

From: Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard (MDE)
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 12:11 PM
To: MDE-SchoolNutrition
Subject: Weekly News from MDE 102813

Oooh, that's scary!!!! No, not the new competitive food rule!!! This week is Halloween!! Here is some decidedly unscary news:

1. Farm to School - Thank you to those of you who responded to the USDA Farm to School Census! We wanted to make sure you knew that the results from the census are now live. They can be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census>. From a national perspective, USDA estimates that 43% of public school districts across the country have an existing Farm to School Program in place, while another 13% of school districts surveyed are committed to launching a Farm to School Program in the near future. Additionally, in School Year 2011-2012, schools purchased and served over \$350 million in local food! Michigan had an overall response rate of 52%. Of those that responded, 40% are currently participating in farm to school activities. USDA estimates that local purchases in our state are valued at approximately \$4,404,768. Please remember these statistics reflect only self-reported data. To check to ensure that your district has successfully completed the census, please visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census>. To find your school, start at our state & district section, click on the state of Michigan, and then click on the "Explore MI School Districts" button at either the top or bottom of the state summary page. If you did not have a chance to complete the census earlier this spring, USDA is accepting submissions until November 30. Please simply email Matt Benson at matthew.benson@fns.usda.gov and let him know that you would like to complete it. Again, overall, the response rate for Michigan is 52%. Let's use the next few weeks to boost that number a bit! Attached are three informative documents that detail much of the success of the Farm to School Program.
2. Food Service Management and Vended Meal Contract Policy - For information on guidance on material changes and review requirements for food service management and vended meal contracts, please see Food Service Administrative Policy No. 5 – School Year 2013 – 2014 at the following link: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Administrative_Policy_No_5_SY13-14_Material_Changes_Final_434881_7.pdf.
3. Procurement Procedures - For information on guidance on procurement procedures for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs, please see Food Service Administrative Policy No. 6 – School Year 2013 – 2014 at the following link: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Administrative_Policy_No_6_2013-2014-Procurement_Procedure_Final_434885_7.pdf.
4. Food Service Management Company and Vended School Meal Company Contract Prototypes and Renewal Forms – These forms are now available at

the following link: http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-43092_61446-289948--,00.html. Districts identified as already having contracts in place received notifications regarding rebid, renewal, and training. If your district is interested in obtaining a **food service management company** contract for School Year 2014-2015, for more information contact Katherine Fuller at fullerk@michigan.gov. If your district is interested in a **vended school meal company** contract for School Year 2014-2015, for more information contact Tom Freeland at freelandt@michigan.gov.

5. School Breakfast - Celebrate the School Breakfast success of you and your staff or those of a program that you know is doing great things. Please use this survey link to nominate yourself or someone you know. MDE would like to recognize these school breakfast leaders at the SNAM Annual Meeting in November. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FVB25MC>.
6. Weekly News from MDE – If you want to continue to receive this invaluable (overstatement?) information, it is important to know the list we send the News to is from your MEGS+ School Nutrition Programs application. Check to make sure you are either the Contact Person or the Food Service Director. While we have to manually add some recipients, being in the MEGS+ application is the best guarantee of receiving this information on an ongoing basis.
7. Produce Safety University – We are looking for a couple volunteers that are interested in attending the Produce Safety University course that will be offered at various locations starting in March. A summary of the course content is attached. In 2014, three out of five classes will be held at USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service campus in Fredericksburg, VA. This training center provides unique opportunities for hands-on training related to purchasing, processing, and preparation of fresh produce. Note, with travel, this will be a week long commitment. Your costs will be covered for travel, lodging, and meal expenses. If you are interested in attending, reply to this email, state a brief reason on why you are interested in this opportunity, and list in order your top date and location preference to attend to your last choice to attend. Here are the dates and locations:
 - a. March 10-14, 2014 Fredericksburg, VA
 - b. March 31-April 4, 2014 Fresno, CA
 - c. April 28-May 2, 2014 Fredericksburg, VA
 - d. June 9-13, 2014 Fredericksburg, VA
 - e. June 23-27, 2014 Atlanta, GA

Please respond by November 4, 2014, if you are interested.

That is it for now. Have a great week.

Howard Leikert, MBA, SNS
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“The MDE School Nutrition Programs team is committed to the success of child nutrition programs through training, support, and leadership by fostering partnerships to ensure the nutritional well-being of all students in Michigan.”



The United States Department of Agriculture

BRINGING THE FARM TO SCHOOL

Growing healthy children & communities

\$354,599,266

in school food dollars was invested in local communities in the 2011-2012 school year.

38,629 schools

are buying local foods for the school cafeteria.

Money invested in agriculture has a positive economic impact on rural and urban communities.

That's a lot of lunch money!

We love local farmers!

56% of schools

Say they will buy more local food in the future.

Expect growth in local plant-based proteins, grains, meat, poultry and eggs.

30%
Fruit

29%
Veggies

15%
Fluid milk

9%
Baked goods

7%
Herbs

Local foods span the school meal tray

Start your tractors!

21,008,254 students

are learning to make lifelong healthy eating choices.

With farm to school programs, kids are more likely to eat their fruits and vegetables and try new, healthy foods.

Healthy habits take root

Beyond serving local foods at mealtime, schools are planting gardens, visiting farms and turning the cafeteria into a classroom.

Local farmers make the grade, A+!

THE FARM to SCHOOL CENSUS

To determine the prevalence of farm to school programs, USDA surveyed an estimated 13,000 public school districts across the country. Approximately 8,800 districts responded for a total response rate of over 65%.

HUNGRY FOR MORE?

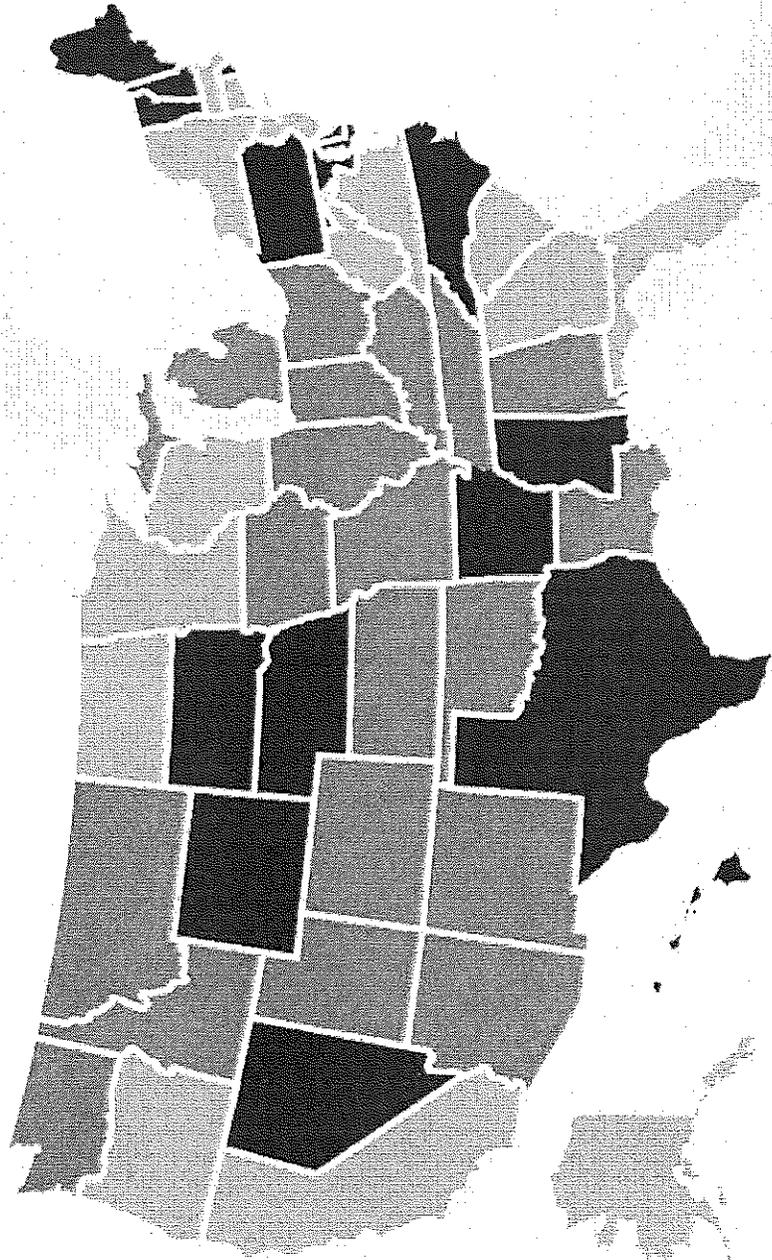
www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census/





The United States Department of Agriculture

HEALTHY HABITS TAKE ROOT



Percent of school districts participating in farm to school activities

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.



HUNGRY FOR MORE?

www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census/

USDA Celebrates National Farm to School Month

*Nationwide Census on Farm to School Activities Shows Promising Results
Over 38,000 schools with 21 million students serving over \$350 million in local food*

WASHINGTON, October 22, 2013 — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today highlighted important strides made in offering healthy, local food to millions of school children through USDA's Farm to School program, and emphasized the program's role in creating economic opportunity for America's farmers and ranchers. According to USDA's first-ever Farm to School Census, in school year 2011-2012, schools participating in farm to school activities purchased and served over \$350 million in local food, with more than half of participating schools planning to purchase even more local foods in future school years.

"An investment in the health of America's students through farm to school activities is also an investment in the health of local economies," said Vilsack. "We know that when students have experiences such as tending a school garden or visiting a farm they'll be more likely to make healthy choices in the cafeteria. We also know that when schools invest their food dollars in their local communities, all of agriculture benefits, including local farmers, ranchers, fishermen, food processors and manufacturers."

Forty-three percent of public school districts across the country reported having an existing farm to school program in place, with another 13 percent of school districts surveyed committed to launching a farm to school program in the near future.

Interest in local products spans the school meal tray, with fruits, vegetables, and milk topping the list of local products currently offered in schools across the country, while census respondents indicate an interest in local plant-based proteins, grains and flour, and meat and poultry in the future.

Vilsack added that through these efforts, schools continue to enhance the health of the school food environment, meet the new meal standards implemented last school year and demonstrate the role local food can play in school meals.

Census results can be accessed online, at www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/census/. School districts that missed the opportunity earlier in the year to respond can submit information regarding farm to school practices through November 30, 2013.

USDA's Farm to School Program is part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which authorized USDA to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, to improve access to local foods in schools. It is also a core element of the USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative, which coordinates the Department's work on local food systems. In mid-November, USDA will announce approximately \$5 million in FY2014 Farm to School grants to help school districts across the country further develop their farm to school programming.

USDA is focused on improving childhood nutrition and empowering families to make healthier food choices by providing science-based information and advice, while expanding the availability of healthy food.

- America's students now have healthier and more nutritious school meals due to improved nutrition standards implemented as a result of the historic Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- USDA's *MyPlate* symbol and the resources at ChooseMyPlate.gov provide quick, easy reference tools for parents, teachers, healthcare professionals and communities.
- USDA awarded \$5.2 million in grants to provide training and technical assistance for child nutrition foodservice professionals and support stronger school nutrition education programs.

Collectively these policies and actions will help combat child hunger and obesity and improve the health and nutrition of the nation's children. For more information on the Farm to School program, please visit www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool.

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Produce Safety University Overview

Fresh produce provides many nutritional benefits, but it must be handled safely to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Harmful bacteria can reside in soil or water and come into contact with fresh produce at any point during growth, harvest, processing, transportation, storage, preparation, or service. Fresh produce that is served raw does not go through a cooking step to kill any harmful bacteria that may be present before it is served to students, and, therefore has the potential to cause a foodborne illness.

Increased funding through the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, farm-to-school initiatives, and school gardens raised concerns about potential food safety risks associated with these programs and prompted the USDA to develop Produce Safety University (PSU). The week-long comprehensive course is a collaborative venture between USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). PSU was launched in 2010 with three pilot sessions, followed by five week-long courses in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Five week-long classes will be held in 2014.

The goal of PSU is to help school foodservice staff identify and mitigate food safety risks in fresh produce no matter whether it is purchased from traditional suppliers, direct from farmers, or through the DoD Fresh program. PSU covers all aspects of the fresh produce supply chain from growing and harvesting to storage and preparation through a combination of lecture, laboratory, and field-trip instruction.

The curriculum addresses how to apply safety standards, such as good agricultural practices (GAPs), to negotiations with local farmers and how to write specifications for both fresh and fresh-cut produce. The course covers how to assess produce upon receiving to ensure that the product meets bid specifications and how to properly store and serve fresh produce. Field trips consist of approximately two of the following options, depending on the season: a tour of a terminal market, a large produce distributor, a fresh-cut processing company, and/or possibly a farm.

Upon completion of the course, students receive a USDA certificate of completion and a School Nutrition Association certificate for 21 continuing education hours. Students receive training materials to use at regional, state, and local trainings that include lesson plans, presentations and activities related to key topics addressed during PSU classes. Trainers may teach selected topics for short educational sessions, or teach the entire set of materials in a day-long workshop.

Produce Safety University Course Content

Produce Safety University begins late on Monday afternoon and ends on Friday at noon to allow the majority of participants to travel on Monday morning and return home on Friday afternoon. Tuesday and Thursday classes run from 8 am to 5 pm. Field trips take place on Wednesday. Departure times may vary with locations visited, but may be as early as 5 am for classes traveling to a terminal market.

The following topics are covered throughout the week:

- Overview of the fresh produce supply chain, from the field to distribution and delivery
- Foodborne illness trends associated with fresh produce
- How contamination occurs from farm-to-fork
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Handling Practices (GHPs)
- Overview of fresh-cut produce, including expectations for suppliers and writing specifications for fresh-cut produce
- Laboratory assessment of produce quality for selected fresh-cut and fresh produce items
- Purchasing
 - Food safety considerations for distributors, cooperatives, and farms
 - Liability insurance
 - Defining “local”
 - Menu flexibility
 - Communication with farmers
 - Negotiating prices
 - Inventory management
- School gardens
- Storing fresh produce to maintain quality
- Purchasing fresh produce
- Writing specifications for fresh produce
- Freezing fresh produce to preserve the harvest
- Using USDA’s Market News to evaluate market prices for fresh produce
- Handling produce safely through the food flow
 - Best practices from receiving through service
 - Equipment
 - Serving produce outside of the cafeteria
 - Merchandising