

FARM TO SCHOOL

Promise

Legal Aid of Nebraska, Farm Law Project
In collaboration with
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Nebraska Department of Agriculture
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OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRODUCERS

- Opening new markets: Reliable markets found in nearby schools
- Healthier Children: Food that is local is fresher, more nutritious and tastier
- Strengthening local economies: Money stays within the community, not to a national wholesaler
- Educational opportunities: Farm to School programs may include a classroom trip to participating farms, connecting kids to local agriculture and its value

CURRENT PROGRAMS

- Central City's Farm to School Program
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Good, Fresh, Local Sustainable Food Project
- Westside School District, Omaha
- Programs in Lincoln, Grand Island, Auburn, Centura and the Norris School District

Over 10,000 schools nationwide now participate in Farm to School programs

WHERE TO BEGIN

- Bring all involved parties together: school food service directors, school officials, state agencies, parent representatives, community partners and producers
- Start gradually, perhaps with just a few items
- Share online resources to familiarize everyone with the process



CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Schools must follow state and federal regulations concerning nutritional standards, procurement policies, and portion sizes.
- Budget constraints, staff with sufficient training and proper equipment are concerns.
- Coordination between harvest season and school year must be worked out.
- Current contracts with other providers must be settled.



DEMANDS ON PRODUCERS

- Producers must convince the school (starting with the food service director) that farm to school programs are beneficial to the students, the school and the community.
- Producers must be able to supply safe, quality food in quantities that schools need and in a timely fashion.
- Ordering, delivery and payment must be efficient and organized.
- Producers, in some instances, must be able to process, package and transport the food.



AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND PRODUCERS

Details that must be worked out between the school and the producer(s):

- The total estimated volume of each item to be delivered
- Seasonal availability of item and delivery date
- Amount and price of items
- Delivery schedule: time of day, frequency, location and whose responsibility
- Packing requirements: standard box, loose pack, bulk, etc.
- Post-harvest handling: storing temperature, cleaning, preparation, packaging
- Meeting basic health and safety standards
- Acceptable seasonal substitutes
- Cost per unit, payment terms and payment process
- Educational activities: trips to farm, curriculum integration
- Name and contact information of coordinator(s)

SUCCESS STORY

The Central City, NE Farm to School Program has worked successfully for over six years.

- Joyce Rice, Food Service Coordinator, wanted fresher, better foods for the 500 students in her school.
- After checking with the NE Department of Education about guidelines for purchasing and serving produce, she received two bids from local producers.
- She chose a producer (about 30 miles away) based on the variety and quantity they could provide.
- At first the producer delivered to the school, but as more food was ordered they needed Joyce to pick up and deliver.
- She orders once a week, plans menus according to produce available, and saves money buying locally.
- Students eat produce usually less than 24 hours old.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Farm to School programs strengthen communities as they tie local farms more directly to the community via the local schools.
- Even factoring in labor, time and gas, school districts can save money while offering dramatically superior produce to their students.
- Money remains in the local community, benefiting the overall local economy.



This presentation adapted from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, ATTRA, Nebraska LR42 Conference Report, F2S Ohio, and Know Your Farmer Know Your Food & other USDA resources.
