

# Selling to Schools: When, Where, and How

Jann Knappage and Cindy Finneseth





Bringing the Farm to School

## The Power of Farm to School

An Introduction to *Bringing the Farm to  
School Producer Training Program*





# Activity – School Meal Memories



Photos: USDA



Photo: Bowling Green Independent School District

# Key Questions

**What is farm to school?**

**How does farm to school work?**

**Is farm to school right for you?**

**What next?**



What is Farm to School?

# What is Farm to School?

## CORE ELEMENTS OF **FARM** *to* **SCHOOL**



Credit: National Farm to School  
Network



# Why Local Food in School Meals?

Supports local farmers, businesses and local economies

Increases school meal quality and overall program participation

Increases kids' willingness to try new fruits and vegetables

Supports school wellness policies and broader school board priorities



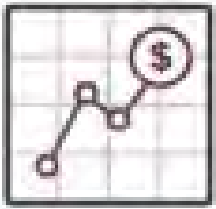
*Credit: USDA Farm to School Census*



## Benefits of Farm to School for Producers



# Benefits of Farm to School for Producers



**Economic  
Development**



**Public  
Health**



**Education**



**Environment**



**Community  
Engagement**

*Credit: National Farm to School Network*

According to the 2019 Farm to School Census, Kentucky schools spent **\$5,820,679** on Kentucky farm foods and milk in school year 2018-19.

# Producer Spotlights: Benefits of Selling to Schools For Your Operation

*“I sell farm to school because of the ability to deal with one customer (though it may be a difficult customer) and to go from selling one case to a hundred cases or 450 cases.”*

*David Neville,  
Capstone Farms*



# Producer Spotlights: Benefits of Selling to Schools For Your Operation



Credit:  
USDA

*“A school contract helped me leverage a USDA grant for cold storage facilities, or a loan from the bank.”*

*“Working with the school’s distributor helped me get on their vendor list and sell additional products through them.”*

# Producer Spotlights: Benefits of Selling to Schools For Your Operation

*“Cafeteria-based promotion helped increase my sales at the farmers’ market (students/parents identified the brand and wanted to support).”*



Credit:  
USDA



# How Schools Celebrate Local Food and Farmers



Credit: Franklin Independent Food Service and Nutrition

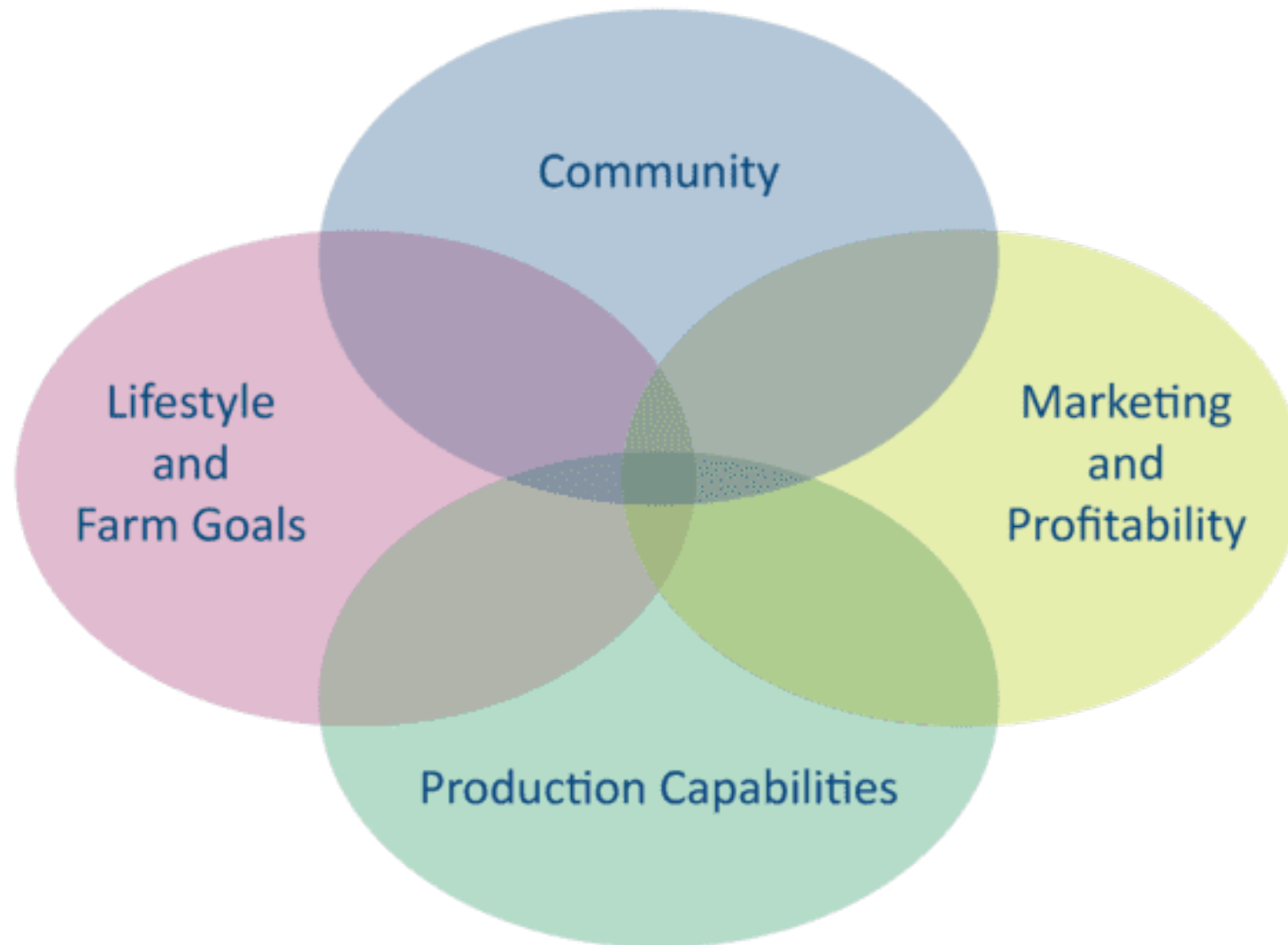


Credit: Kentucky Horticulture Council



## How Your Farm Goals Support Farm to School Sales

# VARIABLES FOR WHOLE FARM PLANNING AND SCHOOL SALES



# SCHOOL BUSINESS ASSESSMENT







Bringing the Farm to School

## Getting to Know School Markets

Module 1





# Child Nutrition Programs

# State Snapshot – Kentucky by the Numbers



## Child Nutrition Programs in Kentucky (SY 2020-2021)

- Number of children served: **677,463**
- Amount of funding provided to programs:  
Breakfast: **\$2,704,277.97**  
Lunch: **\$5,497,657.62**
- Number of school districts participating in farm to school (2015): **77**
- Amount spent on local food (2015): **\$8,862,280**



# School Meals – More Appetizing Than You Remember



Photo: USDA



Photo: Bowling Green Independent School District



# Child Nutrition Programs – School Meal Programs

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

Afterschool Snack Program (ASCP)

Special Milk Program (SMP)

Seamless Summer Option (SSO)



Photo: Bowling Green Independent School District

# Key Players – Federal to Local

United States Department of  
Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service  
(USDA FNS)



State Agency (Education, Health, or  
Agriculture)



School Food Authority (School  
District)



# What Influences School Meal Program Purchasing?



Meal Pattern and  
Nutrition  
Requirements



Meal Costs

# A Look at School Meals

National School Lunch Program

5 Components

School Breakfast Program

3 Components

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Fruit/Vegetable

**Meal Components:** *milk, grain, protein (meat or meat alternative), fruit, and vegetable*





# School Meal Program Meal Components

## Meal Component Requirements:

Milk: Fat-free or low fat

Grains: Whole grain-rich

Fruit: Limit juice

Vegetable: Subgroup requirements

Dark Green

Red/orange

Beans and peas

Starchy

Other

Meat/Meat Alternatives

## Key leverage points:

- Color and variety
- Overcoming seasonal barriers
- Other nutrition standards

# Activity – What About My Farm?

What is a product you produce that will help schools meet the meal pattern requirements and nutrition standards?



Photos: USDA

# The Cost of School Meals

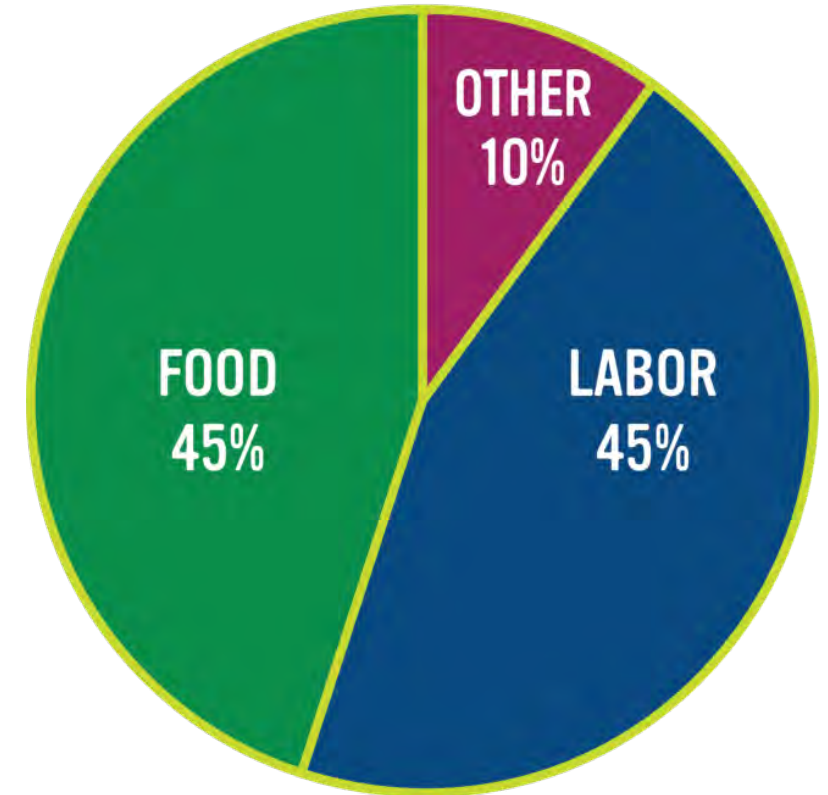
The average cost to produce a school lunch is \$3.81.

The average cost to produce a school breakfast is \$2.72.

The breakdown of that cost is: 45% for food, 45% for labor, and the remaining 10% for all other costs (supplies, contract services, etc.)

That equals \$1.71 spent on food for a school lunch and \$1.22 spent on food for a school breakfast.

## THE COST OF SCHOOL MEALS



Small numbers add up: 28.9 million meals each day x \$1.71 per meal

**= \$49.4 million!**

# Program Reimbursement Rates

## National School Lunch Program

*(SY 2021-2022)*

\$0.35 - \$3.83

## School Breakfast Program

*(SY 2021-2022)*

\$0.33 - \$2.35

## Special Milk Program

*(SY 2021-2022)*

\$0.22

## Afterschool Snack Program

*(SY 2021-2022)*

\$0.09 – \$1.00



Photo: USDA





# The Diversity of School Meal Programs

# Product Need: One Size Does Not Fit All



CNP Setting	Serving Size	Number of Meals	Pounds Needed
Large K-12 District – Plated Lunch	$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup	350,000	108,150
Medium K-12 District – Plated Lunch	$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup	5,000	1,545
Small K-12 District – Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack	$\frac{1}{2}$ Cup	500	102
Medium K-12 District – Salad Bar	Variable	Variable	50

# School Meal Program Models

On-Site Food Preparation

Central Kitchen Model

Vended Meal Sponsors



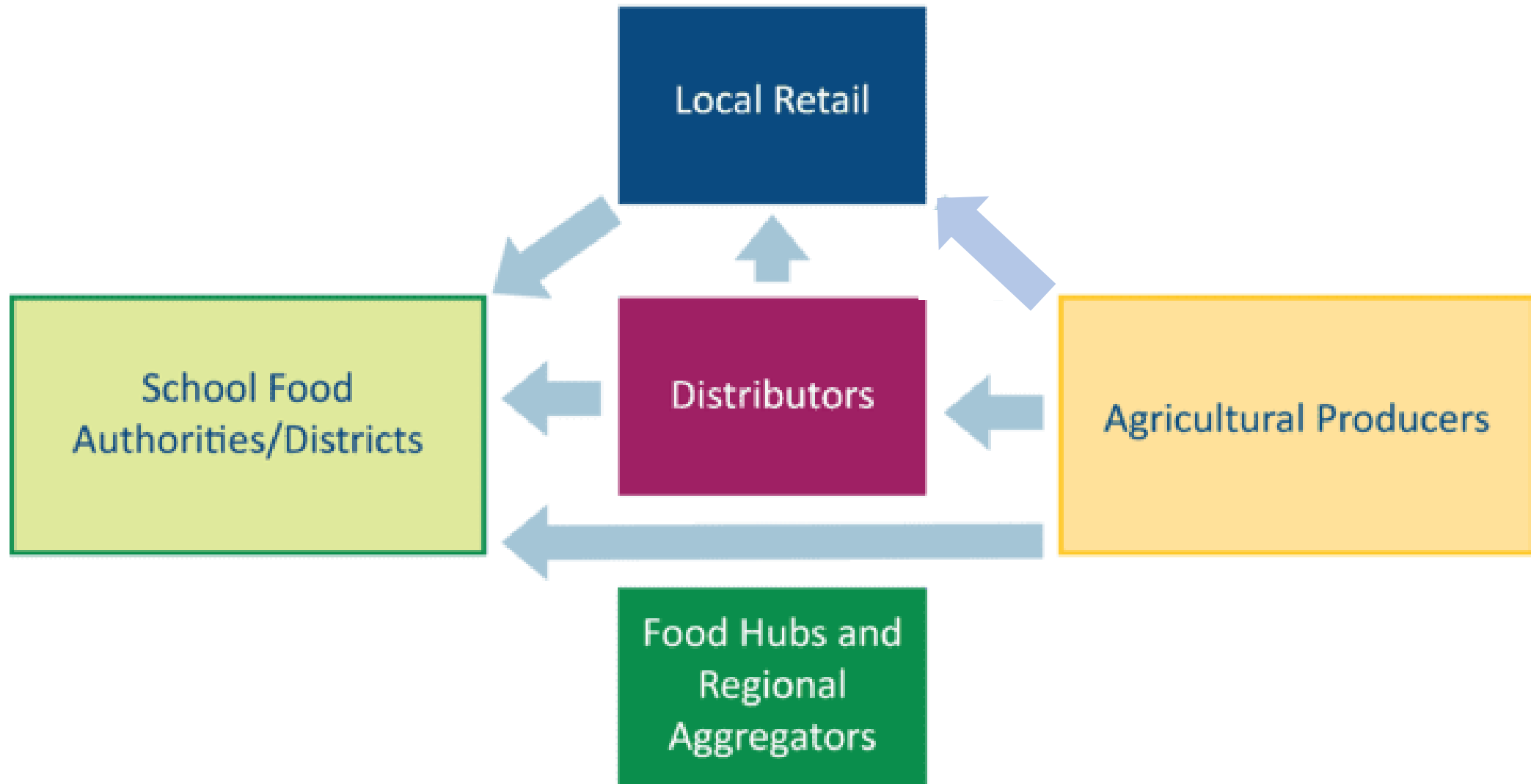
Photos: USDA



## Local Food Sourcing and Procurement in School Meals



# THE FARM TO SCHOOL SUPPLY CHAIN



# What is “Local”? ...It Depends

Possible definitions of “local”:

Produced within a 20-mile radius

Produced within a 50-mile radius

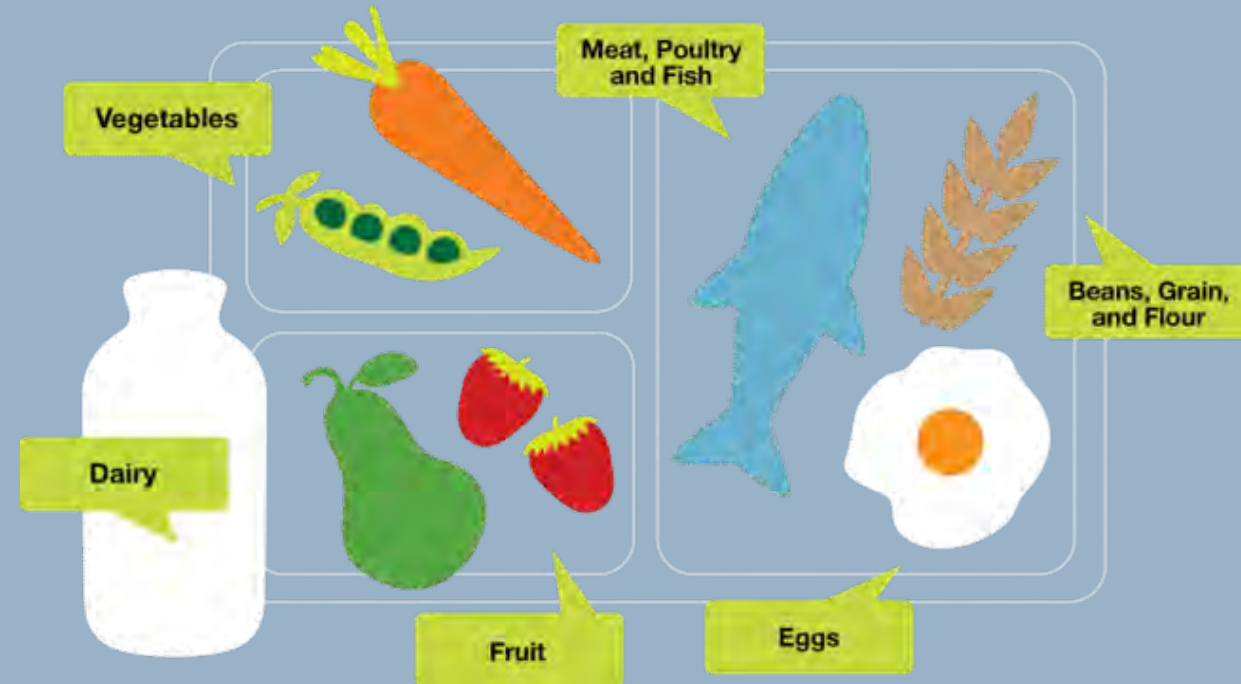
Produced within a 100-mile radius

Produced within a 200-mile radius

Produced within the county

Produced within the state

Produced within the region



# How Schools Source Local Foods

- Direct from producers
- Distributors such as Creation Gardens
- Food service management companies
- Local retailers
- Processors
- Food hubs and aggregators
- Gardens
- USDA Foods

Photos: USDA





# How Schools Incorporate Local Products

Meals – including breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Harvest of the Month (HoM) & “State plates”

Snacks

Tasting and educational activities

Special events

KY Crunch

Farm to School Month activities



Photos: Bowling Green Independent School District



# School Foodservice Cycles



# Procurement Process



# Procurement Methods

## Informal Procurement

### Micro-purchase

Equitably Distribute

Federal Threshold = \$10,000

State Threshold = \$10,000

### Small Purchase

(Requires Price Quotes)

Federal Threshold = \$250,000

State Threshold =  
\$20,000/\$30,000

## Formal Procurement

Sealed Bids (IFBs)  
& Competitive  
Proposals (RFPs)  
(Requires public  
advertising)

# Geographic Preference

The Geographic Preference Option Final Rule:

1. Grants authority to School Food Authorities to define local.
2. Defines unprocessed agricultural products.
3. Clarifies that a preference is a preference, not a specification.

Sample Language:

*"Any vendor who receives YES for KY grown category will receive a 10% price preference. This means that 10% of their price will be deducted FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES ONLY. After the price reduction, prices will be compared between vendors and the lowest price bid will be selected and that vendor will be awarded the bid."*





Bringing the Farm to School

## Selling to School Markets

Module 2

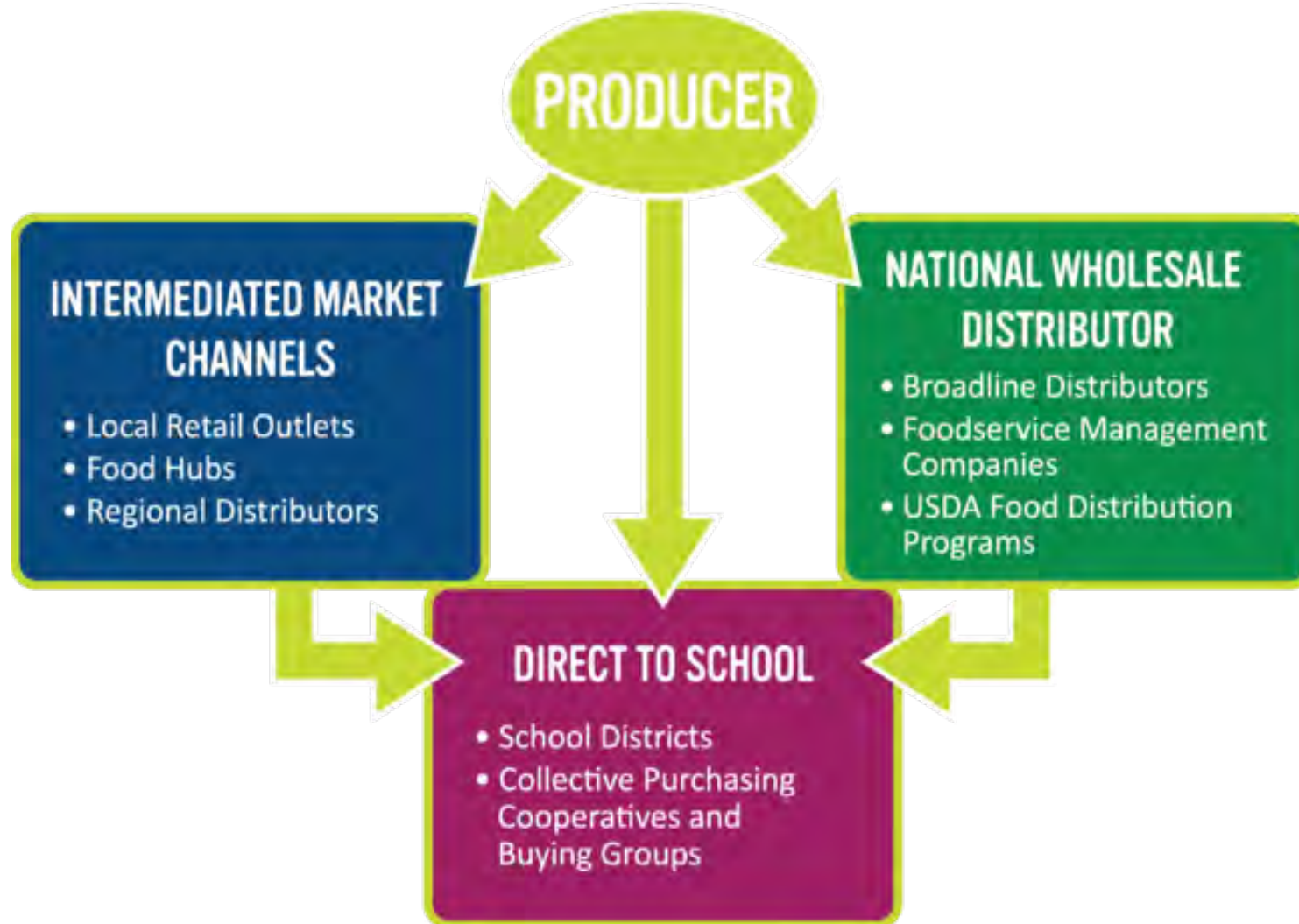




Section A:  
Farm To School Market Channels

# How Does Your Product Get to the School?

## MARKET CHANNELS FOR SELLING TO SCHOOLS



# Overview of Farm to School Market Channels

According to the USDA Farm to School Census:

63% of school districts that participate in farm to school use intermediaries, such as distributors

40% of schools report they get local food through a farmer directly

32% of school districts in KY that participate in farm to school use intermediaries, such as distributors

62% of schools in KY report they get local food through a farmer directly



# Intermediated Market Channels

Local Retail Outlets

Regional Aggregators and Food Hubs

Value Added Processors

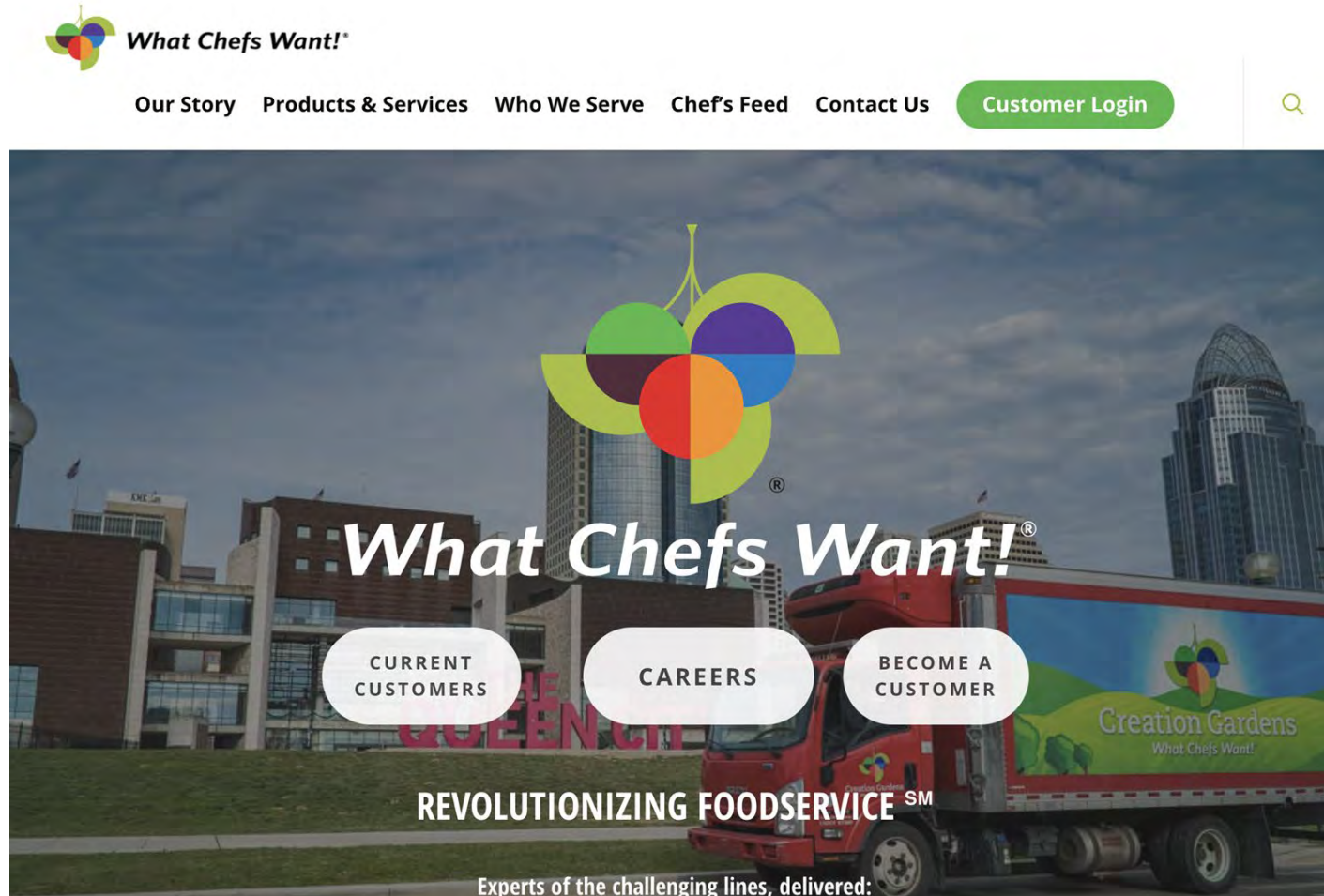
Independent Local and Regional Distributors

# Selling to Schools Through Local Retail Outlets



Photo:  
Unsplash

# Selling to Schools Through Regional Distributors



Credit: <https://www.whatchefswant.com/>

# Considerations for Selling to Schools Through Regional Distributors

These channels can be a good match for producers familiar with wholesale practices

Regional distributors do source from small and diversified farms

Many distributors rely on established suppliers

Important considerations include:

- Understanding of forward contracting

- Having a food safety plan and food safety certification

- Product quality and post-harvest handling

- Ability for providing computerized invoice and recordkeeping program

- Contingency plans



# National Wholesale Distribution Channels

Broadline distributors

Foodservice management companies

USDA food distribution programs (i.e. USDA Foods and DoD Fresh)

# Direct-to-School Supply Chains

Direct-to-school supply chains are what many people think of first when they hear farm to school...



Photo:  
Unsplash



Photo:  
USDA

a relationship directly between a local producer and the school.

# Direct-to-School Buyers

School buyers have many names, such as:

School Food Authorities

School Nutrition Directors

School Foodservice Managers

Procurement Managers



Photo:  
USDA



# Direct-to-School: Potential Benefits

High levels of customer satisfaction

Allows you to retain and grow your brand & business

Potential market for lower grade products

Direct lines of communication

Increased competitiveness in bidding processes

Local decision-making processes



Photo: USDA

# Direct-to-School: Potential Drawbacks



Photo:  
USDA

Increased time spent marketing products

Determining a fair price can be complex

Minimum food safety standards

Required documentation and recordkeeping

Payment processes

Vendor establishment



# Choosing the Market Channel Mix That Works Best For You



Photos:  
USDA



## Selling To School Districts

# Understanding Product Specifications

Specifications describe product standards required to meet the needs of the school market:

Not one-size fits all, but commonly include:

Product & Variety: for example, *heirloom/variety typical to the region*

Quality standards & size: for example, *minimally processed foods and seconds*

Quantity & pack size: for example, *wholesale pack sizes versus sales by unit.*



Photo:  
USDA



## SPECIFICATION WORKSHEET

Item Name:	Green Bell Peppers
Description (variety):	Peppers should be well formed, firm, glossy; rich green, red or yellow color; free from blemish or decay
Size:	Medium
Grade/Standard:	U.S. No. 2
Pack Size/Weight:	15 to 35 lb. cartons or crates
Price Quote: (by lb., dozen, case)	Quote by case/box
Ripeness: (Maximum/Minimal level of ripeness that will be acceptable)	Fully vine ripened
Delivery/Frequency:	
Growing Preference: (Local within Kentucky)	Grown within 75 mile radius
Other:	Delivered 24 to 48 hours of harvest

# Example Specifications

Check out example specs on the KDA website:

<https://www.kyagr.com/consumer/farm-to-school.html>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'ABOUT KDA', 'LICENSING & LAWS', 'FORMS', 'NEWS & HOT TOPICS', 'ONLINE SERVICES', 'ANIMAL', 'PLANT', and 'REGULATORY'. Below this, there is a section for 'PROMOTIONAL' with a sub-section for 'FARM TO SCHOOL'. The 'FARM TO SCHOOL' section contains text about bringing fresh, high-quality Kentucky Proud products to school systems and a sign-up link. Below this, there are sections for 'A NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT' and 'SPANISH LANGUAGE USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT'. At the bottom, there is a 'SPECIFICATION SHEETS' menu with a red circle around it, containing links for 'Vegetables', 'Fruits', 'Beef', and 'Daily Market Prices'. On the right side, there is a search bar, a 'SUBMIT' button, and a 'Food Division Newsletter' sign-up form.

# Understanding What Motivates a School Nutrition Director

You should make an opportunity to meet with the school food service director for the district to learn about their specific needs and requirements.

Here are some key points to discuss together:

Program Goals

Product Needs

Sourcing Practices and Preferences

Solicitations and Procurement

Payment

Contingencies including projections and what to do if a product cannot be fulfilled

**Do not assume that all schools will have the same motivations and requirements!**



# Approaching School Nutrition Directors

It is important to be patient when approaching with school food service directors. Working directly with farmers may be as new to them as working with schools is to you!

Here are a few things you can do to help jumpstart relationship building and build trust:

- Avoid judgment and don't shame school food
- Be prepared for your conversation
- Never show up unannounced
- Share your expertise (and passion!)
- Communication is key
- Remember, developing trusted relationships takes time

And directly from a KY Food Service Director...

- Schedule a meeting with the director that is convenient for them and bring samples to show what you can do
- Be willing to showcase your product to the students during lunch

# Meeting with School Nutrition Directors

## Worksheet 2D:

### School Nutrition Director Meeting Checklist

*Being familiar with the school meal program you are interested in working with will help you decide how best to approach the School Nutrition Director, communicate effectively, and avoid common pitfalls with new market relationships. You should make an opportunity to meet, learn about their specific needs and requirements, and set some goals for working together. Here are some key points to discuss together:*

- ❑ **Goals:** Understanding their motivations may help you build relationships.
  - What motivates them to do this work?
  - What are their food service program goals? How does farm to school fit in?
- ❑ **Products:** Ask about their product needs to assess if your products could be a good fit.
  - What kinds of products are they interested in purchasing locally? How much? How frequently?
  - Which local products have been successful in the past? Which have not been so successful, why?
  - What products do they commonly purchase? How much? How frequently?
  - Are they open to new products? Seasonal specials, traditional foods, etc.?
  - How are they used to receiving products? Processing requirements? Pack size and standards?
- ❑ **Delivery:** Ask about their delivery needs to see if your distribution system aligns.
  - Can products be delivered to a central site or do they need delivery to each school site?
  - Infrastructure requirements for delivery (like refrigerated trucks, pallets and loading docks)?
  - Current options for delivery days and times?
  - Who is responsible for coordinating deliveries?

Opportunities to meet with directors in KY include:

- Grower Buyer Meet-Ups
- KDA Admin Conference



Bringing the Farm to School

## Choosing the Right Product to Sell to Schools

Module 2





## Section A: Choosing the Right Product – School Considerations



# Choosing the Right Product



Photo: Bowling Green Independent School District

Can the schools cook food from scratch?

Do they have a central kitchen?

Which of your current products could be a substitute in the menu?

Can you meet the volume needs of the schools?

What items do the kids like to eat?

What items meet NSLP standards?



# What to Grow?

What crops do YOU grow profitably?

How will you sell to schools?

Direct to a school

Through a distributor

Do you have a product in mind?

In what months will you grow for schools?



Photo: Madison County Food Service

# School Cooking Infrastructure

Infrastructure will dictate what products a school can use

Heat & Serve  
Scratch Cooking



*Photo: Clark County Public Schools*



# What's On the Menu?

Look at local menus

What products could you provide?

Could you provide a substitution?

HARDIN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL MENU				
Entrée Bar- Week 2				
May 10, 2021	May 11, 2021	May 12, 2021	May 13, 2021	May 14, 2021
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Popcorn Chicken	Spaghetti w/ Meatballs	Chicken Spaghetti	Pulled Pork Totchos	Steak & Gravy
Sister Schubert Roll	Cheesy Garlic Breadstick	Sister Schubert Roll	Sister Schubert Roll	Sister Schubert Roll
Flour Tortilla/ Mexican Rice	Tortilla Chips	Tortilla Chips	Tortilla Chips	2 Chicken Chili Crisпитos
Chicken Fajita	Taco Meat	Pulled Pork BBQ	Taco Meat	
Cheese Sauce	Queso	Cheese Sauce	Queso	Cheese Sauce
Hamburger	Cheeseburger	Hamburger	Cheeseburger	Cheeseburger
Breaded Chicken Sandwich	Spicy Chicken Sandwich	Breaded Chicken Sandwich	Pulled Pork Barbecue Sandwich	Meatball Sub
Pizza Max Stix w/ Marinara		Pepperoni Pizza		Fiestada Personal Pizza
		Cheese Pizza		Cheese Pizza
Mashed Potatoes W/ Brown gravy	Baked Potato	Whole Kernel Corn	Tater Tots	Mashed Potatoes W/ Brown gravy
Whole Kernel Corn	Baked Sweet Potato	Blackeyed Peas	Baked Beans	Green Peas
	Green Beans		Coleslaw	
Tossed Salad	Tossed Salad	Tossed Salad	Tossed Salad	Tossed Salad
Assorted Dressing	Assorted Dressing	Assorted Dressing	Assorted Dressing	Assorted Dressing
Grapes	Peach Slices	Grapes	Strawberry Applesauce	Frozen Strawberries

Baby Carrots, Grape Tomatoes, Apples, Raisels, Oranges, Sidekicks and Banana offered most everyday.

#### Lunch Meal Pattern

2 oz. meat/meat alternate daily (10 oz. minimum per week)  
 2 oz. equivalent grain daily (10 oz. eq. minimum per week)  
 1 cup of vegetables daily (5 cups per week)  
 1 cup of fruit daily (5 cups per week)  
 1 cup milk daily (5 cups per week)

4 oz. 100% Fruit Juice and  
 1/2 cup 100% Frozen Fruit Juice  
 Sidekick  
 offered everyday as a fruit choice

#### Milk Choices:

1/2 pint lowfat 1% white milk  
 1/2 pint fat free 0% chocolate milk  
 1/2 pint fat free 0% strawberry milk

# Identifying Volume of the Product Based on School Needs

Work with the school buyer to determine number of servings of a product and how that translates into pounds.

Are there options for smaller volumes?

If you can't supply full volume for a district, some FSD's will work with you to provide product for select schools.



*Photo: Bowling Green Independent School District*



# Rethinking Volume Requirements

Red/Orange Vegetables - CARROTS					
Carrots, fresh <i>Without tops</i>	Pound	10.30	1/4 cup raw vegetable strips (about 3 strips, 4 inch by 1/2 inch)	9.80	1 lb AP = 0.70 lb ready-to-cook, or serve raw carrot sticks
	Pound	10.60	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable	9.50	1 lb AP = 0.83 lb trimmed, peeled carrots
	Pound	15.40	1/4 cup raw, shredded vegetable	6.50	1 lb AP = 0.83 lb (about 3-3/4 cups) trimmed, peeled, shredded carrot
	Pound	8.10	1/4 cup raw, shredded vegetable with dressing	12.40	1 lb AP = 0.83 lb (about 3-3/4 cups) trimmed, peeled, shredded carrot
	Pound	8.63	1/4 cup cooked, drained, shredded vegetable	11.60	1 lb AP = 0.79 lb (about 2-1/8 cups) trimmed, peeled, shredded, cooked carrot; 1 lb AP = 0.83 lb (about 3-3/4 cups) trimmed, peeled, shredded carrot
	Pound	10.90	1/4 cup raw, sliced vegetable (5/16 inch slices)	9.20	1 lb AP = 0.83 lb (about 2-2/3 cups) trimmed, peeled, sliced carrots
	Pound	8.16	1/4 cup cooked, drained, sliced vegetable (5/16 inch slices)	12.30	1 lb AP = 0.76 lb (about 2 cups) cooked, sliced carrots; 1 lb AP = 0.83 lb (about 2-2/3 cups) trimmed, peeled, sliced carrots

Carrot sticks :  
9.8, or ~ 10 pounds,  
of carrots = 100  
servings.

Credit: [USDA FNS Food Buying Guide](#)



# School Food Needs – How Often?

Determine how often the schools need a product

Depends on crop/product and storage capacity

Affects crop planning and succession planting



# Activity – School Menu Brainstorm

What products do you grow that could be used in school menus?

Consider a salad bar: which of your products may fit?

*(Note: not just fruit and vegetables.)*

What is easy for schools to prepare?

How does your product availability fit with the school-year timeline?



## Section B: Product Development

# Raw/Unprocessed Products

What types of schools do these products work for?

Kitchen capability

Look at menus



*Photo: USDA*



# Lightly Processed Vegetables and Fruit

Does the school have processing capabilities?

Consider on-farm infrastructure needed to process

Consider state and local regulations and food safety practices are followed



Photo: Need More Acres Farm

# Processed Meats (Patties and Partially-Cut Products)

Meat requires USDA inspected processing

[www.kcard.info/meat-processing](http://www.kcard.info/meat-processing)

Work with schools to identify types of cuts and then work with the processor pre-cooked meats

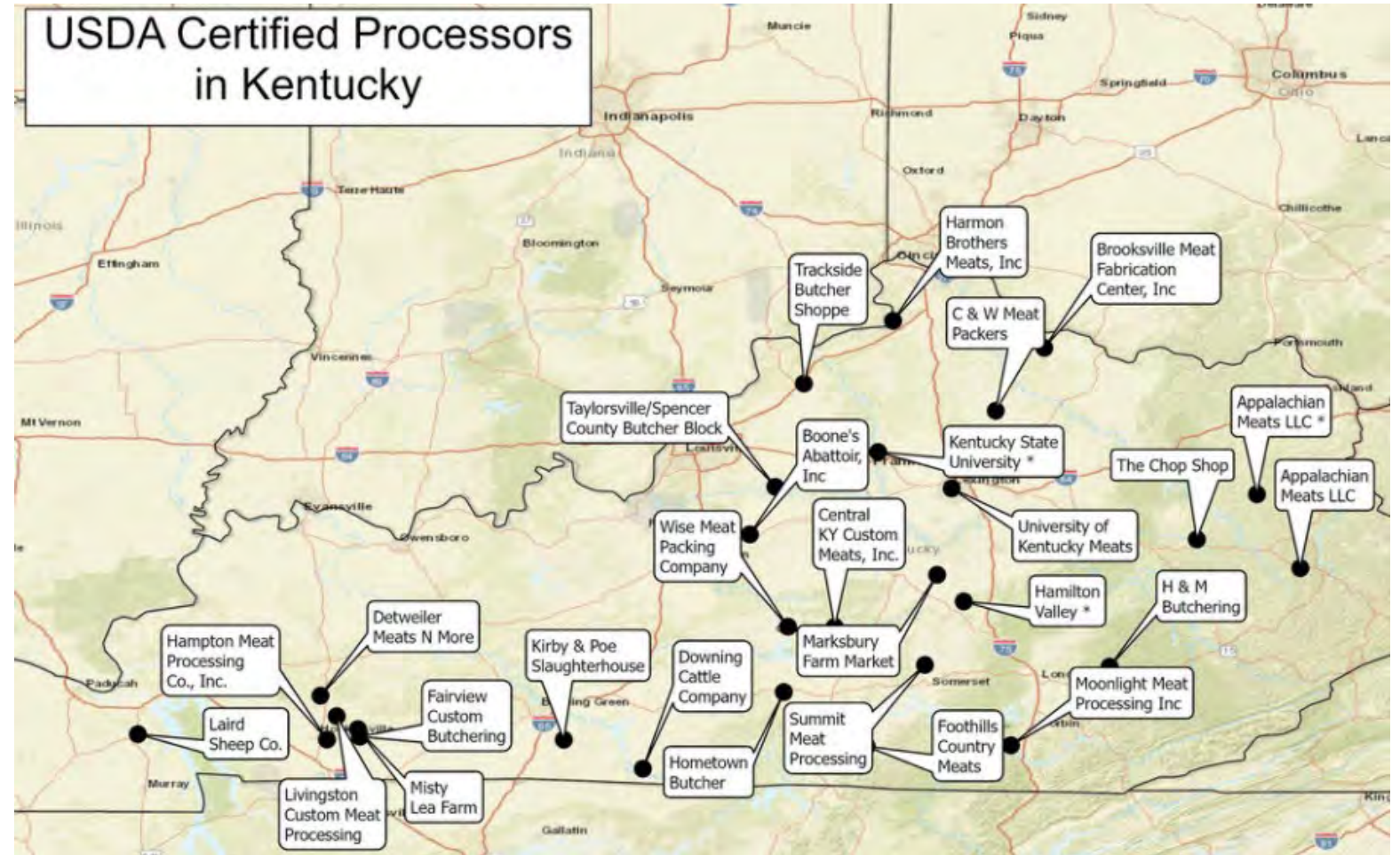


Photo: KCARD



# High Value-Added: Pre-Cooked or Frozen

Requires extensive infrastructure

Probably best left to a processing kitchen

Frozen berries, pitted cherries, frozen and peeled squash are all examples of processed foods

Farm to School or Value-Added Producer Grants can assist with equipment for value-added products



Photo: Lee's Garden Center

# Options for Processing Raw Products Off-Farm



Is there a food hub or aggregator that can do processing?

Build relationships

KY Commercial Kitchens

Photo: Creation Gardens Prep Kitchen



# Adding Value Without Processing

Fresh, superior products

Farm and school visits

Recipes

Community buy-in

Social networks



Students visit a local farm and interact with farmer.

Photo credit: Need More Acres



# AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' TOOLKIT

Bringing the Farm to School

## Growing for Schools

Module 4



# Understanding Pricing

Bidding and contracting process will determine price

Refer to other wholesale-market channel pricing to understand prices.

You must know your break-even price for products—compare that to the wholesale price that schools can pay

Relationship are important! Ask the Food Service Director if they may be able to pay more for a local item on the plate.

Not all products will be a fit for farm to school and that may be okay!

# Farm to School: Not a High Profit Margin

Work with school to determine which products are a good fit for farm to school

High volumes, seconds, or product varieties that have lower costs of production could be creative approaches to finding the right product for the school market and still allowing for a small profit.

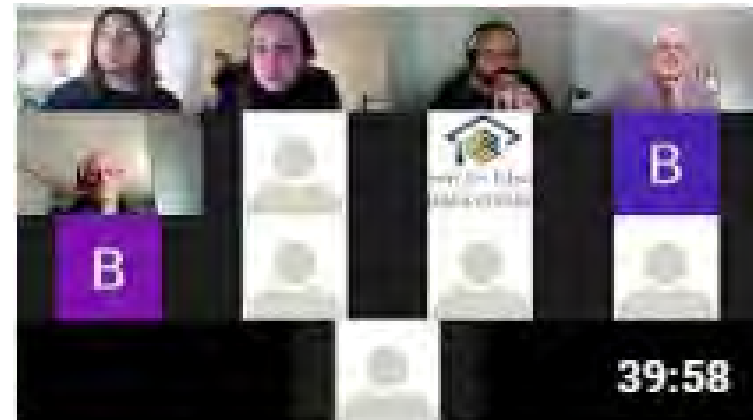
**Know your costs of production**

***“Having a *guaranteed sale* is worth more than the highest price sale to me as a farmer.”***

*— Central KY farmer*



# Production Budgets



Farm to School Enterprise  
Budget Webinar

Kentucky Horticulture Council

<https://www.youtube.com/c/KentuckyHorticultureCouncil>



# Crop Production and Planning

# Planting Plan

*Schools are reliable and can help with planning!*

Determine demand and work back from harvest to planting.

Identify harvest targets and space requirements.

Yield calculations will help identify the amount of space required.

What is your production goal?

Consider plant spacing and number of rows/plants/acres.

How much seed will be needed?

AVERAGE SEEDS NEEDED PER:				AVERAGE YIELD PER:	
Vegetable	100' Row	Weight	Acre # of seeds M=1,000)	100'	Acre
Beans, bush	800 seeds		116M	45 lb.	6,500 lb.
Beans, pole	420 seeds		46M	80 lb.	11,600 lb.
Beans, lima	1 lb.	145 lb.		17 lb.	2,500 lb.
Beans, shell	1/3 lb.	72 lb.		8 lb.	3,480 lb.
Beans, soy	1/2 lb.	87 lb.		20 lb. fresh; 12 lb. dry	3,000 lb. fresh

# Crop Planning Tools



## Johnny's Seed Calculator

AVERAGE SEEDS NEEDED PER:				AVERAGE YIELD PER:	
Vegetable	100' Row	Acre		100'	Acre
		Weight	# of seeds M=1,000)		
Beans, bush	800 seeds		116M	45 lb.	6,500 lb.
Beans, pole	420 seeds		46M	80 lb.	11,600 lb.
Beans, lima	1 lb.	145 lb.		17 lb.	2,500 lb.
Beans, shell	1/3 lb.	72 lb.		8 lb.	3,480 lb.
Beans, soy	1/2 lb.	87 lb.		20 lb. fresh; 12 lb. dry	3,000 lb. fresh



Farm to School Crop  
Planning Webinar

Kentucky Horticulture Council

<https://www.youtube.com/c/KentuckyHorticultureCouncil>





# Navigating School Food Safety Standards

# Finding School Food Safety Requirements



Photo: Madison County Schools

## School Product Specifications

Product & variety

Quality standards & size

*Food Safety—as a vendor requirement*

Quantity

Post-harvest handling—freshness

Packing & labeling

Traceability

Other terms and conditions

# FSMA, GAPs, PBPT, HACCP: What's the Difference?



# Where to Get Help with Food Safety

Kentucky Department of Agriculture Produce Safety Team

University of Kentucky Food Science Innovation Center

Cultivate Kentucky

Kentucky Horticulture Council

County Extension Offices

Produce Safety Alliance – Grower Training



*Photo: National Center for Appropriate Technology*





## Scaling Up Production: Meeting Increased Demand for School Markets

# Heading in the Direction of Farm to School

## Weak Links on the Farm

*Production*

*Harvest and Post-harvest*

*Quality Control*

*Livestock*

*Mechanical*

*Business Management*

*Financial*

*Employees*

*Communication and Decision Making*

*Markets*

“One, and only one, weakest link accounts for the strength of the entire chain, regardless of how strong other links might be. To strengthen a chain, one must always attend first to the weakest link. Other links (adverse factors), no matter how frail they appear, are essentially non-problems until the weakest link is first fixed.”

*- Savory, Butterfield. Holistic Management. 2016*

# Selling to Schools – Special Considerations

## Capacity, Consistency, Infrastructure

School Food Service Directors' requirements

Food safety and production standards

Washing, packing, or processing facility capacity

Cooler and delivery truck space

Accounting system to track sales and payments

Capabilities to manage a larger staff



*Photo: National Farm to School Network*



# Farm to School Myth Busting



# Applied Activity – School Food 101

If I am not a fruit and vegetable producer, I cannot sell my products to Child Nutrition Programs.

**False:** Local foods can span the plate from fruits and vegetables to meat, milk, dairy, and grains.

# Applied Activity – School Food 101

**The only way to get my products to children is through school lunch.**

**False:** There are a wide variety of Child Nutrition Programs in addition to the National School Lunch Program including School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Local foods can be served for meals (including breakfast, lunch, and dinner), snacks, taste tests, special events, and classroom activities.

# Applied Activity – School Food 101

Schools might be particularly interested in the sweet potatoes I grow because they are required to serve red/orange vegetables.

**True:** Schools are required to serve a certain amount of red/orange vegetables each week. Sweet potatoes, peppers, carrots, winter squash, and more can help them fulfill this requirement.

# Applied Activity – School Food 101

**There is no way that schools can afford to purchase my products with their spending limitations.**

**False:** Although the reimbursement rates for school meals may be limited, school food authorities have flexibility to spend more on some local foods while balancing their budget using less-expensive products in other places.



# Applied Activity – School Food 101

**Different School Food Authorities and different Child Nutrition Programs require different volumes of product.**

**True:** The size and type of program, age of children served, mode of serving (e.g., plated vs. salad bar) all influence the volume of product needed. This variation means it is possible to find a program that fits your production size and scale.



## Action Planning for Success: How Farm to School Can Help You Meet Your Farm Goals

# Farm Questions

Type  
and variety:

What products am I already growing that would be of interest to schools?

Size  
and scale:

What size of program do I have the capacity to grow for (small, medium, large)?

Level of  
processing:

Can I offer fresh, whole, unprocessed product and/ or minimally processed product?

Market  
channels:

What relevant market channels am I already selling through (direct, food hubs, distributors, etc.)?

Food  
safety:

What are my existing food safety protocols or documentation?

# Just Getting Started?

Do you know who to contact?

What about micro-purchases?

Can you do a special meal?

- Harvest of the Month

- Kentucky Crunch

- Taste tests

Are you interested in special events?

- Host field trips / farm visits

- Visit a classroom

- Provide materials for cafeteria education

- Support school community events



Photo: Need More Acres Farm



# SCHOOL BUSINESS ASSESSMENT



# Homework – Considerations for Selling to School Districts



Photos:  
USDA



Bringing the Farm to School

Resources



# KY Farm to School Contacts

**Tina Garland**

*Farm to School Coordinator, KY Dept. of Agriculture*

Tina.Garland@ky.gov; (502) 382-7505

**Division of School & Community Nutrition**

*Schools Branch, KY Dept. of Education*

(502) 564-5625

**Olivia Vogel**

*Local Food Coordinator, KY Center for Ag and Rural Development (KCARD)*





# KENTUCKY FARM TO SCHOOL CHALLENGE

WILL YOUR SCHOOL TAKE THE CHALLENGE?

Register your school at [kyhortcouncil.org/F2Schallenge](http://kyhortcouncil.org/F2Schallenge)

KY Farm to School Network

Kentucky Farm to School Network

@KYF2SNetwork · Agriculture

Send Email

Home Events Videos Photos More

Like

Message

## About

See all

The Kentucky Farm to School Network is a coalition of agencies, organizations, and advocates enthusiastic about farm to school programming in Kentucky.

Members of the KY Farm to School Network include Bluegrass Farm to Table,

Create post



Photo/video

Check in

Tag friends

Pinned post

Kentucky Farm to School Network

Kentucky Farm to School N...



Kentucky Farm to School Network

541 people like this including Dakota Moore and 12 friends

Typically replies within a few hours  
Agriculture

When you send a message, Kentucky Farm to School Network will see your public profile information.

+ Photo Video GIF Aa

# Kentucky Farm to School Network



College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Help Us Improve Login

Home

Resources For Producers

Resources For School Food Service Directors

## WELCOME TO THE KENTUCKY FARM TO SCHOOL HUB

### Welcome to the Kentucky Farm to School Hub

The Kentucky Farm to School Hub is a free statewide website. Its purpose is to:

- Help producers and school food service purchasers locate one another and communicate effectively
- Provide reliable information and resources to both producers and school food service purchasers, and
- Increase the amount of Kentucky grown and produced foods on school lunch trays.

The Kentucky Farm to School Hub offers farmers and food service directors the opportunity to post profiles of their operations, list products and services desired and produced, and access resources for planning, funding, procuring, selling, marketing, preparing and serving Kentucky foods to Kentucky school children.

# Kentucky Farm to School Hub



WWW.KYFARMTOSCHOOL.COM

# KENTUCKY FARM TO SCHOOL HUB



JOIN US ONLINE FOR A TOUR OF THIS NEW WEBSITE DESIGNED TO HELP PRODUCERS AND SCHOOL FOOD PURCHASERS LOCATE ONE ANOTHER AND PLAN PRODUCTION, PURCHASE, PREPARATION AND SERVICE OF LOCAL FOOD.



ZOOM WEBINAR

March 2, 2022  
7:00 pm eastern



Scan to Register



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University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service



USDA  
Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program

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# Bringing the Farm to School Producer Training



## KENTUCKY TRAINING FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

MARCH 8-10, 6:30-8:30 ET EACH DAY OVER ZOOM

**MARCH 8**

**INTRO & MODULE 1:  
GETTING TO KNOW  
SCHOOL MARKETS**

**MARCH 9**

**MOD. 2: SELLING TO  
SCHOOL MARKETS &  
MOD. 3: CHOOSING  
THE RIGHT PRODUCT**

**MARCH 10**

**MOD. 4: GROWING  
FOR SCHOOLS &  
CONCLUSION**

# Hyperlocal County-Level F2S Producer Training Program

## Proposed Counties

- Campbell Lincoln
- Clark Madison
- Floyd Martin
- Henry Pike
- Knott Shelby
- Knox Whitley
- Letcher Wolfe





The *Bringing the Farm to School: Agricultural Producers' Toolkit* was developed in partnership by USDA Food and Nutrition Services, the National Center for Appropriate Technology, and the National Farm to School Network.



Cindy Finneseth  
Kentucky Horticulture Council  
[cindy@kyhortcouncil.org](mailto:cindy@kyhortcouncil.org)

Jann Knappage  
University of Kentucky  
[jlknappage@uky.edu](mailto:jlknappage@uky.edu)

