



# Farm to School in Ohio

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An introductory guide for school staff, teachers and farmers to start farm to school programs

December 2011



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## ***What is Farm to School?***

Farm to school (FTS) initiatives connect schools with local farms by bringing fresh, nutritious foods from local farms into school cafeterias and by offering students experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, and food and nutrition education activities. Such initiatives support local farmers, keep food dollars in local economies, and nurture a generation of informed food consumers.

Farm to school efforts are taking place in over 2035 school districts in at least 39 states, including Ohio. By taking it one step at a time and forging partnerships with those in your community, your school can integrate farm to school into your school food program and local farmers can market to schools.

FTS programs come in all different shapes and sizes. Schools may incorporate the Farm to School initiative many ways, including:

- Offering a farm fresh salad bar as part of the National School Lunch Program
- Featuring local food item(s) in the cafeteria
- Featuring local food items at a fundraiser or special event
- Using local food items in the hot lunch offering, or integrated into the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable and School Meals programs.

Schools may also incorporate FTS using hands-on learning opportunities including:

- School gardens
- Farm visits or classroom visits by farmers
- Hands-on nutritional classes
- Cooking demonstrations

Farmers have many opportunities to distribute to schools:

- Directly through local school district food service department
- Through a farmers' market
- Through a farmers' cooperative or other organized structure that allows multiple farmers to share transportation and administrative costs
- Through wholesale distributors

This guide provides the resources to establish successful Farm to School Programs. The steps that follow will assist local schools in working through the process.

## Why Farm to School?

The basic mission of farm to school is to increase the supply of fresh, local, nutritious foods in schools around the state. With that mission come much broader goals that involve developing more informed food decision-making among students, supporting and connecting with local farmers, developing community ties, and reinvesting in local economies.

Farm to school initiatives are gaining momentum across the country in light of two recent phenomena – **rising obesity**, in particular among youth, and **the declining family farm**. While one quarter of Americans over 19 are overweight or obese, only 1 in 10 children eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. Rising obesity rates and the growing awareness of negative health consequences of poor nutritional choices have expanded interest in the nutritional quality of food served in school cafeterias.

Our nation’s commercialized agricultural system, which favors large-scale and high-input farming, has made it increasingly difficult for small and medium size farms to remain competitive. Family farming, which plays a key role in sustaining rural landscapes as well as the economic prospects and social well-being of American communities, is no longer listed on the national census as a profession. The industrial food system model has also contributed to declining farm income: the farmer share of every dollar spent on food has dropped from 41 cents in 1950 to 20 cents in 1999.

FTS constitutes an important response to both of these growing concerns because of the interconnected ways it can bring benefits to students, farmers, schools, and communities alike. Farm to school programs are not only

about sourcing locally, but about sourcing fresh and nutritious foods, integrating those purchases with educational opportunities for students about food choices and about where food comes from, and knowing that the dollars being spent are helping reinvigorate local economies.

### Fast Facts!

According to a UCLA study: **Average fruit and vegetable consumption by children increased by one serving a day** when a Farmers' Market Salad Bar was created in the School Cafeteria.

A Farmers' Market Salad Bar also led to a reduction **in average caloric intake by 200 calories a day**, and fat intake by 11 grams a day.

One study reported that **75% of students receiving the farm to school salad bar chose a balanced meal** without adult intervention as compared to 46% of control students

### For Students:

- Fighting obesity with fresh nutritious foods
- Educating students about wellness
- Building community—students learn where food comes from

Farm to school means having access to fresh, nutritious food as well as gaining invaluable knowledge and experience with making food decisions. Research has shown that practices tried in childhood have a formative role in shaping food consumption and preparation behaviors as adults. There are countless opportunities for sourcing from area farmers that can be integrated into

### Fast Facts!

The percentage of school-age **children 6-11 years that are overweight more than doubled** between the late 1970s and 2000 (Center for disease Control 2002, <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/>)

Between 1999-2000 and 2003-04, the prevalence of **obesity rose from 13.8% to 16.0% among girls and 14.0 to 18.2% among boys.**

According to the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture the number of **small farms decreased about 4%** between 1997 and 2002.

Only **1 in 10 children eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables**

school wellness programs or other areas of the curriculum. Incorporating farm field trips with dining hall options, for example, allows students to make connections between community life, biological systems, and their own health.

**For School Food Service:**

- Boost revenues with increased participation rates
- Improve public relations
- Gain community recognition

Fresh and local food options in cafeterias have been shown to increase participation rates in school food programs, thereby boosting revenues. Gaining access to fresh and local foods enables school food services to expand their options in ways that can support wellness or curricular priorities, while improving public relations and gaining community recognition. While local foods can be slightly more expensive, investing in the viability of local food systems is in the long-run financial interest of schools.

**For Farmers:**

- Increase sales opportunities
- Reliable demand
- Expand community interest in local foods

Farmers can benefit from increased sales opportunities that school lunch programs can offer. Once a relationship is established, schools offer steady and reliable demand for their product. Farm to school programs are also more likely to expand local food purchasing in the household, as students bring home lessons to their parents.

**For the Community:**

Supporting area farmers benefits the local economy by keeping food dollars in the community. Healthy farms provide jobs, pay taxes, and protect working agricultural land. Undeveloped farm land can also benefit the region by maintaining open space and diversified wildlife habitat and keeping down the cost of providing community services.

**For the Environment:**

- Less transportation
- Fewer chemical fertilizers and pesticides

Sourcing locally also supports a food system that is more sustainable – providing an alternate to the current system of production and distribution in which about 10-15 calories of energy, mostly in the form of fossil fuels, are consumed in order to produce one calorie of food. By supporting sustainable producers through consumer demand, individuals can use their purchasing power to vote for a more environmentally sound production and delivery of food and help to preserve the health and beauty of farmland.

**Fast Facts!**

Olympia, Washington school meal participation rates increased 13-16% during their pilot year of the organic choices salad bar, offsetting the higher cost of the organic produce.

One study indicated 90% of parents self-reported positive changes in grocery shopping patterns, cooking at home, and conversations with their children about food choices.

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## Why Ohio?

Farm to school initiatives are an important component in bridging the current gap between Ohio's rural and urban settings, helping build local food systems that can act as a source of food security and an economic buffer.

As Ohio faces a decline of rural communities, challenges of food accessibility in the inner cities, and shrinking job markets, it is important to think about our farmland as an essential part of social and economic viability. Ohioans overall spend \$35 billion per year on food. Capturing just 10% of that market for Ohio growers and producers would mean \$3.5 billion of additional income for the state (not including local multiplier effects) – money that could go a long way toward sustaining communities or rebuilding local food systems.

There are many potential opportunities and benefits associated with local purchasing in Ohio, beginning with our interest in protecting farmland. While Ohio's prime farmland is one of our greatest resources, the state is ranked second in the nation for the rate at which it is losing its farmland. Our farmland faces the challenges associated with growing development, environmental degradation, and the many growing pressures on economic viability. These challenges have significant consequences for the long-term prospects of Ohio farms, the communities that depend on them, and the rural settings we treasure. We can keep small- and mid-scale, environmentally-friendly farming economically viable by supporting them with our business.

Ohio has one of the greatest numbers of metropolitan statistical areas in the country – a phenomenon that has tended to contribute to the problem of sprawl across the state. These urban centers face their own social and economic challenges, and securing access to healthy food in these settings has been an ongoing concern for the state. However, each of these areas is surrounded by productive farmland and provides central locations and sufficient urban infrastructure for rebuilding local food systems through farmers markets, farmers' cooperatives, food processing and storage, and more.

Many organizations and agencies throughout Ohio have recognized the opportunities and potential that a strong Ohio local food system provides. In September 2011, Ohio State Extension began providing leadership for a statewide Farm to School program, and has organized an interdisciplinary advisory board consisting of members of school districts, farmers' unions, government agencies, distributors, nonprofit organizations, and nutrition professionals, among others. Many schools have already implemented FTS programs of various sizes and shapes across the state, and with the support of a statewide coordinating program, many more will have the opportunity.

### Fast Facts!

Ohioans overall spend **\$35 billion per year on food**. Capturing just 10% of that market for Ohio growers and producers would mean \$3.5 billion of additional income for the state.

On average, for every dollar in revenue raised by **residential development, governments must spend \$1.17 on services**, thus requiring higher taxes. For each dollar of revenue raised by **farm, forest, or open space, governments spend only 34 cents** on services.

Ohio has **80,000 farms**, averaging 186 acres each. Agriculture is Ohio's number one industry, contributing more than **\$93 billion to the state's economy**.

Ohio is home to more than **1,000 food processing companies** and produces more than **200 commercial crops**.

Ohio produces **more eggs and more Swiss cheese than any other state**. They are ranked number two in sherbet, three in tomatoes, four in winter wheat and five in sweet corn.

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## Key principles for Farm to School:

### Forge partnerships:

As much as increased consumption of local food is important for reasons that extend beyond any one sector or a defined group of individuals, the program's chances of success are much greater when it captures the energy and ingenuity of all the various stakeholders and different functions.

*(1) Farmers, farmers' cooperatives, and cooperative extension agents* are important partners for improving access to local foods in a way that works for schools. Farmers' cooperatives may be able to aid in meeting the needs of schools by consolidating several farmers' supplies in order to accommodate requests for larger volumes and/or variety, and packaging food in a way that caters to school kitchens. Schools interested in purchasing locally provide an opportunity for new markets for farmers, as long as a trusting, working relationship can be built to overcome the obstacles.

*(2) Members of school service staff and administration* tend to be caught between shrinking budgets, meeting nutritional goals and the daily needs of feeding the student body. It requires considerable time and effort to begin building the networks necessary for a farm to school initiative – identifying farmers, developing delivery strategies, solving storage and processing questions, reworking menus – and any farm to school initiative must be able to accommodate their needs and support them in dealing with these additional administrative, financial, and logistical responsibilities.

*(3) Parents, school teachers, community members, and others* can all be powerful advocates and spectacular resources in getting a program together. Teachers are essential for integrating a nutritional and educational component to a FTS program, supplementing cafeteria additions with programs in the classroom such as those that feature Ohio farms and farmers. School nurses, too, are important advocates for expanded wellness programs in the schools, which go hand-in-hand with farm to school. Including FTS in school wellness policies can be a good motivator.

### Start small, one step at a time:

*Sourcing locally is never an all or nothing endeavor.* Focus on taking one step at a time. Start with one food item, or one meal a week, or with regularly featuring a handful of farmers, or even with one special event. Aim to build upon these successes by at the same time building partnerships and celebrating your successes, and you will find your program gaining momentum and more equipped to overcome obstacles.

### Engage students:

Students are notoriously picky eaters, but fresher, local products do not necessarily have to lose to processed, less healthy options. Studies and experience have shown that FTS programs, when integrated with a nutritional program that allows students to understand the benefits of healthier food choices, increases student dietary behaviors as well as student knowledge of both nutrition and sustainable farming and growing cycles.

Local food in the schools can be linked with numerous educational opportunities – from nutrition and health education to energy and environmental education, community connections, or just a basic curiosity about food decisions. Building a generation of informed, responsible food consumers is a central motivation for FTS programs, and in order to achieve this, students must be directly engaged in the process and the program.

### Celebrate successes and publicize accomplishments:

Each project and program that brings local food to the classroom and engages students in their food choices is a success – celebrate it! Sharing success is important for building morale and continued enthusiasm. It also helps spread the word, which will build support for and participation in your efforts.

**Evaluate projects and think sustainably:**

A strong program is one that not only celebrates its successes, but is ready to evaluate activities, learn from mistakes, and grow. A strong program is also one that is sustainable – it will not die out when one person leaves, when the initial excitement dies, or when some pool of money runs out. Be sure you are building partnerships, developing resources, and thinking critically about the projects in place in such a way that will allow them to continue and expand into the future.



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## **What to do:**

This guide is meant to serve as a framework, and the steps taken will differ depending on your role in the school program or in the community. Similarly, farm to school efforts will vary significantly across schools and school districts, based on a number of variables such as number of schools involved, size and type of food preparation and storage facilities, proximity to farms, and style of purchasing done normally. Our intention here is to give a sense of where to start, what to keep in mind, and to present resources that will be useful to your efforts.

### **Step 1: Brainstorm program:**

Identifying and characterizing your institution's interest in sourcing locally is an important first step for creating the ideal program. Think about what interests and excites you and other supporters most about the potential to source locally, and be prepared to talk about those benefits. Be sure to share those benefits with other members of the school system, food service providers, the community, and farmers, articulating why this program is important. (See "Why Farm to School" again on page 4 for help understanding the benefits).

**Determine your school district's interest and ability:** Thinking about your institution's capacity and flexibility, as well as where the interest and excitement lies, is important for determining the best place to start. Contact the food service director and administrators in the district. Review existing menus and infrastructure in the school to best understand how to integrate local foods.

This Local Food Purchasing Assessment form from Michigan State University can be used to assess your current lunch program and to better understand where local can fit in. This information is also important to have available when you begin contacting farmers or distributors (See [http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP1\\_LocalFoodPurchasingAssessment.pdf](http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP1_LocalFoodPurchasingAssessment.pdf)).

Procuring food from local farms can be done in different ways. As you evaluate your institution and its capacity to buy, check out the different ways you can organize your program. (See "Different Distribution Models" on page 15).

#### **Get to know national and state policy on procurement guidelines:**

As of the 2008 Farm Bill, geographic preference in school bids is more explicitly permitted. Schools are both permitted to use "local" geographic preference in bids and encouraged to purchase unprocessed agricultural products. Read more at Bid local or at Applying Geographic Preferences in Procurements for Child Nutrition Programs

- The USDA has a summary of federal procurement guidelines: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011\\_os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011_os.pdf)
- The Ohio Department of Education has a comprehensive summary of procurement guidelines: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=114301>
- ODE also has a more basic outline of the Federal School Lunch Program: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=4382>

### ***Check out successful programs:***

Read about different success stories in Ohio (see page 23) and in other states to get ideas as to how to make a program that works best for you. See the Occidental College publication Going Local: Paths to Success for Farm to School programs (<http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/goinglocal.pdf>).

### ***Be aware of obstacles:***

It is also important to think about the different obstacles that different parties may face as you try to bring local food into the cafeteria. Below is a summary of things to keep in mind as you move forward. (See page 16 for a more comprehensive look at challenges food services may face and potential solutions).

- **Farmer issues:** Crops, seasonality, marketing channels, value-added processing, transportation and delivery, ability to meet demand
- **School issues:** Ordering and payment procedures, cost-effectiveness, kitchens, storage and prep areas, labor, equipment, reliability of volume, seasonality and availability, quality standards, and packaging and storage

## **Step 2: Begin building connections:**

Farm to School programs are interdisciplinary, and involve the interests of many different groups. These steps will help you integrate diverse interests into a comprehensive FTS program.

### ***Organize a meeting:***

Coordinate a group of cross sector stakeholders in the community - including food service directors, farmers, school administrators, teachers, parents, OSU extension, local nonprofits, etc. This is a crucial step for identifying opportunities as well as obstacles and challenges.

Check out the USDA's step-by-step guide for hosting a FTS town hall meeting: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/Downloadable/small.pdf>.

### ***Identifying foods you'd like to buy:***

First, get an understanding of what is available in the state overall, and what you can expect to acquire from farmers.

- The Ohio Farm Bureau has a seasonal availability chart: <http://ourohio.org/index.php?page=whats-in-season>.
- The Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems has a sample survey to gather preliminary information from farmers (<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/foodservtools/3-Locate-and-purchase-local-foods/producer-survey-2.pdf>) as well as a sample letter to local vendors (<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/foodservtools/3-Locate-and-purchase-local-foods/sample-letter-to-local-vendor.doc>) and a sample bid sheet (<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/foodservtools/3-Locate-and-purchase-local-foods/sample-bid-sheet-with-scoring.pdf>).
- Michigan State also has a sample letter to vendors [http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP3\\_Sample\\_letter\\_notice\\_Purchase\\_Fruits\\_Vegetables.pdf](http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP3_Sample_letter_notice_Purchase_Fruits_Vegetables.pdf)

- The Community Food Security Coalition has a sample survey for food service personnel: [http://www.foodsecurity.org/sample\\_foodservice\\_survey.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/sample_foodservice_survey.pdf).

Then, if you **work with a food distribution company** or a vendor, you can ask them if they have local foods available, if you can express a preference for those items, or you can work with them to expand their local sourcing. Many schools around the country find that this is the best way to start sourcing locally when they are unfamiliar about where local growers are located.

Next, you should **try to identify farmers, farmers' markets or cooperatives**, or other local food distributors in the region. When contacting farmers, be sure to have information on hand regarding your school district or institution. Also, the sample phone survey for farmers can help guide what information to look for in a conversation with a farmer.



Here are some resources that can help identify Ohio farmers:

- **Market Maker:** <http://oh.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/> MarketMaker is a resource for all businesses in the food supply chain – schools can search for farms and distributors, and farms can also search for schools. Institutions update their own information, so if you are interested in (or are) participating in FTS, sign up today! For more information on how to use Market Maker, see the [Market Maker Tutorial](#).
- **Ohio Proud:** <http://www.ohioproud.org/markets.php> Ohio Proud is the Ohio Department of Agriculture's marketing program that identifies and promotes food and agricultural products that are made in Ohio and grown in Ohio. The website has a database of markets and farms, easily searchable by county or product.
- **Fresh Fork Market:** <http://www.freshforkmarket.com/> Fresh Fork Market is a virtual farmers' market, designed to help connect local farms with local consumers. Originally launched in Cleveland, OH, Fresh Fork Market's resources are now becoming available across the country. Possible users of the Fresh Fork system include farmers, co-operatives, non-profits, distributors, and many more.
- **LocalHarvest:** <http://www.localharvest.org/> This site maintains a "living" public nationwide directory of small farms, farmers markets, and other local food sources, including a considerable number in Ohio.
- **Our Ohio:** <http://ourohio.org/> : A website through the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation. It has an interactive Ohio map and searchable database of farmers who are members of the Ohio Farm Bureau, CSAs, markets, and local-food related events. It also features a wide range of information and resources on foods and farms across Ohio, recipes, gardening tips, and more.
- **Look around your community:** <http://extension.osu.edu/counties.php> Beyond farmers' markets and the internet, you can find interested farmers by starting conversations around your community. Try starting conversations with individuals at feed supply stores, roadside stands/U-Pick, county fairs, and farm equipment shows.
  - **Contact county extension office:** Many county extension offices have worked to survey agricultural producers in their county, and oftentimes identify those who market directly. They are a good resource for getting a sense of what is available in the county, and a starting point for building partnerships around the county.

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### ***Integrate FTS into school programs:***

Drawing on connections made and brainstorming done at the organizational meeting between all the stakeholders, imagine ways in which local purchasing can be integrated into other school programs and policies. In particular integrate FTS with:

**School wellness policies and programs:** This is an essential component to any farm to school program. The Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition programs in 2004 included a provision that requires each educational agency participating in a federal school meal program to establish a local school wellness policy, which had to be in place for the 2006-2007 school year. Because locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables are generally high quality and tasty and can help children develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime, farm to school initiatives can easily coincide with the development of wellness programs:

- USDA's wellness policy site: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>
- The Community Food Security Coalition has an excellent resource on developing wellness policies for schools: <http://www.foodsecurity.org/F2Cwellness.html>
- Or, check out the Center for Ecoliteracy's Rethinking School Lunch program: <http://www.ecoliteracy.org/downloads/rethinking-school-lunch-guide>

**Classroom curriculum:** Purchasing local food in the cafeteria can be linked to educational opportunities including farm visits, farmer-in-the-classroom, school gardens, and cooking in the classroom. This improved connection between nutrition education and the quality and freshness of foods served in the cafeteria allows students to better link what they eat with who grows it and where it comes from. Furthermore, they are more likely to eat fresh and healthy foods when they are making those connections. These programs can also create opportunities for integrating agriculture and nutrition into the core curriculum, through science, health and history classes.

- The USDA's Agriculture in the Classroom site includes agriculture-based curricula on a wide variety of subjects: [http://www.agclassroom.org/directory/topic\\_search\\_results.cfm?advSubmit=on&All=on&acAll=on&agAll=on&Media=8&scope=1&MySubmit.x=39&MySubmit.y=16](http://www.agclassroom.org/directory/topic_search_results.cfm?advSubmit=on&All=on&acAll=on&agAll=on&Media=8&scope=1&MySubmit.x=39&MySubmit.y=16)
- The Food Project offers lesson plans on various sustainable agriculture topics : <http://thefoodproject.org/sustainable-agriculture-curriculum>
- The National Gardening Association's KidsGardening.org provides lesson and activity ideas (<http://www.kidsgardening.org/content-themes>) for school gardening, as well as information on funding for school gardens (<http://www.kidsgardening.org/grants-and-awards>)
- Veggie U offers ideas for teachers to promote FTS in the classroom (<http://www.veggieu.org/index.php/teachers-lounge/ideas-for-your-classroom>)

## **Step 3: Making the purchases**

It is important to keep in mind both procurement norms or regulations and the need to accommodate farmers' needs and flexibility. Food service directors are required to put out to bid any order greater than a specific dollar amount. These steps, largely taken from the Michigan guide to farm to school programs, can help you organize a system that accommodates that requirement.

In Ohio, cumulative purchases over \$100,000 are required to go through a formal bid process, which may make beginning farm to school initiatives easier. These resources may still be useful for organizing and communicating information.

### **Preparing the bidding process:**

**Determine criteria for selecting vendors:** Build a plan to evaluate farmers' bids based on categories such as price, food quality, taste test results, dependability, delivery plans, flexibility, promotional or education programs, insurance requirements, growing practices, food safety and/or sanitation standards. See Michigan's guide for bid requirements ([http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP3\\_SampleCriteria\\_for\\_SelectingVendors.pdf](http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP3_SampleCriteria_for_SelectingVendors.pdf)).

**Prepare a vendor information questionnaire:** This will help you identify whether and how closely a farmer meets your criteria for selecting vendors. Here is an example of a questionnaire : [http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP3\\_Sample\\_Vendor\\_Questionnaire.pdf](http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/assets/farmToSchool/docs/STEP3_Sample_Vendor_Questionnaire.pdf) (See also: bottom of page 10).

**Prepare a product availability and pricing form:** Ask for information that is most important to you. For example, if you are going to serve apples as fresh, whole fruit, uniform color and size may be important. If so, indicate this on the product availability and pricing form under condition/description. However, uniform color and size may not be important to you, depending upon your use for the product. Being flexible may increase the likelihood that a farmer will be able to meet your needs and may also reduce costs. In this case, use a simple, more open-ended product availability and pricing form. Sample forms can be found here: <http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/index.php?q=guide#step3>.

Talk with local farmers to **identify a mutually beneficial timeline for the bid process**. Some farmers would like to begin this process early in the spring so they can plan their crops and plantings accordingly, but others may not want to submit bids until the summer when they are more certain of market prices and product availability.

**Prepare a letter or notice of intent to purchase fruits and vegetables:** If you can purchase your local products under the small purchase threshold through informal bid procedures, this letter or notice can be included with your other bid documents for local farmers to complete. Be sure to include your school or district's requirements for payment and payment method in this letter or notice. ( See sample letters to vendors on page 10).

**Spread the word:** Increase the likelihood that farmers will respond to your request for bids by posting your notice in the local newspaper, school newsletter, or other outlet where it will grab their attention. List your school on **MarketMaker** (See page 11). Include information about how farmers should get in touch with you, what type of products you are looking for, and learn more.

**Mail bid documents to interested farmers:** Include your letter or notice of intent, vendor information questionnaire, and product availability and pricing forms as well as instructions for farmers on completing the forms and returning them to you for evaluation. This work up front can pay off for years to come.

### **Evaluating and rewarding bids:**

**Compare bids:** You may use a point system based on a 100 point scale to evaluate bids. While price may earn the majority of points, other bid categories like variety availability, freshness, and delivery schedule may be nearly as important to you. Identify bids that meet your selection criteria and determine products to purchase from local farmers.

**Notify** selected farmers of bid awards.

**Visit the farms** and/or meet in person with the farmers to determine your mutual needs. Be sure to discuss with the farmer your school or district's standard payment method and requirements for payment.

**Develop a written contract** with farmers from whom you will purchase local products. Be sure the contract clearly describes requirements for quantity and quality of food, specifications and packaging, delivery, price, terms of payment, insurance requirements, etc. Ask farmers to review and sign contracts before you place any orders. See the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems' [sample purchasing agreement](#).

## Step 4: Make it sustainable!

There are numerous ways to build upon the successes you achieve in your first efforts to bring local food into your school food programs in order to ensure that the program will continue and expand:

**Publicize your successes:** Share it with us! Visit [farmtoschool.osu.edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu) for directions on how to share your story on our website or in our newsletter.

**Identify alternative sources of funding:** For many school districts, local foods that can be more expensive may be beyond their budgetary possibilities. Fortunately, resources can be found to help cover those excess costs – the USDA often has grants available; local governments, state agencies, or community development organizations may have funds to help support your program; Some local school organizations may also be able to help raise money. Check [farmtoschool.osu.edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu) for updates on funding opportunities.

- Check out the guide to other sources of funding. (See page 19)
- Center for Food and Justice at Occidental College has an excellent resource on fundraising for FTS (<http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/publications/farmraisers.pdf>)

**Create an advisory board:** Build upon the connections made at your organizational meeting to create an advisory board of enthusiastic parents, community members, farmers, and others who can be continued advocates for your farm to school program. They can work to provide input and resources for project ideas or support for the implementation of those projects. They can also serve as a source of ideas for improving state or national policies, and a force for advocating for those changes.

**Look to improve local, state, and national policy:**

- Local food councils are a great way to organize information and achieve change in your town or county. Check out the Community Food Security Coalition's site on state and local councils: <http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/council.html>
- Get to know your state legislators and federal legislators, especially those with an interest in child health and nutrition or education generally and/or involvement with related legislative committees.
- Stay up to date on school food policy at: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/policies.php>

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## Different Distribution Models Outlined:

### 1. Food service staff buys direct from individual farmer:

*Advantages* of direct marketing include the flexibility in ordering: without any middle man, food service can request specific products in the form they need, and may even be able to request that farmers plant in keeping with specific requirements.

*Disadvantages* include the increased administrative costs and paperwork, which may be especially challenging for a food service director used to ordering from one broker. It also may be more difficult to get reliable variety from individual farmers.

**2. School food service works with farmer cooperative:** The farmer cooperative pools resources to develop a group distribution strategy. If a network or a cooperative does not exist, sometimes one farmer or a non-profit can act as a liaison between multiple farmers and schools, handling the administration and paperwork.

*Advantages* include a wider variety of produce at a more consistent supply than individual farmers. Because the ordering is done through one person representing multiple farmers, the director spends less time receiving orders, invoicing, and payment. Finally, cooperatives are often better able to offer value-added products, storage and processing (including things as minimal as chopping the broccoli florets, which may prove too difficult for food service with limited staffing and preparation space).

The main *disadvantage* is that networks and cooperatives do not always exist.

**3. School food service orders through traditional wholesaler:** Food service director should be familiar with seasonality and make food requests that make it easier for the distributor to maximize local sourcing.

*Advantages* include the food service's ability to maintain existing relationships or contracts, while being able to simultaneously purchase items that farmers cannot provide. Centralized ordering and billing is also an advantage.

*Disadvantages* include cutting the farmer out of the communication loop with the food service director. It is also difficult to know how diligent the distributor is being, when they often look for the least expensive item possible.

**4. School food service purchase at farmers' market:** Food service staff contact the farmer a few days in advance to place the order, pick up their own product

*Advantages* include working face-to-face with growers and having opportunity to inspect the product and see what is available is a considerable advantage of shopping at farmers markets. It also makes delivery much easier for farmers, who can serve multiple markets with one trip

*Disadvantages* is that such a strategy is only feasible when farmers' market and school calendar coincide, and shopping at a market can be time-consuming

**5. School food service purchases through DoD fresh program:** Department of Defense establishes FTS partnerships between local producers/producer organizations, and then coordinates and oversees the program. DOD operates as a broker, taking orders from school districts and purchasing fruits and vegetables from produce houses, and in exchange schools pay a 5.8% commission. Read more at [http://www.foodsecurity.org/dod\\_f2s.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/dod_f2s.pdf)

Check out the Community Food Security Coalition's [Distribution Models for Farm to School](http://www.foodsecurity.org/f2s_distribution_method.pdf) to learn about different avenues for procuring local foods: [http://www.foodsecurity.org/f2s\\_distribution\\_method.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/f2s_distribution_method.pdf)

## ***Potential Obstacles and Solutions***

**Purchasing:** Normally, schools purchase large volumes of goods at a time from a limited number of distributors. Food service departments interested in sourcing locally may feel forced to purchase from a wide number of producers, which can be time consuming and difficult to manage. Furthermore, food services tend to be used to working with pre-packaged, ready-to-eat foods.

*Potential Solutions:*

**Organize product supply:** Farmers organized in growers' cooperative makes purchasing from multiple vendors easier for food service providers. Companies can also work with cooperatives to have some of the preparation and packaging done on the farmer side of the transaction if school facilities are insufficient. Many distributors also carry local foods, so schools can still purchase from a distributor while implementing a FTS program.

**Try purchasing one or two items locally to start:** Remember, you can start small. Try purchasing apples for after school programs locally, and building on that.

**Invest in expanding storage and preparation capacity.** Such projects can be expensive to begin with, but can greatly improve a school's capacity to serve fresher and more nutritious foods. Look into and advocate for increased funding in this area. Try coordinating with other organizations or institutions in your community who might also need expanded food storage and preparation infrastructure, such as local colleges, soup kitchens or Food for the Hungry, to advocate for space or to work together in sharing the upfront costs. Or, check [farmtoschool.osu.edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu) for updates on funding opportunities for storage and capacity!

**Supply:** Supply issues faced by schools and food service providers include not knowing where to find foods, insufficient volumes from local farms, packaging norms that do not mesh with those of the schools, and limited variety, especially during the winter seasons.

*Potential Solutions:*

**Start small and communicate:** Working one step at a time with local farms allows kinks in packaging expectations, expected supply, etc., to be worked out over time. Volumes can be increased over time, and even expanded into the offseason if farmers and schools can work together to increase storage capacity. Growers that establish the ability to minimally process their products, including the potential to do some basic food preservation such as bagging and freezing, will not only have a product to sell year-round, but also will have created a product that appeals to the efficiency needs of food service departments.

**Find farms:** See page 11 for resources on how to connect with local farmers.

**Seasonality:** In most of the country, including Ohio, growers face a limited growing season, that peaks during the summer when most schools are not in session. This poses challenges for food service providers who have grown used to menus that no longer need to take seasonality into account.

*Potential Solutions:*

**Look for products that may be offered year-round,** such as meats, dairy, eggs, beans, honey, syrup, jams.

**Highlight products available seasonally.** A special meal can be arranged for each season, featuring Ohio

specialty items for the fall, winter, and spring. Or, feature a different fruit or vegetable every week or month. Winter crops can include potatoes, sweet potatoes, beans, kale, and winter squash.

**Try developing more seasonal menus** that would make purchasing outside the main growing season easier. See page 25 for a seasonal availability chart.

**Work to support the development of freezing, food preservation, and season extension.** Steady demand from a school district can provide a grower or a cooperative the incentive to extend their growing season or look into different types of “value added” production. State or local agencies or organizations may also offer support for the development of such infrastructure, which could help growers and consumers across the community.

Look to develop **summer farm to school programs**.

**Delivery:** Getting local produce to schools often poses sizable challenges. For example, most schools regularly require deliveries once or twice a week, and many small farms do not have the ability to make such frequent deliveries.

*Potential Solutions:*

Farmers can work with a school district that utilizes a **central food service facility** in order to deliver to one site rather than to multiple schools.

Growers can add destinations on an **established delivery route** (on the same day they go to the market or deliver to restaurants).

Schools purchase and **pick up from farmers’ markets**.

Selling through the **Department of Defense Fresh program** allows growers to access the same delivery system used by the schools to deliver USDA commodity products.

**Flexibility:** Some school districts enter into binding long-term contracts or face other purchasing and budgetary norms that offer less flexibility in terms of sourcing locally.

*Potential Solutions:*

Look outside the National School Lunch program. Integrating local foods into **snack programs or afterschool programs** can often be easier for individual schools to accomplish. Such school districts could also focus on programmatic opportunities, such as bringing in a featured farmer or starting a garden program that does not involve reworking the procurement procedures.

**Discuss with your district’s school board** the importance of local foods in the school lunch program and what district policies would support such a program.

**Cost:** Local, sustainably-raised, or organic products can be considerably higher priced than those sourced through large-scale distributors.

*Potential Solutions:*

**Start small:** Identify one or more product that works financially for both the food service and for farmers involved. As a farm to school program expands, it is likely to increase student participation, which may increase revenues enough to offset higher costs.

**Fundraise or look for grants:** See page 19 for strategies to find funds.

**Long-term vision of change:** Currently cheap, federally subsidized commodities are diverted into the school food program. Schools looking for a long run change should look to advocating for policies that would incentivize purchasing nutritious and sustainably raised food items.

**Food Safety:** The assumption is often made that produce from local farms is less safe than the same items produced on an industrial scale, based on the belief that smaller operations do not have the infrastructure to provide safe handling practices. On the contrary, farmers take food safety as seriously as consumers. Sourcing locally allows consumers to know exactly where their food comes from. Growers are more directly accountable for the safety of their products than those who ship their products far away, and their product is less likely to be damaged or exposed to different contaminants when it passed much more directly from the farm to the fork.

*Potential Solutions:*

**Come up with a plan** According to CFSC, Some food services have a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) plan, or some other thorough approach to food safety. These can be revised to include things like handling of raw food, for example, if food service staff is not accustomed to doing so.

**Communication with farmers** on school standards and expectations is essential, although oftentimes required practices are already in place. Visit the farm to ensure mutual understanding on food safety.

**Liability:** Some school services require vendors to carry liability insurance, the costs for which can be prohibitive for small farmers.

*Possible solutions*

Oftentimes farmers and growers cooperatives can get the insurance together, **splitting the costs across multiple producers.**

**Child Food Preferences:** Students are notoriously picky eaters, often preferring foods high in fat and sugar content over more nutritious alternatives. These preferences are being encouraged by strong advertising in favor of the fast food and processed food industry.

*Possible solutions*

**It's all in the presentation.** Experience has shown that highlighting the fresh, healthier options and integrating their presence with educational opportunities and involving students and parents in the selection process increases the likelihood students will choose healthier options.

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## ***Finding Funding and Assistance:***

Check [farmtoschool.osu.edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu) for regular updates on funding opportunities. See also:

### **USDA sites:**

**USDA: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service:** <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/>

Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program, Fund for Rural America, Community Food Projects, Community Supported Agriculture and a variety of other funding programs are listed here. A must see.

**Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program:**

[http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/in\\_focus/hunger\\_if\\_competitive.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/in_focus/hunger_if_competitive.html)

**USDA Office of Community Development:** <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/sd/ocd.htm>

Notices of Funding Availability - search by Department, grant deadline, and key words.

**USDA: Food and Nutrition Service:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/> Lists grants for state agencies including Team Nutrition and Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP).

**USDA: Rural Development** <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

Rural Business Enterprise Grants, Rural Business Opportunity Grants - focuses on funding for agricultural marketing and production innovations.

### **Other Organizations on the web:**

**Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education:** <http://www.sare.org/>

For Farmers and Producers: Organized by region, funds new markets for farmers. Also funds multi-institutional, collaborative approaches including non-profit organizations, university staff and farmers.

**American Community Food Service Association:** <http://www.asfsa.org/>

The School Nutrition 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. Grants and awards available for its membership at <http://www.asfsa.org/Content.aspx?id=1528>.

**Food and Society Initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation:** <http://www.wkkf.org> Their goal is to support the creation and expansion of community-based food systems enterprises (CBEs) that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, and promote good health. Grants for various categories listed.

### **Local Foundations**

Important resources, not to be overlooked, are local foundations. Because they are local, they are interested in funding what's happening in their own backyard, and will often fund start-ups and special projects. A conversation with your local reference librarian should help turn up these sources. You can also find a list of Ohio Community Foundations at <http://www.cof.org/locator/SearchResults.cfm?state=OH>

### **Other sources**

While national foundations tend to have large amounts of funding available, it is generally difficult to secure this funding. Good sources of information for these foundations are:

- The National Network of Grant makers - 1996 Directory - call 619-231-1348
- The periodical, "Chronicle of Philanthropy"
- Various foundation directories generally available in major libraries.
- <http://igrant.com/>: Corporate and community foundations listed by state or grant category with links on "How to write a Grant Proposal."

- Foundation Center: This website allows you to access and search the foundation center database for possible funding opportunities. Many grant directories are also made available. For a \$20 monthly fee you can access more detailed foundation information from their database. (<http://www.fdncenter.org/>)

*Information from National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service and the Community Food Security Coalition*



## What's happening in Ohio? Success stories:

**Sandusky City Schools:** Sandusky has bought food directly from the farmers market for several years and running. Tom Freitas, dining services supervisor, emphasized that getting a program started is not as tricky as it may seem and encouraged schools and food services employees with questions to contact him at (419) 621-2719 or Freitas@scs-k12.net. Read more about his story on the next page.

**The Seven Hills Farm to School Program:** Jimmy Gherardi, chef-in-residence at Seven Hills, has been working with farmers and farmers markets in the Cincinnati area to integrate their products into their dining program. He can be reached at 513-702-4936 or jimmy.gherardi@7hills.org, and the school website is <http://www.7hills.org/>

Does your school have a story to tell? See [farmtoschool.osu.edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu) for directions on how to share your story!

### OSU Extension:

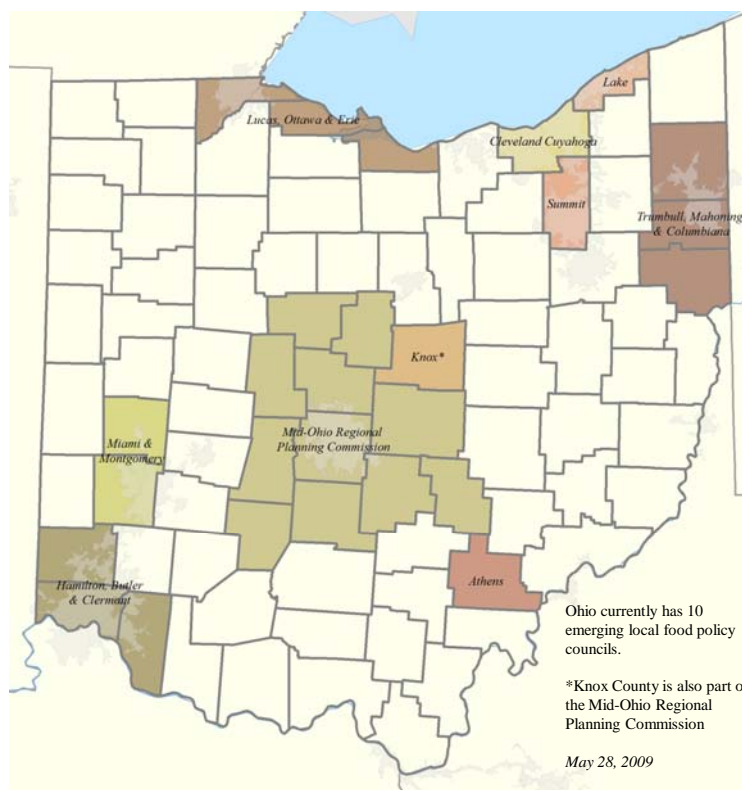
OSU Extension is committed to promoting Farm to School programs, and can provide resources and help make the connections possible to get you involved. See [farmtoschool.osu.edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu) for more information.

### Ohio Organizations:

**Local Matters:** <http://www.local-matters.org/> Local Matters is a Columbus-based organization working to integrate a local foods curricular program with its development of local food markets for farmers.

**Fresh Fork Market:** <http://www.freshforkmarket.com/> Fresh Fork Market is a virtual farmers' market, designed to help connect local farms with local consumers. Originally launched in Cleveland, OH, Fresh Fork Market is now becoming available across the country. Possible users of the Fresh Fork system include farmers, co-operatives, non-profits, distributors, and more.

## Ohio's Emerging Local Food Policy Councils



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## ***Sandusky City Schools: interview with Tom Frietas***

*Sandusky City Schools has bought food directly from the farmers market for several years running. Tom Frietas, dining services supervisor, was a key force in getting the program started, and emphasized that doing so is not as tricky as it may seem.*

### **Q: Tell me a little bit about your FTS program - What foods do you buy? How do you buy them?**

We have a very simple FTS program. Since we live in Ohio we can only run the program for about 3 months of our school year. I choose produce that our local farm market sells and I menu those items on our weekly school menu. Some of the produce that we use is cantaloupe, watermelon, apples, corn on the cob, cucumbers, and peaches.

We ask our local market, Mulvin Farms Farm Market, to give us a price at the beginning of the year and then we have an open purchase order with them so that we can order produce through the entire growing season. Each month I give the farmer, Dave Mulvin, our menu so he knows when to expect the orders. The week before we need the produce I run an order over to him with the amount of produce needed and the school that needs it. An important part of this program that makes it successful is that Dave delivers the produce to us.

### **Q: In what ways are students involved in your program? Is local food integrated with classroom activities, or your nutrition or wellness plan?**

The students' main role is eating the produce. Dining Services encourages the teachers and staff to promote and teach the children good eating habits. To help this Dining Services has several links to web sites that the teachers and students can use in our "health and nutrition" link. Dining Services also has a fruit or vegetable of the month on our web page and it has information on growing, recipes, cooking and history of the vegetable or fruit of the month. We also have a link called classroom catering where we encourage the teachers to buy healthy snacks and turn pizza parties into a complete meal.

### **Q: What steps did you have to go through to get it started?**

To get started I went on the internet and found a link to all of our counties farm markets and sent out a letter telling them my interest in starting a farm to school program. Mulvin's Farms Farm Market responded back that they would like to be involved. I sent out a letter asking them for their prices and they responded with prices that were less than the price of the produce I buy from my regular distributors. I went over to visit them and found out that they could deliver the product (this is important to keep your costs down) so I set up the ordering and delivery process and we haven't had any problems since.

### **Q: Are you looking to expand the program?**

We have been expanding each year by adding more produce to the menu on the month's that it is available. I must reiterate the fact that we are in Ohio and can only have produce available so many months out of the school year. I have begun to work with our distributors to add an Ohio Produce Section on their order forms for the school during the month's that it would be available. I would like to have this for the schools that can't get a local farm market to work with them. That is still in the works and at this time I can't say whether we will be successful with that or not.

### **Q: Do you think these kinds of programs can be replicated at other schools? What sort of advice would you give to those schools interested in getting started?**

These programs can be replicated and should be replicated. With the economy where it is, we need to help our local farmers as much as possible. It is very simple to start this program if you have a local farm market that will work with you. Make sure they offer fair prices, will deliver, and be sure to give plenty of notice before you are going to need the product.

If any schools need some help getting started I would be more than willing to help them with any questions. Please give me a call at 419-621-2719 or write me at my email [tfreitas@scs-k12.net](mailto:tfreitas@scs-k12.net) Good luck to all of you, believe me when I say you will be thanked by the press, by your board, the parents and students of your districts.

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## Resources for Farmers

Most schools in Ohio participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Program, and often up to 70 to 90 percent of students participate. Through this program, schools receive a small reimbursement for each meal that they serve, while the charge of around \$1.50 covers the rest of the cost. Schools also receive low-cost commodities through the USDA Food Distribution program, allowing them to purchase shelf-stable or frozen food products at a low cost.

### Advantages of participation:

A new, reliable, and predictable market

The potential to capture a greater percentage of the consumer food dollar

A school offers a large market by which you can reach a large number of consumers offering the potential for lower administrative costs.

Sales to institutions can bring increased community exposure and may increase participation in other marketing outlets, such as grocery stores, farmers markets, or CSA shares, through increased community exposure.

### Strategies:

**Direct marketing:** Selling directly to the school or school district involves building a strong business relationship with the food service director. It is important to recognize the ways in which a school as a customer is different than other buyers, including other institutions, and to be prepared to work toward a relationship of strong communication and cooperation. These relationships can prove to be a sizable and reliable source of business over time.

The sample telephone survey is an example of what food service directors may need to know about your operation ([http://www.foodsecurity.org/sample\\_farmer\\_survey.pdf](http://www.foodsecurity.org/sample_farmer_survey.pdf))

**Cooperative marketing:** Selling your product cooperatively with other farmers offers the advantage of reducing the administrative costs for any one farmer or school administrator and the opportunity for collaboration on storage, preparation, and packaging that make it easier for schools to buy from you. Check page 20 for grant opportunities, and see the website of an Iowa farmers' cooperative for an example <http://www.grownlocally.com/>. The New North Florida Cooperative is another example of organized farmers being able to sell to schools and other institutions where before they could not.

**Wholesale marketing:** Many vendors and distributors are looking to source more locally. This may be advantageous for farms who do not have the capacity to deliver to schools, or who may not be able to accommodate schools' particular needs. Contact schools to see who their vendors or distributors are and see if they are interested in your product.

### Things to keep in mind:

**Safety is a big deal:** Conventional channels guarantee food that meets specific sanitation requirements or standards of approval, and many schools perceive a considerable risk in looking elsewhere for their food. Be prepared to educate buyers on the safety of your production and handling techniques and your product. Some schools may have liability insurance requirements, or expect certain levels of certification. If these prove to be obstacles, look for ways to collaborate with other farmers share the costs of liability insurance.

**Seasonality is a challenge:** A lot of schools are not used to eating seasonally. Work with schools to see what you can offer them during the offseason, and consider investing in processing and storage strategies that can help extend your season as well as extended production techniques.

**Many schools are looking to improve health:** Be prepared to highlight the health benefits of your products, compared to the less fresh and often over-processed conventional alternatives. Schools are required to have a wellness program in place, and your products can fit very well into the program.

**Purchasing guidelines for schools can be complicated:** While some school foods are obtained at a low cost through the USDA commodity program, most schools also purchase foods from private vendors to supplement their supply from the commodity program. Schools receive the equivalent of \$0.16 in USDA commodities for each lunch served, and most purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and some meat products from private vendors. Farms interested in selling products to schools may first want to inquire what products the school district currently purchases from private vendors to see what opportunities may exist. (from Washington State Department of Agriculture's Farm to Cafeteria Connections) See ODE's guide to school procurement (<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=20111>) and guide to Ohio Lunch (<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=43821>)

**Storage and preparation capacity may be limited:** Facilities available to schools vary widely. They may lack the storage and preparation capacity to work with products not packaged in a standardized way or that require extra preparation time. Schools have very limited budgets and often cite an inability to pay for the extra time that would go into preparing fresh food. The cost of things as simple as washing or chopping can be prohibitive for many schools. Think about how cooperating with other farmers, with local non-profits or community organizations, you might be able to help overcome that challenge.

**Most food service directors are unaware of local resources available:** Just because you haven't heard from food service directors doesn't mean they're not interested! Make yourself and the opportunities for working together known to them. Use MarketMaker (<http://oh.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/>) to find schools, or contact your county extension office for help!

**Educational opportunities abound:** Incorporating farm field trips or farmer classroom visits with dining hall options allows students to make connections between community life, biological systems, and their own health and also develops an appreciation for the role of farmers in society and the critical importance of soil to life.

**Remember the advantages to local farms:** You can provide the freshest products possible and products that have a face and a community value behind them. Local farms can also provide specialty products that cannot be obtained through conventional channels, such as those that do not package and ship well. Remind schools of these opportunities and work together to see how to make them work for both of you.

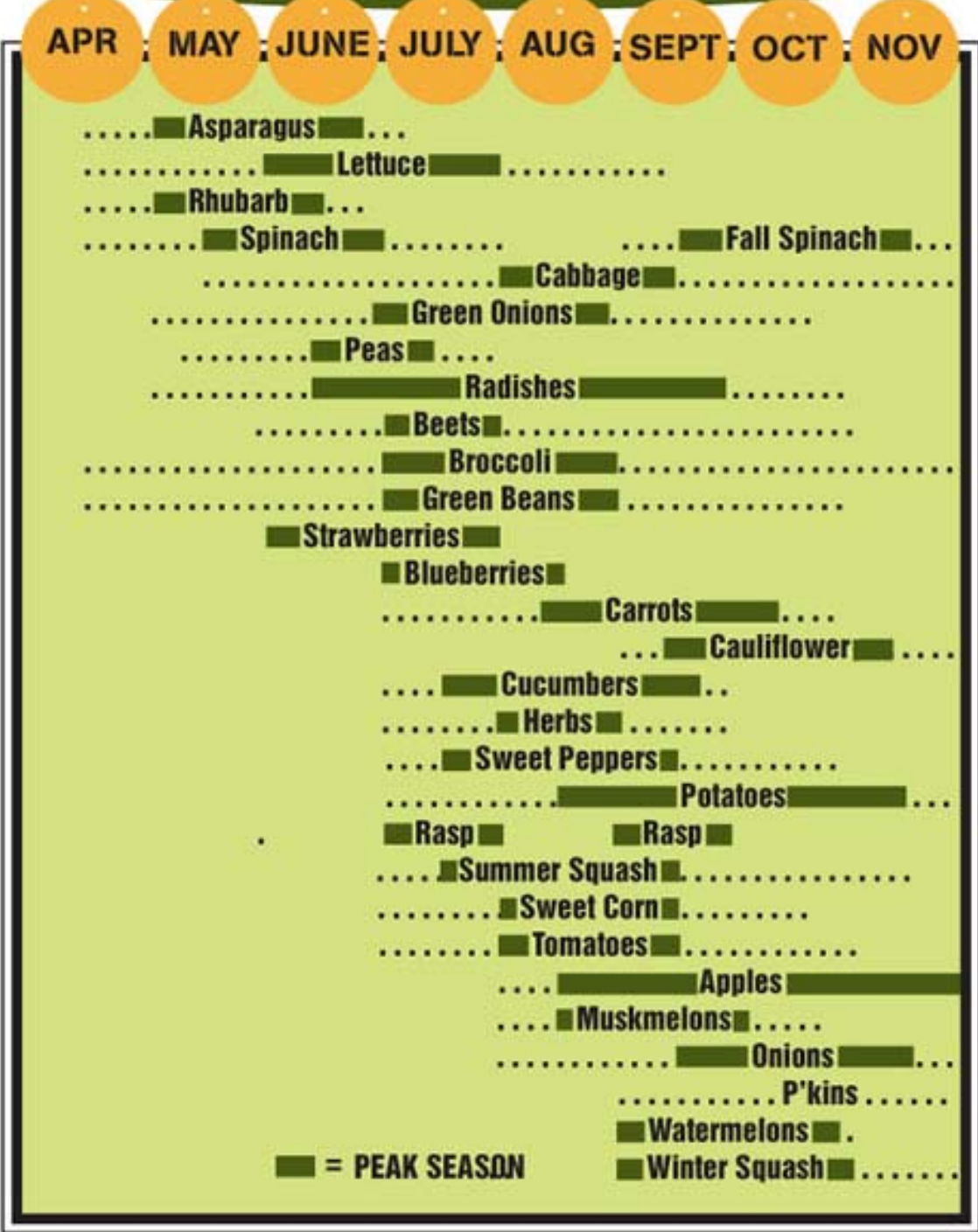
## Resources

**MarketMaker:** <http://oh.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/>

**How to sell to institutions** <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1853A.pdf>

**Local Food Connections: From Farms to Schools.** (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1853A.pdf>) by Iowa State University Extension Local Food Connections: From Farms to Schools

# SEASONAL AVAILABILITY



From: HomeGrown: A guide to local food in and around Knox County

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## Resources and Links

- National Farm to School: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>
- Community Food Service Coalition: [http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm\\_to\\_school.html](http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html)
- For links to food and agriculture related issues <http://www.foodsecurity.org/links.html>
- For the latest news in Farm to School <http://www.farmtoschool.org/news.php>
- Check out Farm to School videos: <http://www.youtube.com/farmtoschool>
- USDA Team Nutrition <http://www.fns.usda.gov/TN/>
- School Nutrition Association <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/>

### Ohio Links:

- Ohio farm to school: <http://farmtoschool.osu.edu>
- Our Ohio: <http://ourohio.org/>
- Ohio proud is a brand to help consumers buy Ohio-grown and produced products. <http://www.ohioproud.org/>
- Local matters <http://www.local-matters.org/wp/> a non-profit organization in Columbus
- Fresh Fork <http://www.freshforkmarket.com/>, an organization in Cleveland connecting producers and buyers.
- Ohio Department of Education <http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

### Other States' Programs:

- Michigan Farm to School <http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/>
- Massachusetts [http://www.mass.gov/agr/markets/Farm\\_to\\_school/](http://www.mass.gov/agr/markets/Farm_to_school/)
- Oklahoma <http://www.okfarmtoschool.com/index.htm>
- Vermont <http://www.vtfeed.org/>
- New Mexico <http://www.farmtotablenm.org/fts/>

### Nutrition and Wellness resources

- School Nutrition Association of Ohio (they changed their name a few years back): <http://www.snaohio.org/inside/index.php>.
- Fruits and Veggies—More Matters <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>

### For Farmers:

- How to sell to institutions <http://www.iowafoodpolicy.org/docs/selling.pdf>
- Local Food Connections: From Farms to Schools. <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1853A.pdf> by Iowa State University Extension Local Food Connections: From Farms to Schools

### Publications

- Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions <http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farmtoschool.html> By Barbara C. Bellows, Rex Dufour, and Janet Bachmann with National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service
- Eat Smart—Farm Fresh! A Guide to Buying and Serving Locally-Grown Produce in School Meals (PDF) USDA: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/Farm-to-School-Guidance\\_12-19-2005.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/Farm-to-School-Guidance_12-19-2005.pdf)
- Meeting School Meal Requirements with Farm to School <http://www.okfarmtoschool.com/pdf/Meeting-School-Meal-Requirements.pdf>
- Farm to School Policy: a state-by state listing [http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications\\_177.pdf](http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_177.pdf)

- The National School Lunch Program: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ERR61/> Background, Trends and Issues This report provides background information on the NSLP, including historical trends and participant characteristics. It also addresses steps being taken to meet challenges facing administrators of the program, including tradeoffs between nutritional quality of foods served, costs, and participation, as well as between program access and program integrity.
- [Going Local: Paths to Success for Farm to School programs](http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/goinglocal.pdf) (<http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/goinglocal.pdf>)
- [Farm to Cafeteria Connections](http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/102-FarmToCafeteriaConnections-Web.pdf): (<http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/102-FarmToCafeteriaConnections-Web.pdf>) Marketing Opportunities for Small Farms in WA State
- A Growing Movement: A Decade of Farm to School in California [http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/publications/a\\_growing\\_movement.pdf](http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/publications/a_growing_movement.pdf)
- Fresh from the Farm: Using Local Foods in Afterschool and Summer Nutrition Programs [http://www.frac.org/Out\\_Of\\_School\\_Time/index.html](http://www.frac.org/Out_Of_School_Time/index.html) Alexis Bylander and Crystal FitzSimons
- How Local Farmers and School Service Buyers are Building Alliances: Lessons Learned from the USDA Small Farm/School Meals Workshop <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3102250&acct=wdmgeninfo> by Debra Tropp and Dr. Suarajudeen Olowolayemo

