



WISCONSIN SCHOOL NUTRITION IN A NUTSHELL

The Lifecycle of Farm to School:



**Serving Local
Foods**

Benefits of Serving Local Foods

General Benefits

- Promotes life-long healthy eating habits.
- Connects food to core curriculum like health and science.
- Draws school and community together.
- Builds local economy.
- Promotes sustainability.

Food Service Benefits

- Relatively inexpensive.
- Increases access to local foods.
- Expands variety of food offerings for menu planning.
- Introduces students and school staff to food service operations.
- Increases participation in school meal programs.

Marketing and Promoting Local Foods

Social Media

Social media is a great option for marketing local foods in your school meal programs. It is free and can spread your message far and wide, engaging students, parents, and your community! You can choose to create accounts for your school nutrition department on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and/or TikTok.

Include photos and videos of your meal lines, trays, and students in your posts to encourage excitement and engagement. When featuring local foods, tag and/or highlight the producer who supplied the local food for your program.

**When featuring students on social media check to make sure all students have a media release on-file.*

Broadcast Media

Another way to market your local food usage is through broadcast media. Local TV news and radio shows are always looking for feel-good stories to share about the community. Consider contacting the media and inviting them to feature your programs for a story. These opportunities are great for getting the word out to families about your local food efforts.

Menus and Signage

Use signage in your cafeteria to showcase your local food offerings. Signage could include posters or slides on TVs in the cafeteria.

Utilize your public-facing menus to highlight local foods as well. Many schools place a special symbol (i.e., a tractor or farm icon) next to local food offerings.

Appealing Trays

To be successful with incorporating local foods, consider the visual appeal of your meals.

- Plan meals with a variety of textures and colors. Avoid all brown foods.
- Make a sample tray to place at the beginning of the service line to entice students.



Photo credit: Academy of Excellence

Resources for Serving Local Foods

- [Wisconsin Harvest of the Month](#): Each month, schools feature one seasonal, Wisconsin agricultural product for students to explore, taste, and learn about. This provides an opportunity for students to try new foods and learn about how they are produced.
- [Nutritious, Delicious, Wisconsin Toolkit](#): This resource provides information for school nutrition professionals to implement a Wisconsin Harvest of the Month program at their school. The toolkit contains recipes featuring Wisconsin agricultural products, information on local procurement, promotional materials, and education resources. Lessons are targeted for third to fifth grade.
- [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#): Find a listing of local food producers looking to sell to schools by location and products they have available by season. You can also find farmers that are willing to visit schools! Add your school to the database of schools looking to buy local to make it easier for producers to contact you.

Events

Try incorporating local foods into these fun events throughout the year! These events can harness excitement and engagement from your school community.

- Around the World in 80 Trays
 - When: Week of Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January
 - Encourages schools to increase global flavors in school meal programs and celebrate the unique cultural backgrounds of Wisconsin students!
- Wisconsin Chili Lunch
 - When: Last Thursday in February
 - Prepare and serve chili featuring as many locally grown ingredients as possible, including local meats, cheese, and yogurt!
- Great Apple Crunch
 - When: Second Thursday in October
 - Celebrate National Farm to School Month (October) by purchasing and crunching into locally grown apples.

Video of Farm to Fork

To see successful implementation of local foods in school nutrition programs, check out [this video](#) featuring the partnership between Oregon School District and Greenfield Farm!

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