



Bringing the Farm to School

Welcome

Session 1



Advisory Team

- Montana Team Nutrition Program at Montana State University
- Montana Office of Public Instruction
- Alternative Energy Resources Organization
- Great Northern Development Corporation
- Headwaters RC&D
- Intertribal Agriculture Council
- Mission West Community Development Partners
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Livestock
- Montana Farmers Union
- Montana State University Extension
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- Northern Pulse Growers Association
- Snowy Mountain Development Corporation
- USDA Office of Community Food Systems

Fabulous Funders



Introductions - Breakout Rooms

Unmute + Introduce Yourself:

- Name
- Organization/Business
- Location / region
- What you grow, raise, sell, and/or produce
- Why are you interested in selling to schools and/or the farm to school model?



Montana-grown Rainbow Carrot Sticks Credit: Erin Turner

Training Logistics + Expectations

Attend all 3 sessions

Have your materials and a pen nearby.

Participate and engage.

Mute when not speaking.

Unmute at any time or use the chat box.

Try on new ideas and perspectives.

Share your experiences and ideas.

Ask questions.



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' TOOLKIT

Bringing the Farm to School

The Power of Farm to School

An Introduction to *Bringing the Farm to School Producer
Training Program*



Bringing the Farm to School Producer Training Goal

Training program goal: Help all agricultural producers (farmers, fishers, ranchers, and food processors) build their capacity to launch or expand efforts to market to schools, therefore supporting producers in diversifying their business while increasing farm to school activity in schools and communities across the nation.

Training program objectives:

- *Increase producers' knowledge and understanding of farm to school programs*
- *Increase participation in farm to school activities, such as education about food production*
- *Increase the amount of local foods that producers sell to schools*

Training Overview

Session	Date + Location	Topics
Session 1	November 15 at 3-5pm Virtual	Child Nutrition Programs Local Food Sourcing and Procurement in School Meal Programs
Session 2	November 29 at 3-5pm Virtual	Food Safety + Regulations Market Channels Panel Discussion
Session 3	December 7 at 8:30 - 4pm Hardin School District Hardin, MT	Selling to School Districts Product Evaluation + Development Business + Production Planning School Nutrition Tour, Living Root Farm

Training Evaluation Overview

Survey	To Be Completed	Format
Pre-survey	Before the training	Online - please remember to do this!
Post-survey	At the end of the training	In person
Follow-up survey	6-months to 1-year after the training	Online*

*You will receive an email invitation 6-months to 1-year from now to complete

PRODUCER WORKBOOK



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' TOOLKIT

Bringing the Farm to School



BRINGING THE FARM TO SCHOOL



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Bringing the Farm to School

— Producer Worksheets —

Worksheet 1A: Getting to Know Your Local School Market

Worksheet Objective: Use the USDA Farm to School Census data to identify current local-food-purchasing practices in schools and districts in your region and state.

Resources: <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov>

Directions:

- Use your phone or mobile device to access the USDA Farm to School Census Website (<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov>).
- Navigate to "Find Your School District" and select your state or local school district.
- Use the information to answer the following questions:

State

How much money is spent on local foods in your state?	
What percent of its budget is the average district spending on local?	
What are the most frequently purchased types of foods?	
School District Name: _____	
What are the top five products that schools in your local district are purchasing locally?	
Do you produce any of these products? Which ones?	
Where are they getting these products?	

Supplemental questions to explore for your district:

Are there any schools with salad bars or "a la carte" and flexible meal purchases?	
What percent of food is from scratch?	
Does the district expect its local purchases to increase, decrease, or remain the same?	

III. APENDICES

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL BUSINESS ACTION PLANNING GUIDE

— School Business Action Planning Guide —

This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with your Farm to School Producer Workbook. After each module, your trainer will prompt you to check in about what you learned and where you need to “dig deeper.” The action planning prompts below will help you identify your short-term and long-term strategies for moving forward with selling to schools.

Farm to School Skills and Resources

Let's look at how your knowledge, skills and resources align. The University of Vermont's Beginning Farmer Program sees the skills and resources needed to get started in farming as overlapping, reinforcing, and interconnected – more like a web than a checklist. Our team has adapted this web for farmers interested in starting to school, as shown in Figure 1.

Each category in the School Business Assessment is an average to schools, as shown in Figure 1.

- Has a mission and whole farm goals that align with school sales
- Has strong production and financial management skills and food safety protocols in place
- Is familiar with selling through wholesalers
- Is not familiar with procurement and what it takes to be a vendor for schools

Figure 1. Sample School Business Assessment



*Adapted from the University of Missouri's
Beginning Farmer Program*

Learning Objectives

- **Gain an understanding of what farm to school is** and how it can benefit your business.
- **Identify motivations for selling to schools** and how your farm goals align.
- **Learn about action planning** as a tool for meeting farm goals through school sales.

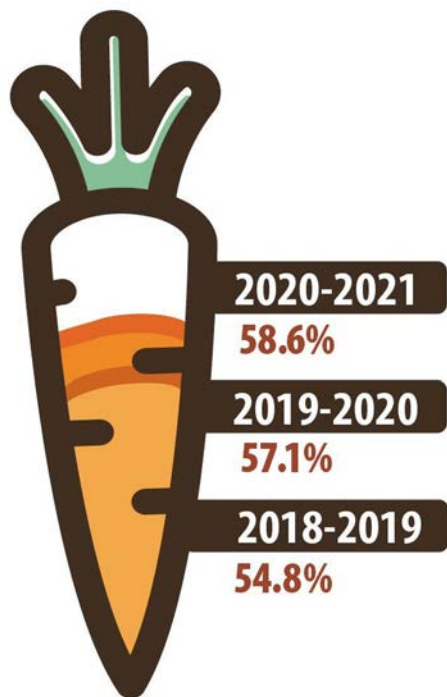


What is Farm to School?

What is Farm to School?



Montana Farm to School by the Numbers



Credit: Montana Farm to School Annual Report

- Number of school districts participating in farm to school (SY 22-23):
 - Serving local foods: 134
 - Conducting educational activities: 79
 - Creating or tending school gardens: 64
 - Participate in Harvest of the Month: 78
- According to the USDA Farm to School Census in 2019, Montana schools spent 9.4% of their food budgets on local, excluding milk, which amounts to about \$5,000 per school per year.

Why Local Food in School Meals?

- Supports local farmers, businesses and local economies
- Increases school meal quality and overall program participation
- Increases kids' willingness to try new foods
- Supports school wellness policies and broader school board priorities



Credit: Farm to School Park County

How Schools Celebrate Local Food and Farmers



Credit: Elle Ross, Hardin School District 17H&1



Credit: National Center for Appropriate Technology

How Schools Celebrate Local Food and Farmers

11	12	13
Sausage, WW English Muffin, Cheddar Cheese Slice & Milk	WW Toast, Apple Butter, Strawberries & Milk	WG Cheerios, Strawberries & Milk
Baked Potato w/ Black Beans, Broccoli, Cheddar Cheese, Greek Yogurt, Milk	Fish Nuggets, Brown rice, Cauliflower, Oranges & Milk	<i>Chickpea and Couscous Bowl</i> Dried Apricots & Milk
Rice crackers & Pears	Wheat thins & <i>Hummus</i>	Graham Crackers & Apple Sauce
18	19	20
Cinnamon Raisin Bagel, Apple Butter, Apples & Milk	Crunchy Oats, yogurt, Raspberries & Milk	WG Cheerios, Bananas s & Milk
Pizza English Muffins w/ Mozzarella, Tomato slices, Pepperoni & Milk	Chicken Nuggets, Brown Rice, Broccoli, Oranges & Milk	Grilled Cheese on WW bread, Tomato Soup, Apples & Milk
<i>Hippeas</i> & Cuties	WG Tortilla Chips & Salsa	Bell Peppers & Tzatziki

Credit: Linzie Norman, Missoula YMCA



PRESCHOOLERS EAT WITH THE SEASONS

We've been working hard to get local foods into the classroom! In Montana, we are lucky to have great farms and local food suppliers right in our backyard. Purchasing local food drastically reduces our carbon footprint and helps to support our local economy. Freshly picked produce is also more flavorful and nutrient dense than food that has traveled a long distance.

YMCA Child Care Centers are planning their menus to align with seasonal produce. Right now, the menu is bursting with cauliflower, zucchini, and salad greens. We are also putting an emphasis on year-round local foods. Bread and bagels come from Wheat Montana, milk and yogurt from Kalispell Creamery, and lentils and chickpeas from Timeless Foods. This is in part thanks to a grant from the National Center for Appropriate Technology and the Harvest of the Month (HOM) program. HOM is a great tool when it comes to promoting local foods, and highlighting ways to support our local economy. Our goal is to get kids excited about what they're eating, providing new food exposure and education on where their food is coming from.



Credit: Linzie Norman, Missoula YMCA





Benefits of Farm to School for Producers

Benefits of Farm to School for Producers



**Economic
Development**



**Public
Health**



Education



Environment



**Community
Engagement**

Credit: National Farm to School
Network

Benefits of Farm to School for Producers



Credit: National Farm to School Network

Producer Spotlights: Benefits of Selling to Schools For Your Operation

*A school contract helped me leverage a USDA **grant for cold storage** facilities, or a loan from the bank.*

*Selling to a school and participating in their Agriculture Education program helped me find **students/apprentices** to work part-time and in the summer.*

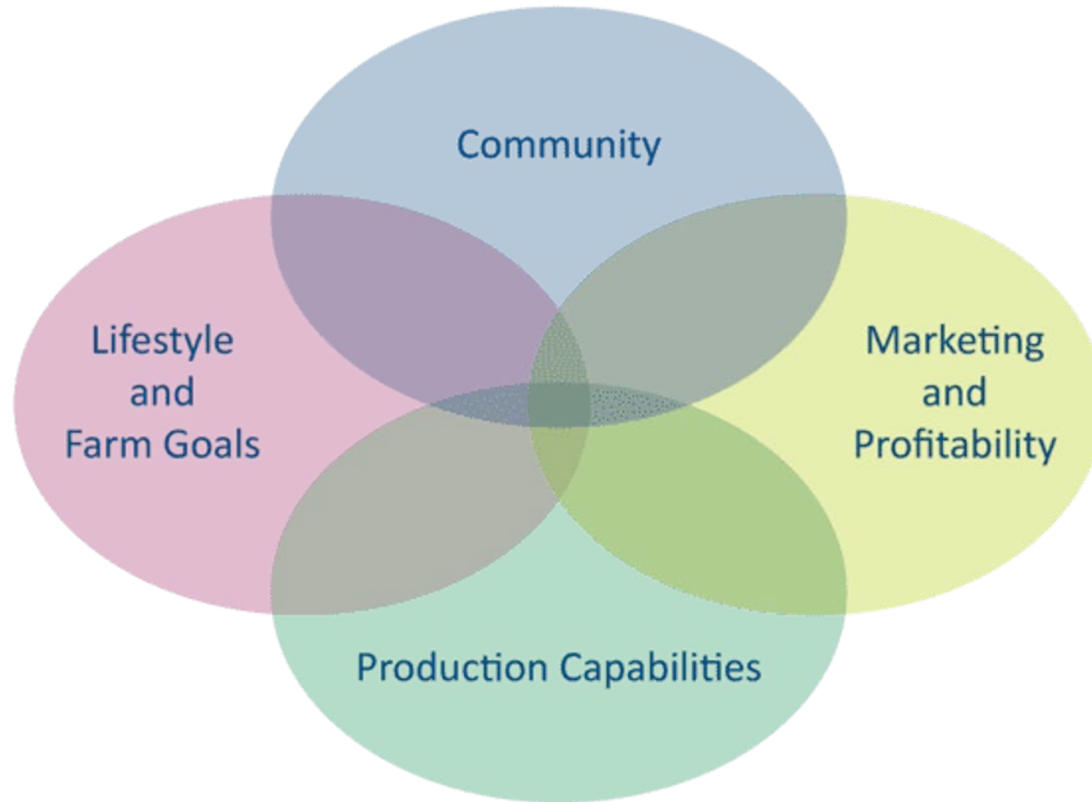
*Working with the school's distributor helped me get on their vendor list and **sell additional products** through them.*

*Cafeteria-based promotion helped **increase my sales** at the farmers' market (students/parents identified the brand and wanted to support).*



Action Planning for Success: How Farm to School Can Help You Meet Your Farm Goals

VARIABLES FOR WHOLE FARM PLANNING AND SCHOOL SALES



Credit: Adapted from Oregon State University

Action Planning for Success

— School Business Action Planning Guide —

This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with your Farm to School Producer Workbook. After each module, your trainer will prompt you to check in about what you learned and where you need to “dig deeper.” The action planning prompts below will help you identify your short-term and long-term strategies for moving forward with selling to schools.

Introduction

First, let’s start by checking in with your whole-farm goals related to school sales.

Benefits of farm to school that interest you (check all that apply):

- ☐ Expanding into a new market (i.e., schools)
- ☐ Expanding product offerings
- ☐ Increasing quantity and/or frequency of sales
- ☐ Diversifying market strategy (e.g., marketing to students and families by hosting farm visits or barn-raisers)
- ☐ Growing your brand by building relationships with school communities
- ☐ Nourishing kids with healthy, fresh food
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Increasing access to fresh and local foods in your community
- ☐ Increasing agriculture and nutrition educational opportunities for students
- ☐ Promoting farming as a career path and lifestyle choice for youth in your community
- ☐ Increasing the visibility of small- and medium-sized family farms
- ☐ Managing risk (e.g., through market diversification and consistent sales)

The *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Toolkit* was developed in partnership by USDA Food and Nutrition Services, the National Center for Appropriate Technology, and the National Farm to School Network.



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Bringing the Farm to School

Getting to Know School Markets

Module 1



Learning Objectives

- **Understand the scope and diversity of Child Nutrition Programs (CNP)** so that you can assess the viability of school markets for their business.
- **Understand how CNPs plan menus, process foods, and prepare meals** so that you can consider how your products meet the needs of school markets.
- **Understand the basic regulations governing school food procurement** and how this impacts CNP practices for sourcing and purchasing local foods.



Child Nutrition Programs

A Brief Overview of Child Nutrition Programs



Photo: USDA



Phillipsburg, MT

Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Toolkit

School Meals – More Appetizing Than You Remember



Photo: USDA



Child Nutrition Programs – School Meal Programs

“School Meal Programs”

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)



Lunch Tray at Somers Middle School, Somers, MT
Photo Credit: Montana Team Nutrition Program

Child Nutrition Programs – Additional Child Nutrition Programs

Additional Child Nutrition Programs

- Child and Adult Care Food Program/At Risk After School (CACFP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)



Photo: USDA

Montana School Meal Programs by the Numbers

National School Lunch Program (2018-2019)

- 258 Montana school districts participated
- 20 million meals served
- \$48,868,272 in MT reimbursements

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (2018-2019)

- \$2 million in MT reimbursements

Key Players – Federal to Local

United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS)



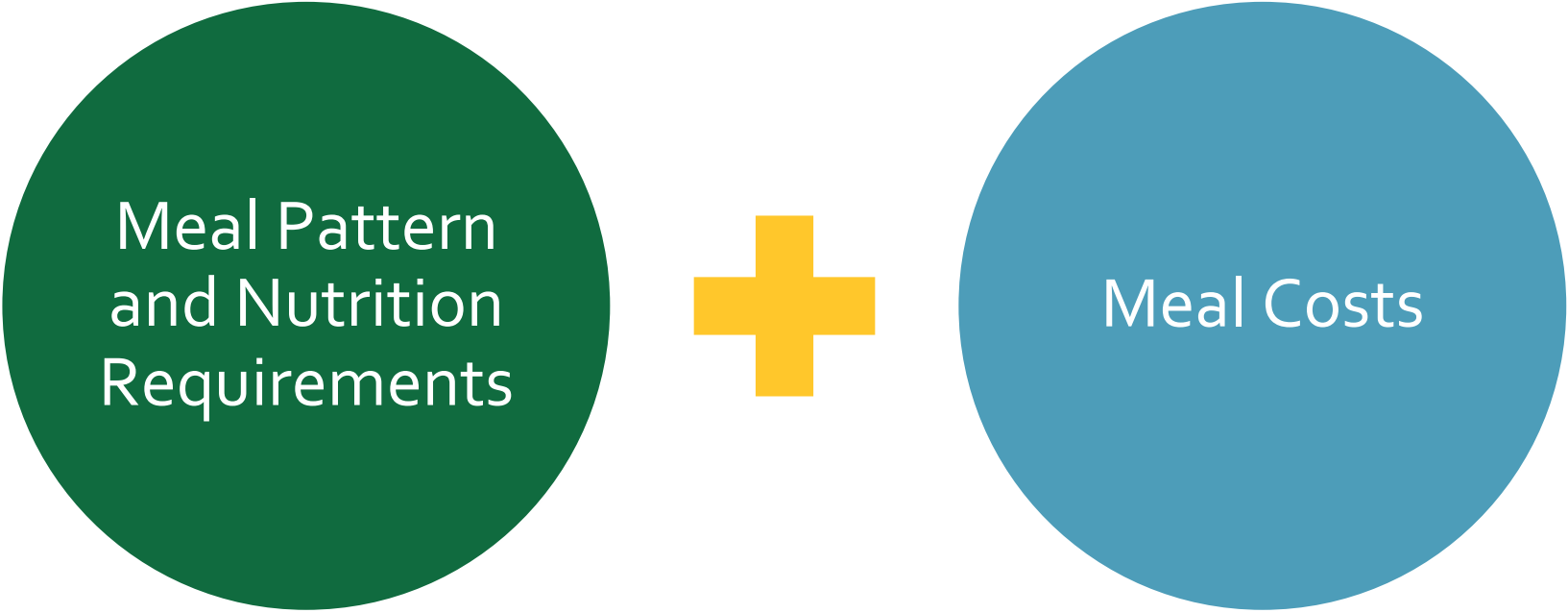
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graph TD; A[United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS)] --> B[Montana Office of Public Instruction – School Nutrition Programs]; B --> C[School Food Authority (SFA) – School District];
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The diagram consists of three stacked rectangular boxes. The top box is yellow and contains the text 'United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS)'. A light blue arrow points from the bottom right of this box to the top right of the middle box. The middle box is teal and contains the text 'Montana Office of Public Instruction – School Nutrition Programs'. A light purple arrow points from the bottom right of this box to the top right of the bottom box. The bottom box is dark blue and contains the text 'School Food Authority (SFA) – School District'.

Montana Office of Public Instruction –
School Nutrition Programs

School Food Authority (SFA) – School
District

What Influences School Meal Program Purchasing?



Meal Pattern
and Nutrition
Requirements

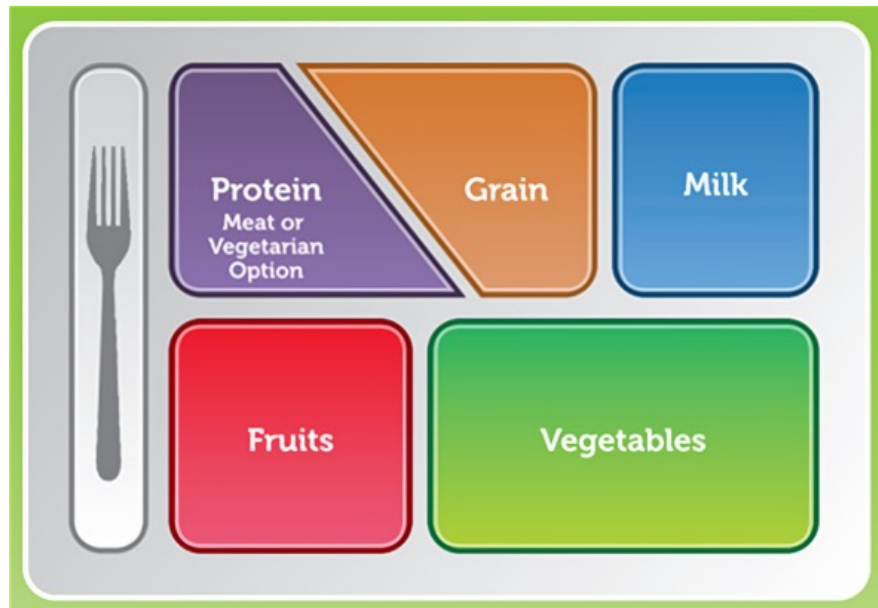


Meal Costs

A Look at School Meals

Meal Components: milk, grain, protein (meat or meat alternative), fruit, and vegetable

- **National School Lunch Program**
—5 Components
- **School Breakfast Program**
—3 Components
- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**
—Fruit/Vegetable



School Meal Program Meal Components

Meal Component Requirements:

- Milk: Fat-free or low fat
- Grains: Whole grain-rich
- Fruit: Limit juice
- Vegetable: Subgroup requirements
 - Dark Green
 - Red/orange
 - Beans and peas
 - Starchy
 - Other
- Meat/Meat Alternatives

Key leverage points:

- Color and variety
- Overcoming seasonal barriers
- Other nutrition standards

Applied Activity – What About My Products?

List a product you produce that will help schools meet the meal pattern requirements and nutrition standards?

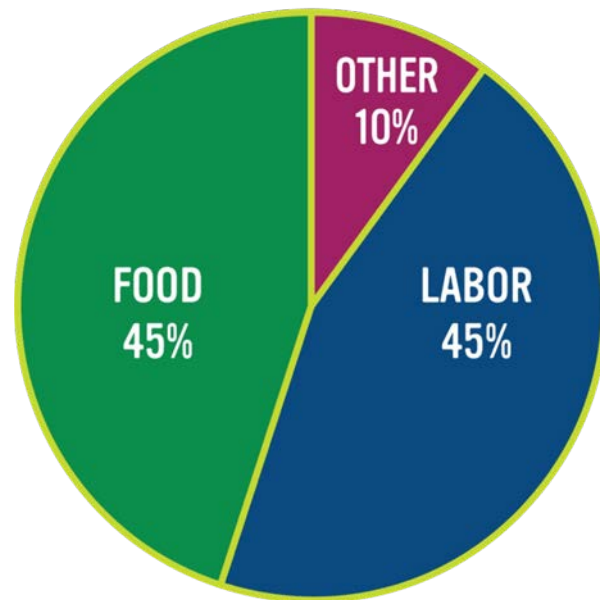


Photos: USDA

Cost of Schools Meals in MT

- The average cost to produce a school lunch is **\$4.31** (\$3.81 Nat'l average).
- The average cost to produce a school breakfast is **\$3.26** (\$2.72 Nat'l average).
- The breakdown of that cost is: 45% for food, 45% for labor, and the remaining 10% for all other costs (supplies, contract services, etc.)
- That equals \$1.94 spent on food for a school lunch and \$1.47 spent on food for a school breakfast.

THE COST OF SCHOOL MEALS



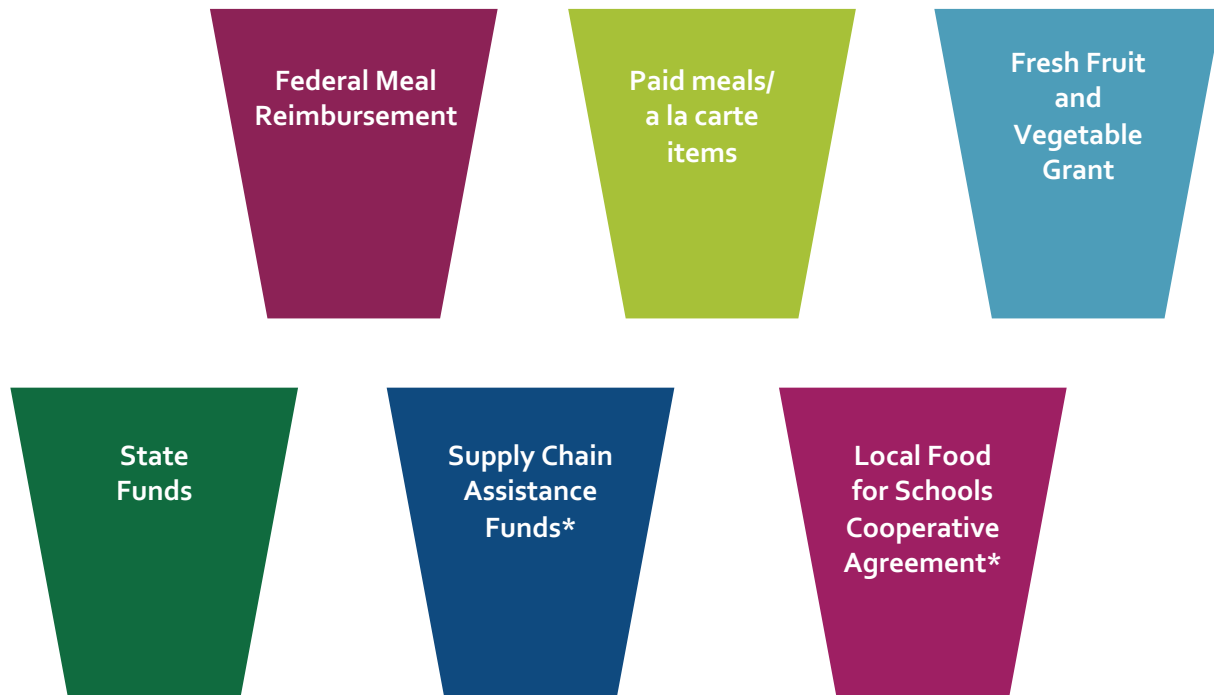
Small numbers add up: 10,000 meals per month x \$1.94 per meal

= \$19,400 per month in food costs for lunch

Federal Funding

- National School Lunch Program
—\$0.77 - \$4.35
- School Breakfast Program
—\$0.50 - \$2.67

Funding Buckets



*New funding sources and may be one-time only.



The Diversity of School Meal Programs

Product Need: One Size Does Not Fit All

CNP Setting	Serving Size	Number of Meals	Pounds Needed
Large K-12 District – Plated Lunch	$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup	5,000	1,545
Small K-12 District – Fresh Fruit and Vegetable	$\frac{1}{2}$ Cup	500	102

Product Need: One Size Does Not Fit All

Half of MT Schools have 100 students or fewer

School Size	# of Schools	% of Schools	Enrollment	% Enrollment
500+	59	7.14%	50,129	33.60%
250 - 499	157	19.01%	54,732	36.68%
100 - 249	170	20.58%	28,685	19.23%
50 - 99	129	15.62%	8,949	6.00%
Less than 50	311	37.65%	6,703	4.49%
TOTAL	826		149,198	



School Meal Program Kitchens



Photo: Montana Team Nutrition Program



Photo: USDA

Spotlight: Kitchen Video Tour

Choteau Lunchroom

Cathy Campbell
Head cook

Choteau, Montana

School Meal Program Models

- On-Site Food Preparation
- Central Kitchen Model
- Vended Meal Sponsors



Making soup in Belgrade, MT





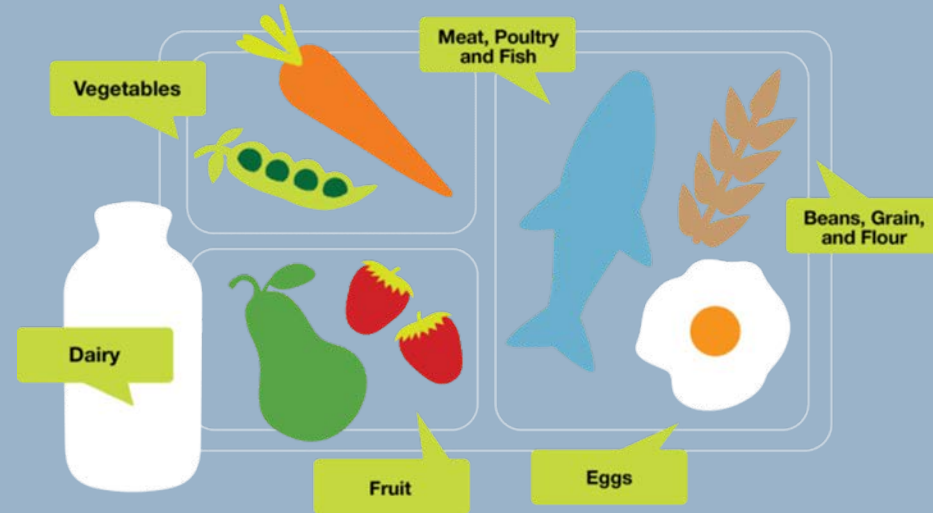
Local Food Sourcing and Procurement in School Meals

What is “Local”? It Depends

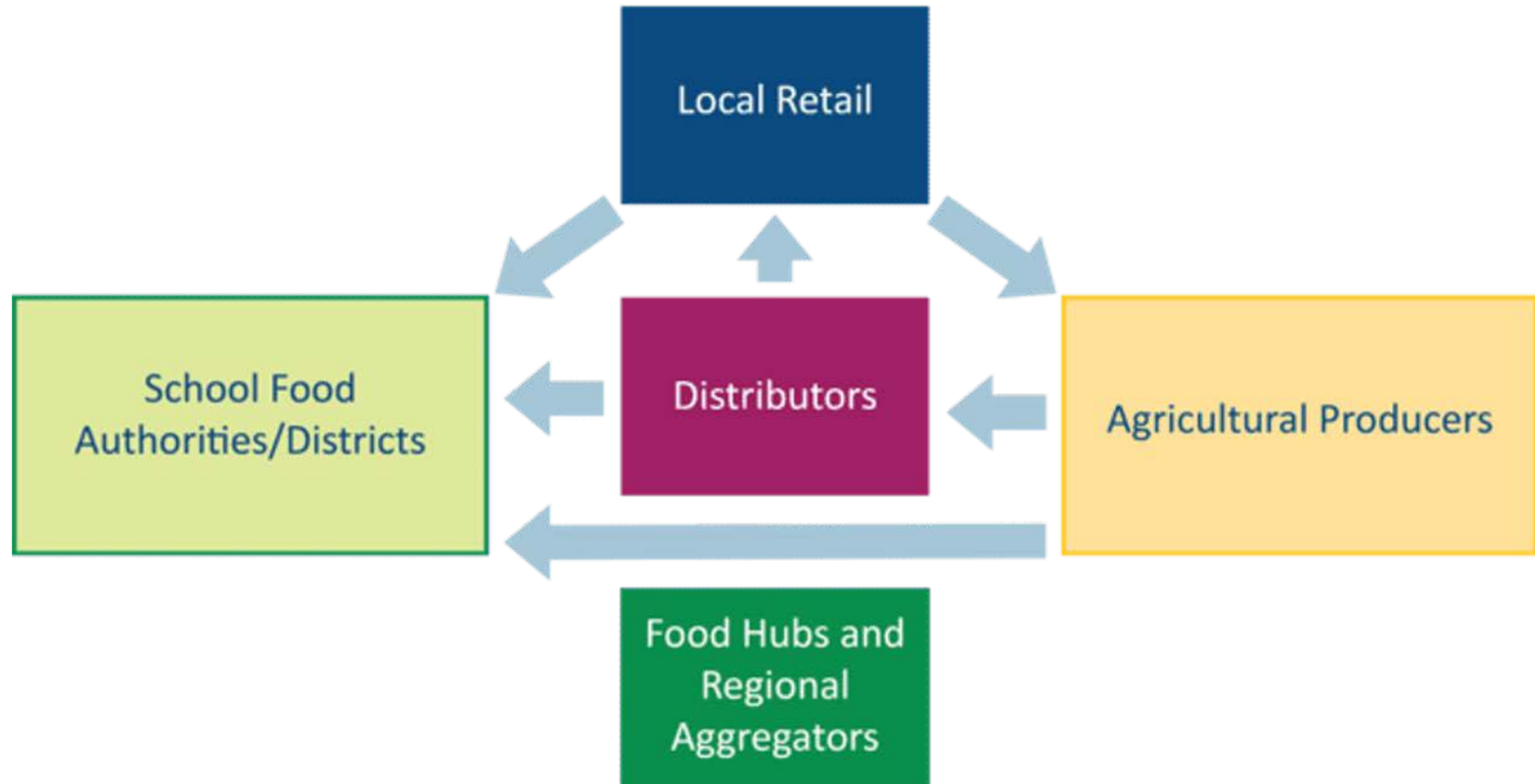
- What are a school’s farm to school and local procurement goals?
- What’s available locally and regionally?
- Must the school align with an incentive program or established definition?

Helps with tracking, marketing, and celebrating successes.

Graphic: USDA



THE FARM TO SCHOOL SUPPLY CHAIN



How Schools Source Local Foods

- Direct from producers - Swanson's Orchards
- Distributors - Quality Foods Distributing
- Local retailers - Varies by region
- Processors - Cream of the West
- Food hubs and aggregators - Western Montana Growers Coop
- Gardens - Farm to School Park County
- DoD Fresh - Harlequin Produce
- USDA Foods - Montana Marinara



How Schools Incorporate Local Products

- Meals – Including breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Harvest of the Month (HoM) & “State plates”
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for elementary schools
- Tasting and educational activities
- Special events
 - Montana Crunch Time
 - National Farm to School Month



Beets grown in Arlee, MT and
Served in Choteau, MT



Applied Activity – Finding the School Meal Program for You

Bringing the Farm to School Case Studies

- **Accessing the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program as a Market Opportunity**
- Joseph Martinez, Arizona Microgreens, Phoenix, Arizona

Questions

- What makes the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) an easy introduction into school sales?

School Food Procurement 101

- Procurement is the purchasing of goods and services.



Plan

Describe what
they're
looking for

Share with
vendors

Select a
vendor

Make sure
they get what
they asked for

Procurement Principles

- Buy American Provision
- Free and Open Competition
- Responsive and Responsible
- Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Regulations
- Priorities for Small, Minority, and Women Owned Businesses
- Food Safety



Procurement Methods

Informal Procurement

Micro-purchase

Equitably Distribute
Federal Threshold = \$50,000

Small Purchase

(Requires Price Quotes)
Montana Threshold =
\$80,000

Formal Procurement

Sealed Bids (IFBs)
& Competitive
Proposals (RFPs)
(Requires public advertising)

Shopping in the Real World – Mostly Micro Purchases

School

What are my upcoming menus and events that call for local items?

Producer

I should find out if any schools in my service area need my product for an upcoming menu or event.

Example: National School Breakfast Week

School

What can I menu for NSBW that would appeal to kids and be do-able for my staff?

Possible sticking points: delivery timing, accounts payable, fear of the unknown

Producer

Contact schools about NSBW and work together on menu possibilities.

Ways to help: be clear about delivery options and timing, offer to help figure out the billing and payment

Geographic Preference

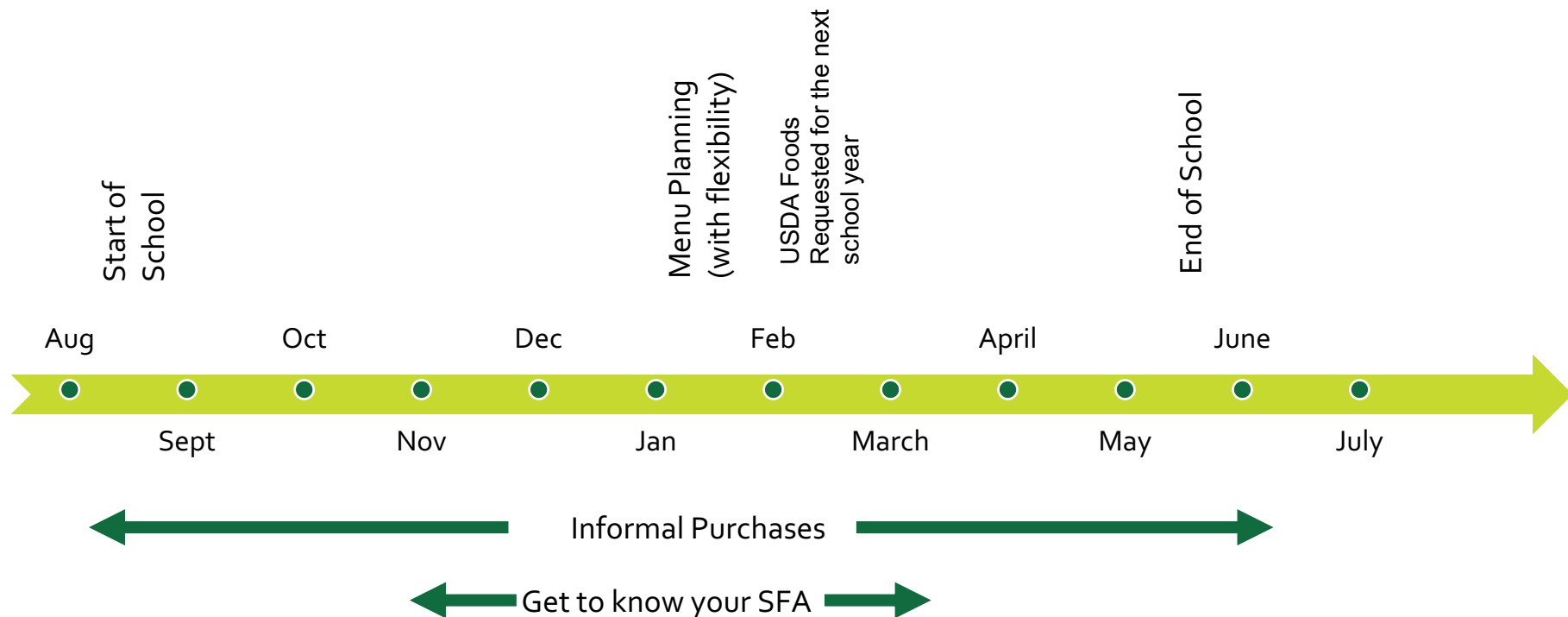
The Geographic Preference Option Final Rule:

1. Grants authority to School Food Authorities to define local.
2. Defines unprocessed agricultural products.
3. Clarifies that a preference is a preference, not a specification.

Sample Language:

"Any vendor who receives YES for WA grown category will receive a 10% price preference. This means that 10% of their price will be deducted FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES ONLY. After the price reduction, prices will be compared between vendors and the lowest price bid will be selected and that vendor will be awarded the bid."

School Foodservice Cycles



The School Food Service Account is Non-Profit

**** Special funding opportunities currently exist****

Supply Chain Assistance Funds - USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Round 1 was distributed in March of 2022

Montana allocation \$3,639,907

Round 2 will be distributed in December of 2022

Montana allocation \$3,490,480

Round 3 distribution date not yet determined

Montana allocation \$2,254,430



Acceptable Uses of Supply Chain Assistance Funds – Unprocessed and minimally processed domestic foods

Yogurt,
Milk, Cheese

Fruits &
Vegetables:
Whole, cut,
pureed, fresh,
frozen,
canned, dried,
100% juices

Grains,
Pasta,
Rice

Meats:
Whole,
Pieces, or
Ground

Beans
&
Legumes

No requirement for local

****Special funding opportunities currently exist – part 2**

Local Food for School Cooperative Agreement Program (LFS) - USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Montana has applied for a grant amount of \$727,981, to include:

1. Subgrants to schools
2. State Purchase of flour, bison, and lentils
3. Contracted distribution of dry goods to all NSLP school districts



Acceptable Uses of LFS funds – Unprocessed and minimally processed domestic foods

Yogurt, Milk,
Cheese

Fruits &
Vegetables:
Whole, cut,
pureed, fresh,
frozen,
canned, dried,
100% juices

Grains,
Pasta,
Rice

Meats:
Whole,
Pieces, or
Ground

Beans
&
Legumes

Must be local, must target socially disadvantaged producers and small businesses.



Bringing the Farm to School

Getting to Know School Markets

Module 1: Opportunities Beyond School Lunch



The *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Toolkit* was developed in partnership by USDA Food and Nutrition Services, the National Center for Appropriate Technology, and the National Farm to School Network.



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Bringing the Farm to School



Conclusion and Action Planning

Applied Activity – School Food 101

If I am not a fruit and vegetable producer, I cannot sell my products to Child Nutrition Programs.

False: Local foods can span the plate from fruits and vegetables to meat, milk, dairy, and grains.

Applied Activity – School Food 101

The only way to get my products to children is through school lunch.

False: There are a wide variety of Child Nutrition Programs in addition to the National School Lunch Program including School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Local foods can be served for meals (including breakfast, lunch, and dinner), snacks, taste tests, special events, and classroom activities.

Applied Activity – School Food 101

Schools might be particularly interested in the sweet potatoes I grow because they are required to serve red/orange vegetables.

True: Schools are required to serve a certain amount of red/orange vegetables each week. Sweet potatoes, peppers, carrots, winter squash, and more can help them fulfill this requirement.

Applied Activity – School Food 101

There is no way that schools can afford to purchase my products with their spending limitations.

False: Although the reimbursement rates for school meals may be limited, school food authorities have flexibility to spend more on some local foods while balancing their budget using less-expensive products in other places.

Applied Activity – School Food 101

Different School Food Authorities and different Child Nutrition Programs require different volumes of product.

True: The size and type of program, age of children served, mode of serving (e.g., plated vs. salad bar) all influence the volume of product needed. This variation means it is possible to find a program that fits your production size and scale.

Applied Activity – School Food 101

The United States Department of Agriculture dictates food safety requirements for schools.

False: Food safety requirements are established at the state or food service authority level. Learn more about food safety in Module 4.

Action Planning – Checking In

Table 1. School Business Action Plan

Module THEMES	Short-Term STRATEGY (the short-term strategy to support progress towards your long-term goals)	Recommended ACTION STEPS (immediate actions after leaving this training)	Action TIMELINE (process to start/complete actions—who's responsible, important dates, benchmarks, etc.)
<p>Module 1: Getting to Know School Markets</p> <p>Including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the school districts in my region that serve local food • Alignment of current production and infrastructure with school market needs 			



Bringing the Farm to School

Session Closing



Coming Soon

Type
and variety:

What products am I already growing that would be of interest to schools?

Size
and scale:

What size of program do I have the capacity to grow for (small, medium, large)?

Level of
processing:

Can I offer fresh, whole, unprocessed product and/ or minimally processed product?

Market
channels:

What relevant market channels am I already selling through (direct, food hubs, distributors, etc.)?

Food
safety:

What are my existing food safety protocols or documentation?

Next Sessions

- **Session 2: November 29, 2022 at 3-5pm – Virtual**
- **Session 3: December 7, 2022 – Hardin, MT (In-person)**
 - 8:30am – 4:00pm
 - Hardin Middle School
 - Plan to arrive between 8-8:20am
 - Mix of classroom content, school kitchen tour, virtual farm tour, discussions
 - Lunch and snacks provided
 - Recommended hotel: Homestead Inn + Suites, Hardin

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