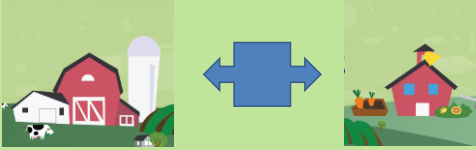


## Farm To School



Cafeteria • Classroom • Community

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

## Local Food System



## Michigan Good Food



The Michigan Good Food Charter presents a vision for Michigan's food and agriculture system, including 6 goals to achieve by 2020 and 25 agenda priorities to move us toward those goals.

### THE CHALLENGE

**1 in 3**

CHILDREN BORN IN THE YEAR 2000 ARE ON TRACK TO DEVELOP TYPE II DIABETES



**2%**

OF CHILDREN EAT ENOUGH FRUITS & VEGETABLES



**1 in 4**

YOUNG ADULTS ARE TOO OVERWEIGHT TO SERVE IN THE MILITARY



**100%**

OF OUR CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP IN A FAST FOOD NATION



### THE ROLE SCHOOLS & SCHOOL GARDENS CAN PLAY

**16 Million**

CHILDREN DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT



**32 Million**

CHILDREN EAT SCHOOL FOOD EACH DAY



**15%**

REDUCTION IN SCHOOL ABSENCE WHEN KIDS EAT NUTRITIOUS LUNCHES



**100%**

OF KIDS DESERVE TO GROW UP IN A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



## Do you...?

- Feed children healthy meals with locally grown fruits, vegetables, grains or proteins?
- Conduct hands-on educational experiences involving plants, seeds, food, gardening or cooking?
- Talk with children about where their food comes from and how it grows?
- Engage children in meal preparation or meal time activities?
- Grow a garden with children?

## What is Farm to School

- **Cafeteria**
  - Procurement of local food for cafeterias



## Surveys of MI School Food Service Directors MSU Center for Regional Food Systems 2004, 2009 and 2012

### Top factors motivating local food purchasing

- Supporting local economy
- Access to fresher food
- Helping MI farms/businesses
- Higher quality food

### Top barriers to local food purchasing

- Procurement regulations
- Limited seasonal availability
- Budget constraints
- Food safety concerns

## Surveys of Early Care & Education Programs

National	2012 Survey Results	State
<b>Top influences on vendor selection</b>		
Price	1	Price
Specifications	2	Specifications
Quality	3	Quality
<b>Top barriers to local food purchases</b>		
Price/budget	1	Price/budget
Procurement regulations	2	Convenience
Product availability	3	Facilities for handling
<b>Resources/assistance needed</b>		
Examples	1	Products and suppliers
Implementation tools	2	Health and safety tools
Policies and procedures	3	Regulatory information

## Farm to School Opportunities

### In the Cafeteria

- Fresher food
- Increased variety
- Ability to specify needs
- Increase access to fresh produce
- Hands-on teaching tools
- Engaging community
- Support local economy

### On the Farm

- Expanding marketing opportunity
- Market for seconds
- Diversify market
- Loyal customers
- Cultivate the next generation
- Free promotion

## Farm to School Opportunities

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Meat and Fish
- Dairy

## Farm to School – What is Local

- For purposes of Good Food Charter and Michigan Farm to School Network the goal is Michigan products
- U.P. Food Exchange has been defining local as a tiered system with the following priority order:
  - Counties within your region (EUP, CUP, WUP)
  - Upper Peninsula
  - Northern Lower
  - Michigan

## Where are Schools Searching for Local Foods?

- Regional food networks such as the U.P. Food Exchange
- Regional food distributors such as Cherry Capital
- Broadline Distributors

## Connecting Schools and Producers

- Together at the Table
  - U.P. Food Exchange Local Food Summits, November 2015
- Farmer Meet and Greets
- Connect with local farm to school workgroup
- U.P. Food and Farm Directory
- On-line Marketplace

## Procurement

- Budgeting
- Bid Process
- Food Safety
- Expectations

## Budgeting for Local Foods

- The Myth of Cost



## The Myth of Cost

- There are many examples of schools purchasing locally for no additional cost
- Purchase seasonally for best price
- Some products may be more expensive - pair local products with lower cost items elsewhere on the menu
- Look at overall system cost
  - Increased participation rates
  - Reduction in waste
  - Less spoilage

## USDA Foods

- Using USDA Foods products schools can save cash reimbursement dollars for local purchases
- USDA Foods are all produced in the U.S.
- The DoD Fresh program allows schools to use their USDA Foods entitlement dollars to buy fresh, and often local, produce.

## USDA Foods

- USDA Foods local to Midwest Region
  - Apples
  - Cherries
  - Beef
  - Beans
  - Carrots
  - Cheese
  - Green Beans

## Produce Calculator

- Template to determine price per serving
- [www.okfarmtoschool.com](http://www.okfarmtoschool.com)

## Funding Opportunities

- USDA Farm to School Grant Program
- Michigan Farm to School Grant Program
- USDA Programs aimed at farmers and food hubs
  - Specialty Crop Block Grant
  - Value Added Producer Grant
- Local funds to support programs such as an extra 10¢ per meal
  - Fundraisers, Community Foundation, etc.

## Purchasing Strategies

- Smaller sized or nonstandard grade items may be less expensive
- Larger quantities might be available at a lower price
- Flexibility to handle last-minute surplus produce
- Look at summer programs – matches season better, less volume needed

## Extending the Season

- Look for local vegetables with longer shelf-lives
- Look for farmers who extend their growing season by utilizing hoop houses
- Proteins, especially meat products, can be made available in the cold season
- Storage crops: potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash, apples and onions
- Freezing

## Bid Process



## Bidding and Procurement

- Follow local or ISD policies for bidding and procurement
  - Number of bids
  - Notification of bid document availability
- Informal purchasing
  - Federal small purchase threshold is \$150,000
  - State and/or local thresholds are often lower
  - Most restrictive threshold must be followed

## Informal Procurement

- Can formally advertise OR contact and seek price quotes from 3 or more potentially qualified sources
- When purchasing is under the threshold, schools can get quotes exclusively from local producers

## Request for Information

- Not a procurement mechanism so you can ask more specific questions than you can ask in an RFP – such as local, distance, prices

## Forward Contracting

- School usually can't pay early but can contract early
- Gives more incentive for farmers to plant specifically for school and more likely school will get items and quantity they want
- Can set a price cap

## Planning

- Determine amount of product desired
  - Based on current use or projected use based on recipes/frequency of use
- Know the requirements for new vendors
  - Is this affected by contract with food service management company or large distributors

## Geographic Preference

- Applies only to unprocessed or minimally processed items
- Origin is tied to the agricultural product, not the location of the seller
- Schools define local
- Primary consideration is that GP is applied in a way that does not restrict competition

## Geographic Preference

- Preference for product grown within X number of miles
- Supply at least X% of products from within a specific region
- Include non-price items such as farm tours, in-school programs, specific invoicing

## Geographic Preference How Does it Work

- Award extra points in the selection process
  - If within define region = x number of points
- Provide a price reduction for the purposes of evaluating lowest bid
  - Absolute scale:  $x\% = y$  points
  - Sliding Scale:  $x\% = a$  points;  $y\% = b$  points

## Other Language to Increase Local Purchases

- Foods be harvested within a certain number of days of delivery
- Can specify variety

## Be Careful

- What you can't do in soliciting bids
  - Write bid documents that are too narrow in focus that it limits competition
  - State that you only want to purchase from local vendors
- Can ask for organic, pesticide free, etc. but need justification

## Advertising Bids

- Where do you normally post bid documents
- How to make sure local/regional farms see the bid?

## Communication with Farmers

- Clear Communication
- Think about timeline in regards to growing season
- Learn what a farmer grows or would be willing to grow
- Be clear about expectations and have backup options thought out
- Be clear about payment process or arrangements

## Local Food through Existing Distributors

- GFS and Sysco both offer a Michigan preference option
- Ask what local products they sell
  - What is their definition of local
- How often will they communicate with you regarding seasonal availability of products
- How do they track where the products come from
- Do they have farmer profiles or other information to support F2S efforts

## Local Food through Existing Distributors

- Include expectations regarding local sourcing in contracts
- Language that allows for off contract purchasing

## Bid Documents

- Must haves
- Would like
- Make sure scoring priorities match if use a scoring system

## Food Safety

- Certification Requirements
- Purchasing and Receiving
- Inspecting Produce
- Washing and Preparation
- Serving
- Storage

## Certification Requirements

- There are no certifications required by law for schools to purchase **produce** from farmers directly or for farmers to sell **produce** directly to schools
  - For meat and dairy products there are laws governing sale of these products
- That doesn't mean you shouldn't be asking the farms to verify their food safety practices!

## Certification Options

- Michigan Safe Food Risk Assessment
- GAP or Group GAP

## Purchasing and Receiving

- Include food safety requirements/checklist in purchasing specifications
- Establish procedures for inspecting and accepting or rejecting incoming deliveries.
- Traceability

## Inspecting Produce

- Inspect produce for obvious signs of damage
  - Note: produce bought from a local farm may not look as “perfect” as what comes from traditional distributors. Need to determine what is damage that could cause food safety issue vs. what is imperfection

## Washing and Preparation

- Wash produce before using
- Procedures for washing and sanitizing equipment, utensils and food contact surfaces
- Hand hygiene
- Wash produce just before preparation, not before storage

## Serving

- Do not store in direct contact with ice or water
- Display cut produce for a maximum of 4 hours unrefrigerated

## Storage

- Maintain produce at recommended temperature for variety
- Store at least 6 inches off the floor
- Store in a covered container above other items that might cause contamination
- Establish a policy for produce that is cut in-house to specify how long the refrigerated cut product may be used



## Other Considerations

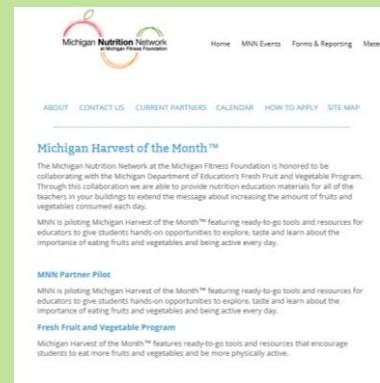


## School Districts vs Early Care Settings

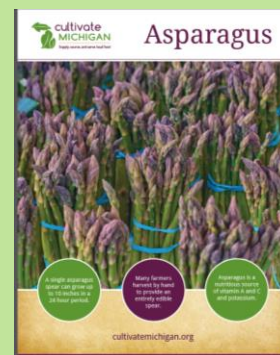
- Preschools tend to have smaller volume and fewer menu options
- Smaller class size may offer more flexibility for food procurement
- Experiential education is highly encouraged in preschool
- High level of parent involvement

## Other Considerations

- Staff skills
- Kitchen infrastructure
- Menu development
- Salad bar utilization
- Marketing
- Produce from school gardens



[www.cultivatemichigan.org](http://www.cultivatemichigan.org)



## What is Farm to School?

### • Classroom

- Gardens
- Taste testing
- Cooking with kids
- Nutrition and food system education
- Field trips to farms and visits by farmers



## School Garden Models For Use: Building Connections to Nature

- **Youth farmer training** – prioritizes crop production and impact on school food environment .
- **Kid-center garden exploration** – prioritizes child experience, curiosity and inquiry based learning.

*Both models build connections to the natural world and engage students hands on in their food system.*

## Building connections to what?

- Connect kids to the natural world and a sense of place.
- Connect real life experience to academics content areas.
- Connect school to broader community.
- Connect to educators and content areas to one another.



## The Edible Gardens

- **Start with a few easier crops.**
  - Set yourself up for early success to build on.
  - Radishes, spinach, lettuce, kale.
  - Beans, pumpkins, sunflowers, cherry tomatoes, onions, beets, peas, Chard, Brussels sprouts.
- **Don't go it alone.**
  - Who are the experienced gardeners in your community?
- **Choose crops that connect to your menu.**
  - Gives children an opportunity to practice making those food choices.
  - Supports innovations of food service staff.
- **Gardens aren't just for veggies!**
  - Flowers, art, weather stations, etc.



## Cooking with Kids

- **Kids safe tools.**
- **Kid friendly simple recipes.**
  - Assembling snacks.
  - Smoothies.
  - Salad dressing.
  - Send recipes home to families.
- **Cooking with kids and families.**
  - Consider using guest presenters such as SNAP educators.
  - Families, older youth, partnering with elders already in the building as volunteers.



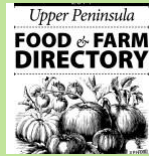
## Taste Tests

- **Modeling new food behaviors.**
  - Don't yuck my yum!
- **Expressing food preferences.**
  - Liked it, loved it, not for me.
  - Comparing green vs. red grapes and voting for favorites.
- **Have fun with it!**
  - "Muncha muncha muncha MUNCH! Let me hear those carrots/green beans/etc. CRUNCH!"
- **Marketing for food service.**



## Farm Field Trips

- Local Farms
- Community Gardens
- Other School Gardens
- Farmer in the Classroom



## Nutrition Education

- Current curriculum or activities?
- Learn ways to group and describe foods.
- Example Curriculums
  - Color Me Healthy
  - Harvest of the Month
  - Early Sprouts



## How to “Grow” Your F2S Program

- Find opportunities to incorporate F2PS into activities you are already doing.
  - Talking about food plants during science lessons.
  - Work on math skills by counting the tomatoes you harvest.
- Focus efforts on the activities that work well for your setting.
  - Don't fit a round peg into a square hole. Work with the resources that you have, and build from there.
- Try new ideas as they come along and continue thinking of new ways to incorporate healthy, local foods into the day.
- Be Creating and Have Fun!
  - Many people are creatively and successfully incorporating farm to school and farm to preschool. Talk with partners and others about what they are doing and what your opportunities may be.

## What is Farm to School

- Community
  - Opportunities for growers
  - Special events
  - Parent or volunteer involvement



Food Day seeks to bring together Americans from all walks of life – parents, teachers, and students; health professionals, community organizers, and local officials; chefs, school lunch providers, and eaters of all stripes – to push for healthy, affordable food produced in a sustainable, humane way. We will work with people around the country to create thousands of events in homes, schools, churches, farmers markets, city halls, and state capitals.





[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

[www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu](http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu)



#### Knowledge

Teach kids about what healthy food is and where it comes from.

#### Engagement

Let's get our hands dirty! Building and tending school gardens as a learning community.

#### Access

Bring high-quality local food into public school cafeterias.

## Questions



## For more information

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