



FARM TO SCHOOL: WAYS TO INVOLVE LOCAL FARMERS

Farm to school is a broad term used to describe efforts to link schools with local agriculture. These efforts are diverse and can include a range of activities such as harvest festivals, field trips to farms, school gardens, farm-raisers (fundraising with local products), educational visits from farmers, and offering locally grown foods in the cafeteria.

Farm to School fits with the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*. One of the guiding principles of the standards is an emphasis on whole, minimally-processed nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat and fat-free dairy.

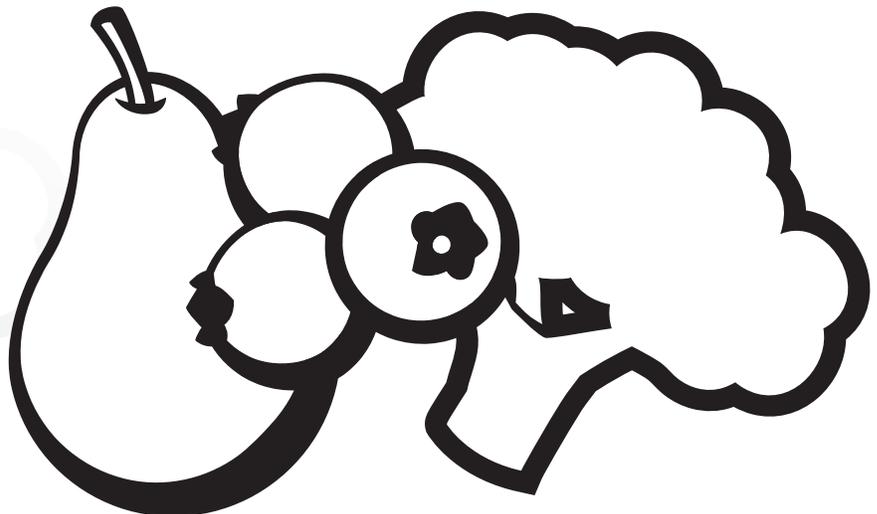
WHEN LOCAL FARMS PROVIDE FOOD FOR SCHOOL MEALS OR SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES...

- School children gain access to fresher less-processed foods and increased variety in school meals.
- School food service directors are afforded new flexibility, both to tailor their orders and to offer creative learning opportunities in school cafeterias.
- Food may cost less because it travels fewer miles to get to the school cafeteria and are handled by fewer people.



THERE ARE MANY WAYS FOODSERVICE CAN BRING THE FARM OR FIELD INTO THE CAFETERIA, THE CLASSROOM AND THE COMMUNITY WHILE PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE *MICHIGAN NUTRITION STANDARDS*. YOU CAN...

- Partner with local farmers to supply locally grown foods such as apples, berries, mixes greens etc. for use in school meal programs, catering, school events and more;
- Organize field trips to local farms and incorporate farm to table and gardening education into the core curriculum and in afterschool programming;
- Serve locally-grown foods at school events such as classroom parties, holiday celebrations, or parent meetings or gatherings;
- Work with farmers and local food processors to sell locally grown foods that meet the standards for school fundraisers such as fruits baskets;
- Offer locally-grown and produced foods such as packaged apple wedges, fresh fruits and veggies and low-fat yogurt in school stores and at concession stands.





FARM TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

There are many resources available to help school foodservice directors purchase Michigan products. Below are a few:

PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS: A Step by Step Guide. If you're a food service director who wants to purchase local products for your school meals program this resource is for you. **Not a Food Service Director?** This guide is also helpful for others who want to learn more about how to work with their school food service staff to bring locally grown foods into school cafeterias.

PUTTING MICHIGAN PRODUCE ON YOUR MENU: How to Buy and Use Michigan Produce in Your Institution. This resource contains additional tools including suggestions to help school foodservice connect with local farmers, purchase and use equivalencies, and food safety and storage tips. A 2010 Michigan Produce Availability Guide is also included, which highlights not only field fresh availability but also year-round availability of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs through storing and season extension and greenhouse production.

MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL: At this web site you will find a compilation of FAQs about Farm to School, and information about possible upcoming Farm to School grant opportunities.

MINNESOTA FARM TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT FOR FOOD SERVICE: This online toolkit offers recipes with nutritional analysis, menu examples, nutrition facts, buying tips, promotional materials, and tasting event ideas to help incorporate local foods into school food service. Some agricultural products local to both Minnesota and Michigan are featured, such as apples, dry beans, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, garlic, green beans, herbs, honey, lettuce, potatoes, rhubarb, squash, and sweet corn.

RECIPES

Fruit and Veggie Quantity Recipe Cookbook

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services,
Division of Public Health Services Fruit and Vegetables Program

Fresh From the Farm: The Massachusetts Farm to School Cookbook

Amy Cotler, Massachusetts Department of
Agricultural Resources



FOOD SAFETY

A Checklist for Purchasing Local Produce

Iowa State University Extension and Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Buying Local—Approved Sources for Food Establishments

Michigan Department of Agriculture

Produce Food Safety in Schools Workshop

Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (FDA and University of Maryland)

Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools

United States Department of Agriculture

Adapted from the Michigan Farm to School website: <http://www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu/index.php?id=48>