Matt Benson
May 14, 2014
HHFKA 2010
Section 243: Access to Local Foods

The Secretary shall create a Farm to School Program to:
1. Distribute grant funding.
2. Provide training and technical assistance.
3. Disseminate research and data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.
Grant Program

• $5 M available annually through four grant types

• Applicants
  » Schools, state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profits.

• FY 2013 and FY 2014
  » Funded 139 projects for $9.8 M
  » Requests from 713 projects seeking $53.7 M
  » Projects in 46 states + D.C.
Grant Program Evaluation

• Peer Associates and University of Vermont are the external evaluators

• USDA strategic interests
  » Increasing MARKET OPPORTUNITIES for local and regional foods
  » Improving student HEALTH AND NUTRITION via access to and consumption of local foods at school
HOW COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS CAN SUPPORT FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, an increasing number of schools and districts have begun to source more foods locally and to provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition. If you are a Cooperative Extension professional, this means there are more opportunities than ever to help connect local and regional farm products to school meal programs, support school gardens, and teach students about the importance of eating healthy and how food is produced.

Farms to school programs exist in every state across the country and chances are these programs are flourishing in your region. As an Extension professional, there are many different ways you can get involved.

Help Schools Purchase Local or Regional Products for School Meal Programs

There are many different types of foods that can be sourced locally for school meal programs including fruits, vegetables, meat/seafood, eggs, baked goods, milk, herbs, and plant-based protein items such as beans, seeds, and nuts. Local foods can be used in all sorts of school meal programs such as breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and summer. Local foods can also be purchased by schools from a variety of different sources including directly from a farmer or rancher, through an intermediary source such as a food distributor or buying cooperative. Sharing information with farmers, ranchers, and fisherman about schools as a market for their products is a great way for Extension professionals to support local and regional procurement.

Assist Schools with Their School Gardens

School gardens provide an excellent opportunity for cross-programmatic collaborations among several Extension professionals working on different program areas and have been shown to play an important role in improving students’ knowledge of nutrition and preferences for some types of fruits and vegetables. Extension professionals can help with the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of local foods, or complete lesson plans/curricula involving school gardens; they can also help organize Master Gardener volunteers that may be excited about supporting school gardens.

Participate in Experiential Education Programs or Activities

Delivering presentations in the classroom or cafeteria, or participating in school fieldtrips to nearby farms, is a great way for Extension professionals to support agricultural, food and nutrition-related education. Other educational activities may include conducting local food cooking demonstrations or taste tests, visiting a farmers market, providing-in-school farmer workshops, etc.

Farm to school is a great fit for Extension. In northeast Iowa, the school food service directors asked Extension for help in meeting the new school meal requirements. We saw it as an opportunity to create a mess that would be very friendly to Iowa grown food.

- Teresa Klemens
Iowa State University Extension Outreach

USDA does a part of your basic nutrition government for every meal administered and purchases federal child nutrition products.

Andrea Drift, Farm to School Program Coordinator
Narrowsburg, NY

USDA is an equal opportunity provider.
USDA FOODS: A RESOURCE FOR BUYING LOCAL

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh) allows schools to use their USDA Foods entitlement dollars to buy fresh produce. The program, operated by DoD’s Defense Logistics Agency, began in school year (SY) 1994-1995 as a pilot in eight states. As of 2013, schools in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam participate; schools received more than $100 million worth of produce during SY 2012-2013.

What are the advantages of DoD Fresh?

- **Flexibility:** States can change DoD Fresh allocations on a monthly basis, which allows them to utilize USDA Foods entitlement dollars more effectively. USDA does not impose a cap on the amount of entitlement dollars or the amount of cash reimbursement funds that a state can allocate to DoD purchases.
- **Consistency:** DoD Fresh vendors update the catalog weekly, and depending on the state, schools can receive deliveries every week, making orders timely, fresh, and responsive to market fluctuations.
- **High quality:** DoD maintains high-quality standards through
- **Variety:** DoD Fresh vendors offer as many as 50 different types of produce, available in multiple forms (whole, precut, and a variety of peel sizes) and from multiple locales (local and non-local items are routinely offered).
- **Easy ordering and funds tracking:** Schools place orders via the web-based Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order/Receipt System (FFAVORS). The prices listed in the FFAVORS catalog reflect the prices that schools will be billed for the product. FFAVORS tracks schools’ entitlement fund balances and total order costs. DoD manages vendor payment and reconciliation.
HEALTHY HABITS TAKE ROOT

THE FARM to SCHOOL CENSUS

USDA estimates that as of the 2012-2013 school year,
3,812 districts
operating approximately
38,629 schools with
21,008,254 students
in attendance are buying local products and teaching children
where their food comes from.

Percent of school districts participating in farm to school activities

- Less than 25%
- 25% - 50%
- 51% - 75%
- More than 75%

HUNGRY FOR MORE? www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool
LOCAL IN THE LUNCHROOM

The term 'farm to school' generally includes efforts that bring locally or regionally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and food-related education in the classroom.

To determine the prevalence of farm to school programs in the United States, USDA surveyed an estimated 13,000 public school districts.
Farm to School Census Explorer Tool

The searchable database below allows users to drilldown into the data from the USDA Farm to School Census. Once you've conducted your query, you can easily download your results in an excel file.

Want the entire dataset, including answers to every question asked? Two exportable excel files are available for download. One excel file contains district level information and the other excel file contains state and national level summaries for selected variables. Identical versions of these data sets are also available from data.gov. For more information about the data presented, see the "About the Data" tab below. For assistance, please contact the USDA Farm to School Program at farmschool@fnas.usda.gov. This website was last updated on May 15, 2014.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Schools</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>% of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Meals</th>
<th>Total Food Costs</th>
<th>Dollars Spent on Local Food</th>
<th>% of Total Food Dollars Spent on Local Food</th>
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Thank you!