

From: Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)
Sent: Tuesday, November 01, 2011 4:03 PM
To: MDE-SchoolNutrition
Subject: Tuesday News from MDE 110111

The past few weeks I didn't have a lot to share. This week is different. Here we go:

- 1) Direct Certification Lists – Be sure to keep all of your direct certification lists you use this year and NOT just the most recent one. During a review, our analysts may check a prior month and if a student was directly certified at that time but doesn't show up on the current list, the analyst would have to have the earlier direct certification list to verify the student. Remember, you are required to complete direct certification a MINIMUM of three times this year, but the list is updated monthly if you want to check it more often. As you may be aware, direct certification is becoming more important – as a tool to approve students for free meals without application and as the basis of the Community Eligibility Option.
- 2) Equipment Grant – I occasionally get asked if there are any more equipment grants. Up until just recently my answer was, "No. All of the federal equipment grant funds were obligated." However, following is information I received from the School Nutrition Foundation (SNF): SNF and Winston Industries are committed to supporting child nutrition programs and school food service nationwide. Each year since 2007, Winston has awarded equipment to one school district needing improvement of its school meal kitchen facilities. The Winston Equipment Award Grant 2011 application process is open! Winston will be awarding 10 pieces of equipment (through this competitive grant process) to one (1) child nutrition program. Equipment includes: holding cabinets, holding drawers, and thermalizers. For more information on the application and equipment available, visit <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Level2.aspx?id=11634#winston>. **The online application must be submitted by midnight EST (Eastern Standard Time) on Tuesday, November 29, 2011.** Applications submitted after this date and time will not be considered. For more information, please contact scholarships@schoolnutrition.org or call 301-686-3100 x 149.
- 3) Rewarding Children – The following is not regulatory but I think follows good sense in this era of providing healthy eating habits for our students. Providing food as a reward can encourage children to eat treats even when they are not hungry and can instill lifetime habits of rewarding or comforting themselves with food behaviors that are associated with unhealthy eating or obesity. Rewarding children with food during class also reinforces eating outside of meal or snack times. In addition, food rewards outside of the cafeteria may interfere with students eating a full, well balanced meal at lunchtime. At the same

time, punishing children by taking away recess or physical education classes reduces their already-scarce opportunities for physical activity.

As well, using laps or pushups as punishment might lead children to avoid such activities as they are seen as negative. A great alternative is to use non-food rewards like: longer recess times; sitting in a "special" seat; receiving a pencil, box of crayons, or other school supply; trinkets from the "Treasure Box" such as yoyos, finger puppets, or bubbles; or to even larger incentives like eating lunch with the teacher; a book, gift card, or board game.

- 4) Verification – The Administrative Policy regarding verification has been posted at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/5_Verification_of_Eligibility_for_Sch_Meals_367308_7.pdf. Please read the memo and make sure you complete the steps on a timely basis. We have updated the materials and we even have a web page that covers the "12 Steps to Conducting Verification" with links to necessary resources. Here is the link: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-43092_50144-222884--,00.html.
- 5) On-Site Reviews – We have also posted Administrative Policy #6 which includes guidance on On-Site Reviews. In addition to the guidance, it also contains the new on-site review form. The form is located at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/6_On-Site_Review_w_attachments_367311_7.pdf. On-site reviews for the National School Lunch Program must be completed by February 1. After school snack schools must complete on-site reviews twice a year. Details can be found in Administrative Policy #6.
- 6) Food Buying Calculator – Just received this and tried it out. I put in that I wanted 1000 – 2 ounce servings of ground beef and it figured out how many pounds I would need to purchase taking in to account that cooked weight would be less than raw weight. Very cool. The National Food Service Management Institute and Team Nutrition have developed this online calculator to be used with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG). The interactive and simple to use calculator allows child nutrition professionals to build shopping lists of foods from the FBG and determine how much of each item to purchase to provide enough servings for the children in their program. You can find the online calculator by visiting: <http://fbg.nfsmi.org/>. For more information about the Food Buying Guide or to download your free copy, visit the Team Nutrition Website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/foodbuyingguide.html>.
- 7) Eligibility Manual – A new Eligibility Manual for School Meals is now available. This is a very useful document for you to either print out or bookmark on your computer. The manual is located at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/EliMan.pdf>. There is even a link to the manual with the changes highlighted: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/guidance/EliMan_h.pdf. Pick the one that will be most helpful for you. I know I use the manual frequently

when I get Technical Assistance calls from the field. I prefer to use the online version because you can search for a keyword. For example, if someone calls regarding a situation involving a guardian, I "find" the word guardian in the manual electronically and every time it is used it will show up.

- 8) Paid Price Equity and Nonprogram Foods – USDA issued guidance on these topics. The guidance is located at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SP_39-2011- Revised_s_367565_7.pdf.

Note that they have highlighted in red font the new questions and answers regarding the topics. While there is too much in this document to summarize in the Tuesday News, here are just a few key points:

- a. The USDA fully expects compliance with the Paid Price Equity portion of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA).
 - b. The \$2.46 meal price referenced in the guidance applies to last year's average meal price. For the calculations for this school year, it is my understanding that the new minimum required meal price would be \$2.51 (free reimbursement rate – paid reimbursement rate = \$2.51 for School Year 2011-2012). Due to this, schools that raised prices \$.05 will likely need to do it again next school year.
 - c. Be sure you are pricing your a la carte items, vending machine products, catering sales and other non-program food sales at a rate that will provide the same level of contribution after food cost that your school meals program provides. As stated in the memo, we hope to get more guidance from USDA on this topic in the near future.
- 9) Farm To School – Attached is more information on the Farm to School Program. This program offers a great opportunity of helping to provide fresh, healthy foods for our students while at the same time supporting local agriculture.

I am going to consider this enough for this week. Let me know if you have any questions. Enjoy the start of November!

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Looking for information on local schools? Go to www.michigan.gov/mischooldata.



Michigan Farm to School: Scaling Up and Branching Out



WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?

“Farm to School” centers around efforts to offer local foods in school cafeterias but applies to a variety of initiatives in Michigan, including school garden programs, fundraisers that take advantage of local agricultural products, farmer visits to school classrooms and cafeterias, school field trips to nearby farms and other curriculum connections. The **Michigan Farm to School** website, located at www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu, is a portal for information and a venue for sharing ideas, tools and resources to support these efforts to link schools with local food and agriculture in Michigan.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL?

School food service directors and staff, farmers and distributors have been working together in communities around the state to overcome challenges and improve availability and distribution of local foods for schools food service programs. Survey responses show that the number of Michigan school food service directors participating in farm to school nearly tripled between 2004 and 2009. In 2004, 11% reported purchasing foods from a local farmer or producer in the previous year, and in 2009, 41% reported having done so. State government agencies, community organizations, agricultural commodity groups, universities, school administrators, parents and community members are all supporting their efforts to make farm to school a reality.

WHY FARM TO SCHOOL?

While farm to school practitioners work through issues that can make farm to school challenging, these programs offer important benefits like fresher food, increased variety, greater ability to specify needs of school food service programs and support of local farmers and the local economy. Responses from a 2009 survey of Michigan school food service providers show that cost, quality and supply of local food were the top concerns for implementing farm to school programs but helping Michigan farms and businesses, supporting the local economy and higher quality food were the top three factors motivating them to purchase local food.

By increasing and expanding farm to school programs, we can help meet one of the goals of the **Michigan Good Food Charter**: that Michigan institutions purchase 20% of their food from local growers, producers and processors by 2020. See www.michiganfood.org for more information.

MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

 **Michigan Farm to School website** (www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu) is a portal for information and a venue for sharing ideas, tools and resources to support farm to school. The **Michigan Farm to School listserv** and resources are freely available on the website to help food service professionals, farmers, distributors and community members develop farm to school programs.

 **Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-By-Step Guide** is designed to help food service directors purchase local food from local farmers for their school food service programs. Resources to link with local farmers, templates of forms to request quotes for local food and a summary of the regulatory environment are included.

 **Marketing Michigan Products: A Step-By-Step Guide** is designed to help Michigan farmers market their products to local schools. Information about food safety, school food budgets and templates of forms food service directors may use to request quotes for local food are included.

 **Putting Michigan Produce On Your Menu: How to Buy and Use Michigan Produce in Your Institution** provides purchase and use equivalencies, storage tips, and a seasonal availability chart to help institutional food service professionals use local food.

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