity of local agriculture would be of great use to a college dining director who has been thinking about procuring more local food. An economic impact study of a farm to college project could provide a tremendous learning opportunity in an economics course with real life experience.
7. Student organizations or clubs. For many upper-elementary, high school and college students, involvement in a student organization can be a rewarding experience that enriches their academic life. Many student organizations oriented around sustainability and local food systems have provided the primary impetus for starting a farm to college project. These groups can carry out a number of activities that involve research or local food events that can increase awareness and interest in local foods among students, staff, and faculty.

Taking your farm to school project beyond the cafeteria or dining hall into the classroom, a school garden, a college course, or a student organization provides tremendous opportunities for creating a comprehensive and integrated program. The purpose of this brief chapter was to provide food for thought about why and how to enhance the farm to cafeteria connection. Please refer to the “Resource for Going Further” section and the Chapter 6 Toolkit for materials to help you go beyond the cafeteria with your farm to school project. We encourage you to explore these exciting resources and make use of those which are best suited to your needs, current capacity for incorporating new academic programming, and your farm to school efforts.

Chapter 6 Tool Box

Toolbox

Agriculture in the Classroom. This webpage is an amazing resource for teachers. This USDA run website provides an extensive resource list for agriculture in the classroom and K-8 educational materials as well as downloadable curriculum guides. www.agclassroom.org

Center for Environmental Education. CEE Online's curriculum library offers lesson plans for classes of all ages. http://www.ceeonline.org/curriculum/search_results.cfm?Category_ID=27

Cooking With Kids using food within the curriculum http://www.cookingwithkids.net

FoodChange Programs. Educational Programs of **FoodChange**, a New York City based-nonprofit, strives to improve lives through nutrition, education, and financial empowerment.

- ***CookShop®:*** Nutrition education for the whole school community. CookShop® Classroom is a nutrition education curriculum designed to increase elementary school children's consumption of whole and minimally processed plant foods. Students become familiar with plant foods and develop an increased understanding of where their food comes from. They are introduced to plant foods via letters from local farmers, sensory explorations, and cooking activities centered around 10 crops grown by farmers in the Northeast region and frequently used on School Lunch menus. The curriculum has a classroom-friendly design, supports the attainment of grade appropriate learning standards in multiple subject areas, and provides resources and training opportunities to support classroom teachers and others who deliver the curriculum lessons. CookShop® Classroom's message can be reinforced when linked with other related school-based programs, such as the School Lunch Program and CookShop® for Adults.

- ***CookShop® for Adults*** (formerly Vegetable of the Month™) is a nutrition education program designed to increase awareness and consumption of fresh, locally grown plant foods among adults in New York City. Through monthly hands-on cooking workshops facilitated by trained staff members from community-based agencies, participants are introduced to a variety of readily available, seasonal, and local plant foods. They discuss the health benefits of each food and develop skills to enhance their ability to purchase, store, and prepare plant foods. In addition, CookShop® for Adults provides participating agencies with resources to enhance participants' food, nutrition, and food system education beyond the workshops. When implemented in a school setting in conjunction with CookShop Classroom®, the program complements the children's learning about food in the classroom.

- ***EATWISE:*** Educated and Aware Teens Who Inspire Smart Eating. EATWISE is a teen development project that trains high school students to become nutrition educators and advocates. Teens participate in workshops and activities led by FoodChange staff to build their knowledge of food and nutrition issues and to develop skills in public speaking, facilitation, and advocacy. Using their newly gained knowledge and skills, the teens create and conduct nutrition workshops and events for their peers. Curriculum materials, training, and support are available to community organizations and schools to develop and manage their own EATWISE Chapters.

[FoodChange, a New York City based-nonprofit, strives to improve lives through nutrition, education, and financial empowerment. http://www.foodchange.org/advocacy/youth.html]

Create Your Own Farm from the creators of What Kids Can Do.
http://www.whatkidscando.org/shorttakes/Curriculum.html

Days of Taste is a discovery based program for fourth and fifth grade children to learn about food and how it weaves its way through daily life from farm to table. American Institute of Wine and Food.
http://www.aiwf.org/site/days-of-taste.html

Discovering the Food System A Primer on Community Food Systems: Linking Food, Nutrition and Agriculture. J. Wilkins and M Eames-Sheavly, Cornell University.
http://foodsys.cce.cornell.edu/primer.html

Family Cook Production exists to bring families together around delicious, fresh food while positively impacting their health and well being. Family Cook Productions offers three field-tested, school-based curricula teaching culinary skills and basic nutrition in a fun framework of international cultures and offer a training certificate program to certify educators in skills necessary to teach these curricula. http://www.familycookproductions.com

Farm Service Agency Puzzles, mazes, games, fast facts, and coloring pages.
http://www.fsa.usda.gov/fsakids/parents.htm

Farm to Table: A Curriculum Connecting Agriculture to Our Everyday Lives produced by the New England Heritage Breeds Conservancy http://www.nehbc.org

Fast Plants. A gardening curriculum resource from the University of Wisconsin.
http://fastplants.org/index.php

Feeding Young Minds: Hands-on Farm to School Education Programs. Latest Publication of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) called, now available. Focusing on educational activities that complement local purchasing for school meals, this booklet highlights farm to school experiential education programs from around the country. These range from cooking classes in New Mexico, to school fundraisers in Ohio, to kindergartners tasting watermelon radishes in Pennsylvania. Each program is unique, yet offers insights and possibilities of what can be achieved when farm-fresh products in the cafeteria are linked with experiential education activities. A resource section is also included To order a copy of the publication.
http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#feeding

Food Studies. A wonderful collection of curriculum integrating academic disciplines with food, nutrition, culture and the arts. http://www.foodstudies.org/curriculum/

French Fries and the Food System: A Year Round Curriculum Connecting Youth with Farming and Food This site offers books, manuals, and videos for sale such as: French Fries and the Food System-Lesson plans developed and utilized by an innovative urban youth gardening program in Massachusetts; and manuals on how to engage community members in working the land.
http://www.thefoodproject.org

The Growing Classroom. A popular, hands-on science elementary school curriculum from Life Lab Science Program. It has a great unit on Nutrition, one on Food Choices and another on Consumerism Website also includes workshops, events, and project models.
http://www.lifelab.org/products/activity

Guide to Food and Fiber Systems Literacy http://food_fiber.okstate.edu/

Healthy Choices for Healthy Kids is great website to teach nutrition to kids. Designed by the Washington State Apple Growers Association explores healthy eating, snacking and healthy lifestyles.
http://www.healthychoices.org/

Healthy Foods from Healthy Soils: A Hands-On Resource for Teachers. Patten Elizabeth Patten and Lyons Kathy. Tilbury House Publishers $19.95 plus shipping.

How to Teach Nutrition to Kids by 24 Carrot Press available for purchase from this site. FREE Feeding Kids Newsletter. You'll also find lots of useful tips and quick updates.
http://nutritionforkids.com/

Junior Master Gardener Curricula developed by Texas A&M University.
http://www.k2demo.com/jmg/index.k2?did-6019&sectionID=6019

Kids Cook Farm Fresh Food. Seasonal Recipes, Activities & Farm Profiles That Teach Ecological Responsibility An activity guide for students in grades two through seven that links local agriculture to the pleasures of dining. The guide is designed to introduce students and teachers to fresh,

seasonal, locally grown produce. Each chapter features a particular fruit or vegetable and background information. Recipes, ideas for cooking and gardening activities, and profiles of real farms are provided. Instructions for planting a garden make learning engaging and inviting. In addition, a matrix displays classroom activities that support specific academic content standards in math, English–language arts, science, and history–social science. 247 pages, available from the California Department of Education Press http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/

Land Learn from Australia LandLearn provides a structure and support for Environment Education in schools to incorporate studies of ecologically sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, and food production and marketing. Newsletter and other resources available. http://landlearn.netc.net.au/

Linking Food and the Environment a production of Teachers College, NY. http://www.tc.edu/centers/life/

National Agricultural Statistics Service Kids Pages http://www.usda.gov/nass/nasskids/kidpg.htm

National Gardening Association. Major resource for youth gardening and school gardens including curricula, tool kits, supplies, grant information, and technical support. Great for teachers who already have established gardens and also for parents looking to support projects. Website hosts a registry of schoolyard garden projects across the country. www.kidsgardening.com

New York State 4-H Resources for Educators: http://www.cerp.cornell.edu/4h/

Nutrition in the Garden curriculum by Texas A&M University:

http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/nutrition/index/

Nutrition to Grow On. A Resource for teachers. Available through the California Department of Education. http://www.cde.ca.gov/cdepress/catalog/nutried.html also at http://nutrition.ucdavis.edu/perspectives/SeptOct00.htm#nutritiontogrowon

Project Learning Tree: The American Forest Foundation has developed environmental curriculum and resources for teachers for grades k-12. Funding opportunities are also available. http://www.plt.org/

Project Seasons: Hands-on Activities for Discovering the Wonders of the World. To purchase the workbook visit http://www.shelburnefarms.org/products.asp?dept=8

School Food Plus an initiative of Food Change, New York City for the New York City School System. http://www.foodchange.org/nutrition/schoolfood.html

School Market Program. Learning by doing is exactly what these kids are doing; growing, selling and preparing their own school garden fresh food. Get inspired! http://www.thefoodtrust.org/

Spoons Across America,™ the source for children's culinary education, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating children, teachers, and families about the benefits of nutritious, healthy eating and the important traditions of supporting local farmers and sharing meals around the family table. http://spoonsacrossamerica.org/

Sustainable Agricultural Education from SAGE (California) http://www.sagecenter.org/

Sustainable Agricultural Resources and Programs for k-12 Youth

http://www.sare.org/publications/edguide.htm

Teacher Curriculum Resources: http://members.ift.org/IFT/Education/TeacherResources/

National Resource Conservation Education Material Help with curriculum and lots of resources for teachers from the USDA NRCS. http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/education/

Resources for Going Further

Disclaimer

The resources referenced herein reflect a broad interest in farm to school and community-based food systems generally. The views expressed in these resources are not necessarily reflective of, or endorsed by the Cornell Farm to School Program, Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY Farms!, and the New York School Nutrition Association. The project team acknowledges the existence of a diversity of viewpoints related to this emerging area of work and believes that, in the spirit of fostering an open and thoughtful dialogue, exploration of these viewpoints is essential to sound food system decisions in our Northeast communities.

Farm to School in the Northeast

Connecticut

Connecticut State Department of Education. This site provides examples and information on School Wellness Policies, Guides for School Nutrition and Physical Activity, and Healthy Snacks. Resources and links available. http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/Index.htm

Project Farm Fresh Start– In 1998, the Hartford Food System expanded its Project Farm Fresh Start from a special research and demonstration activity to a full program. The program has two goals: increase the purchase of locally grown produce by the Hartford school system's food service; and encourage young people to make high quality, nutritious food a regular part of their diet. You'll want to read: *A Guide to Increasing the Consumption of Local Produce in the School Lunch Program* http://www.hartfordfood.org/programs/project_farm.html

Massachusetts

Communities Involved in Sustainable Agriculture of Western, Massachusetts now has a farm to institution program. Keep updated on their progress. Farm to School newsletter subscription available. http://www.buylocalfood.com

NE Food System Partnership The TUFTS University Experience. http://northeastfood.tufts.edu/about.html

The Pioneer Valley Food System, a program of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences at the University of Amherst serves as a resource center and clearinghouse for farm to school in Massachusetts. http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/%7Epvmafs03/farmtoschool/f2sindex.html

New Hampshire

Get Smart Eat Local: A project to connect New Hampshire's Farms and Schools The NH Farm to School (NH FTS) Program is a project to connect NH farms and schools by integrating agricultural production, school food procurement and school curriculum. The goal of NH FTS is to develop a healthy, community-based, community-supported school food system. http://www.nhfarmtoschool.org/

New Jersey

New Jersey Department of Agriculture. This website is a model nutrition policy put together by the state of New Jersey http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/modelnutritionpolicy.htm

Jersey Fresh Information Exchange http://www.njfarmfresh.rutgers.edu/default.asp

Programs and Resources for Sustainable Schools New Jersey Sustainable Food Network. http://www.globallearningnj.org/SSNprograms.htm

New York

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets PRIDE of NY: Farm to School
http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/PrideOfNY/farm_to_school.html

Cornell Farm to School Program. As an active member of the New York State Farm to School Coordinating Committee develops strategies to build a stronger link between schools and the New York state food and agriculture system. http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/

NY Farms! NY Harvest for NY Kids is a weeklong celebration that occurs each fall, when children, schools and families are encouraged to purchase, eat and learn about local food and agriculture. During this week many schools feature NY foods on their menus and plan activities with teachers, community groups, farmers and farmers' market. http://www.nyfarms.info/farmtoschool.html

Pennsylvania

Project PA: Best Practices Manual. This is a comprehensive step by step approach in incorporating Farm to School as part of school wellness policies in Pennsylvania.
http://nutrition.psu.edu/projectpa/html/bpmanual/BP_Manual_link_2.html

The Food Trust: http://www.thefoodtrust.org/policy.html

Vermont

Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) is a community-based approach to school food system change in a rural state through a collaboration of three Vermont non-profits: Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont, and Shelburne Farms. http://www.vtfeed.org/

Farm to School/College in other States

CA Healthy Schools Project: Farm to School, Ventura County, CA A Healthy Schools initiative.
http://ventura.k12.ca.us/childnutrition/id5.htm

CA Improving School Meals in California's Schools: A Best Practices Guide California Food Policy Advocates http://www.cfpa.net/obesity/obesity.htm

CA Los Angeles Healthy School Food Campaign Action Alliance for Children.
http://www.4children.org/news/704gse.htm

CA University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program
http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/cdpp/

CT Yale Sustainable Food Project http://www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/

IA Expanding Local Food Systems by Marketing to Iowa Institutions May 2002. With a focus on Iowa, four different programs linking Iowa farms and institutions are described in this publication.(PDF)
http://www.practicalfarmers.org/resource/PFIResource_82.pdf

IA University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project A Report from the Leopold Center, Iowa.
http://www.uni.edu/ceee/foodproject

IL Illinois Farm to School Initiative Follow Generation Green through their development of a Farm to School Program in Illinois. http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/school-food.htm

KY Kentucky Dept of Ag: Farm to School Program. This website is an introduction of Farm to School by Kentucky Department of Agriculture and can be especially useful for farmers who have little knowledge of Farm to School opportunities.
http://www.kyagr.com/mkt_promo/hort/programs/hort/farmtoschool/

MO Food Circles Networking Project: Report on 1999-2000 Activities
http://foodcircles.missouri.edu/spring00.pdf

MN Minnesota School Food Polices and Practices Simmone French, American Dietetic Association

http://www.eatright.org/images/journal/1202/r5.pdf

NC North Carolina Dept of Ag Farm to School Program http://www.ncagr.com/fooddist/Farm-to-School.html

WA A Salad Bar Featuring Organic Choices: Revitalizing the School Lunch Program (PDF) Written April 2003. An in depth report of the Olympia School District School Lunch program, which features an "Organic Choices Salad Bar" and purchases direct from local farmers. It provides an in depth look at how their farm-to-cafeteria program started, and discusses how the district was able to make changes to school lunch offerings and keep the program financially stable. http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/SaladBarOrganicChoices.pdf

WI Dishing Up Local Food on Wisconsin Campuses
http://www.wisc.edu/cias/pubs/briefs/055.html

National Farm to School Resources

The National Farm to School Network is a collaborative project with the goal of strengthening and expanding activities in states with existing programs and assisting others that do not yet have programs. Please help us build our nation-wide network of people working on Farm to School. http://www.farmtoschool.org

The Farm-to-College web site developed by CFSC presents information about farm-to-college programs in the United States in Canada. Visitors to the web site can find information about specific programs, search for programs with certain characteristics and see graphs and charts summarizing key aspects of farm-to-college programs. Links to resources related to starting and maintaining farm-to-college programs are also provided. http://www.farmtocollege.org.

Community Food Security Coalition. Provides resources and support for establishing a farm to school program www.foodsecurity.org.

Going Local: Paths to Success for Farm to School Programs. Produced by the National Farm to School Program, Center for Food & Justice, Occidental College and the Community Food Security Coalition. With case studies from eight states - California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Oregon, the publication provides a snapshot of the diverse ways in which farm to school is making a difference nationwide. The case studies in this publication will facilitate a better understanding of the farm to school approach and encourage the development of future programs. Download for free at:
http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/goinglocal.pdf
<http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/goinglocal.pdf> . Contact Center for Food & Justice, cfj@oxy.edu <mailto:cfj@oxy.edu> for print copies.

Getting Started

Buy Local Food and Farm Guidebook: A guide for campus organizers (PDF) Oxfam America. Report on incorporating local food into college dining operations, general information that is useful for the K-12 level as well. http://www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/food_farm_toolkit.pdf

Center for Environmental Education. Explore our site to discover why it is important for our children to have a healthy diet and how you can help redesign food experiences at your school. http://www.ceeonline.org/food/

Center for Science in the Public Interest's Nutrition Policy Project is working with concerned citizens, health professionals, government officials, and other nonprofit organizations to strengthen national, state, and local policies and programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity to help reduce the illnesses, disabilities, premature deaths, and costs. http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfoodkit/

Changing the Way People Think About Food Center for Informed FOOD Choices http://www.informedeating.org/

Creative Approaches to Local Food in Schools and Hospitals http://www.localfoodworks.org/

Education for Change, by Mark Winne. http://www.foodsecurity.org/views_education.html

Expanding Farm to School Programs Create Opportunities for Farmers... Children http://newfarm.org/depts/talking_shop/1203/farm-to-school.shtml

Feeding Minds Fighting Hunger http://www.feedingminds.org/

Farm Fresh Start: A Guide to Increasing the Consumption of Local Produce in the School Lunch Program. The Hartford Food System, 2000. http://www.hartfordfood.org/programs/project_farm.html

Farm-to-Cafeteria Connections Handbook (PDF) Published 2003. This publication contains information on Farm-to-Cafeteria programs for farmers, food service professionals, and community members. It provides locally relevant information, how-to ideas, and case studies of successful projects from across the country. From the Washington State Department of Agriculture. http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/102-FarmToCafeteriaConnections-Web.pdf

Farm to School: An Introduction for Food Service Professionals, Food Educators, Parents and Community Leaders. By Alison Harmon. National Farm to School Program, Center for Food and Justice, Urban and Environmental Policy Institute. 2003. A 73 page manual for a wide-variety of audiences. Profiles initiatives around the country and places farm to school programs in the food system context. Available for a donation of $12. http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#linking

Food for Life: School Meals http://www.soilassociation.org/foodforlife

The Food Resource Action Center is a nonprofit and nonpartisan research and public policy center working to eradicate hunger is the United States. This website provides information about school lunch policy as well as downloadable informational reports. http://www.frac.org **Nourish Their Bodies Feed Their Minds** is available at: http://www.frac.org/Afterschool_Guide.pdf

Healthy School Food Policies: A Checklist written by Mark Vallianatos, J.D. of Healthy Schools Campaign. http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/

Improve School Foods written by Claudia Malloy of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/policy_options.html#ImproveSchoolFoods

Linking Farms with Schools: A Guide to Understanding Farm-to-School Programs for Schools, Farmers, and Organizers By Marion Kalb, Kristen Markley and Sara Tedeschi. Community Food Security Coalition, 2004. ($12 plus shipping), details the benefits, challenges, and strategies for building successful farm to school projects and includes case studies of innovative projects and a comprehensive resource list.

http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#linking

The Parent Action for Children is a wonderful guide in helping parents, teachers, and school become active in the fight to improve children's nutrition and wellness. http://www.parentsaction.org/act/nutrition/resources/

Pioneer Valley Food System: Farm to School Gets Underway in Western Massachusetts. http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~pvmafs03/farmtoschool/index.html

School Food and Beverage Reform The Food Trust of Pennsylvania. http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/programs/school.food.beverage.reform.php

School Foods Tool Kit: A Guide to Improving School Foods and Beverages. Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2003. http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/policy_options.html#ImproveSchoolFoods

Small Farms/School Meal Initiatives Town Hall Meetings
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/Downloadable/small.pdf

WHY's Farm to Cafeteria Program World Hunger Year attacks the root causes of hunger and poverty by promoting effective and innovative community-based solutions that create self-reliance, economic justice and food security. WHY's Farm to Cafeteria program was created to improve the nutritional status of America's children while providing an important new sales outlet for small and medium sized farmers. http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/faqs/ria_063.asp?section=6&click=1

Farm Guides and Product Availability

Farmer-Chef Connection: A Guide to Local and Seasonal Products
http://www.ecotrust.org/foodfarms/

Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship at the New York State Food Venture Center; Food Entrepreneur Resource Center. Small Co-packers and Commercial Kitchens. Select a state for small co-packer and commercial kitchen information.
http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/CoPackerKitchen/index.html

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower's Guide. A. Rangarajan, E.A. Bihn, R.B. Gravani, D.L. Scott, and M.P. Pritts © 2000. This 28-page color booklet provides an overview of good agricultural practices that can be implemented on farms and in packinghouses as well as background information on foodborne illnesses related to produce consumption. Available in English or Spanish.
http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/Educationalmaterials/GAPsFlyer.pdf

From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce. A practical guide and resource for farm-to-school projects, with seasonal recipes and information on using vegetables. For a copy, contact: Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MADSAC), c/o/ Wisconsin Rural Development Center, 4915 Monona Dr., Suite 304, Monona, WI 53716, Phone 608-226-0300, Fax 608-226-0301. Cost: $19.00. http://www.macsac.org/foodbook.php

Harvest and Availability Calendar produced by the Farmers Market Federation of NY.
http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/

Local Harvest. This is probably the most comprehensive national database to find local farmers and their products. If you're looking for a farm near you using sustainable agricultural practices, you'll want to visit this website. http://www.localharvest.org/

New York Food of the Month. This flier from Cornell University Department of Nutrition highlights a separate NY specialty food each month, gives nutrition and preparation tips and fun facts. Great for menu backs. http://www.cce.cornell.edu/farmtoschool/NYFOODMO.htm

The New York State Farmers Direct Marketing Association. http://www.nysfdma.com/

North American Farmer Direct Marketing Association Membership List: These farms specialize in direct marketing and belong to the National organization which promotes direct marketing.
http://www.nafdma.com/

Northeast Farms to Food: Understanding our Region's Food System. Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG). Facts and analyses about the production, distribution and consumption of food and other agricultural products in the twelve states region from Maine to West Virginia. Copies are $10 each plus $2 postage. Bulk discounts are available. To order, email nesawg@smallfarm.org or call NESAWG at 413-323-4531.

The Northeast Regional Food Guide is a valuable table to identify products grown in the Northeast and their approximate harvest dates. This guide should be used as an aid to plan school menus around the availability of fresh produce when in season. Available as a 19" x 28" poster and/or a 8.5" x 11" two-sided flyer. Fact sheets are also available.
http://nutrition.cornell.edu/foodguide/lists.html

Buying and Selling Local Food (For Farmers)

Be Healthy Y'All. This website highlights market initiatives of the People's Grocery, in California. Youth are active in the markets, which includes a mobile market of fresh produce.
http://www.peoplesgrocery.org/programs.html

Bringing Local Food to Local People: A Resource Guide for Farm-to-School and Farm-to –Institution Programs. By Barbara C. Bellows, Rex Dufour, and Janet Bachmann. ATTRA 2003. This resource includes profiles of programs, potential funding sources, and an annotated bibliography. (PDF)
http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/farmtoschool.pdf

Farm to Cafeteria Connections: Marketing Opportunities for Small Farms in Washington State (PDF) Written by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, this guide is intended to help farmers realize the opportunities in working with local schools.
http://www.agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/102-FarmToCafeteriaConnections-Web.pdf

Farmer Chef Collaboratives. Chef's Collaborative is providing farmers with tools to help them sell to institutions. http://www.chefscollaborative.org/index.php?name=Farm

Farmer Resource Guide: Managing Risk Through Sales to Educational Institutions By Community Food Security Coalition and the Center for Food & Justice, Occidental College, 2004 An extensive compilation of resources that address the many different issues within farm to institutional purchasing projects, including how to approach food service directors, how to organize supply and distribution of the products, characteristics of different institutions, pricing issues, and several case studies of different types of farm to institution projects. ($22 plus $8 shipping)
http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#farmerguide

The Green Book. This publication contains information about the regulatory landscape governing the sales of farm products in Washington State. It is a comprehensive guide to direct marketing strategies and contains an extensive resource section of organizations and relevant publications.
http://www.agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/greenbook.htm

How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers are Building Alliances published by Debra Tropp this study is available at the USDA AMS. (pdf) This 32-page report describes lessons learned from a USDA Small Farm/School Meals Workshop in May, 2000, in Kentucky. It provides examples, checklists and resources helpful in linking farms and schools. To order, call 202-720-8317, or e-mail Debra.Tropp@usda.gov

http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/mta/Farm%20To%20School%20Marketing.pdf

Innovative Marketing Opportunities for Small Farmers: Local Schools as Customers. This site is maintained by the Agricultural Marketing Services of the USDA and is of particular interest to producers looking for alternative markets.
http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/publications.htm

New Farmer Development Project The Council on the Environment of New York City/ Greenmarket is providing information to new farmers looking to enter new markets.
http://www.cenyc.org/HTMLGM/nfdpfaq.htm

New Markets for Producers: Selling to Colleges A report from the University of Wisconsin.
http://www.wisc.edu/cias/pubs/briefs/039.html

NRCS Farmer Direct Marketing New North Florida Cooperative Program
http://www.ams.udsa.gov/directmarketing/publications.htm

Selling to Institutions: An Iowa Farmer's Guide. By Robert Luedeman and Neil D. Hamilton. Drake University Agricultural Law Center, 2003. http://www.iowafoodpolicy.org/selling.pdf

Supplying Local Food to Educational Institutions produced by Communities Involved in Sustainable Agriculture (CISA) of Western, Massachusetts. http://www.buylocalfood.com/

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has the following reports available on the Florida Trials: Marketing Fresh Produce to Local Schools: The North Florida Cooperative Experience USDA AMS Cultivating Schools as Customer in a Local Market: The New North Florida Cooperative USDA AMS Progress Report on Producer Direct Sales to School Districts USDA AMS

USDA: Farmer Direct Marketing. This site maintained by the USDA is intended to be a resource to farmers interested in direct marketing. http://www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/

Buying and Selling Local Food (For Food Service)

Connecting Growers and Food Service Operators: A Gathering of Participants in the Leopold Project (PDF) http://www.extension.iastate.edu/hrim/localfoods/downloads/localfoods_summary.pdf

Institutional and Commercial food Service Buyer's Perceptions of Benefits and Obstacles to Purchase of Locally Grown and Processed Foods Mary Gregoire, Iowa State. Iowa State Journal of Extension. http://www.joe.org/joe/2005february/rb1.shtml

Institutional Buying Models and Local Food Markets: the Iowa Experience (PDF) Published by Rich Pirog. http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/speech/files/100502_cafeteria.pdf

Local Food Connections: Food Service Considerations. Iowa State University Extension, June 2002. Geared toward food service professionals. Local Food Connections (PDF) http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1853A.pdf

Procuring Produce for Farmers' Market Salad Bar Programs in Southern California School Districts. Nelson, Thomas. February, 2001. (PDF) http://www.farmtoschool.org/ca/procurement_report.pdf

Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch Project http://www.reapfoodgroup.org/farmtoschool/

Fruit and Vegetables: United States Standards for Grades. Available by food goups (fruits and vegetables, dairy, meats, etc.) at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/standards/

School Food Service

Eating at School. A report written by Martha Conklin of National Food Service Management Institute. http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/eating_at_school.pdf

Farmer's Market Salad Bar
http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/resources/farmtoschool01cover.pdf

Food Industry Research Center "The Food Service Director" for chefs from the Culinary Institute of America. Cooking tips, buying guides. http://www.foodservicetoday.com

Fruits and Vegetable Galore: To Help Schools Encourage Kids to Eat More Fruit and Vegetables
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Healthy School Meals Resource System offers recipes and menus, as well as links to expert chef's ideas and chefs in your area who are interested in partnering with kids organizations. http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/index.html

How to Develop a Salad Bar for School Lunch Menu Programs Written by Wendy Slusser, School of Pulbic Health UCLA. http://www.farmtoschool.org/ca/SaladBarDev.pdf

Local Food Connections: Food Service Considerations. Iowa State University looks at incorporating local food in the school lunch. http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1853C.pdf

National School Lunch Program. This website is designed to help Food Service Professionals evaluate nutrition standards required of the National School Lunch Program. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/default.htm

Nutritional Assessment of Foods Sold in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Schools. WestEd. 2000. (PDF) http://www.farmtoschool.org/ca/nutrit_assmnt_lausd.pdf

Remaking School Lunch

Chef Ann Cooper is a "renegade lunch lady" who helps schools restructure their meal programs to offer more locally grown, sustainable, healthy foods. Her website contains links, information about her work and how to contact her. www.chefann.com

Eat Right Now In the fall of 2002 Calhoun hired Chef Bobo from the French Culinary Institute to revamp the school's lunch program. Dubbed "Eat Right Now", Calhouns lunch program is aimed at providing students with healthier meals, while building deep understanding of the importance of a well-balanced diet. http://www.calhoun.org/page.cfm?p=48

The Healthy Lunchbox (Paperback) by Marie McClendon and Cristy Shauck

Jamie Oliver has been a UK champion for improving school lunches. http://www.feedmebetter.com

Lunch Lessons. Lunch Lessons: Changing the Way We Feed Our Children by Ann Cooper and Lisa Holmes. Ann Cooper incorporates education and nutrition making the cafeteria a classroom. See how: http://www.lunchlessons.org/html/meal_wheel.html

New York City School Food's homepage. http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/default.aspx

New York Coalition for Healthy School Lunches works to promote optional plant-based entrees, healthy snack foods, farm to school programs, and nutrition education to encourage healthier choices. http://www.healthylunches.org/

Rethinking School Lunch The Center for Ecoliteracy presents a comprehensive guide, Rethinking School Lunch, for revamping school lunch programs by addressing issues of health, education, and wellbeing. Also available on the website is the Thinking Outside the Lunchbox series, an ongoing collection of lectures extending the scope of the Rethinking School Lunch guide. http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/rsl.html

School Food: Feed Your Mind NYC Department of Education takes a look at school lunches. http://www.opt-osfns.org/osfns/default.aspx

The SchoolFood Plus Initiative is a collaborative multi-agency effort that seeks to improve the eating habits, health and academic performance of New York City public schoolchildren while strengthening the New York State agricultural economy through the procurement of local, regional produce. Partners lead institutional change in New York City school meal programs (SchoolFood Plus Cafeteria) and provide school-based programming (including CookShop® Classroom, CookShop® for adults, and LiFE: Linking Food and the Environment) to educate students and adults associated with the city's 1200+ public schools about food, nutrition, agriculture and health. The Initiative also builds local and national coalitions to address these issues. The primary partners are New York City SchoolFood, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Teachers College Columbia University, and FoodChange.

http://www.foodchange.org/nutrition/schoolfood.html

SchoolFood Plus Cafeteria is a cafeteria-based program that works to enhance the vegetable options of the National School Lunch Program in New York City and encourages students to incorporate these foods into their diets. The New York City Department of Education Office of SchoolFood, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and FoodChange collaborate to make the four parts of this program happen: recipe development, staff training, local procurement, and student education. SchoolFood Plus Chefs create new plant-based recipes; foodservice staff are trained to implement the SchoolFood Plus recipes in their cafeterias; New York grown products are made available through the school meals programs; and related social marketing materials and

events have been incorporated into many cafeterias across the city. http://www.foodchange.org/nutrition/schoolfood.html

School Foods Took Kit: A Guide to Improving School Food and Beverages Center for Science in the Public Interest takes a look at school lunches. http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfoodkit/

Slow Food. Slow Food in Schools helps children develop an appreciation for real, wholesome food and an understanding of sustainable food practices http://www.slowfoodusa.org/

Smart Yet Satisfying! Healthy Eating at School: Ten Steps for Parents A Useful checklist from the USDA FNS for parents to evaluate their child's lunch. http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Parents/lunch.html

Vending

The National Conference of State Legislatures has produced a website, looking at the issue of vending machines in schools. It documents each state's policies and activities related to vending machines. http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/vending.htm

Stonyfield has created the country's first organic and all-natural healthy vending machine program in schools, in partnership with nutrition educators, school administrators, parents, students, and other food companies. http://www.stonyfield.com/MenuForChange/HealthyVendingProgram/MFCHealthyVendingMachines.cfm

Breakfast

Academics and Breakfast Connection Pilot (ABC) A Report of the Nutrition Consortium of New York State http://www.HungerNYS.org

School Breakfast Report a study of the Food Research and Action Center http://www.frac.org/School_Breakfast_Report/2004/index.html

Nutrition

5 a Day the Color Way from The Produce for Better Health Foundation has http://www.5aday.org/

American Dietetic Association (ADA) Statement on Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Legislation http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/media_8435_ENU_HTML.htm

The American Heart Association takes a look at nutrition is its website Healthy Americans: http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1088

Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/changing.html

Community Nutrition. The USDA Agricultural Resource Service explores community nutrition, including school communities. http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=12-35-55-00

The Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) at the National Agricultural Library (NAL) has been a leader in food and human nutrition information dissemination since 1971. FNIC's web site provides a directory to credible, accurate, and practical resources for consumers, nutrition and health professionals, educators and government personnel. http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/ **Food Service resource listings** from Food and Nutrition Information Center. http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/service/

Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA provides children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education. We help nearly one in five people. Check out our programs to see if we can help you or your family. http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/

Food Research and Action Center Working to meet the nutritional needs of low income individuals. This site offers information on food and nutrition policy, including school wellness policies. http://www.frac.org

The Healthy School Meals Resource System (HSMRS) provides information to persons working in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs. To learn more about the HSMRS, Team Nutrition and how to borrow school food service publications from National Agricultural Library (NAL), see Framework & History http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/index.html

MyPyramid Plan can help you choose the foods and amounts that are right for you. For a quick estimate of what and how much you need to eat, enter your age, sex, and activity level in the MyPyramid Plan box. One size doesn't fit all. http://www.mypyramid.gov/

National Food Service Management Institute mission is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of Child Nutrition Programs. http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/

Noteworthy Creations has developed this website: Our mission is to help children, parents, and educators discover good nutrition together through fun, educational, hands-on activities that bring about life-long learning and good health. http://www.funwithfood.com/

Nutrition Exploration produced by the Connecticut Department of Education. http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/Index.htm

Nutrition Exploration produced by the National Dairy Council encourages dairy as a part of well balanced nutrition program. http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/index.asp

Nutrition for Kids. How to Teach Nutrition to Kids by 24 Carrot Press available for purchase from this site. FREE Feeding Kids Newsletter. You'll also find lots of useful tips and quick updates. http://nutritionforkids.com/

School Environment: Helping Students Learn to Eat Healthy This is a brochure available from the USDA FNS. http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/sebrochure.pdf

The School Nutrition Association (formerly American School Food Service Association) is a national, nonprofit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. http://www.schoolnutrition.org/

Smart Mouth. You guessed it!, A website just for teens. The Center for Science in the Public Interest has created a wonderfully interactive website to teach teens about good nutrition. http://www.cspinet.org/smartmouth/index1.html

Smart Nutrition Starts Here: http://Nutrition.gov/

TEAM Nutrition, a USDA initiative, is designed as an implementation tool to improve school meals and motivate children to make food choices for a healthy diet. Resources include nutrition education materials for school and home as well as recipes that meet the Dietary Guidelines. http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/

USDA Child Nutrition Home Page http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/

Health and Wellness in Schools

Action for Healthy Kids A step by step approach to your wellness plan. http://actionforhealthykids.org/resources_wp.php?page=goals

California Project Lean. Policy guides and community tool kits to help improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment. Included are a series of policy briefs on critical issues that affect the school nutrition and physical activity environment. These resources were developed for use with adolescents, teachers, school administrators and community members.
http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/resourcelibrary/

The Center for Ecoliteracy Model School Wellness Policy Guide.
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/wellness_policy.html

The Center for Advanced Studies in Nutrition and Social Marketing in collaboration with the Cancer Prevention Nutrition Section, developed a compilation of tools to measure environmental factors, including health and nutrition related surveys for children and adults. http://socialmarketing-nutrition.ucdavis.edu/Tools/somarktools.php

Eat Smart New York: Project Evaluation. Cornell University Community and Rural Development Initiative takes a look at NY's Eat Smart Program.
http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/external/esny/pdf/2002/50273%20SummaryRptESNY2002.pdf

Eat Smart Play Hard an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service
http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/

Eat Well Play Hard an initiative of the New York's Department of Health
http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/nutrition/resources/ewph.htm

Healthy Students + Health Schools= Educational Success a website of the New York Statewide Center for Healthy Schools http://www.nyshealthyschools.org/palliance.asp

Healthy Schools The National Association of State Boards of Education helps school administrators evaluate their schools. http://www.nasbe.org/

National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity is a member based coalition headquartered at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. It advocates national policies and programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity to help reduce the illnesses, disabilities, premature deaths, and costs caused by diet- and inactivity-related diseases such as heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.

NANA promotes within the legislative and executive branches of government a better understanding of the importance of healthy eating, and physical activity. http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/

The National PTA supports student wellness.
http://www.pta.org/pr_category_details_1117232379734.html

School Health Index by NYS AHPERD http://www.nysahperd.org/index.htm

Statewide Center for Healthy Schools. This site encourages physical activity in addition to good nutrition for student well being. http://www.nyshealthyschools.org/

Food and Wellness Policies

ADA (American Dietetic Association) Wellness Policy
http://www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/advocacy.html

Establishing a Whole School Food Policy British Nutrition Foundation has written this guide particularly for school administrators.
http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/4865/BNF_Food_in_Schools_BT.pdf

Food Research and Action Center Outreach Brochure. Designed to Encourage More Parents to Get Involved in the Creation of Local Wellness Policies
http://www.frac.org/html/news/parent_brochure06.html

Healthy Food Policy Resource Guide developed by the California School Board Association http://www.csba.org/PS/hf.htm

Healthy Schools: Local Wellness Policy a website of the **USDA Food Nutrition Service (FNS)** http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html

Model School Food Policy: A Practical Guide Alliance for Better Food and Farming. http://www.sustainweb.org/g5fp/index.htm

Model Wellness Policy Guide by the Center for Ecoliteracy to assist community members in writing wellness policies.http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/wellness_policy.html

Model School Wellness Policies of the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org

Project PA: Best Practices Manual a comprehensive guide by Penn State University http://nutrition.psu.edu/projectpa/html/bpmanual/BP_Manual_link_2.html

School Wellness Policies examples by the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity http://schoolwellnesspolicies.org

Surveys

Sample Survey for Farmers Exploring their Involvement in Farm to School Projects Developed by the National farm to School Program http://www.farmtoschool.org/sample_survey_for_farmers.htm

Sample Survey for School Food Service Staff developed by the National Farm to School Program

http://www.farmtoschool.org/sample_fsd_interview.htm

School survey to evaluate school's nutrition needs. Developed by Food for People, Eureka, CA.

Curricular Resources on Gardening, Cooking, Nutrition and the Food System http://www.farmtoschool.org/school_survey_humboldt.pdf

Case Studies

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Funding and Fund Raising

Creative Financing and Fundraising from the California Department of Health. http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/download/pdf/WPCreativeFinancing&FunFundraising.pdf

Creative Financing and Fundraising from the Louisiana Action for Healthy Kids http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/nutritioned/1862.html

Environmental Protection Agency offer excellent funding sources targeted to environmental education. www.epa.gov/teachers/grants.htm

Federal and State grant opportunities for schools as well as a connection to foundations around the country. This site is part of http://www.schoolgrants.org, a site set up to help, find, and write educational grants. http://www.k12grants.org/grant_opps.htm

The Foundation Center provides education and training on the grantseeking process. They collect, organize, and communicate information on U.S. philanthropy while conducting and facilitating research on trends in the field. The website is set up to help to strengthen the nonprofit sector by advancing knowledge about U.S. philanthropy http://www.fdncenter.org/

Grant Maker offers a list of community organizations by state. This is a great place to start for funding projects. http://fdncenter.org/funders/grantmaker/gws_comm/comm.html

The National Environmental Education and Training Foundation's Challenge Grant Program was designed to create leverage for non-federal investment in environmental education. http://www.neetf.org/Grants/index.htm

Resource Directory for Grants. www.kidsgardening.com/resources/resource.asp

School Garden Grants. www.kidsgardening.com/teachers2.asp

The United States Department of Agriculture: Food Nutrition Service (http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Default.htm). This website helps find funding for a Local Wellness Policy. http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy_funding.html

Youth Garden Grant. www.kidsgardening.com/grants.asp

School Gardens

Added Value is a non-profit organization promoting the sustainable development of Red Hook by nurturing a new generation of young leaders. They work towards this goal by creating opportunities for the youth of South Brooklyn to expand their knowledge base, develop new skills and positively

engage with their community through the operation of a socially responsible urban farming enterprise. http://www.added-value.org/index.php

The Edible Schoolyard is a project in which is wholly integrated into the school's curriculum and lunch program. It involves the students in all aspects of farming the garden – along with preparing, serving and eating the food – as a means of awakening their senses and encouraging awareness and appreciation of the transformative values of nourishment, community, and stewardship of the land. The websites includes curricula, tool kits, supplies, grant information, and technical support. www.edibleschoolyard.org

Food For Thought Ojai Is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization created by parents, farmers, health and educational professionals, and environmentalists to bring healthier, fresh food to our school children, while raising awareness and support for local farms and the environment. www.foodforthoughtojai.org

Garden for the Envrironment is a California based gardeners forum established to answer questions, and to provide resources and contacts of local businesses or organizations to help with your garden needs. http://www.gardenfortheenvironment.org/

Garden Mosaics is a project that combines science education with gardening,intergenerational mentoring, multicultural understanding and community action. Great science and action project resources as well as interactive components. http://www.gardenmosaics.cornell.edu/

Healthy Foods from Healthy Soils: A Hands on Resource for Teacher written by Elizabeth Patten. http://www.tilburyhouse.com/Children%27s%20Frames/child_health_fr.html

Kids Growing Food a program of Cornell University's Agriculture in the Classroom. Resources and mini-grants for teachers interested in a garden based curriculum. http://cerp.cornell.edu/aitc/KGF.html

Life Lab provides training in garden nutrition education and runs a great farm based educational tours in the Spring and Fall. http://www.lifelab.org/tours

National Gardening Association Major resource for youth gardening and school gardens including curricula, tool kits, supplies, grant information, and technical support. Great for teachers who already have established gardens and also for parents looking to support projects. Website hosts a registry of schoolyard garden projects across the country. www.kidsgardening.com

Resource for garden based learning, from seed to harvest, for youth and adults from the Cornell University Department of Horticulture. Great activities, lesson plans, publications, and evaluation resources. www.hort.cornell.edu/gbl/

A Greener School Environment

Beyond Pesticides encourages a pesticide free approach to managing our bugging problems. http://www.beyondpesticides.org/

Children's Environmental Health Network is a website to guide school administrators through the decision making process when evaluating their school environment. http://www.cehn.org/

Collaborative on Health and the Environment a website developed by the Network for Environmental Health. http://www.chenw.org/

The Environmental Kids Club an interactive website on environmental topics just for kids. http://www.epa.gov/kids/

The Environmental Protection Agency has a website for teachers which includes environmental curriculum and resources. http://www.epa.gov/teachers/

Go Green is an initiative for greener environments. http://www.gogreeninitiative.org/

The Green Schools Initiative. Read how to make our schools greener and healthier places for our kids. http://www.greenschools.net/index.html

Green Teacher is a magazine by and for educators to enhance environmental and global education across the curriculum at all grade levels. http://www.greenteacher.com/

Healthy Schools Network of NYS promotes the development of national and state policies, regulations, and appropriate funding-- with a two-fold focus: to improve the conditions of school facilities and to promote children's environmental-occupational health in their 'workplaces'. HSN has won national recognition for its Healthy Schools/Healthy Kids Clearinghouse services. http://www.healthyschools.org/

The Institute for Children's Environmental Health explores the environment that children live within. http://www.iceh.org/

The Organic Consumers Association nationwide campaign working to integrate organic foods and non-toxic products into our schools and homes, creating a safer and healthier environment for our children to learn and grow. http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.htm

Terry Hausseman Sustainable School Awards http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0207022.pdf

Farm Field Trips

Farm Connection Manual. This manual is designed to let farmers know what to expect when hosting a farm visit, and to prepare teachers and classes so that they may get the most out of their farm visit. http://www.caff.org/programs/FarmConnectionManual.pdf

Making the Farm Connection A Farm to School, Farm Visit Manual from the Community Alliance with Family Farmers of California. This manual is designed to let farmers know what to expect when hosting a farm visit, and to prepare teachers and classes so that they may get the most out of their farm visit. (PDF) http://www.caff.org/programs/f2sManual.shtml

Schools Come to the Farm: A Farm Guide for Giving Tours
NY Agriculture in the Classroom Program and the Cornell Educational Resources Program (CERP) 2003 Cost: $7.00 + s/h. Contact the CERP Store: (607) 255-1837, email: cerp@cornell.edu or visit the CERP Store online. http://cerp.cornell.edu/

Sustainability

The Alliance for Better Food and Farming takes a look at the impact transportation plays in our current food system in their report called Food Miles
http://www.sustainweb.org/chain_fm_index.asp

The American Farmland Trust has a short video showing the small percentage of the Earth which is suitable for agriculture. The Earth is cut similar to an apple showing the amount farmers are charged with. http://www.farmland.org/default.asp

Building Bridges: Linking Public Health and the Sustainable Agriculture Movement an on-going project of the Prevention Institute. http://www.preventioninstitute.org/buildingbr.html

The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is a non-profit 501(c)(3), North American organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. We seek to develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and to create a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability. http://www.foodsecurity.org/

Cultivating Stronger Communities. Community Markets looks at the food system and why buying local is important. http://www.communitymarkets.biz/news.php#3

Edible Communities. Our mission is to transform the way communities shop for, cook, eat, and relate to the food that is grown and produced in their area. We value local, seasonal, authentic foods and culinary traditions. We strive to put a face on every farmer as we tell their stories and champion their efforts toward a more sustainable and safe food system. http://www.ediblecommunities.com/

Food First is a not-for-profit organization. Advocating for sustainable agriculture is part of their programming. Find out why Food First looks at sustainability. http://www.foodfirst.org/programs

Food Land and People. Resources for learning about sustainability: http://www.foodlandpeople.org/

Food Routes asks "Where Does Your Food Come From?"
http://www.foodroutes.org/farmtoschool.jsp

Food Trust. Building Strong Communities Through Healthy Food is just one of their policies. From the Pennsylvania Food Trust. http://www.thefoodtrust.org/policy.html

Green Tables, a newly formed NY not for profit has initiated a Farm to School program based on their mission for agricultural sustainability. http://greentables.org/impact.php#farmschool

Heritage Foods explains why production agriculture is becoming a monoculture. Bringing back heritage plants and animals and educating others about the current system and it's alternatives is part of their mission. http://www.heritagefoodsusa.com/who_we_are/index.html

Just Food. Community Food Education http://www.justfood.org/education/

The Land Connection of Illinois Our goal is to cultivate healthy farms, healthy food, and healthy communities http://www.thelandconnection.org/

Local Harvest The freshest, healthiest, most flavorful organic food is what's grown closest to you. Use our website to find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your area, where you can buy produce, grass-fed meats, and many other goodies.
http://www.localharvest.org/

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service http://www.attra.org/

Northeast Farms to Food: Understanding our Region's Food System
http://www.nesawg.org/resources_publications.php

Practical Farmers of Iowa a sustainable agricultural initiative of Iowa State.
http://www.pfi.iastate.edu

Radio Report on School Lunch Initiative The Center for EcoLiteracy takes a look at school lunches and the relationship to agricultural sustainability. How can you help?
http://www.rethinkingschoollunch.org/

Rooted in Community. This Arkansas group explains how supporting local agriculture sustains local communities. http://www.earthisland.org/ric/localgroups.html

Why Eat Well? It's good for the farms, the environment, the community and You!
http://www.eatwellguide.org/

Glossary

Action for Healthy Kids – A national initiative to address the child obesity crisis that was launched at the 2002 Healthy Schools Summit in Washington, D.C. This initiative is public-private partnership of more than 50 national organizations and government agencies representing education, health, fitness and nutrition that addresses the epidemic of overweight, sedentary, and undernourished youth by focusing on changes in schools. Action for Healthy Kids works to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in schools.

American School Food Service Association – (See School Nutrition Association)

Backhaul – occurs when a processor transports the commodity from a school food authority (SFA) or distributor warehouse to its facility. A distributor may charge the SFA up to 90% of bid price per case for lump sum pickup by a processor.

Bids, or Bidding Process – Procurement of food by schools and colleges often, but not always, involves a bidding process where a food service director will request quotes from several suppliers, or in the case of farm to school, farmers. If the price asked for any given product is over a set threshold for a particular food product, depending on policy or legal requirements (K-12 schools will likely differ here from college dining), the school is required to state the product/service desired and make the contract open to the bidding process. Once the bids are in, the school will often go with the lowest bid price, all other factors (reliability of supplier, quality, etc.) being equal. Bidding also can involve a Request for Quotation.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 – a revision and strengthening of the Child Nutrition Act which invests than $16 billion annually in child nutrition programs. On June 30, 2004, President Bush signed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act into law to strengthen these programs and improve their effectiveness for America 's most vulnerable children.

Commodity – Food purchased by the USDA and provided to eligible recipient agencies.

Community – an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location.

Consumption – a step in the food system, it can mean the act of actually eating something or just the act of purchasing it. A consumer is a person who can go to the store, select which product they want and purchase it.

Dietary Guidelines (Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, 6th edition) – Since 1980, United States Department of Agriculture and Department of Health and Human Services have jointly published the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee of prominent experts in nutrition and health to review the scientific and medical knowledge current at the time and recommend to the Secretaries revisions to the Guidelines. Committees produced reports of their recommendations and rationale to the Secretaries. The Dietary Guidelines provide the basis for Federal nutrition policy and nutrition education activities. Specifically, the Guidelines provide advice for healthy Americans ages 2 years and above about food choices that promote health and prevent disease.

Direct Diversion – a process whereby commodities are ordered by a state distribution authority (commodity distribution warehouse in this case) to be shipped directly from the USDA vendor to the processor. The school food authority (SFA) may identify the processor and quantity of each food to be processed using a Processing Order Form. As food is ordered by the distributing agency, each SFA will be notified of the quantity of food shipped to the processor. Generally, the SFA contacts the processor and confirm the processing request. Direct Diversion is encouraged for several reasons: (1) it eliminates the risk of taking the product in and out of freezer storage several times, thus providing a more controlled environment for the donated food; (2) it results in producing a better product that has a longer shelf life than products which have been backhauled; and (3) it results in significant savings in transportation and storage. (Source: http://www.kyagr.com/)

Disposing, composting and recycling – the step in the food system in which the food not eaten is dealt with. This food can go into the garbage or can be added to a compost pile and turned into a valuable, rich fertilizing material to add to a home garden or a farmer's field. Food packages may also have different fates with different environmental impacts. All food packages, of course, can be thrown away and added to the solid waste accumulated by a community. However, many food packages can be recycled. Food packing materials such as paper, cardboard, plastic, aluminum, glass and tin can be recycled depending on the services provided by the community.

Distribution – the process of dividing up, spreading out, and delivering food to various places. Farm products can be taken from their original sources and delivered to supermarkets, other food stores, or farmers' markets for sale as a whole fresh product - like many fruits and vegetables. Alternatively, farm products can be transported to a site where they will be transformed in some way, combined with other ingredients, made into food products, packaged and then distributed through a number to marketing channels. Most of what we find in grocery stores today has been transported great distances and has undergone some degree of processing. We currently distribute food by truck, train, boat, and plane.

Distributor/Supplier – a business or individual devoted to the distribution of food.

Externality – costs or benefits generated by an agent (say a farmer, or a truck driver) that does not register as a cost or benefit to that agent or end-user. The pollution generated by transporting food is not paid for by the trucking company in the price of the fuel, or by the consumer in the price of the food. The beekeeper is not compensated for the benefit his/her bees provide to a neighboring orchard in the form of pollination. These costs and benefits are "externalized" and not paid for directly at the grocery store register.

Farm to Cafeteria – a program that promotes and serves locally produced food in cafeterias of K-12 schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, businesses and other institutions. (See "Farm to Cafeteria Basics" section for more information.)

Farm to School – a program that promotes and serves locally produced food in cafeterias of K-12 schools, colleges and universities.

Farm to College – a program that promotes and serves locally produced food in colleges and universities dining halls and university catering operations.

Food Guide – a nutrition education tool that graphically represents how recommendations on nutrient intake are translated into recommendations on food intake. Foods are clustered into groups that are similar in nutrient composition. A food guide provides recommendations on what food groups to choose from and the number of servings of food from each group in order to get a nutritionally adequate and wholesome diet. The latest national food guide, published in 2005 is a symbol known as MyPyramid and is available on the web at: MyPyramid.gov.

Food Group – the grouping of foods that are similar in nutrient composition. On USDA's MyPyramid there are 6 primary food groups: Bread, cereal, pasta, tortillas, whole grains; Vegetables; Fruits; Dry beans, nuts, eggs, poultry, fish, meats; Milk, yogurt, cheese; and Fats, oils, sweets.

Food labels - the label on a food package that provides information about its manufacturer and its nutritional content

Food Miles – the distance food travels from where it is grown or raised to where it is ultimately purchased by the consumer. (See the Food, Fuel and Freeways report http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/ppp/ for information on food miles in the local and global food system.)

Food Production - involves many of the activities that take place on a farm, at an orchard, in bodies of water, or in greenhouses and fish-farm tanks to produce our food. Food production depends on the "input" of several resources, both natural (soil, water, climate, seeds, and human labor) and human-made (machinery, fuel, fertilizers, pesticides). A farmer owns or rents land to plant crops, or tend animals. The inputs required vary depending on what is being grown or raised and the type of agricultural system that is in place. For example, many of the pesticides and fertilizers common in most of our agriculture are not allowed in organic agriculture.

Food System – a set of interdependent processes that together provides food to a community. This includes the growing, harvesting, storing, transporting, processing, packaging, marketing, retailing, and consuming of the product. Some or all of these steps in the food system may be within the community but they also may be part of the global or regional system instead.

Forager (or Food Forager) – a person hired by a food service operation in a K-12 school district, or more commonly by a college dining service whose responsibility it is to someone to keep in regular communication with local farmers and act as link between the school district or college and the farmers. This person also keeps records of their available produce, consults with the food service director on the district's weekly menu needs and facilitates the ordering and delivery process.

Growing – the process of preparing the soil, planting, maintaining the food item to be harvested. There are a variety of ways to grow products depending on the culture and climate. Large corporate farms may use chemically manufactured pesticides to maintain their crop while a local farmer may use other plants as pesticides.

Growing Season – the period of time between when a seed or a start is planted and the when it is harvested.

Harvesting – the process of reaping a food product from the earth. A variety of harvesting methods are used across the world from hand picking to large machinery that can harvest large portions at once.

Health claims - statements about the relationship between a nutrient or food and a disease or health-related condition, such as calcium and osteoporosis, and fat and cancer.

Input – something introduced into a system or expended in its operation to attain a result or output.

Interviewer Effects or Interviewer Bias – effects on the respondent's answers in an interview that are produced by characteristics of the interviewer (including the interviewer's attitudes or physical characteristics like sex or race).

Local Food – While there is no official definition of local when it comes to food, farm to school programs usually define local food as foods produced by farmers in neighboring counties first, then the state, and next the region of the United States.

Marketing - labels and pictures on the boxes and containers in which food is packaged. A large portion of the money used to buy the products goes to the development of attractive images to encourage the consumer to choose one product over another. The marketing step researches what people are attracted to and finds ways to show the consumers their products by television, newspaper, and magazine advertisements.

Market Development – a process for developing sales, new business, and new markets. In the Farm to School context, market development means developing schools and colleges as a market for the crops grown by nearby farmers. The customers here are the schools and colleges, and products are the locally grown foods. Developing schools and colleges as a market for local food involves many of the steps in creating a farm to school connection.

Natural Resources – something from the earth that we can use to perform or create something we need or want. Most people know that oil and gas are natural resources, but soil, water and air are also natural resources required to produce food.

Output – something that is produced by a system. Outputs can be desirable products, such as crops from a farm system, or undesirable, such as nitrogen run-off from fertilizers used on a farm.

Packaging – the step in the food system in which food is put into containers that will be presented to the consumers. The packagers receive the food from the processors or the farms and put them in paper, foil, plastic, cans, etc. for distribution to stores and markets.

Processing - the step in the food system that involves everything done to change the food form from its original, such as, cutting, freezing, boiling, canning, etc. A food can be prepared in a variety of ways for a variety of uses. For example, a processing plant may receive apples to process into applesauce or apple juice. Some processing is very intensive, breaking down a whole food into unrecognizable, constituent components and then adding other substances – often fat, sugar, salt and colorings – and reforming the mixture into a multitude of products. In contrast to this kind of highly processed product, a minimally processed product will have much of its inherent goodness – nutrients and fiber – left at the end of the process and no unhealthy fat, sugar, salt, and coloring added.

Procurement – refers to the acquisition of food that will be served in the school cafeteria or the college dining hall at the best possible cost, in the right quantity and quality, at the right time, in the right place. Procurement of food by schools and colleges often, but not always, involves a bidding process where a food service director will request quotes from several suppliers, or in the case of farm to school, farmers.

Quotes or Request for Quotation.- is one of the steps common to the procurement process engaged in by school food service. Quotes received about a food product include the price, but also can include: payment terms, quality level per item or contract length. Multiple quotes from different suppliers allow a food service director to make the best choice given existing budget constraints and interests of the school and customers.

Retailing – the step in which food is transported to market. This may be at a family owned grocery store or a franchised supermarket.

School Breakfast Program – (SBP) provides cash assistance to States to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions. The program operates in more than 72,000 schools and institutions, serving a daily average of some 7.4 million children. It is administered at the Federal level by FNS. State education agencies administer the SBP at the State level, and local school food authorities operate it in schools.

School Food Authority (SFA) – a school district eligible and approved to participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, and the Food Distribution Program.

School Nutrition Association (formerly American School Food Service Association) – is a national, nonprofit professional organization representing more than 55,000 members who provide high-quality, low-cost meals to students across the country. Recognized as the authority on school nutrition, the School Nutrition Association (SNA) has been advancing the availability, quality and acceptance of school nutrition programs as an integral part of education since 1946.

School Lunch Program - (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. In 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after school educational and enrichment programs to include children through 18 years of age. The Food

and Nutrition Service administers the program at the Federal level. At the State level, the National School Lunch Program is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

School Wellness Policy - In June 30, 2004, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act was signed into law (Public Law 108-265). Section 204 of this Act School Wellness Policy requires that schools participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture child nutrition programs (e.g. School Lunch Program, or School Breakfast Program) establish by the first day of the 2006-2007 school year a local wellness policy, at a minimum: 1. Includes goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness in a manner that the local educational agency determines appropriate; 2. Includes nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day, with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity; 3. Provides an assurance that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture.

School Wellness Committees – groups of school-based stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, food service personnel, school administrators, community members, school health representative, formed to develop School Wellness Policy

Serving size - the basis for reporting each food's nutrient content. It is uniform and reflects the amounts of a food people actually eat.

Storing - keeping food items in a climate controlled environment until it is used. For example, this is done with apples in the northeast in order for local apples to available throughout the winter months. Some foods are more perishable so they cannot be stored for a long period of time while potatoes can be kept for many months.

Transporting - the step in the food system that brings the food product from the producing farm or storage facility to the processing facility or right to the market if it is to be sold fresh. This can be by air, truck, train or barge. In the instance of a farm stand, the farmer may bring the food up to the stand by tractor thereby significantly reducing the transportation involved.

Value-added – refers to food processing. For most schools, some value-added processing is necessary to make it easier to incorporate locally grown food into the food service operation.

References

Introduction

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Chapter 1. Farm to School Basics: Understanding What It Is All About

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Chapter 3. Building Relationships: Cultivating Farm to School Stakeholder Partnerships

[1] Because this toolkit was written, primarily, for Extension Educators, who are ideally positioned to help make connections between schools and farmers, we have not included these professionals in our list of stakeholders. However, if you are not an Extension Educator but, rather, reading this publication as another community leader (broadly defined as anyone with a serious interest in and capacity for leading the development and implementation of farm to school projects), reaching out to your county Extension office should be one of the first steps, if not *the* first step, you take in developing your farm to school partnership. Extension offices are staffed with personnel who have training and practice in nutrition education, agricultural and horticultural sciences, and community and economic development. As such, Extension educators have the expertise, experience, and outreach/networking capacity needed to help make farm to school dreams, reality. To locate contact information for your Extension Association in New York State, visit Cornell Cooperative Extension on-line at: http://www.cce.cornell.edu/in_your_community.php.

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Building Relationships Toolbox

[1] See "Establishing a Vision and a Mission," under "Best Processes and Practices" of the University of Kansas' "Community Tool Box." This resource is on the web at: http://ctb.ku.edu/index.jsp (Viewed on-line: 9/25/06).
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Chapter 4. Needs Assessment: Assessing Your Farm to School Capacity

[1] Although the assessments can be completed by the stakeholder, rather than through a phone or in-person interview process, we don't recommend this method as it is through the interview process that relationships begin to be built.

Chapter 5. Making the Cafeteria Connection: Implementing and Evaluating Your Project

[1] Tools that are primary to narrative in this chapter are provided within the text of the chapter, though on a new page so they can be easily copied as a "tool." Additional tools designed to help "make the connection" are provided in the Tool Box at the end of the chapter.
[2] The harvest and availability periods will differ by area and can be located in the form of a harvest calendar on most state department of agriculture websites. For example the harvest calendar for New York as available at: http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/HarvestCalendar.html.
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