

Reducing Food Waste with Farm to School

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Region**



Overview

- What is Farm to School?
- How do Farm to School efforts reduce food waste?
- Examples from the USDA Farm to School Grant Program



What is Farm to School?



THE
FARM to SCHOOL
PROGRAM

HHFKA 2010

Section 243: Access to Local Foods

The Secretary shall create a Farm to School Program to

1. Distribute grant funding to improve access to local foods in schools.
2. Provide training and technical assistance to improve access to local foods in schools.
3. Disseminate research and data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.



2010 Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act



**Does Farm to
School help
schools meet
the new meal
pattern
requirements
without
wasting food?**





2015 USDA Farm to School Census

76% of respondents (3,002 out of 3,954 districts) experienced at least one of the following benefits:

- reduced food waste (18%)
- lower school meal program costs (21%)
- greater acceptance of the new meal pattern (28%)
- increased participation (17%)
- greater community support (39%)

How *exactly* do Farm to School activities reduce food waste?



Food Education



Local Food



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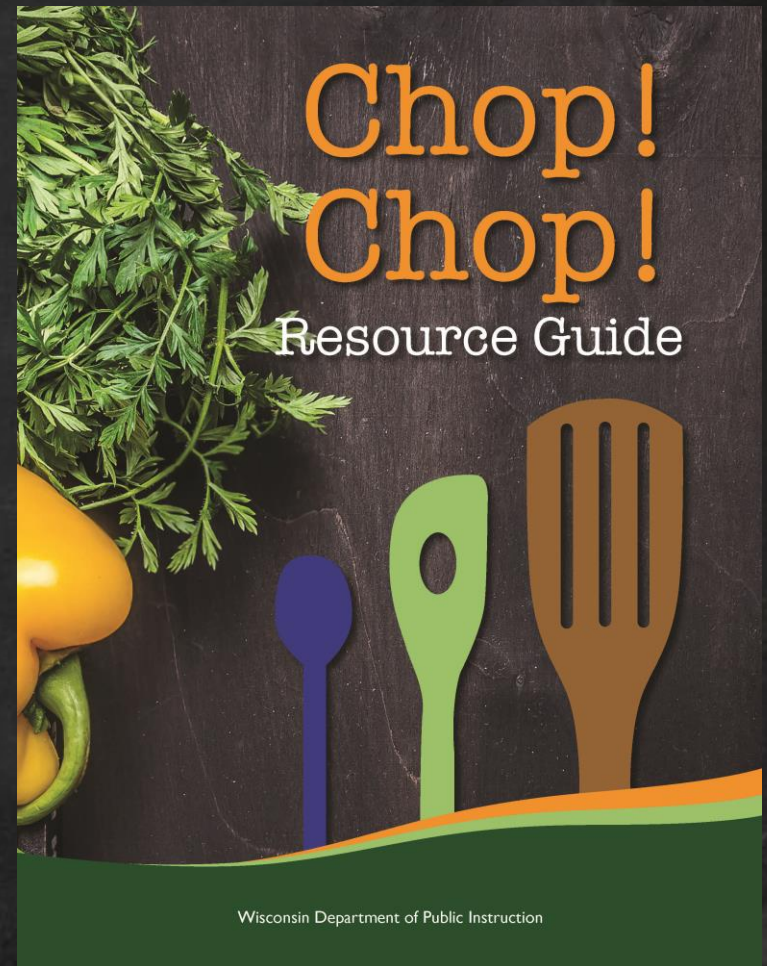
School settings



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Step 1: Food Service Trainings

- Culinary demos
- Prepare and serve fresh fruits and vegetables
 - » Food safety (less wasted)
 - » Chopping skills to minimize food waste
 - » Enhance flavor



Step 2: Marketing

- When local food is served on menus, kids eat more
 - » Highlight local, seasonal varieties
 - » Menus, special events, posters



Step 3: In-Class Taste Tests



- **Children** need to be offered a **new** food as **many** as 10-15 times **before** they will eat it
- Feature several local apple varieties
 - » Great Lakes Apple Crunch

Step 4: Experiential Learning



School Garden, Waterford Elementary School,
Waterford Michigan

- Willingness to taste fruits and vegetables increases with hands-on, food-based activities and school gardening

“...But there is no one to maintain the garden in the summer, all of that food will get wasted...”



Reduce Wasted Food in the Garden

- Have families or neighbors “adopt” the garden
- Summer Food Service Program
- Partner with a local non-profit or restaurant
- Weed now, not later
- Mulch for weed suppression and water conservation
- Summer interns
- Plant smart!
 - » Short, quick return crops in the spring (radishes)
 - » Plant for fall



Step 5: Composting



Step 6: Local in Summer



Step 7: Preserving the Harvest

- Freeze and preserve frozen vegetable during summer
 - Tomato sauce
 - Mirepoix
 - Veggie blends
- Train students in summer on how to process food



Start Early! Local in Childcare

- Exposure to local foods → greater willingness to try and like healthy foods
- Gardening at young age → increased willingness to try fruits and vegetables at an older age



Effects on Farmers

- Farmers have a new market
 - » Seconds
 - » Small items
 - » Imperfect produce
- Forward Contracting
- Gleaning projects
- Schools can accept donated food



Effective Strategies to Minimize Plate Waste

- Taste tests before introducing food on the menu
- Creative marketing/presentation of foods
- Fresh salad bars
- Smarter lunchroom
- ...Farm to School does all of this!



Benefits of farm to school

- ✓ Willingness to try new foods
- ✓ Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables (.99 – 1.3 servings/daily)
- ✓ Improved knowledge and awareness regarding gardening, agriculture and healthy eating
- ✓ Reduced food waste of local food, both on the production side as well as plate waste
- ✓ Decrease in overall food waste due to farm to school activities



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THE FARM *to* SCHOOL CENSUS



of districts surveyed by USDA say they participate in farm to school activities.



That's
5,254
districts



and
42,587
schools bringing
the farm to school



for the benefit of an estimated
23.6 million
children.



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Farm to School Grant Awards To Date

FY 2013 - FY 2016

- 300 projects
- 50 states, DC, Virgin Islands
- \$20.2 M
- Requests from 1,300+ projects seeking ~\$98 M



United States Department of Agriculture

THE
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PROGRAM



FY 2013–15

Summary of Grant Awards



THE
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GEOGRAPHIC PREFERENCE

What it is and how to use it



United States Department of Agriculture

USDA FOODS: A RESOURCE FOR BUYING LOCAL



United States Department of Agriculture

USING DOD FRESH TO PURCHASE LOCAL PRODUCE

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh) allows schools to use their USDA Foods entitlement dollars to buy fresh produce. The program, operated by DoD's Defense Logistics Agency, began in school year (SY) 1994-1995 as a pilot in eight states. As of 2013, schools in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam participate; schools received more than \$100 million worth of produce during SY 2012-2013.



What are the advantages of DoD Fresh?

- * Flexibility:** States can change DoD Fresh allocations on a monthly basis, which allows them to utilize USDA Foods entitlement dollars more effectively. USDA does not impose a cap on the amount of entitlement dollars or the amount of cash reimbursement funds that a state can allocate to DoD purchases.
- * Variety:** DoD Fresh vendors offer as many as 50 different types of produce, available in multiple forms (whole, pre-cut, and a variety of pack sizes) and from multiple locales (local and non local items are routinely offered).
- * Easy ordering and funds tracking:** Schools place orders via the web-based Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order/Receipt System (FFAVORS). The prices listed in the FFAVORS catalog reflect the prices that schools will be billed for the product. FFAVORS tracks schools' entitlement fund balances and total order costs. DoD manages vendor payment and reconciliation.
- * Consistency:** DoD Fresh vendors update the catalog weekly, and depending on the state, schools can receive deliveries every week, making orders timely, fresh, and responsive to market fluctuations.
- * High quality:** DoD maintains high quality standards through



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Procuring Local Foods
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Thank you! Questions?

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