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JERSEY FRESH™

Farm School



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Bringing the Farm to School

The Power of Farm to School

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



Bringing the Farm to School Producer Training Goal

GOAL: Help all agricultural producers expand efforts to market and supply to schools.

OBJECTIVES:

- *Increase knowledge and understanding of Farm to School programs*
- *Increase participation in Farm to School activities*
- *Increase the number of local foods that producers sell to schools*



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

Farm to School in Action

Local Beekeeper Katie Williams & her husband Richard presented information about honeybees, their business, and being a beekeeper. She brought in hives (with wax and honey) for students to see and touch.

Students then were able to create posters for the cafeteria that taught all students about honey and bees. This was an opportunity for so many students to give raw honey a try for the very first time.



Producer Spotlights: Benefits of Selling to Schools For Your Operation



WHO WANTS SWISS CHARD?



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

Credit: USDA



Bringing the Farm to School

Getting to Know School Markets

Module 1





Child Nutrition Programs

School Meal Programs by the Numbers

National School Lunch Program (2021)

- 774 NJ school districts participating in the NSLP
- 706,285 meals in NJ are served each day
- 13.83 billion in federal spending each year

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (2022)

- 5.5 million in federal spending for NJ

Total dollars spent on local food:
\$1.26 B National spending
(2019) NJ 76.9% of SFA's purchase local

A Look at School Meals

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

- National School Lunch Program
 - 5 Components
- School Breakfast Program
 - 3 Components
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
 - Fruit/Vegetable



Photos: USDA





Local Food Sourcing and Procurement in School Meals

Common Assumption

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.

How Schools Source Local Foods

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

Photos: USDA



How Schools Incorporate Local Products

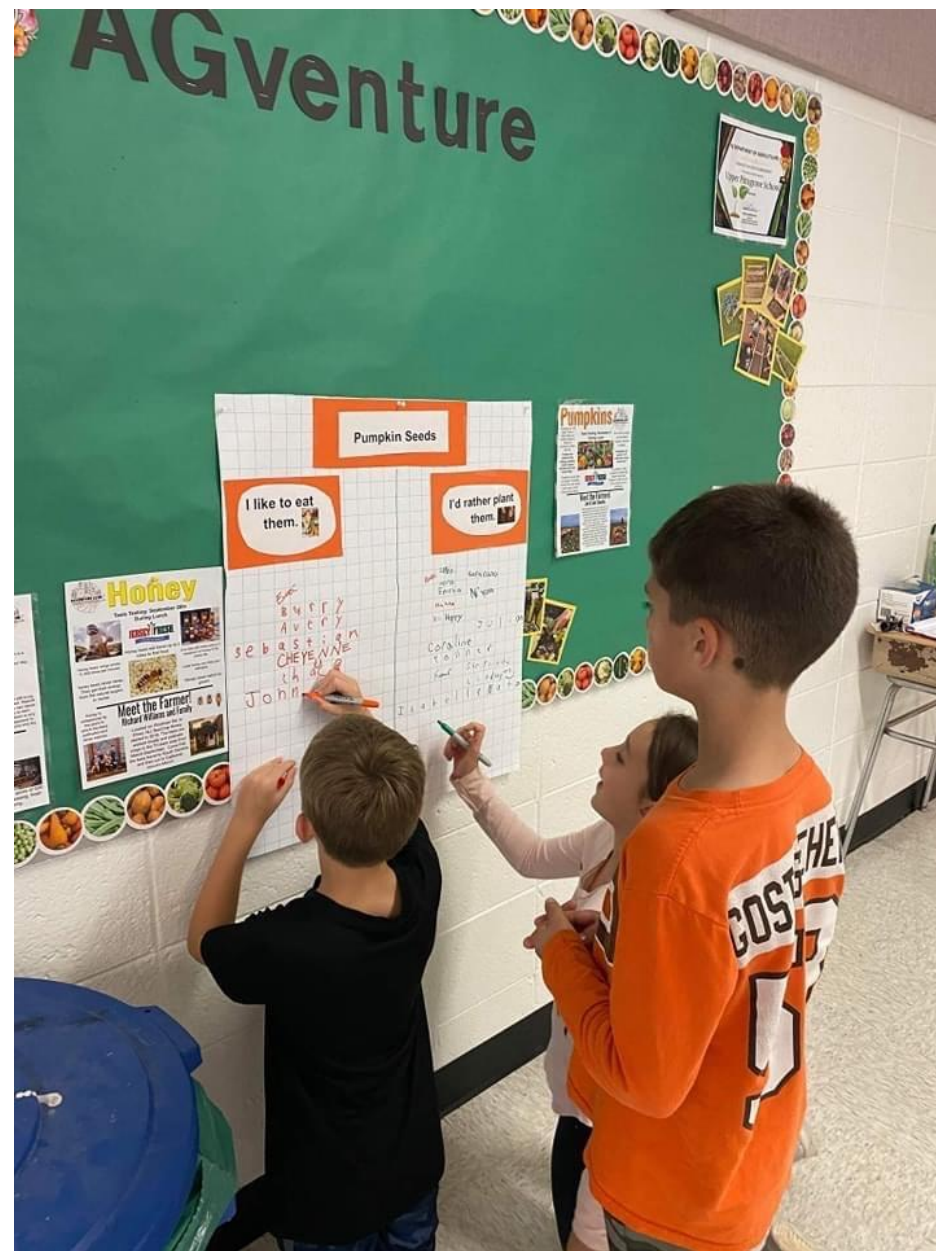
- Meals – Including breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Harvest of the Month (HoM) & “State plates”
- Snacks
- Tasting and educational activities
- Special events
- Fresh Fruit & Veggie Program



Photos: USDA



Photo: Upper Pittsgrove School District



Procurement Methods

Informal Procurement

Micro-purchase

Equitably Distribute
Federal Threshold = \$10,000
NJ Public School Threshold
= \$4,800 or \$6,600 with QPA

Small Purchase

(Requires Price Quotes)
Federal Threshold =
\$250,000
NJ Threshold = \$32,000 or
\$44,000 with QPA

Formal Procurement

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

Questions for Reflection

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?



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS' TOOLKIT

Bringing the Farm to School

Selling to School Markets

Module 2





Section A: Farm To School Market Channels

Overview of Farm to School Market Channels

There are **2 primary supply chain models** for getting your food into school markets:

- Direct-to-school
- Intermediated

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

Choosing the Market Channel Mix That Works Best For You



Photos: USDA

Considerations for Selling to Schools Through Regional Distributors:

- Can be a good match for producers familiar with wholesale practices
- Do source from small and diversified farms
- Schools 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

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

Meeting Common School Requirements

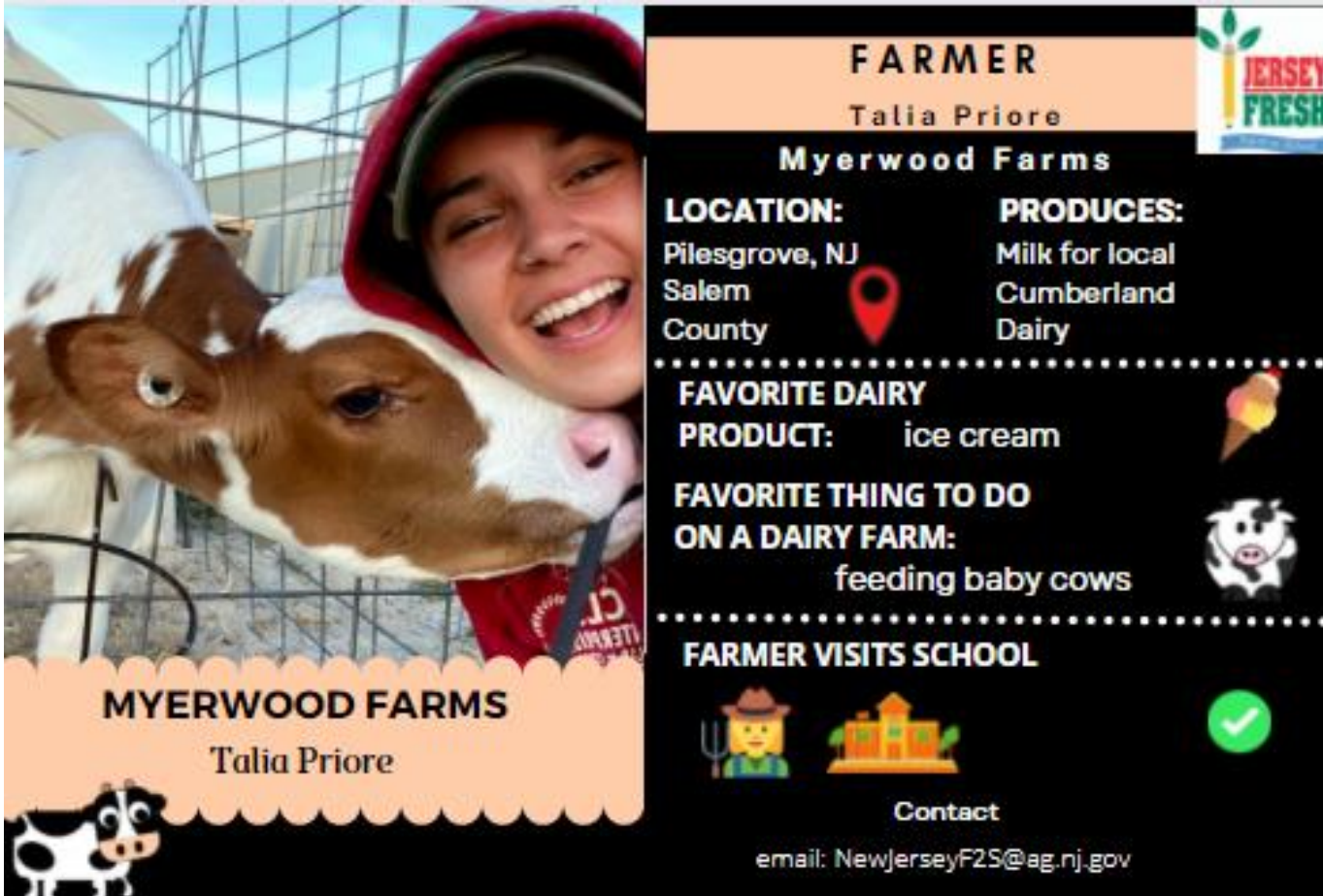


Photo: USDA

- Post-Harvest
- Handling Practices
- Food Safety Practices
- Insurance and Licenses
- Distribution Logistics

Marketing to School

To differentiate yourself as a local vendor, you can offer to:



FARMER
Talia Priore

Myerwood Farms

LOCATION: Pilesgrove, NJ
Salem County

PRODUCES: Milk for local
Cumberland Dairy

FAVORITE DAIRY PRODUCT: ice cream

FAVORITE THING TO DO ON A DAIRY FARM: feeding baby cows

FARMER VISITS SCHOOL

MYERWOOD FARMS
Talia Priore

Contact
email: NewJerseyF2S@ag.nj.gov

- host field trips or farm visits
- provide materials for cafeteria education
- support school community events

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.



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Bringing
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to
School
Producer
Training
Panelists



HELLO
MY NAME IS

DENISE

AREA SUPERVISOR
MASCHIO'S FOOD SERVICES



HELLO
MY NAME IS

CARMEN

FARM TO SCHOOL
ASSISTANT & GROWER