



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.

MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL CONTACTS

CS Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems
Michigan State University
Colleen Matts
517-432-0310, matts@msu.edu
Jekeia Murphy
517-432-0308, stilljek@msu.edu
www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu

Michigan State University Extension
Kendra Wills (west/southwest Michigan)
517-930-0928, willsk@anr.msu.edu
Kathe Hale (east/southeast Michigan)
586-469-6088, halek@anr.msu.edu
www.msue.anr.msu.edu

STATE AGENCIES

Michigan Department of Education
Jaime Malnar
517-335-3792, MalnarJ1@michigan.gov
www.michigan.gov/mde

Michigan Department of Agriculture &
Rural Development
Jeanne Hausler
517-373-9790, hauslerj@michigan.gov
www.michigan.gov/mdard

Michigan Department of Community Health
Diane Golzynski
517-335-8980, golzynskid@michigan.gov
www.michigan.gov/mdch

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Food System Economic Partnership
(southeast Michigan)
Michaelle Rehmann
517-490-6912, rehmannm@fsepmichigan.org
www.fsepmichigan.org

Michigan Land Use Institute
(northwest Lower Michigan)
Diane Conners
231-941-6584 ext 16, diane@mlui.org
www.mlui.org
www.localdifference.org

