

-SCHOOL DINING SERVICES-
LOCAL FOODS PROCUREMENT WORKSHEET

Here are some tips from the Mass. Farm to School Project. There are **three major components** to making your search more productive. First, **have detailed information** about your operation ready to share with a prospective farm products vendor. Second, be ready to **ask basic questions** of the farmer/vendor. Third, in order to fully utilize fresh fruits and vegetables which are seasonal, and to build a mutually advantageous relationship with a local farmer or distributor, **flexibility** is required.

STEP ONE: PREPARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR OPERATION

HAVE BASIC INFORMATION READY FOR FARMER OR DISTRIBUTOR CONVERSATIONS

1. Your name, and the name and location of your college or school
2. Best way to reach you, and best times to call or visit
3. Do you want as many types of food as you can get, or are only some items of interest (this can change over time but it's good to mention your priorities now)
4. Rough estimate of your weekly orders, either by dollar amount or by product volume (choose a month when seasonal foods are bountiful, and do not include items like bananas, which cannot be purchased from a local source)
5. Number of locations where you want deliveries, at what time, and on what day
6. Do you serve meals in the summer (if yes, tell the farmer the dates, delivery locations, and size of orders for summer vs. regular school year)
7. Name(s) and phone number(s) of other staff with whom farmer or distributor should interact
8. How does farmer become an official vendor for your operation - paperwork required - (can the packing slip serve as an invoice or must bills be sent to a separate location)
9. How and when do you prefer to place orders (fax, email, phone)
10. How long will it take farmer to get paid

STEP TWO: TALKING WITH A LOCAL FARMER

ASK THESE QUESTIONS, AND PREPARE OTHERS AS NEEDED

1. Is the farmer interested in, or already selling to, colleges or schools?

2. Might he/she be interested in your school, which is located in.....
 3. Tell the farmer about your operation and then find out more about his/hers -
GIVE THE FARMER THE BASIC INFORMATION WHICH YOU PREPARED ABOVE
 4. What products does the farm sell
 5. When does the farm have products available for sale
 6. Would the farmer pick up products from other farms for sale to the college
 7. Does the farmer have a delivery truck and the ability to deliver regularly
 8. Does the farmer require a minimum purchase per delivery location, or per invoice
 9. Other questions you want to remember to ask
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STEP THREE: TALKING WITH A NON-FARM VENDOR ABOUT LOCAL ITEMS

ASK THESE QUESTIONS, AND PREPARE OTHERS AS NEEDED

1. Can the vendor give you a list of local farms from which products have been procured in the past, and a sense of how often local foods will be available
 2. Can the vendor give you a list of the local items that were offered to customers in the past year
 3. Does the vendor have a system in place to alert you to which products are in season and available each week
 4. Will the vendor pick up local products at the farm gate and deliver them directly to you; if not, how are locally grown foods tracked or segregated in the warehouse
 5. Are products delivered to the customer in boxes which note the farm of origin, or which identify in some way that the items were locally grown
 6. Can the vendor provide you with promotional materials from the farms whose products they sell
 7. Other questions you want to remember to ask
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