



Farm to Cafeteria Manual for Montana



A how-to guide for producers, foodservice professionals, and local leaders



Written and Compiled by the National Center for Appropriate Technology's (NCAT) Farm to Cafeteria Network and the Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)

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Introduction

About This Manual

This manual was developed by Farm to Cafeteria Network, a program of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), in collaboration with the Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO). Farm to Cafeteria Network is a group of Montana food producers, processors, foodservice professionals, and community members who collaborate to share best practices and develop resources about Farm to Cafeteria programs with the goal of increasing local food in institutions. You can learn more about our projects and how to get involved at www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org.

We have designed this manual to be comprehensive, relevant to Montana, and easy to follow. It offers insight and information about how to integrate local foods into your cafeteria and provides examples of the various models that have been successful. If you have questions or would like more information beyond what is presented here, please get in touch with us by emailing Nancy Moore at nancym@ncat.org or by calling (406) 494-4572.

What is Farm to Cafeteria?

Farm to Cafeteria can mean different things to different people. In this manual the term Farm to Cafeteria refers to programs in public and private institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals, correctional facilities, and senior living centers that serve healthy, local food while engaging the broader community in that effort.

Goals and Benefits of Farm to Cafeteria Programs

Though each Farm to Cafeteria program is unique, they generally share similar values and goals. Farm to Cafeteria programs often seek to accomplish the following:

- Provide nutritious, locally-sourced food in cafeterias
- Support local economies by purchasing from regional food producers and processors
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the distance from farm to table
- Educate communities about the value of eating and growing healthy, local food

The benefits of such programs are numerous and far-reaching.

For Farmers, Ranchers, and Food Processors, building a relationship with an institution can

1. Diversify your customer base
2. Create a stable market for your products
3. Provide opportunities to engage the community in your agricultural operation
4. Provide a stepping stone into the broader \$3 billion food market in Montana

For Foodservice Professionals, buying fresh food from local producers can

1. Increase participation in meal programs
2. Improve the taste and quality of your institution's meals
3. Earn your institution recognition and bring in new customers
4. Provide more information about the safety and origins of your food

For Parents, Community Organizers, and Educators, helping build a Farm to Cafeteria program in your community can

1. Increase community awareness of local farming and food systems
2. Encourage healthy lifestyles and improve access to fresh, nutritious food
3. Engage the community in collaborative, hands-on learning experiences
4. Strengthen local economies and food-based livelihoods

Montana-Specific Considerations

Montana's predominant food system, much like elsewhere in the United States, relies on exporting commodities produced in-state while importing processed foods from out of state. There is a strong case to be made that this centralized food system is exacerbating, if not creating, health problems and struggling rural communities in Montana. In 2009, the Centers for Disease Control reported that 62% of Montana residents were either overweight (38%) or obese (24%), meaning more than half of Montanans are at increased risk for heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and cancer. Meanwhile, the state's agricultural sector, capable of providing residents with fresh, healthy foods, is in decline. According to a 2011 study conducted by Ken Meter and funded by the Grow Montana coalition, over half of Montana farmers and ranchers report net losses annually.¹

Local food purchasing is one way to improve the health of individuals as well as revitalize our agricultural economy. Montana's public institutions spend approximately \$33 million annually on food purchases.² Diverting just 20% of that market to local products would contribute an additional \$6.6 million to Montana's agricultural economy, a significant amount of money for small and medium-sized producers looking to enter Montana's larger \$3 billion annual food market.

Despite economic struggles, agriculture is still Montana's largest industry. Beef and wheat generally account for three-fourths of all agricultural sales, though farmers and ranchers are increasingly diversifying their crops and operations.³ Other goods commonly produced in Montana include lentils, barley, peas, beets, honey, potatoes, cherries, apples, lamb, oilseeds, dairy products, squash, carrots, onions, cabbage, peppers, and tomatoes. This list is far from exhaustive and new food products are being grown and developed every year. See Appendix A for a seasonal food chart.

¹ Western Montana Local Food and Farm Economy, Meter, Ken, 2011

² *Unlocking the Food Buying Potential of Montana's Public Institutions*, Grow Montana, 2007

³ Montana Department of Agriculture, 2010

Profile I: FoodCorps Grows Farm to School Programs

One of the biggest challenges schools face in sourcing local food is the amount of time and energy it requires. Locating products, coordinating orders and deliveries, and integrating information about those local healthy foods into school curricula—it all takes time.

Enter FoodCorps. Launched in 2006 by Grow Montana and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), FoodCorps began by dispatching AmeriCorps members to Montana towns to help schools buy local food. Since then, the Montana program has grown and served as a model for a national FoodCorps program that took root in 2011.

In 2012-2013, service members in ten Montana communities joined a national team of eighty FoodCorps members in twelve states. Their work focuses on the three FoodCorps pillars: access, which involves helping schools serve local, healthy foods; knowledge, educating students about how and why to eat food



Montana's 2012-2013 FoodCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA members at a September 2012 Training. Photo courtesy of Lea Howe

grown closer to home; and engagement, building and involving students in school gardens.

The impact has been tremendous. From August 2012 to June 2013 FoodCorps members worked with over 7,000 students in cooking classes, school gardens, and other hands-on food

activities. They helped bring over 15,000 pounds of local food into schools with almost 2,500 pounds coming directly from school gardens. With FoodCorps' help, schools across Montana have included 81 new ingredients in school menus and are continuing to increase that number.

FoodCorps host organizations can be schools, non-profit organizations, or government entities, though all members serve in K-12 schools. Host communities in 2013-2014 are Billings, Kalispell, Boulder, Red Lodge, Ennis, Missoula, Flathead Northshore Area Schools, Butte, Bozeman, and Ronan.

To learn more about FoodCorps Montana visit: www.montanafoodcorps.org

To learn more about National FoodCorps visit: www.foodcorps.org

Although Montana boasts an abundance of raw food products, the state currently lacks adequate food processing infrastructure and facilities. This wasn't always the case, as historically Montana had a very robust processing infrastructure that helped provide 70% of Montanan's diet with local food. As a result, the vast majority of Montana's agricultural commodities are exported, while grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions rely on imported foods, often of a lesser quality than what we could grow in-state. As demand for local products is increasing, Montana's ability to process locally is improving, providing yet another opportunity for community-based food systems to support the state's economy.

Section I: For Farmers and Ranchers

Why Should I Get Involved in Farm to Cafeteria?

Montana's public institutions spend an estimated \$33 million on food per year, representing a significant and largely untapped market for Montana's farmers and ranchers. These institutions can provide a direct market that would expand local food and agriculture businesses, creating economic as well as social effects that help revitalize rural communities. When farmers and ranchers develop the capacity to sell to local institutions, they may find that they can better access the broader \$3 billion that Montanans spend on food each year, such as in restaurants and grocery stores. In that way, public institutions can provide sales opportunities as well as a great learning opportunity for helping farmers access additional local markets.

For farmers and ranchers, building a relationship with an institution can help you create a new and stable market for your business and also provide opportunities for you to engage community members in your agricultural operation. Institutions can act as an ideal market for "second quality" products (misshapen or slightly bruised, for example) that are just as tasty as first quality items but more affordable for the institution. The institutional market can also help producers leverage unexpected surplus in a given season or harvest period. In addition to second quality and surplus items, many institutions involved in Farm to Cafeteria also purchase normally-priced local food; they have worked hard to rearrange their budget so that they can help support farmers like you.

Overview of Institutional Markets and Special Considerations for Each

Montana has a variety of institutions that serve food such as K-12 schools, public and private universities, correctional facilities, healthcare institutions, senior living centers, veterans' services facilities, preschools, and many more. While there are broad commonalities in the purchasing needs of institutional foodservices, there is also great variation and it is important to understand their different characteristics when considering this market for your products.

Institutions generally purchase large volumes of food from a few broadline vendors, such as Sysco or Foodservices of America. Long-term contracts with these vendors or distributors often require a majority of purchasing through that company. In return, institutions are assured frequent deliveries, fast and convenient ordering, access to nearly any food product all year-round, and confidence that each product meets all food safety regulations. They also often get rock-bottom prices. Of course, what they don't necessarily provide—and where you have an advantage—is food grown nearby, for maximum freshness and quality. As a farmer or rancher, you should understand that every institutional buyer is different; some will expect consistent, high-volume sales while others may be more flexible and willing to accept different items and quantities each week. Regardless of which model you're working with, the institutional market will likely form only one part of your diverse marketing strategy.

Universities

Student interest in local food was an initial driver for what are now broadly supported Farm to College programs at the University of Montana (UM) and Montana State University (MSU). The university market is perhaps the most flexible of institutional markets; different food venues on campus offer student meal plans as well as cash-only sales, a feature that allows the consumer to absorb increased costs associated with local food if any exist. Both UM and MSU facilitate group purchasing among their branch campuses in the state and are leaders in purchasing large volumes of processed and fresh Montana food products through their broadline vendor contracts as well as directly from area food producers. Several private and community colleges in Montana are also beginning to source local food and are worth contacting about potential business.

K-12 Schools

A school district's size and available kitchen equipment can greatly affect food purchasing decisions. In Montana's rural communities, individual schools often purchase and prepare food in their respective kitchens. In urban areas, school districts usually prepare food in a central kitchen and distribute it among elementary, middle, and high schools. When making large purchases, public schools are required to hold a bidding process. The geographic preference option can help foodservice directors prioritize local sources in that process (see Appendix E for more details). For smaller purchases, foodservice directors must use their best discretion and consider full and open competition in the purchasing process. Most schools receive food from a variety of sources, including the federal School Nutrition Program run by the Montana Office of Public Instruction and commodity programs run by USDA. Farm to School programs are increasing in Montana. Check with your local school district to see if it is already purchasing from local farmers and businesses.

Correctional Facilities

Montana has seven correctional facilities that collectively spend around \$4 million on food per year. Most of these are public institutions that purchase food through a competitive bidding process. The largest correctional facility—Montana State Prison (MSP) in Deer Lodge—is home to the Food Factory, which prepares food served on-site as well for other institutions. MSP is unique for having an inmate-run beef and dairy ranch. Prisons are a market for some competitively priced Montana food products, most likely channeled through MSP's Food Factory.

Healthcare Facilities

Farm to Hospital programs are gaining ground nationwide as fresh, local food plays an increasingly vital role in hospitals' missions to improve the health of their patients. In addition to purchasing and serving local foods, a few Montana hospitals have introduced other innovative models for incorporating local food in their institutions. One model is to host farmers markets on hospital campuses, while another is to provide employees with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares. Unlike schools and universities, hospitals, as well as nursing homes and senior living facilities, consistently serve food year-round, including during the peak growing season, making them a great market for local producers. Healthcare facilities tend to be price-sensitive and purchase the majority of their food through broadline vendors, though they have the ability to buy Montana food products through those contracts as well as directly from area producers.



Foodservice staff prepares the banquet line at Livingston Healthcare Center. Photo courtesy of Jessica Williams.

All in One!

If you're interested in selling to all institutions (and restaurants and grocery stores), your best bet is to work through a broadline distributor like Sysco Foodservices of America (FSA), or a smaller independent distributor. These companies make regular deliveries and already carry products from Montana businesses such as Wheat Montana Bakery, Daily's Premium Meats, Cream of the West, Baush Potatoes, Quality Meats of Montana, and more. See page 13 to learn more about distributing options in Montana and how to begin working with distributors.

Types of Institutions and Considerations

Institution Type	How They May Use Local Food	Seasonality	Other Considerations
Healthcare Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient meals • Cafeterias or cafes for guests, staff • May host on-site farmers markets or employee Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs 	Year-round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets for in-house cafeterias or cafes may have more flexibility than patient meals
K-12 Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National School Lunch Program <p>Some schools also have additional programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) • Backpack Program • Summer Foodservice Program • School Breakfast Program 	August-May, though some schools have a Summer Foodservice Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District size is important in determining food purchases and processing capacity. All large school districts use a “central kitchen” model, meaning the meals are prepared in a single facility and distributed each day to the school lunchrooms. • When making large purchases, public schools are required to hold a bidding process • The geographic preference option can help foodservice directors prioritize local sources in that process. See page 52 for details • For smaller purchases, foodservice directors use discretion and consider full and open competition when purchasing • Many schools get started buying local food during October, which is National Farm to School month. Others try Montana meal events, or simply feature a single Montana-grown food each month
Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafeterias for students with meal plans • Campus restaurants • Catering services • Concessions at sporting events 	August-May, though most campuses operate a limited version of foodservices year-round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somewhat flexible budget because they offer student meal plans as well as cash-only sales that allows the consumer to absorb any increased costs • UM and MSU facilitate group purchasing among their branch campuses in the state and are leaders in purchasing large volumes of processed and fresh Montana food products
Correctional Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plated meals • Buffet style meals 	Year-round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven in the state; most food produced at the Montana State Prison's Food Factory in Deer Lodge • On-site gardens and farms most common form of “Farm to Prison”
Pre-K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast, Snacks, and Lunch 	August-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm to Preschool is growing, though Montana has few formal programs so far • Public and private preschools use different funds to purchase food
Senior Living Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident cafeteria 	Year-round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively untapped market in Montana, price point is comparable to other institutions

Strategies for Selling to Institutions

Successful Farm to Cafeteria programs are built over time and are always based on strong relationships among the parties involved. When first inquiring about selling to an institution, contact the foodservice director or manager to set up a time to introduce yourself and your products. Keep in mind that foodservice directors are extremely busy so a well-prepared, professional introduction delivered in-person will be key in beginning a positive business relationship.

To locate an institution near you that is already versed in purchasing local foods, search the Farm to Cafeteria Network's database of Montana Farm to Cafeteria programs at www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org. Then try approaching other institutions in your area that may not yet be procuring food locally but may be interested in your product.

The following are considerations to address when approaching an institution:

Marketing Methods

Several factors will determine the best method for you to market and sell to an institution. These include the scale of your operation, the size of the institution, the availability of a cooperative near you, delivery options, and more. There are three common ways local producers sell to institutions. You'll want to discuss these options with the institution's foodservice director to decide which method will best suit both of your needs.

- **Direct Marketing** – In this scenario, the producer sells directly to the institution. Because there's no "middle man," producers receive a slightly higher price with direct marketing. In turn, they must be able to provide in house all the services of that "middle man," such as delivery, invoicing, and price negotiations. This method is more common among smaller institutions due to their low purchase volumes and relative flexibility. Still, some larger institutions will consider working directly with producers if purchases will be significant and consistent.
- **Cooperatives** – Producer cooperatives have been highly successful in serving the institutional market as they are able to aggregate products from multiple small-scale producers to meet the volume requirements of institutions. This one-stop shop makes it convenient and easy for institutional buyers to go local. Check with the cooperative nearest you about joining and marketing to local institutions.
- **Wholesale Distributor** – Most institutions already work with large distributors like Sysco and Foodservices of America (FSA), and many also receive product

"Not only do we produce a wholesome, quality product for our kids to eat but we are also employing their parents by doing so."

—Brian Engle of Pioneer Meats, Big Timber, Montana

from smaller local distributors like Charlie's Produce, Butte Produce, Quality Food Distributing, and Montana Fish Company. You can contact any distributor about carrying your product, though keep in mind that larger companies generally require a minimum product volume, liability insurance, and a commitment to consistency that best suits medium to large-scale producers.

Product Details

When you visit with a foodservice director be sure to provide clear information, both verbally and in print, about:

- The volume and prices of your products
- Packaging, processing, and delivery capacities
- Insurance coverage
- Relevant certifications
- Food safety measures and production practices
- Names of your other customers (wholesale)

Presenting this information will demonstrate your level of professionalism as well as provide the institution with the resources necessary to purchase from you in the future.

Mode of Communication

From a foodservice professional's perspective, one of the challenges of buying locally can be maintaining clear and consistent communication with vendors. You'll want to address this issue upfront by discussing the best mode of communication (phone, email, fax, etc.) and by making a commitment to a communication schedule. This may be as simple as agreeing to email every Thursday about weekly product availability, or calling the first Monday of the month to plan a larger sale. Decide what works best for you and the institution you're working with.

Selling Points

The reasons institutions should adopt Farm to Cafeteria programs are generally understood, while the reasons they should carry your product in particular are far more specific and less obvious. When making a pitch for your product, make sure you mention the big picture benefits of Farm to Cafeteria while also



Students of Boulder Elementary School get excited about their greenhouse projects. Photo courtesy of Montana Food Corps

highlighting benefits surrounding your product: what sets it apart from the competition? Why is it better for consumers' wellbeing? The community's economy? The environment's health? Use concrete examples to appeal to potential buyers.

Processing

Many institutions lack the kitchen equipment or labor required to prepare food from scratch, making processed food products a near necessity for the institutional market. Minimal processing, such as cutting and bagging vegetables or pureeing and freezing squash, may be the difference between whether a foodservice director buys a local item or sources it from a larger national vendor.

In Montana, this can be challenging as food processing centers are few and far between. In western Montana, producers have access to the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC), a processing facility that offers food safety training and affordable kitchen and equipment rental (see Profile II). State government agencies and food and agriculture interest groups are working to redevelop processing capacity in other parts of the state. To learn more, visit Montana's Food and Ag Development Center Network website: <http://agr.mt.gov/agr/Programs/Development/FADC>

Some institutions are modifying foodservice practices to be able to work with whole food products. This includes training staff in culinary skills, rearranging budget expenditures, and even investing in new equipment. These changes require innovation and a motivated foodservice director; talk with your local institution to see if it is pioneering such efforts. Let them know if you are willing to take on additional processing yourself. Something as simple as washing and chopping your carrots in a certified kitchen may cinch your sale.

Distributing

Given Montana's vast distances and relatively small populations, it is often difficult for individual producers to distribute products to institutions and businesses outside their

"Sysco actively seeks to source product locally as a part of our guiding principles because it is the right thing to do for our customers, our suppliers, and our environment. We are proud of our progress but are far from finished as we strive to improve our understanding of our environmental and social footprint and generate more ideas to make our company more sustainable."

—Valerie Carl, Healthcare & Education Account Executive, Sysco Montana

area. The current solution to this challenge is for producers to connect with a cooperative or wholesale distributor that can market, sell, and distribute their items.

Independent Distributors

A successful example of the producer cooperative model is the Western Montana Growers' Cooperative based in Arlee. The Growers' Co-op serves western Montana and is working to expand their distribution network farther east. Other independent distributors carrying Montana products include Quality Food Distributing and Market Day Foods, both located in Bozeman.

Broadline Distributors

Broadline distributors (also called broadline vendors) such as Sysco and FSA service a wide variety of accounts with a wide variety of products. They serve most of Montana's institutions and have expressed interest in carrying more Montana products. To stock your product with one of these companies, they recommend that you use a broker to represent your product, though this isn't essential if you have a plan (e.g., flyers, ride with sales people, sample program, representation at shows). The first step is to contact the distributor and set up an appointment to show the product in the test kitchen. Based on this initial meeting, the company will decide if they think the product will sell. For this reason, it is essential that the 'showing' go well and that producers are prepared with information such as who your target customers are, why your product is better than the competitors', and what your business plan looks like.

In addition to having a quality product, you'll need to show you can provide a relatively consistent supply of your product to larger distributors. These companies often sell in the hundreds of cases and they usually demand a steady product volume.

If the broadline distributor declines to carry the product after the initial meeting, there's still another option. Because the broadline distributors' primary goal is customer service, they will go out of their way to meet the requests of their customers, particularly larger ones such as colleges, hospitals, or big school districts. If a food producer gets an institution excited about the product, that institution can request that its broadline vendor stock the product. With the additional incentive of keeping their customers happy, Sysco or FSA will likely try to make it work. It may be a long process to begin working with a large distributor, but once you're in, you're in!

Food Safety Considerations

Food-safety requirements pertaining to production and handling practices, packaging specifications, and transportation conditions vary among institutions as well as among food type. In 2011, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was passed with the goal of creating a safer food supply and more stable food industry. At the time of this writing, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is still receiving comments on the proposed rules, most of which are consistent with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards. Until the final rules are adopted, below are some food

Profile II: Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center and the Western Montana Growers' Cooperative Lead the Way

Developed by Lake County Community Development Corporation in western Montana, the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) is a food processing and business development facility in Ronan that helps entrepreneurs with specialty food product development, packaging, and marketing. Opened in 2000, MMFEC also assists Farm to Cafeteria programs by processing local food products that institutions don't have the capacity to process in-house.

MMFEC's partnership with the Western Montana Growers' Cooperative has been crucial in reaching the institutional market. The cooperative, founded in 2003, provides wholesale marketing and product distribution for its 38 grower members. The Co-op alleviates the need for institutional buyers to work with multiple growers by aggregating members' products at a central warehouse and by acting as the point person for sales transactions. If the buyer is interested in a local product but needs it processed—such as coined carrots, shredded cabbage, or pre-cooked taco beef crumbles—the Co-op arranges for MMFEC to provide this service.



The Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center's lentil patty is made with all Montana ingredients (lentils, oats, barley, organic eggs, flax seed, bell peppers, onions and carrots) and fulfills protein requirements for Child Nutrition Programs. Photo courtesy of MMFEC

In addition to providing processed fresh products, MMFEC also prepares frozen items like cherries, pureed squash, and their signature lentil patty, made with all Montana ingredients. Though stored at MMFEC, the Co-op is responsible for the sale of these products. Other products available year-round through the Co-op include dairy and meat products and some dry goods such as barley and lentils.

The partnership between MMFEC and the Western Montana Growers' Cooperative has helped Farm to Cafeteria programs in Montana grow by leaps and bounds. Schools in Kalispell, Polson, Ronan, St. Ignatius, and Missoula regularly utilize their products, along with other institutions like the University of Montana and St. Pat's Hospital. Weekly orders grew from 400 pounds in 2011 to 1,000 pounds in 2012, and sometimes twice that. The Co-op and MMFEC are rising to the challenge of increasing demand and are exploring ways to increase supply.

For more information about Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, visit: www.mmfec.org

To learn about the Western Montana Growers Cooperative, visit: www.wmgcoop.com.

safety considerations to help you prepare for selling to institutions. To get current updates on the Food Safety Modernization Act, check the FDA website, www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA. You can also contact your county health officer or sanitarian, or Chief Attorney of the Montana Department of Agriculture Cort Jensen at cojensen@mt.gov or (406) 444-5402 if you have additional questions.



Staff at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center prepare Flathead cherries to be frozen. Photo courtesy of MMFEC

Produce

Institutions and distributors are increasingly looking to the **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** and **Good Handling Practices (GHP)** for safety guidelines required of farmers to minimize health risks associated with growing and transporting produce. Some institutions and food buyers may require GAP certification though most in Montana don't. They may, however, require a GAP plan or simply give preference to producers who follow GAP guidelines even if they aren't GAP certified.

For more information about GAP/GHP guidelines and to access an audit checklist, visit the USDA's GAP/GHP website, www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp.

For information on GAP/GHP trainings in Montana, contact Nancy Matheson, Agricultural Marketing and Business Development Director at the Montana Department of Agriculture, at (406) 444-2402 or nmatheson@mt.gov.

Meat

Montana institutions can purchase beef directly from any meat plant that is state or federally-inspected, or from a producer who slaughters and processes in one of these plants. Animals slaughtered and processed in a "custom-exempt" plant may not be sold to

Local Food Procurement Checklist

Iowa State University has developed a thorough *Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce* (Appendix C) that can give you a sense of what types of food safety standards institutions may be looking for. It is a good idea to complete the checklist and bring a copy to prospective institutional buyers to give them a better idea about your production practices (and show off your professionalism!). Expectations will vary by institution, and not meeting one of the standards listed is by no means reason not to inquire about doing business with an institution.

institutions. Montana has 9 state Department of Livestock-inspected plants and 5 USDA-inspected plants. See Appendix B for a list and map of 14 Montana meat processors and their contact information.

Poultry

Local chicken, turkey, and other poultry sold to institutions must be processed by a grower licensed by the Montana Department of Livestock or the USDA under the federal 1,000 or 20,000-bird poultry grower exemption. These exemptions mean they are exempt from an on-site, bird-by-bird inspection but that they have met licensing requirements. Institutions may also buy from state-inspected poultry plants; currently the New Rockport Hutterite Colony near Choteau is the only such facility in Montana.

Dairy Products

The Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) requires that dairy products be pasteurized at a processing facility licensed by the Milk and Egg Bureau.

Eggs

DPHHS requires egg vendors to be licensed by the Milk and Egg Bureau. However, according to food safety law MCA 81-20-201, producers that sell fewer than 25 cases (about 750 dozen eggs) a month over a year are exempt from grading requirements, though they must have a vendor's license and the eggs must be reasonably clean.

For additional questions about meat and poultry, contact the Meat and Poultry Bureau at (406) 444-5202. For questions about eggs and dairy, contact the Milk and Egg Bureau at (406) 444-9761.

Profile III:

Buying Local the “Right Thing to Do” at University of Montana

When the University of Montana (UM) in Missoula began purchasing local food in 2003, it started with the proverbial low-hanging fruit: oil, beef, and wheat. “They’re available year-round, so it seemed like a good place to start,” says Ian Finch, Farm to College Coordinator. Since then, the program has grown significantly and now purchases a variety of products from 120 different farmers, ranchers, and businesses.

University Dining Services (UDS) at UM serves over 3,000 meals a day and spends more than 20% of its total food budget on local food items. Students eating in one of the university coffee shops, at a dining hall, in the UDS-managed Food Court, or at a catered event on campus will often spot the UM Farm to College logo displayed alongside food items.

The University of Montana embraces Farm to College for many reasons, and all of them can be summed up with what has become the organization’s guiding philosophy: it’s just the right thing to do.

— Continued on next page —

Mark LoParco, Director of University Dining Services, has been the driving force in creating and spreading this philosophy. LoParco was instrumental in starting the program in 2003 when he partnered with four UM graduate students on a pilot “Montana Mornings” breakfast that featured local eggs, bacon, and milk. From there, local food and LoParco’s philosophy grew into every aspect of University Dining Services.

One of UM Farm to College’s biggest successes is its innovative use of organic safflower oil. The oil was chosen because of its health properties and versatility—it can be used in every foodservice application from salad dressings to fry oil. The product comes from the Oil Barn, a farmer-owned operation in northcentral Montana, and is healthier than traditional vegetable oil alternatives. Not only is it better for consumers, it’s better for the environment as well. After the oil has been used, it is collected and returned to the Oil Barn farm where it is converted into biodiesel to fuel their tractors.

One challenge associated with increasing the amount of local food served at the university has been developing kitchen and storage capacity to process whole, raw items and store them for year-round use. To meet their cooking-from-scratch needs, UDS purchased a patty machine to manufacture their own hamburger patties and two vacuum packing machines that allow them to blanch and package products for freezing. Most recently, UDS has developed a campus food hub comprised of a freezer, cooler, and dry storage space that allows the organization to buy in bulk (e.g., thousands of pounds of onions) and store items for distribution among the campus’s five different kitchens. These initiatives have served to buffer any added food costs, though UDS has not experienced an increase in costs due to its Farm to College Program.

In addition to purchasing and preparing local food, UM’s Farm to College program is also involved in growing it. Their Edible Campus Project is active in strategically seeking under-utilized areas of campus where food can be grown. UDS currently has two sizeable gardens and is planning to establish an orchard soon. “Gardens are a great way to garner student involvement and support,” Finch says of the Edible Campus Project.

For others starting Farm to College programs, Finch recommends starting small with one meal that showcases efforts around local food. He also stresses the importance of being flexible and patient with producer partners who might not have a solid understanding of your institution’s needs at first. “Clear dialogue is key to working out the kinks. Over time, you’ll both know how to meet each others’ needs and your efforts will be rewarded.”



University Dining Services proudly displays local beef at UM's annual "Fall Festival" that features local food. Photo courtesy of UM University Dining Services

Section II: For Foodservice Professionals

Why Create a Farm to Cafeteria Program in My Institution?

Many Farm to Cafeteria initiatives start with motivated foodservice professionals interested in serving fresher, healthier food that helps supports the local economy. While the lion's share of the challenges will fall under your purview as a foodservice professional, so too will the accolades and many of the benefits of Farm to Cafeteria. The number one reason to purchase local food is because of the high quality and tastiness of such products. In addition, purchasing local food can increase meal participation and foster positive community relations. Finally, many foodservice professionals feel that because the average food product changes hands 33 times between the field and the plate, decreasing that number also decreases the opportunity for mishandling and potentially dangerous contamination. In other words, knowing the farmer can increase confidence in the safety of the food.

Support

As the number of Farm to Cafeteria programs in Montana has increased in recent years, government and non-profit organizations have also increased support of such programs. The Montana Department of Agriculture actively promotes the use of Montana beef in institutions while the state's Office of Public Instruction trains foodservice directors and teachers around local procurement and nutrition education. The National Farm to School Network, a non-profit organization established in 2007, offers valuable resources and support for schools involved in Farm to School as does FoodCorps, a rapidly growing national program affiliated with AmeriCorps that places young professionals in schools to promote Farm to School activities.

The Montana Association of Health Care Providers (MHA) showed its strong support of Farm to Hospital in 2012 by giving the annual *Innovation in Healthcare Award* to

"I like knowing that our foodservice model helps put federal dollars into our state's economy when we make local sourcing a priority. It also bridges the lunchroom with the classroom and starts a dialogue with kids about where food comes from, providing an excellent opportunity to discuss science, biology, math, and practical culinary arts—exactly what a 21st century school district should be doing with kids."

—Ed Christenson, Assistant Supervisor of Missoula County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services

Livingston HealthCare Center for its work incorporating local, healthy food in its cafeteria and menu options. In corrections, the Montana State Prison has been recognized by the National Institute of Corrections for its cutting-edge agriculture programs that aim to reduce recidivism.

In the non-profit world, countless community groups and statewide organizations exist primarily to support local food and Farm to Cafeteria in particular. These include NCAT's Farm to Cafeteria Network, the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center in Ronan, Western Sustainability Exchange in Livingston, Garden City Harvest and Community Food and Agriculture Coalition in Missoula, Community GATE in Glendive, Madison Valley Farm to Fork in Ennis, and many more.

These examples show that widespread support of Farm to Cafeteria is growing, making it increasingly easy for foodservice professionals like you to galvanize community and administrative support behind your efforts to procure local, healthy food.

Models of Farm to Cafeteria

There are a variety of different ways to bring local food into an institution. Below are a few of the most common models institutions are using in their Farm to Cafeteria programs:

Special Events

A special event such as a “locally grown lunch” that features multiple local items is a great way to get a Farm to Cafeteria program started. Special events help showcase efforts around local food while allowing foodservice professionals to ease into the challenges of local food procurement and preparation.

Salad Bar

Offering and labeling fresh, local items on a salad bar is likely to increase your cafeteria's sales as well as provide healthy options for consumers. In Montana, the best months to do this are April through November when fresh produce is in season.

Incorporation into Regular Meals

Once your Farm to Cafeteria program has established relationships with local vendors you can regularly incorporate local items into everyday menus. For example, you might substitute your current out-of-state bread or flour with versions made from Montana-grown grains. And don't forget to label these items on your menu—give eaters a chance to be as proud of the meal as you are! You might also want to feature special items on a regular basis, such as a “harvest of the month” or similar initiative that educates consumers about seasonal availability. Some of your special items may become so popular that you'll want to include them in your daily menu.

Employee CSA

An innovative way to support local farmers while incentivizing employees to eat healthy,

local food is to begin an employee Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Connect with a local farmer who offers CSA shares to organize a cooperative purchase and organize weekly deliveries of fresh food.

Farmers Market

Some larger institutions host weekly or monthly farmers markets that make it easy for employees, visitors, patients, and others to purchase local food at their facility.

Catering

For institutions that offer catering services, consider offering an “all-local” meal option as a way to expand your Farm to Cafeteria efforts.

On-site garden

The educational and therapeutic benefits of gardening are innumerable, making on-site gardens an important component of many Farm to Cafeteria programs. Your institution can utilize the garden’s bounty in the cafeteria and also to host educational activities like cooking classes and nutrition workshops.

How Can I Find Local Products?

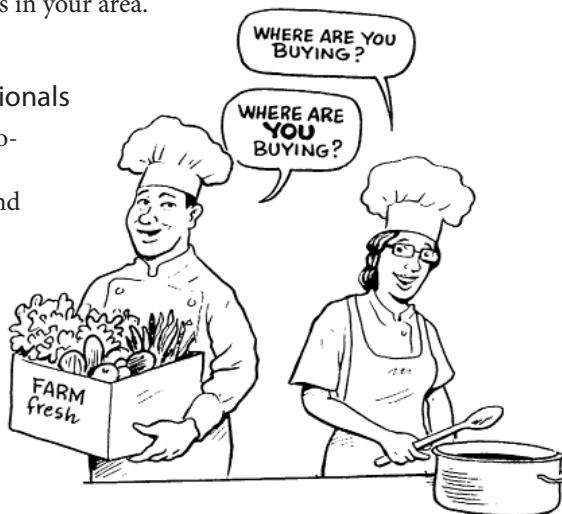
Identifying sources of local and Montana food products can be a challenge but there are many ways to get started.

Farm to Cafeteria Network Producer Database

In 2013, Farm to Cafeteria Network compiled a directory of Montana producers and distributors interested in selling to institutions. Check the website for more details and a list of other helpful resources, at www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org, or call (406) 533-6648 to connect with local food opportunities in your area.

Connect with other institutional foodservice professionals

There are many Farm to Cafeteria programs in Montana that have experience working with local producers and vendors; reach out to their chefs and food buyers! In addition to learning about sources for local food, you may gain new ideas about integrating local ingredients into your menu, suggestions about how to handle Purchase Orders and contracts with local vendors, and anything else you’re curious



about. For a list of Montana institutions engaged in Farm to Cafeteria, see the Farm to Cafeteria Network database: www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org

Visit nearby farmers markets

During harvest season, stroll down to one of Montana's many farmers markets and chat with the market manager and vendors to learn if there is interest in providing food to your institution. To find a farmers market near you, check the Montana Department of Agriculture's directory: http://agr.mt.gov/agr/_downloadGallery/Montana_Farmers_Market_Directory.pdf

Refer to a food & agriculture business directory or list

- The Farm to Cafeteria Network Producer Database contains Montana food businesses (farms, ranches, processors, and distributors) interested in selling to institutions. You can find what you need by searching the database for a desired product, location, or business: www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org
- The Montana Department of Commerce maintains a Made in Montana Products Directory, which includes some food and agriculture businesses: www.madeinmontanausa.com/ProDir.asp
- The Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) has an Abundant Montana Directory that lists many Montana producers: www.aeromt.org/abundant
- Western Sustainability Exchange maintains a list of Certified Sustainable producers that participate in their Market Connection Program: www.westernsustainabilityexchange.org/market-connection-program/member-producers

"I feel so much better about serving food that is grown close to home. It's fresher, it tastes better, it's putting money in our neighbors' pockets instead of leaving the state, and it's better for our patients and our environment."

—Jessica Williams,
Foodservice Manager
Livingston Healthcare Center

Contact national and regional distributors

Both Sysco and Foodservices of America (FSA) distribute to most institutions in Montana and carry a variety of Montana food products. Contact your sales representative for a list of available Montana products.

There are also a few regional distributors that carry Montana food products:

- Western Montana Growers Cooperative: www.wmgcoop.com

- Charlie's Produce: www.charliesproduce.com
- Quality Foods Distributing: www.qfdistributing.com
- Montana Fish Company: www.montanafishcompany.com

How Can I Serve Local Food Year-Round?

One of the obvious challenges of growing local food in Montana is the harsh and long winter. Despite the short growing season, there are many strategies you can employ to ensure that your Farm to Cafeteria Program serves local food twelve months out of the year.

Many local foods are available year-round

A common misperception is that local food is synonymous with fresh produce, when in reality most Montana foods are non-produce and are available all year long. These include oil, beef, lentils, barley, an assortment of dairy products, bread and pasta made with Montana wheat, and more.

Freezing

Many institutions rely on frozen local products in the winter such as pureed squash, cherries, and carrots. These frozen items are as nutritious and delicious as their fresh counterparts and work great in a variety of recipes. You can explore packaging and freezing foods with staff at your institution or buy frozen items through a local processor. The Western Montana Growers' Cooperative sells frozen items year-round: www.wmgcoop.com

Long-storage vegetables

Another option is to stock up in the fall on long-storage vegetables such as onions, squash, carrots, garlic, and cabbage. While these unprocessed items will require additional staff labor to prepare, the money you'll save on these affordable raw products can offset labor costs.

"The primary challenge for us as producers and for institutions is price. I think we have to ask ourselves what it's worth to have healthy communities, nutritious food that won't make us sick, and clean water. If we put a value on those things, then the price of local food begins to look reasonable."

—Dean Williamson, Three Hearts Farm in Bozeman

Ten Tips for Working with Producers

1. Be aware of producers' schedules when you set up appointments and meetings

During the growing season, try contacting farmers and ranchers early or late in the day when they are less likely to be outside working. Use farmers Markets as an opportunity to make contacts and establish relationships. For long term planning about products you seek, hold winter meetings when farmers are less busy, giving them lead time to plant what you want.

2. Make time for in-person visits

Demonstrate your commitment and interest by visiting farms and ranches to learn first-hand about growing practices, availability and pricing issues. Invite producers to dine in your facility or to participate in special events so they can learn about your operation and get more involved.

3. Request samples

When first meeting an interested farmer or rancher, request product samples that will allow him or her to showcase product quality and give you the opportunity to see if it will meet your needs.

4. Develop a purchasing plan that allows you to start small

Communicate with producers about your purchasing needs and work together to develop a purchasing plan that will allow you to increase purchases in the future if you are satisfied with the product. Also be sure to specify packaging and farm liability insurance requirements early and commit to a delivery schedule.

5. Develop a list of when and how much product you order

This allows producers to integrate your ordering needs into their annual operation plans.

6. Allow for some flexibility in your menus

Putting “local fresh seasonal vegetable” on your menu allows you leeway in adapting to inevitable fluctuations in fresh sourcing local products.

7. Develop a pay schedule that works for both parties

Many institutions are unable to provide payment immediately upon delivery, something producers may be unaccustomed to. Remember to communicate your pay schedule upfront.

8. Look for producers who go the extra step in working with you, and also go the extra step for them

You’re both absurdly busy, making the “extra step” hard sometimes, but small gestures go a long way in building lasting partnerships.

9. Ask producers for a weekly product availability sheet during the growing season

This current information, including quantity, variety, and price lists, will help you make the best purchasing decisions.

10. Keep open communication with producers

As you build relationships with local producers, communicate clear expectations as well as honest feedback. Producers will be happy to hear positive reactions to their products as well as suggestions for how they can better meet your needs. You can also update producers on how you are using their products, share press coverage or community outreach activities, and invite their participation in relevant events.

Adapted from: “Vermont Farm to School: A Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools.” Developed by Vermont FEED: Food Education Every Day, a partnership of Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), and Sherburne Farms. January 2007.

Purchasing Agreements

Every institution has different requirements for vendor contracts and purchasing agreements. If you are designing a new contract with a local vendor, here are some items you’ll want to include in the agreement:

- The total estimated volume of each item to be delivered
- Item specifications: grade (if applicable), variety, size, etc.
- Amount and price of standing order items
- Delivery schedule: time of day, frequency, and location
- Packing requirements: standard box, grade, loose pack, bulk, etc.
- Post-harvest handling practices: is the product pre-cooled? How clean should the product be?
- Cost per unit, payment terms, payment process
- Names and phone numbers of the contacts responsible for ordering and billing

Direct Reference: “Vermont Farm to School: A Guide for Using Local Foods in Schools.” Developed by Vermont FEED: Food Education Every Day, a partnership of Food Works, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), and Sherburne Farms. January 2007.

Marketing Your Farm to Cafeteria Program

Farm to Cafeteria is a challenging endeavor, and it is important to have your institution’s customers, administration, and broader community recognize your work and the benefits that come from purchasing locally. There are many ways to highlight the local products that you are using, including:

Special Events

A *Montana Meal Day*, local food taste tests, and other food-centered events are not only

A Note on Marketing and Media

Marketing and media attention are central in getting recognition for your efforts and can help galvanize administrative buy-in.

Refer to Appendix D for tips on working with the press and a sample press release.

a great way to get a Farm to Cafeteria program started, they also attract attention that will help you build support for the program.

Promotional and Educational Materials

You can advertise your Farm to Cafeteria program and simultaneously educate the institution's customers about local food efforts via signs, pamphlets, website text, and more. Try creating a display in a high traffic area that is regularly updated with information about featured farms and products. You could also include "fun farm facts" on your menu and highlight your institution's partnerships with local farms on your institution's website. Don't be shy about showcasing your efforts; people want to know!

Press Releases, News Articles, and Newsletters

Involve the media by using press releases to announce local food events or by inviting your local newspaper or radio station to do a story on your Farm to Cafeteria program. To keep employees informed of your local food program, write an article for your institution's newsletter or send periodic staff emails with updates. This will spur employee support and also earn your cafeteria new customers.

Garnering Support from Administration and Foodservice Staff

There are a variety of people you'll want to involve when starting a Farm to Cafeteria program and you'll want to be as inclusive as possible in your efforts so as not to deter anyone who may be a hidden resource. It is especially important to engage administrators and foodservice staff members in as many aspects of the Farm to Cafeteria program as possible because without their support, the initiative won't reach its potential.

Foodservice staff members are critical to have on board as they'll be preparing and serving the local food items. To optimize their involvement, you'll need to invest some time on additional staff meetings and trainings. Some effective ideas used by other institutions include farm tours to connect staff with local producers, culinary training specific to working with whole raw products,

"Schools are at the heart of many Montana communities, and it only seems right that students should be fed the high quality food that Montanans work so hard to produce. By supporting local agriculture and ranching we may be helping to preserve the pastoral beauty and satisfying lifestyle that makes Montana such a great place to live."

—Jenny Montague, School
Foodservice Director, Kalispell
Public Schools

and nutrition workshops that explain the benefits of incorporating healthier, local foods into meals.

To galvanize support from your institution's administration, start by presenting your idea to the principal, president, or executive director and by asking who else might be important to involve. Next, hold an informational meeting about the goals and potential plans for the Farm to Cafeteria program. Build in opportunities for co-workers and community members to help shape the program. The more people you can get involved, the more people you'll ultimately reach.

Informational Meeting Ideas

Here are some key points you may want to address in an informational meeting when seeking support from your institution:

1. **Outline the proposed program** by describing short-term and long-term goals and expected outcomes. Is there a specific local purchasing percentage you'd like to reach within a set time frame? Do you expect meal participation to increase? How will education and outreach strengthen the program?
2. **Bring a success story** about a program at an institution that is similar to your own, and/or share your own successes with purchasing locally thus far.
3. **Persuade with numbers** by doing minimal research. How many acres of farmland are in your area? What is the obesity rate? How many local jobs depend on agriculture? If you are working with decision-makers who are also responsible for the overall fiscal health of your organization, you will want to be well-prepared to talk about how much additional cost, if any, you might incur as a result of the program. Highlighting examples where the program will actually generate extra revenue or savings will be one of the most convincing points you can make. Minimal research can go a long way in educating about the importance of healthy, local food.
4. **Highlight current support** for your and similar programs. Administrators are more likely to buy into an idea that already has support from other individuals and groups. Bring a few co-workers, community members, or government officials to the meeting who are passionate about the benefits of Farm to Cafeteria, or simply mention examples of national and state support (see brief listing on page 19 for ideas). This can help get the buy-in you want.



Dixon Melon owner Harley Heddick and his grandson provide melons for several institutions in Western Montana. Photo courtesy of UM University Dining Services

Food Safety Considerations

As a foodservice professional, you already know the tremendous importance of proper food

safety and handling practices. Still, when buying food from a new source it can be helpful to brush up on food safety requirements, especially as the proposed rules of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), passed in 2011, are adopted by the Food and Drug Administration. To get current updates on the Food Safety Modernization Act, check the FDA website: www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA. You can also contact your county health officer or sanitarian, or Chief Attorney of the Montana Department of Agriculture Cort Jensen at cojensen@mt.gov or (406) 444-5402 if you have additional questions.

For schools, the USDA Farm to School Food Safety FAQ's is another great resource, www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/faqs_safety.htm

Produce

At the time of this writing, there are no formal inspections or regulations required for fresh, whole, uncut, raw produce sold to Montana institutions. To mitigate potential food safety issues, however, you should ask producers if they have an on-farm food safety plan. While your institution may not require producers to have such a plan, this can help guide your local purchasing. You may also ask producers if they follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) guidelines. While your institution likely doesn't require farmers to be GAP/GHP certified, knowing that they have a GAP plan will add to their food safety credibility. If you'd like to learn more about GAP/GHP criteria, see "Producer Food Safety Considerations" on page 14 of this guide.

We also recommend using Iowa State University's "Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce" (Appendix C) or a similar buyer's checklist that addresses on-farm food safety like irrigation sources and types of manure utilized.

Processed Foods

Processed food items, including minimally processed such as sliced, chopped or peeled, must follow food safety and licensure requirements established by the Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS). As a result, **when buying processed products you must ensure the local vendor is a licensed food business.**

Meat

With a state full of cattle, it only makes sense to buy local beef! Montana institutions can purchase beef directly from any licensed rancher as well as from meat plants that are state or federally-inspected. When buying from a processor, ask where the meat is from to verify that it was raised and finished in Montana (this isn't always the case). Animals slaughtered and processed in a "custom-exempt" plant may not be sold to institutions. Montana has 9 state Department of Livestock-inspected plants and 5 USDA-inspected plants. See Appendix B for contact information and a map of all 14 Montana meat processors.

Poultry

Institutions can purchase local chicken, turkey, and other poultry from growers that are licensed by the Montana Department of Livestock or the USDA. This includes growers licensed

by the state under USDA's federal 1,000 or 20,000-bird poultry grower exemption (meaning they are exempt from an on-site, bird-by-bird inspection but that they have met licensing requirements). Institutions may also buy from state-inspected poultry plants, though currently the New Rockport Hutterite Colony near Choteau is the only such facility in Montana.

Dairy Products

As with any dairy items served in institutions, local dairy products also must be pasteurized at a dairy-processing facility licensed by the Milk and Egg Bureau.

Eggs

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) requires egg vendors to be licensed by the Milk and Egg Bureau. However, according to food safety law MCA 81-20-201, producers that sell fewer than 25 cases (about 750 dozen eggs) a month over a year are exempt from grading requirements, though they must have a vendor's license and the eggs must be reasonably clean.

For additional questions about meat and poultry, contact the Meat and Poultry Bureau at (406) 444-5202. For questions about eggs and dairy, contact the Milk and Egg Bureau at (406) 444-9761.

Policy Support

There are a variety of types of policies to consider when developing your Farm to Cafeteria program, most of them put in place to support local food purchasing. Knowing and understanding any local, state, or federal policies/regulations regarding local food purchases is essential, as is developing your institution's own policies to promote Farm to Cafeteria.

State and Federal Policy

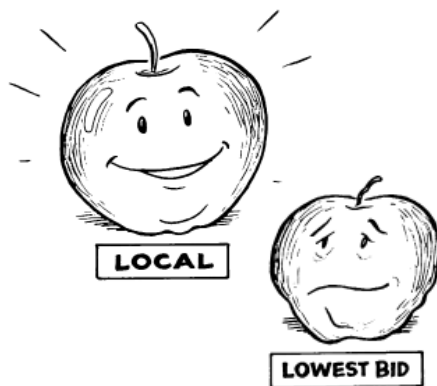
Montana Food to Institutions

In 2007 the Montana State Legislature passed the Montana Food to Institutions bill, which provides institutions an optional exemption to the Montana Procurement Law when purchasing local food. According to this law, institutional food buyers can purchase local food products even when they don't represent the lowest bid in the bidding process, as long as it doesn't increase overall expenditures on food. This gives buyers the opportunity to take other factors, like where and how food products were produced, into consideration instead of being limited by price points. For a summary of the law visit Grow Montana's website: www.growmontana.ncat.org/policies.php



Federal Geographic Preference

The 2008 Farm Bill revisions granted institutions operating Child Nutrition Programs the option to utilize geographic preference when purchasing locally-produced agricultural products. This allows school food directors to include geographic preference specifications (i.e., produced within X miles; harvested within X days; etc.) on Invitation for Bids (IFB) and also gives them authority to prioritize “local” over “lowest bid” in the bidding process.



For a concise explanation about how to utilize geographic preference, including information about foods that qualify and guidelines around small purchase thresholds, refer to Appendix E: “Federal Geographic Preference Guidelines,” developed by National Farm to School Network.

Learn more about this and other Farm to School Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) policies on the USDA website: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/f2spolicy.htm

Institutional Policies

Local Food Purchasing Policy

Developing a Local Food Purchasing Policy for your institution is an effective way to determine short-term and long-term local purchasing goals and guiding principles for your Farm to Cafeteria program. A well-developed local or sustainable food purchasing policy will increase awareness and support of the program among various stakeholders and define the institutional values that will guide local and responsible purchasing.

There are many examples and resources for developing a local food purchasing policy so there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Our favorite resource is *A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy*, a Food Alliance publication that walks you through the various questions to consider when developing your institution’s own purchasing policy. The guide is available at <http://food-hub.org/files/resources/SustainableFoodPolicyGuide.pdf>

Wellness Policy

A Wellness Policy outlines nutrition and exercise goals for the staff, students, residents, or others at an institution. When developing a new wellness policy or modifying an old one, you can include Farm to Cafeteria priorities by highlighting goals around school/community gardens and access to healthy, local food.

Your wellness policy might include:

1. Goals for *nutrition education, physical activity and other institution-based activities* that are designed to promote patient/inmate/student/customer wellness

2. *Nutrition guidelines* defined by the institution for all foods served, with the objective of promoting patient/inmate/student/customer health as well as local purchasing
3. A plan for *measuring implementation* of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons within the local agency to ensure that the institution fulfills the wellness policy
4. *Community involvement* goals, including local organizations, parents, students, and other representatives, in the development of the wellness policy

Adapted from: “Five Required Components of School Wellness Policy” as designated by Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

Montana Team Nutrition developed a *School Wellness Policy Implementation Guide* that contains useful information for other types of institutions as well. The resource is available at <http://opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/WellnessImpGuide.pdf>

Profile IV: Food as Part of Reform in Montana State Prison

Located on 37,000 acres of rolling foothills, the remarkably scenic Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge holds more than just inmates serving time; it’s also home to a sizeable cattle ranch, dairy operation, and food processing center, all run with inmates’ skills and labor.

The Ranch – Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) raises 1,600 beef cattle and grows barley, alfalfa, oats, and grass hay on the state prison property. To avoid competing with local ranchers, MCE sells the beef cattle from its cow-calf operation out of state. Ross Wagner, the Agriculture Director of MCE, says they used to have even more food-related projects—gardens, a slaughterhouse, and a cannery—but the combination of aging infrastructure and a quickly growing inmate population has made it difficult to keep those operations going. In 1991, the state prison housed approximately 700 offenders; by the end of 2012, that number had reached approximately 1,500.

The prison’s agriculture operations are self-funded and rely heavily on inmate labor. Of the prison’s total population, 192 inmates are classified as “low custody” and are therefore eligible to live in a dormitory outside the fence and work on the prison’s ranch and dairy. Inmates apply for these jobs, are interviewed by site supervisors, and if hired they must stay in a position four months before they’re allowed to switch. The work program has a strong focus on training inmates in technical skills that may be valuable after they finish their sentence.

Dairy – The prison’s 310 dairy cows are milked three times a day: at 1 a.m., 9 a.m., and 5 p.m., with each cow producing an average of 100 lbs of milk per day. The relatively new milking parlor was built in 2005 and contains extensive systems set up to monitor milk flow and the animals’ health. A computerized chip on each cow’s leg monitor her body temperature, number of steps taken, and other factors

— Continued on next page —



*The Montana State prison has 310 dairy cows and a state-of-the-art milking parlor.
Photo courtesy of NCAT*

that help detect potential health problems early on.

The prison also has a dairy processing center that pasteurizes milk and processes and packages yogurt, cream, and ice cream to be served in the eight state facilities the prison helps feed. Despite the impressive scale of its in-house operation, the prison processes and serves only 30% of the milk its cows produce; the remaining 70% is sold raw to Darigold, a farmer-owned dairy company.

The Food Factory – The Food Factory is a large food processing and cooking facility located at the state prison outside the security fence. In addition to the Montana State Prison, the Food Factory provides food for seven other state operations: Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs, the Warm Springs Addiction Treatment & Change (WATCH) Program in Warm Springs, Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Jail, Elkhorn Treatment Facility, Riverside Youth Correctional Facility, Lewis and Clark County Corrections, Helena Prerelease Center, and Treasure State Correctional Training Center. The Food Factory produces around 12,000 meals per production day.

The Food Factory prepares everything almost entirely from scratch, including baked goods prepared in its own bakery. The facility sources some of its raw products from within Montana though the majority still arrives from elsewhere via wholesale distributors.

Leading by Example – The food and agriculture operations at the Montana State Prison are not only extensive, they're also models for similar reform programs in prisons across the nation. "We've been recognized by the National Institute of Corrections for having cutting-edge programs in agriculture in our prison," Joe Mihelic, Director of the Food Factory, says. "The work experience and values these inmates gain while they're here will help them lead productive lives once they're released."

Profile V: Good Food is Growing at Livingston HealthCare

"It's no secret that some of Livingston's best food is served at the hospital," a local resident said when asked about the local Farm to Hospital program. The institution's cafeteria and meal program are recognized for their delicious food, yet they're also gaining recognition for supporting local agriculture and boosting community health.

Big changes started at Livingston Healthcare in 2007 when Jessica Williams became the Foodservice Manager and made it a priority to transition the institution's menu from pre-prepared processed foods to healthier meals made from scratch. While the institution was rearranging the kitchen set-up to accommodate this switch, Jessica began establishing business relationships with local producers through the Western Sustainability Exchange's (WSE) Farm to Restaurant Connections program. The program helps connect food buyers with local farmers and ranchers in a variety of ways, including via an annual Commerce Day that gathers interested parties to meet and share resources about selling and purchasing local foods.

Another key resource in getting Livingston's Farm to Hospital program underway was the institution's relationship with the county sanitarian. In 2007, Doris Morgan provided considerable knowledge about available local products and helped build trust and transparency between Livingston Healthcare and the county health department.

While Livingston Healthcare is relatively small, serving between 70-120 meals a day, its purchasing has had a sizeable impact on the local agricultural economy. In the 2012 fiscal year, 19% of its food was purchased from in-state producers and 4% was from Park County producers. "We have developed some wonderful relationships with our local farmers and producers," Jessica says of LHC's Farm to Hospital program. "We continue to strive for improvement in our culinary capabilities, creating flavorful comfort food without compromising nutrition. Using local products makes this so much easier!"



A kitchen staff member prepares a local meal at Livingston Healthcare Center. Photo courtesy of Jessica Williams.

Livingston Healthcare has enjoyed many benefits from its Farm to Hospital program but it has also faced its fair share of challenges. One of the greatest obstacles has been getting staff on board with the new menu and food preparation needs. To increase buy-in, Jessie works to provide educational opportunities for staff around the benefits of local, healthy food and requests that staff members contribute to the ever-changing menu with a personal or family recipe. She has found that convincing foodservice professionals of the value and health benefits of local and organic food can be as difficult as it is important.

In 2012, the Montana Association of Health Care Providers (MHA) recognized Livingston Healthcare's Farm to Hospital program by awarding the institution the annual Innovation in Healthcare Award. This is the first time the award was granted for achievements in food and nutrition in healthcare. Indeed, the institution has set many precedents with its Farm to Hospital program and continues to serve as a resource and model for other healthcare institutions interested in starting local procurement and healthy menu changes.

Section III: For Parents, Community Organizers, and Educators

Getting Started: How to Bring All the Right People to the Table

Get Connected With Farm to Cafeteria Network

Farm to Cafeteria Network has compiled multiple online resources to make it easier for you to get a Farm to Cafeteria Program started in your community. Check out the “Resources” tab on our website that includes various fact sheets, tips, and templates for Farm to Cafeteria in Montana: <http://farmtocafeteria.ncat.org/resources>

Find the Right People

Farm to Cafeteria succeeds when the whole community is involved. In the beginning, you may want to invite strategically-identified people to participate while still leaving opportunities for all interested community members to pitch in. Inviting representatives from different sectors, including kitchen staff, administration, community members, and students or residents will illuminate the different ideas, skills, and resources each can contribute and will also set the tone for a broadly collaborative project.

Get Them Excited!

People have to be passionate about Farm to Cafeteria to make it happen, and you can help get them there by knowing which benefits might particularly resonate with them. Teachers often enjoy the opportunity to incorporate nutrition or garden education into their curriculum standards. Foodservice professionals may be looking for ways to increase meal participation, meet new USDA nutrition standards (in schools), serve higher quality, tasty foods, and support Montana famers. Interested community members may know of a local farmer looking for a new market or may just want to help schoolchildren or seniors enjoy healthier meals.

To inspire collaboration, try hosting a fun event like a farm tour or “dig day” and invite community members to participate. Take time to ask participants to identify aspects of Farm to Cafeteria that interest them most, and engage partners based on those specific interests. For additional ideas, check out the National Farm to School Network’s tips for getting everyone involved in the planning process: www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_350.pdf

Enlist Help

AmeriCorps or FoodCorps

Many successful Farm to Cafeteria Programs in Montana, including UM Farm to College and Red Lodge Farm to School, got off the ground with the help of an AmeriCorps VISTA

or FoodCorps member. During their terms of service, which vary from several months to two years, these service members can dedicate the valuable time needed in the early stages of a Farm to Cafeteria program to build strong institution-producer relationships and begin educational efforts and outreach. To be eligible to host an AmeriCorps or FoodCorps member, an organization must be a government office, nonprofit, or school. Even if you don't host a service member, you might find AmeriCorps members in your town that could help with garden projects or volunteer days.

AmeriCorps has several branches in Montana that could be useful:

FoodCorps members serve in K-12 schools: www.foodcorps.org or www.montanafoodcorps.org

Montana Campus Compact AmeriCorps members serve in college communities: www.mtcompact.org

Montana Conservations Corps members focus on land stewardship, and has tools and experience with building and expanding school gardens: www.mtcorps.org

AmeriCorps VISTA members serve in communities to reduce poverty and may be able to help build the capacity of your organization to work on Farm to Cafeteria long-term: www.americorps.gov/about/programs/vista.asp

Hire an Intern or Farm to Cafeteria Coordinator

Another way to build capacity for local food purchasing and related educational activities is by hiring someone to help. While funding is an obvious challenge for most institutions, you could develop an internship program or apply for grant funding to help cover the new position.

Involve Young People

There are many young people across the state who are motivated about transforming the current food system—involve them in your program! Farm to Cafeteria Network has organized a “Growing Leaders” youth program for high school students and these youth can provide tremendous support in procuring and educating about local food in your institution.

Institutional Food 101: What to Expect When Working with Institutions

When approaching a foodservice operation with the idea of sourcing local products it is important to remember that they already have a busy workload and incorporating local foods into their schedule may be a challenge.

Understanding Institutional Foodservice Basics

- *Economy of Scale* - Institutional food costs are often based on economies of scale. Because their market has such a high demand for food products, centralized suppliers can meet those needs at relatively lower prices. In Farm to Cafeteria programs, the ability to source local products in large quantities is important and may require working with a

growers' cooperative, local distributor, or a dedicated staff member who works on sourcing and aggregating the products needed on a daily basis.

- *Consumer Demands* - Customer demand and satisfaction is what drives all food-service operations, even in institutions. To increase customer demand for a local food menu, educational activities (in the cafeteria, classroom, outside, anywhere!) and marketing campaigns are essential.
- *Kitchen Facilities* - Over the years, most institutional foodservices have transitioned away from scratch cooking to heat-and-serve systems that deal mostly with prepared, processed foods. As a result, many kitchen facilities now lack the equipment and staff needed to prepare meals from whole, raw products. You may want to ask for a tour so you can see first-hand an institution's kitchen capacity (e.g., how much prepping can they do? Can they cook raw beef? Do they have freezer capacity?) before considering what local foods would work best in your Farm to Cafeteria program.
- *Streamlined Ordering* - Ordering from multiple local food sources can be a logistical challenge for foodservice professionals. Encourage them to start small by working with their existing distribution channels to identify and source local products, and then slowly begin scaling up. Foodservice professionals might conduct a trial period of purchasing from just one local farmer. As a community member, you could play an important role in identifying potential producer partners and even researching what products they have to offer.

Imagine working all day

organizing menus, making food orders, arranging deliveries, checking nutrition guidelines, double-checking prices, and ensuring HAACP food safety guidelines are met in your facility's kitchen. You stayed overtime to fill in for a sick employee, and after the long work-day you stop at the grocery store, cook dinner, put your kids to bed, and finally sit down to relax when a neighbor stops by and asks why you didn't attend the community meeting that night. We're all busy, and it's important to keep in mind that foodservice directors are already working hard to serve hundreds—or thousands—of meals every day.

A Few Points to Remember When Working from Outside an Institution:

- If you are planning your first Farm to Cafeteria meeting, don't be disappointed if only a few people show up; always be sure to thank those who did come!
- Start any meeting by thanking the foodservice staff for all the hard work that they already put into their program.
- Ask questions! Before asking foodservice staff to do anything new, ask them what they're already doing. Maybe they've been serving local beef for years. If so, they

should be applauded for their vision and commitment. Also ask about any barriers they've experienced or foresee in buying local.

- Once you've begun a relationship with the foodservice staff, offer to help them start small with local purchases. Help them identify local products they are already buying and encourage them to scale up those orders, or identify one seasonally available food that they can integrate into their menu.
- Work with your local institution to set reasonably achievable Farm to Cafeteria goals and take the time to understand the challenges that institutions face in buying local food.
- Help your local institutions celebrate Farm to Cafeteria accomplishments and become a voice of support from the community.

Education and Outreach

Because Americans have grown accustomed to having access to any food, any time, many have lost an appreciation for the delicious taste of seasonally-harvested food, not to mention awareness of where and how that food was grown and the nutritional benefits it holds. Farm to Cafeteria programs have the potential to reignite appreciation of and demand for local foods. For that to happen, local procurement needs to be coupled with educational and outreach activities that community members like you can be instrumental in organizing.

For specific resources and examples of the activities below, see Appendix F, "Curriculum and Cookbooks."

School & Community Gardens

Starting a school or community garden is a fun way to engage patients, students, staff, neighbors—all sorts of Farm to Cafeteria stakeholders—in local foods. Whether you want to build a community garden on an institution's campus (or rooftop!) or a school garden to integrate into K-12 education, there are many resources to help you get started and to incorporate your gardens into educational activities.

Check out the Edible Schoolyard Project's website to see the variety of school gardens that exist and to find valuable curriculum resources: www.edibleschoolyard.org

Nutrition and Local Foods Education

There are many places in a cafeteria where you can strategically exhibit educational tidbits about the importance of eating healthy food and why local food is preferable. Materials can be placed along the serving line, next to the cash register, or on cafeteria walls. You could also try a community-level campaign that educates others about efforts around local, healthy food and why it's so important.

In schools, starting nutrition education at a young age will build a strong foundation and

positive relationship with food, and it is the perfect opportunity to connect students with their food sources. Nutrition education can easily be coupled with farm field trips or visiting farmers, school garden or orchard activities, cooking classes, and meals served in or outside of the classroom.

Cooking Classes

Cooking classes are a fun and educational way to get community members excited about using local food in their diets. Cooking classes can impart fundamental food and nutrition values to schoolchildren, patients, inmates, and college students as well as other community members.



Taste Tests

Taste tests are a means of introducing cafeteria consumers to new tastes, textures, and flavors of local products. They are also a great method of getting foodservice staff exposed to local products and of giving them the opportunity to see consumer reaction without a huge investment.

Montana Meals

Highlighting specific meals or days when local products will be featured in the cafeteria is an easy way to celebrate and increase awareness of local products. While it's up to the foodservice director to set the menu, community members can help by creating educational materials to promote the event and also arrange a farmer visit to accompany his or her local food.

National Food Day—October 24

You may want to suggest that your institution plan a special event such as an all-local meal or farmer visit for National Food Day on October 24. For schools, the entire month of October is National Farm to School Month. Visit the National Farm to School Network website for a list of resources and ideas of how to celebrate (many of which are relevant for other institutions as well): www.farmtoschoolmonth.org/resources

Press Releases and Social Media

Help get the word out about an upcoming Farm to Cafeteria event by getting in touch with local media and making announcements via social media. See Appendix D for tips on working with the press and a sample press release.

Policy Considerations

Institution-Specific Food Safety Regulations

When working with institutional food-services, there are quite a few things to know about food safety and foodservice regulations. Reach out to the local county sanitarian or the staff member at the food-service operation to discuss your ideas/plans for a Farm to Cafeteria program. They should be able to clarify any regulations and requirements around sourcing and serving local foods.

For an in-depth explanation on understanding the regulations that guide purchasing local food, see Montana Team Nutrition's "Purchasing Local Food: Guidelines for Montana School Foodservice Programs": www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/SchoolFood/FarmToSchool/Guide_PurchasingLocalFoods.pdf

Refer to "Policy Support" in Section II for more information about

- Federal and State Local Food Purchasing Policies
- Institutional Policies

How to Get Involved with Policy

There are a variety of ways to get involved with policy change as it relates to Farm to Cafeteria and local food education. Here are a few ideas:

1. Know About Legislation

- Stay abreast of bills during the Montana legislative session by checking Grow Montana's website or by subscribing to the Montana Food and Agriculture Listserv at www.growmontana.ncat.org
- Use Grow Montana's updates and action alerts to contact your representatives and tell them how important Farm to Cafeteria is to you.

2. Write Letters to the Editor

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper expressing the significance of local foods and Farm to Cafeteria programs to your regional economy. Congratulate specific individuals or organizations on their efforts and highlight the need to create policies that support local foods. This is an especially important role for community members who are not directly affiliated with an institution.

3. Propose a School Board Resolution

- Work with your local school board to pass a resolution around starting or supporting Farm to School efforts. Gallatin Valley Farm to School has provided a model resolution, available at <http://bit.ly/15ByefZ>
- Or check out Change Lab Solution's toolkit for developing a Farm to School Resolution: <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/establishing-farm-school-program>

Profile VI: Red Lodge Area Food Partnership Council and FoodCorps Spur Change

Farm to School in Red Lodge, Montana began with one purchasing trial. The School Wellness Committee helped one local rancher to supply beef to the schools, and from those humble beginnings a community-wide initiative was born. The citizen's group Red Lodge Area Food Partnership Council was formed and hosted a community forum to spur dialogue about local foods.



A student helps harvest an armload of carrots in Red Lodge. Photo courtesy of Alyssa Charney

In 2011, the Red Lodge Area Food Partnership helped bring FoodCorps member Alyssa Charney to Red Lodge and has played a critical role in helping the School Wellness Committee, Boys & Girls Club, and school foodservice staff work together to buy local food and educate students about the benefits of healthy eating and local agriculture. "Students have enjoyed local beef, greens, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, beets, and potatoes," Alyssa says. "Some were able to visit the farms where their food is grown, and others got to chat with farmers in the cafeteria during lunch."

In addition to farm field trips and farmer visits to the classroom, Alyssa has taken the lead on building the Community Youth Garden. Through school visits, afterschool activities, and summer programming, the garden is designed to be an outdoor classroom for students, teachers, and community members alike. A major challenge in establishing the Youth Garden was finding available land.

Eventually the school board secured a plot of school-owned land that was not in use. Throughout this process Alyssa was a driving force in working with stakeholders from the Food Partnership Council, the school district, Boys & Girls Club, the Children's Center, and others across town to ensure that the garden was collaboratively built.

In addition to spending all summer planning and tending the garden, Alyssa built strong relationships with teachers in order to incorporate garden and nutrition curriculum into their lessons. Special events for National Farm to School Month, Earth Day, and other occasions have helped get teachers excited about using garden and nutrition curriculum developed by the Montana Department of Agriculture and Life Lab.

Alyssa has also helped further community-based food activities in Red Lodge. Community members are hosting a local food film series, offering an afterschool cooking class, and continuing to support the local Farmers Market. While there was certainly broad interest in local foods among the Red Lodge community before Alyssa arrived, she has energized and organized stakeholders into action, a valid need in many Montana communities.

To learn more, visit: www.foodpartnership.org

Q & A Session: Kris Thompson of Gallatin Valley Farm to School Talks about Getting a Parent-Driven Organization Off the Ground

Interview from 2012

How did GV Farm to School get started?

It was started by interested parents and community folks. Some early inspiration came from reading about Alice Waters' efforts in the Bay Area and the local food movement in general. The annual October Bioneers event in Bozeman also helped bring some of these ideas into our community. And Missoula was a few steps ahead of us – some of their ideas and activities were trickling down our way.

Who was involved in that process?

It was a combined effort of active parents of school aged children, a couple of nutritionists, staff from MSU and Montana Team Nutrition, and a representative from the Bozeman Community Food Co-op.

What year did it get going?

It started about 6 years ago with the Gallatin Valley Farm to School group... but there were earlier efforts with some of the elementary schools through parent groups at those schools. Irving and Hawthorne Elementary and some of the Montessori schools were among the first.



Hands-on education is a priority of the Gallatin Valley Farm to School group. Photo courtesy of Gallatin Valley Farm to School

What resources were useful in that start-up process?

The Bozeman Community Food Co-op was important in many ways. They provide grants (known as the 4% Day Grants) to quite a few of the Bozeman schools that were building gardens or orchards and other farm-related activities. They have given our Farm to School group a 4% Day Grant almost every year since we organized. This year they have expanded the scope of their grant program to include schools in surrounding areas. The Bozeman Food Co-op allowed salaried staff time to help with the initial organization of the group, and have supported our FoodCorps volunteer with a working member discount at the Co-op to help with their living expenses. They also regularly promoted our efforts through their newsletter, e-newsletter, and website.

FoodCorps members have also been central to getting us established. Though we have had plenty of interested volunteers, having a regular working person helped us establish ourselves. The Rural Landscape Institute in Bozeman helped us gain nonprofit status, and we

worked a lot with the Montana Team Nutrition Program at MSU and used the National Farm to School Network website.

What other resources could you have used to get started?

Fiscal sponsorships are hugely important to launching a nonprofit. We had a difficult time finding a nonprofit to sponsor us. Hopa Mountain graciously did so for a number of years even though it was somewhat out of their purview. Some Farm to School groups may function under the nonprofit status of their school or PTA equivalent. But if this is not an option, a fiscal sponsor relationship must be established in order to pursue grants and contributions. I think this could be one of the greatest hurdles for establishing new farm to school groups in the state. It would be immensely helpful if an established nonprofit with similar goals could fiscally sponsor new Farm to School groups. Also, the Montana Nonprofit Association has also been very helpful to us and I would recommend that any new group join them and take advantage of their resources.

How did you approach the school district with the farm to school concept and get them excited or involved with it?

It initially came out of the parent groups at the schools. We had some great school principles get behind the idea immediately. Teachers were generally hesitant at first as they often looked at it as something that increased their work load. But there is a broader understanding now of how easily it can be fit into the curriculum, especially at the elementary school level.

A school garden is a great way to get a Farm to School program going. It provides a focus and is a very visible reminder of the movement. Other related educational activities such as field trips, cooking, and nutrition education seem to follow. If a school is worried about the manpower required to start a school garden, one of the best places is to start with an orchard on the campus. Many schools desperately need landscaping, so orchards are a great way to make an initial presence on a school campus. There are lots of grants available to get them going and once established take minimal maintenance.

Getting buy-in from the foodservice personnel can be a slower and more challenging process that will depend on the staff and policy or encouragement of school board and superintendent. National Farm to School Month in October can be a good starting place to garner support.



A student shows off her harvest. Photo courtesy of Gallatin Valley Farm to School

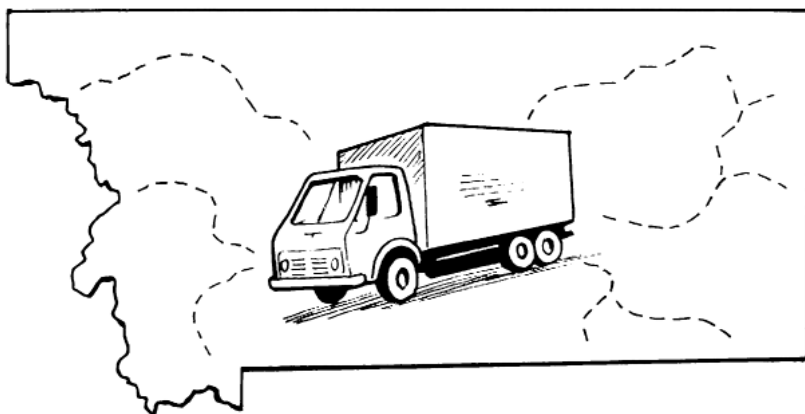
What advice would you offer a parent or community group interested in starting a Farm to School program?

A greater number of folks are familiar with the concept now than six years ago so it should be easier to get a group going. There is also more information online and more grants available. When we first started, a great deal of time was just spent explaining the concept and what the far-reaching implications could be to our community. We spent a lot of time at the farmers markets and other venues trying to get the ideas out there. I think it should be a lot easier now for new groups. The main thing that has kept us going was our FoodCorps members and then a paid staff person. We would not have been able to keep the level of projects going without that ongoing staff person. It seems to be an important part of maintaining our effort.

Conclusion

As we've seen, there's a lot happening with Farm to Cafeteria programs in Montana, but there remains much to be done! The good news is you're not alone in your effort to get healthy, local foods in your institution. An active Farm to Cafeteria movement is taking place in Montana and we are happy to help connect you to the people and resources associated with that movement. For more information and to stay connected, please visit Farm to Cafeteria Network's website at www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org or contact us at (406) 494-4572.

Remember, the more institutions demonstrate demand for healthy, local food products, the more Montana's food producers and processors will step up supply. We can improve our state's agricultural economy, our stewardship of the land, and the health of our communities, one institution at a time.



Appendix A: Seasonal Food Chart

The Montana Seasonal Food Chart shows many of the food items grown or raised in this state that are available throughout the four seasons. For produce, the chart indicates when fresh items may be available and doesn't take into account fruits or vegetables that are available after the harvest season due to canning, freezing, or dehydrating.

Winter (Dec. –April)	Spring (May–June)	Summer (July–August)	Fall (Sept.–Nov.)
Barley Beef Beets Buffalo Carrots Cheese Chicken Eggs Garbanzo Beans Garlic Kamut Lentils Milk Mushrooms Onions Parsnips Pasta Pinto beans Pork Potatoes Shallots Sprouts Sunflower Seed Tortillas Turkey Wheat Winter Squash Yogurt	Barley Beef Broccoli Buffalo Cabbage Cauliflower Chard Cheese Chicken Collards Eggs Garbanzo Beans Kamut Herbs Kale Lentils Lettuce Milk Morels Mushrooms Mustard Greens Pasta Peas Pinto beans Pork Spinach Sprouts Sunflower Seed Tortillas Turkey Wheat Yogurt	Apricots Barley Basil Beans Beef Beets Broccoli Buffalo Carrots Cabbage Cantaloupe Cauliflower Chard Cheese Cherries Chicken Collards Corn Cucumbers Eggs Garbanzo Beans Garlic Kamut Herbs Kale Lentils Lettuce Milk Mushrooms Mustard Greens Pasta Peas Peppers Pinto beans Pork Raspberries Scallions Shallots Spinach Sprouts Strawberries Summer Squash Sunflower Seed Tomatillos Tomatoes Tortillas Turkey Wheat Yogurt	Apples Barley Basil Beans Beef Beets Broccoli Buffalo Carrots Cabbage Cantaloupe Cauliflower Chard Cheese Cherries Chicken Collards Corn Eggs Garbanzo Beans Garlic Kamut Herbs Kale Leeks Lentils Lettuce Milk Mushrooms Mustard Greens Onions Pasta Peas Pears Peppers Pinto beans Pork Potatoes Pumpkins Raspberries Scallions Shallots Spinach Sprouts Strawberries Summer Squash Sunflower Seed Tomatillos Tomatoes Tortillas Turkey Wheat Winter Squash Yogurt

Courtesy of Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC)

Appendix B: Montana Beef In Schools (2012)

Did You Know?

- **The Montana Department of Agriculture can help you** to find sources for Montana beef, as well as other local products. Contact our Marketing Officers with specific requests:

Meats

Marty Earnheart

(406) 444-9126

mearnheart@mt.gov

Other Local Products

Angie DeYoung

(406) 444-5424

adeyoung@mt.gov

- **Montana schools can purchase beef directly from both State and Federally-inspected.**

Dry-aged beef, the process of choice for most Montana beef processors, is beef that has been hung to dry for several weeks, resulting in moisture evaporation from the muscle. The key effect of dry aging is the concentration and saturation of the natural flavor

Wet-aged beef is beef that has typically been aged in a vacuum-sealed bag to retain its moisture. This is the dominant mode of aging beef sold through most national food-service distributors today. Wet-aging is popular because it takes less time (typically only a few days) and none of the weight (moisture) is lost in the process.

What does this mean for you? This means that when you buy dry-aged beef, you're paying for up to 1/3 less of the moisture content (i.e., water, when compared to wet-aged beef). In a recent trial, we found that when equal portions of raw dry-aged vs. raw wet-aged ground beef were cooked, the wet-aged beef lost nearly an ounce in weight, whereas the Montana dry-aged beef lost around half an ounce, resulting in a lower cooked unit cost for the Montana beef (dollars per cooked pound of meat). Therefore, based on our 2011 experiment, **schools can purchase Montana beef (Choice, 88/12) at a price of up to \$3.05/lb. (uncooked) and still receive better or equal value than typical foodservice wet-aged beef.**

- **Montana beef processors can help you with sourcing Montana beef** and with coordinating distribution back to your school. This means that while you can purchase directly from a rancher, and we encourage you to do so if you have the means, you can also leave this work up to the beef processors, saving you time and energy. For a list of Montana beef processors who have indicated a willingness and interest in helping Montana schools source Montana beef, see the Montana Meat Processors map and corresponding Montana Beef Sources list on page 46.
- **There are some Montana school foodservice directors who are successfully sourcing Montana beef** for their schools while staying within their budgets for food and labor costs. In fact, in some cases, the directors have found that local food (including beef) increases their student meal participation numbers! To learn more, contact two such foodservice directors:

Robin Vogler
Somers Lakeside School
(406) 857-3661

Salley Young
Greenfield Elementary, Fairfield
(406) 788-5526 or (406) 463-2578

- **Montana law allows for procurement exemption.** Montana law allows state public institutions the option to prioritize “local” over “lowest bid” by taking advantage of an optional exemption from the Montana Procurement Act in the purchasing of Montana-produced food. This optional exemption, enacted in 2007, gives public institutions more flexibility to buy Montana-produced food, unless the purchases are made using federal dollars. The law requires that food purchasers stay within their current budgets. What this means is that an institution may pay more for Montana-produced food items, including beef, as long as the extra cost can be made up on other less expensive items or substitutions. “Montana-produced” is defined broadly in the law to mean products that were “planted, cultivated, grown, harvested, raised, collected, or manufactured” in Montana.
- **If a Montana rancher wants to donate a whole or half beef, you can say “yes!”**
 1. Make sure that there are no local ordinances or school policies that preclude you from accepting this donation.
 2. Contact a processor (Custom-Exempt, State, or Federally-inspected)
 3. Coordinate distribution from the ranch to the processor and then back to the school, provide processing instructions (cuts, fat content, packaging, etc.)
 4. Pay for the processing. The rancher often can help locate and coordinate with the processor; however, if the rancher cannot help with this coordination, contact Marty Earnheart (contact on previous page) for help.

Montana Beef Sources

Montana beef can be sourced in many ways. Here’s a list of some of the Montana meat processors below who can provide to you an easy source of Montana beef for you school. Contact them directly for more information.

Bear Paw Meats, Chinook

Karla Buck
406-357-2286
bpl@mtintouch.net
Inspection Status: State
Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
 - Can process to your specifications
 - Can help coordinate distribution for you
- Value-added products available:

polish sausages, hot dogs, taco meat,
smoked roast beef, summer sausage,
salami, beef sticks, jerky

C & K Meats, Forsyth

Karla Gambill
406-356-7660
ckmeats@rangeweb.net
Inspection Status: State
Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you

Clark Fork Custom Meats, Plains

Michael Frey

406-826-6169

smallfrey@blackfoot.com

Inspection Status: State

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you

Livingston Meats Distributing, Livingston

Ken Betley

406-222-0760

Inspection status: Federal

Services Provided:

- Can process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you

Lolo Locker, Lolo

Ted Meinzen

406-273-3876

timeinzen@aol.com

Inspection Status: State

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications

Lower Valley Processing, Kalispell

Wes & Sue Plummer

406-752-2846

plumbob_4@yahoo.com

Inspection Status: State

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you, in the Kalispell area

Value-added products available: hot dogs, taco meat, variety of sausage products

M3 Meats, Sidney

Clay Moran

406-433-3410

m3meatz@midrivers.com

Inspection status: State

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
 - Can process to your specifications
- Value-added products available: Beef Patties

Mission Mountain Food Center, Ronan

Jan Tusick

406-676-5901

jt@ronan.net

Inspection Status: Federal

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
 - Can process to your specifications
 - Can help coordinate distribution for you
- Value-added products available: cooked crumbles, taco meat

Pioneer Meats, Big Timber

Brian Engle

406-932-4555

brian@pioneermeatsmt.com

Inspection Status: State

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
 - Can process to your specifications
- Value-added products available: Bulk burger, burger patties (seasoned & unseasoned), 5:1 hot dogs, smoked bratwurst, bacon, snack sticks, beef jerky

Ranchland Packing Company, Butte

Justin Fisher

406-782-6371

jfish514@gmail.com

Inspection Status: Federal

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you

S & T Project Meats, Billings

Tanya Flowers

406-373-6315

flowers5@projectmeats.biz

Inspection Status: State

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can Process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you

Stillwater Packing Company, Columbus

Kathie Emmett

406-322-5666

stwpackingco@msn.com

Inspection Status: Federal

Services Provided:

- Can Process to your specifications
- Value-added products available: USDA

processed meats-sausages, jerky, roast beef, etc.

Superior Meats, Superior

Gerald Stroot

406-822-4702

superiorjerky@blackfoot.net

Inspection Status: State

Services Provided:

- Can Source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications
- Can help coordinate distribution for you

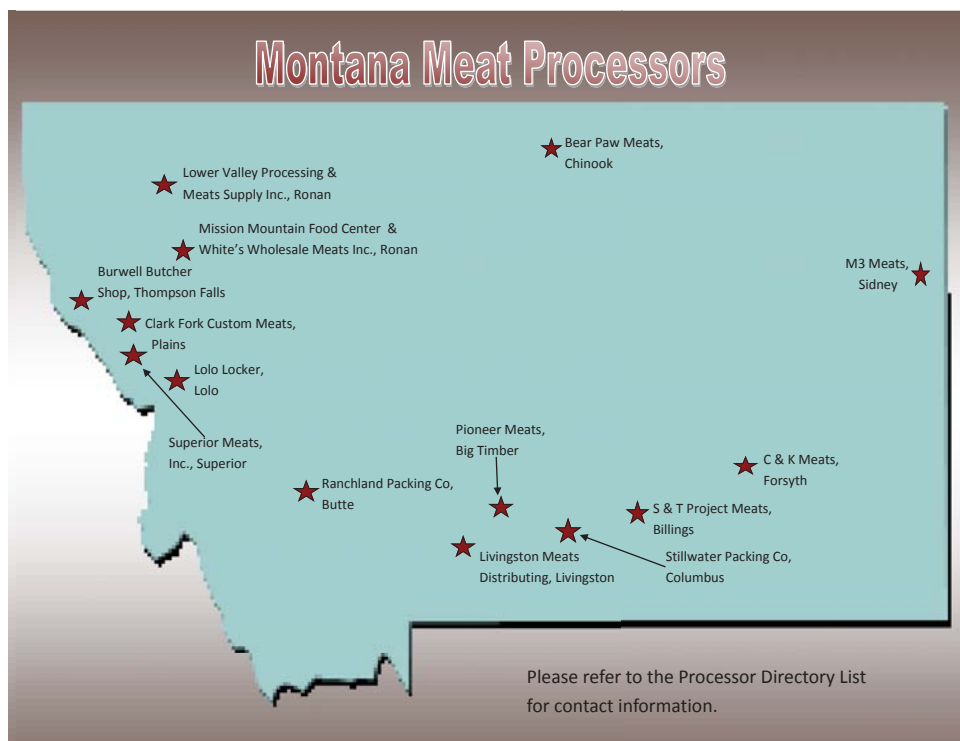
White's Wholesale Meats, Ronan

Robert White 406-676-0082, 406-676-0087

Inspection status: Federal

Services Provided:

- Can source Montana beef for you
- Can process to your specifications



Appendix C: Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce

Iowa State University has developed this Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce available at www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2046A.pdf

Name of Producer/Farm _____

City _____ State Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Total acres farmed _____ Availability of promotional materials YES NO

Products to be purchased _____

Is an insurance liability required YES (Dollar amount: \$ _____) NO

Was the produce grown without addition of chemical pesticides and fertilizers?

YES NO

Are you USDA Certified Organic? YES NO

Is the facility licensed and inspected to process products? YES NO

Are there acceptable substitutes available if an order cannot be filled YES NO

Production Practices	Yes	No	N/A
Are wells protected from contamination?			
If irrigation is used, what is its source? Well Stream Pond Municipal Other			
What types of manures are used? Raw manure Composted Aged No manure is used			
Is raw manure incorporated at least 2 weeks prior to planting and/or 120 days prior to harvest?			
Is the manure application schedule documented with a copy submitted to the retail operation?			
Is land use history available to determine risk of product contamination (e.g, runoff from upstream, flooding, chemical spills, or excessive agricultural crop application)?			
Is the field exposed to runoff from animal confinement or grazing areas?			
Is land that is frequently flooded used to grow food crops?			
Are coliform tests conducted on soil in frequently flooded land?			
Are farm livestock and wild animals restricted from growing areas?			
Are portable toilets used in a way that prevents field contamination from waste water?			
Product Handling	Yes	No	N/A
Are storage and packaging facilities located away from growing areas?			
Is there risk of contamination with manure?			
Are harvesting baskets, totes, or other containers kept covered and cleaned (with potable water) and sanitized before use?			

Is harvesting equipment/machinery that comes into contact with the products kept as clean as possible?			
Are product and non-product containers available and clearly marked?			
Is dirt, mud, or other debris removed from product before packing?			
Are food grade packaging materials clean and stored in areas protected from pets, livestock, wild animals, and other contaminants?			
Transportation	Yes	No	N/A
Is product loaded and stored to minimize physical damage and risk of contamination?			
Is transport vehicle well maintained and clean?			
Are there designated areas in transport vehicle for food products and non-food items?			
Are products kept cool during transit?			
Facilities	Yes	No	N/A
Is potable water/well tested at least once per year and results kept on file?			
Is product protected as it travels from field to packing facility?			
Is a product packing area in use with space for culling and storage?			
Are packing areas kept enclosed?			
Are food contact surfaces regularly washed and rinsed with potable water and then sanitized?			
Are food grade packaging materials used?			
Do workers have access to toilets and hand washing stations with proper supplies?			
Are toilets and hand washing stations clean and regularly serviced?			
Is a pest control program in place?			
Worker Health and Hygiene	Yes	No	N/A
Is a worker food safety training program in place?			
Are workers trained about hygiene practices and sanitation with signs posted to reinforce messages?			
Are workers and visitors following good hygiene and sanitation practices?			
Are smoking and eating confined to designated areas separate from product handling?			
Are workers instructed not to work if they exhibit signs of infection (e.g., fever, diarrhea, etc.)?			
Do workers practice good hygiene by:			
wearing clean clothing and shoes			
changing aprons and gloves as needed?			
keeping hair covered or restrained?			
washing hands as required?			
limiting bare hand contact with fresh products?			
covering open wounds with clean bandages?			

I confirm that the information provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Seller: _____ Date: _____

Prepared by Amy Casselman, graduate student; Catherine Strohbehn, PhD, RD, CP-FS, HRIM extension specialist; Sam Beattie, PhD, extension food safety specialist.

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Appendix D: Tips for Working with the Press and Sample Press Release

- 1. Have a message**
Come up with a simple, clear message about your organization or event. This could be your mission statement or a simple catch phrase. Remember to stick with it!
- 2. Know your audience**
The media does not necessarily care about your cause. If you show them that their audience will care, they will be more inclined to cover it.
- 3. Follow journalists and bloggers**
Knowing the right person to talk to about your story is important. Find a writer, journalist, or blogger who covers the topics of food justice, local food, community, health, or education and familiarize yourself with their writing style and interest.
- 4. Building a relationship down the road**
Once you're familiar with a writer, journalist, or blogger, keep him or her abreast of any new developments with your group. A simple email with an update can go a long way and who knows, maybe they will turn it into a story.
- 5. Be Timely**
Don't assume the media knows of your event—inform them well ahead of the event that you would like covered and they will make time for it.
- 6. Share through other outlets**
Utilize social networking to post events or share a relevant news story.
- 7. Be informed**
Be aware of what similar groups/organizations are doing in your area, state, and nationwide. It's important to know your local allies and this will give you an arsenal of examples from similar projects and how they benefitted their community.
- 8. Share images**
Be willing to share photos with the media either from past events or the event they are covering. Be sure to inform your media contacts if the event provides a good photo opportunity. Make sure you have participants' or guardians' permission

(extremely important when working with kids) before photos are taken or released. If working at a school, make sure you and the journalist follow the school's media policy. The Principal should be able to provide guidance regarding this policy.

Press Release Template

Media Contact:

Your Name

Your Contact Phone

Your E-mail Address

For Immediate Release

August 3, 2012 [DATE PRESS RELEASE GOES TO MEDIA]

Press Release Template Goes Viral [GRABBER HEADLINE]

Bozeman, MT [SITE OF YOUR BUSINESS OR WHERE ACTION/EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE]

In this opening sentence, explain the reason you're contacting the media – to get them psyched about your terrific program, farm, or product.

In the second sentence or paragraph, provide additional information, the details of your event or program. When possible include in this section: (*Example*) Taking Root [who], Montana Farm to School Conference [what], August 16-17, 2012 [when], Montana State University [where], part of an ongoing effort to increase awareness and accessibility of locally grown foods in schools, a triple win for farmers, children, and communities [why].

In this final section, include any additional pertinent information, such as you organization's mission statement, website, Facebook, and Twitter address.

ATTACH LOGO, IMAGE AND/OR INFO SHEET.

Appendix E: Federal Geographic Preference Guidelines

Frequently Asked Questions

The following information is an adaptation of the USDA 2011 memo to help School Food Authorities (SFAs) in institutions with Child Nutrition Programs purchase local food using the Federal Geographic Preference option. It was developed by the National Farm to School Network (www.farmtoschool.org) and provides only highlights.

To view the original memo, visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011_os.pdf

What is the Definition of Local or the Defined Geographic Area?

It is the purview of the school district or the School Food Authority (SFA), or purchasing institution to define what is “local.” USDA does not make this determination.

What USDA Programs May Apply for a Geographic Preference?

The programs include: the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Summer Foodservice Program.

Is there a requirement to purchase local products?

No, an SFA cannot include language such as “we will only accept locally grown products.” This is considered a requirement and not a preference. Applying geographic preference is an option.

If the bidder or supplier is incorporated outside of the state, but doing business in the state, can they be included in a geographic preference option?

Yes. A grower may be producing within state boundaries, but their business may be incorporated outside of state boundaries – or in another state. As long as the agricultural products are grown or raised within the specified location, applying a geographic preference is an option.

How can an SFA use a geographic preference option when issuing an Invitation for Bid (IFB)?

With an IFB, the contract is generally given to the bidder who meets the specifications and has the lowest price. As part of an IFB, the SFA could write specifications that include picked within one day of delivery, harvested within a certain time period, or traveled less than XX miles or hours. Although the IFB process doesn’t generally utilize the point system, the essence of the point system could be incorporated into the price equation. For example, if a bidder meets the geographic preference, they may have 10 cents (instead of points) deducted from their price. (Refer to the USDA memo cited in the first paragraph, then see Question 5 for a specific example.)

Can a geographic preference be given in terms of a price percentage?

Yes, a geographic preference may be used in terms of points or percentages. For example, a product qualifying for a geographic preference could be 10% higher in price than the lowest bid.

Is there a limit on the price percentage or points allocated in this manner?

No, there is no limit, but the SFA cannot unnecessarily restrict free and open competition.

Can an SFA split up large purchases into smaller amounts and thereby fall under the small purchase threshold?

No. However, there may be situations where particular items may be separated from overall food purchases. For example, produce, or specific produce items, may have a limited shelf life when compared with other products. Bread and milk are typically set aside from large overall food purchases because of their shorter shelf life and durability. Fresh produce may fall into this category as well, and be separated from other items being purchased.

Can a SFA utilize the small purchase threshold when purchasing directly from the farmer?

Yes. The federal small purchase threshold is \$100,000, which means purchases under this amount are not required to go through the formal bid process. This threshold may be lower, as states and schools/school districts can set this amount. When purchasing under the small purchase threshold, it is recommended that three quotes be recorded from eligible sources. The quality, number and type of product should be put in writing before contacting potential growers. If possible, at least three bids should be obtained. If it is difficult to find three sources with the desired product, it is essential to document this situation. Documentation should be thorough whenever this purchasing option is used.

Can a state mandate, or require SFAs to apply a geographic preference?

No. However, a state can require that SFAs exercise a geographic preference when feasible. Feasibility may take into account a variety of factors such as price, quality, and seasonal availability.

What agricultural products qualify for the use of a geographic preference?

To qualify for this option, agricultural products must maintain their inherent character. Specifically, this includes ground beef and other ground products that do not contain additives or preservatives; frozen vegetables, including a combination of local products, such as carrots, broccoli and cauliflower; and portion sized or single-serving bags, such as apples or carrots. Canned products do not maintain their inherent character and therefore are not included in the geographic preference option.

Appendix F: Curriculum and Cookbooks

Curriculum

Having a lesson plan and curriculum in place can make your educational activities more effective. Below is a list of some of the best known curriculum models for sustainability, nutrition education, and local agriculture from a variety of organizations and online sources.

- **Agriculture in the Classroom** is a program coordinated by the USDA that offers resources for students and teachers including lesson plans, funding opportunities, and more. (Grades PreK–12) www.agclassroom.org
- **The Center for Ecoliteracy** website offers some philosophical background on ecological concepts and systems thinking. www.ecoliteracy.org/teach
- **The Edible Schoolyard Project** has a wealth of tools for teachers, parents, and advocates of healthy lunches and school gardens, and you can share your resources here as well. www.edibleschoolyard.org
- **Facing the Future** offers global issues and sustainability curricula some free and others for purchase. www.facingthefuture.org/Curriculum/PreviewandBuyCurriculum/tabid/550/List/1/CategoryID/16/Level/a/Default.aspx
- **Gallatin Valley Food Bank Hunger 101 Curriculum** is a flexible curriculum that offers a broad range of lessons, stand-alone interactive sessions, and diverse small group activities that explore the issues of hunger and poverty in Gallatin County/Montana, the United States, and the world. (All ages) www.gallatinvalleyfoodbank.org/hunger-awareness/hunger-101.
- **Green Education Foundation** has lesson plans around sustainability with a focus on science, health, social studies, language arts, math, and creativity. (Grades PreK–12) www.greeneducationfoundation.org/institute/lesson-clearinghouse.html
- **How to Teach Nutrition to Kids**. 2006. Evers, Connie. A comprehensive resource for teaching mostly younger ages. Available for purchase at <http://nutritionforkids.com>
- **Life Lab** is a national leader in farm and garden-based education. Their website includes resources for school garden curriculum and teacher training. (Mostly PreK–8) www.lifelab.org
- **Montana Team Nutrition** has developed several Montana-specific lesson plans and educational posters, available on their website under “Educators.” www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School
- **Northeast Beginning Farmer’s Field Journal: A Beginner’s Guide for Young**

Farmers 2012. Greenhorns and Cornell University Cooperative Extension. A step-by-step guide to sustainable farming, geared toward middle school and high school students. www.thegreenhorns.net/wp-content/files_mf/1352147650GreenhornsFieldGuide2012lowres3.pdf

- **Nutrition Fun With Broc and Roll.** 2007. Evers, Connie. The follow-up to Evers's popular title listed above. Available for purchase at <http://nutritionforkids.com>
- **SARE Youth Education Curriculum Guides** have a great list of sustainable agriculture curricula from across the U.S. (Grades K-12) www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Courses-and-Curricula/Youth-Education-Curriculum-Guides
- **Toward a Sustainable Agriculture**, developed by the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems in Wisconsin, is a great resource for lesson plans on sustainable agriculture. (High School) www.cias.wisc.edu/curriculum/index.htm
- **Teaching the Food System** is a project of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future and provides a sequence of modules that follows the food supply chain from field to plate in the US while also touching on global implications. (High School – College level) www.jhsph.edu/teachingfood/curriculum
- **USDA Team Nutrition** has a variety of nutrition education resources, including helpful lessons like “Serving Up MyPlate” and “Grow It, Try It, Like It”. (Grades PreK-8) <http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov/library.html>

Cookbooks

Incorporating local food in institutional meals, offering cooking lessons, and organizing taste tests are a great way to engage students and community members in hands-on activities. Below are some great resources with local food recipes and taste test lesson plans.

- **Montana's Healthy School Recipe Roundup** was compiled by Montana Team Nutrition and contains 31 colorful, tasty, eye-appealing and kid-friendly recipes made with Montana products. Large serving sizes (50-100) are geared toward foodservice directors. To get the full list of recipes visit www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/SchoolFood/HealthyMT/MTRecipeRoundup.pdf
- **Fresh from the Farm: The Massachusetts Farm to School Cookbook** is a comprehensive guide for foodservice professionals that is more applicable to Montana than you might expect. The cookbook contains standardized recipes, organized by vegetable and season, as well as lesson plans and additional tips for preparing local foods. www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_134.pdf
- **Cooking with California Foods in K-12 Schools** was developed by the Center for Ecoliteracy in partnership with the TomKat Charitable Trust and offers many ideas

for adding fresh, local, and healthy foods to school lunches. The downloadable resource introduces the concept of the dynamic 6-5-4 School Lunch Matrix, based on six dishes students know and love, five ethnic flavor profiles, and four seasons. See it here: www.ecoliteracy.org/cooking-with-california-food

- **The Food Trust Preschool Initiative Lesson Plans** has 35 lesson plans for preschoolers, many of which can be adapted for elementary students as well, and includes taste test activities and healthy, delicious recipes. www.thefoodtrust.org/pdf/Preschool%20Initiative%20Toolkit/The%20Food%20Trust%20Preschool%20Initiative%20lesson%20plans.pdf

Appendix G: Finding Funding

You can start locally to raise funds for your local foods program or event by asking local businesses and organizations to support you. Your local bank, the Rotary Club, PTA or other such group might be happy to get involved in your efforts.

- **Montana Team Nutrition's Harvest Montana Fundraiser:** A program that raises funds through the sale of Montana-made healthy food products. <http://opi.mt.gov/Farm2SchoolFundRaising>
- **National Farm to School Network's list of funding opportunities** at the national, state, and local level. www.farmtoschool.org/fundingopps.php
- **The how-to pamphlet on Farm to School competitive grants** assembled by the National Farm to School Network: www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_341.pdf
- **USDA Food and Nutrition Services: USDA Grants and Loans for Farm to School Efforts:** www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/f2s-grants.htm
- **Vermont Food Education Every Day (FEED):** a list of national funding opportunities. www.vtfeed.org/get-involved/funding-opportunities

Appendix H: Additional Farm to Cafeteria Resources

For specific questions about Farm to Cafeteria opportunities in your area of Montana, contact Farm to Cafeteria Network directly at (406) 533-6648 or by emailing nancym@ncat.org. You can also visit our website at www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org, which has additional Montana resources for each of the stakeholder groups listed below.

General

Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions. 2003; updated 2013. ATTRA. This publication gives an overview of models of Farm to Cafeteria, considerations for producers and food

buyers, and provides several case studies of successful Farm to Cafeteria programs across the country. Available for download at www.attra.ncat.org

Farm to Cafeteria Connections: Marketing Opportunities for Small Farms in Washington. 2004. Kelli Sanger and Leslie Zenz. An in-depth manual broken down by producer, food-service and parent/community organization. Available at: <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm/docs/102-FarmToCafeteriaConnections-Web.pdf>

Food Hub Knowledge Base. This website has links to videos, publications, and other tools relevant for institutions involved in Farm to Hospital and Farm to School. <http://food-hub.org/knowledgebase>

A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy. Developed by the Food Alliance, this guide is geared toward colleges/universities, hospitals, and other institutions and gives step-by-step instructions and considerations for creating a food purchasing policy around local foods. Available at: <http://food-hub.org/files/resources/SustainableFoodPolicyGuide.pdf>

National Good Food Network Webinars. This archive of webinars covers a host of topics, many of which are relevant for producers, food buyers, and community members alike. Search for topics that interest you at <http://ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-cluster-calls>

Schools

Farm to School: National Publications. The National Farm to School Network offers a wealth of resources and information. Visit its website for a complete list. www.farmtoschool.org

Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition Farm to School Toolkit. This website has many Farm to School resources for foodservice professionals, producers, and distributors. <http://toolkit.centerfornutrition.org/find-your-toolkit>

Purchasing Local Food: Guidelines for Montana School Foodservice Programs. Developed by Montana Team Nutrition in September 2011, this guide provides helpful info about local procurement for all types of institutions. Available at www.opi.mt.gov/Farm2School under “School Food,” or directly on the Farm to Cafeteria Network website at <http://bit.ly/ZHjnQS>

Colleges

Yale’s Sustainable Food Purchasing Guide. First Edition. Provides facts on specific food groups, clarification of certifications/titles, and general first steps to getting started. Available at: www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/purchasing_guide_002.pdf

Real Food Challenge Resources. This national organization and campaign focuses on getting colleges on board with “real food” that is locally grown and/or fair trade. Real Food Challenge provides tools such as trainings, a “real food calculator” app, and a campus commitment that university presidents can sign. www.realfoodchallenge.org

Healthcare

Healthy Food in HealthCare is a program of Healthcare Without Harm that harnesses the purchasing power and expertise of the healthcare sector to advance the development of a sustainable food system. HFHC coordinates the Healthier Food Challenge of the Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI), a national sustainability initiative for the healthcare sector, and offers a pledge that 220 facilities across the nation have taken. Learn more at www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org

Producers

ATTRA's Local & Regional Food Systems Resources. ATTRA, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, has several publications and resources available for producers interested in diversifying their market. A list of resources is available at https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/local_food

Good Agricultural Practices Network for Education and Training. Cornell University Department of Food Science. This website maintains up-to-date educational information about on-farm food safety. www.gaps.cornell.edu

On-Farm Food Safety Project. Developed by familyfarm.org, this website has a great template farmers can use to create their own on-farm food safety plan, as well as additional educational resources about good handling practices. www.onfarmfoodsafety.org

Selling to Institutions: An Iowa Farmer's Guide. 2003. Robert Luedeman and Neil D. Hamilton. A comprehensive "how-to" for producers in Iowa and beyond. www.statefoodpolicy.org/docs/selling.pdf



Since 1976, the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) has been helping people by championing small-scale, local and sustainable solutions to reduce poverty, promote healthy communities and protect natural resources. Headquartered in Butte, Montana since 1976, NCAT has offices in seven states and operates dozens of programs that promote sustainable agriculture and renewable energy. More information about its programs and services is available at www.ncat.org or call 1-800-ASKNCAT.



Farm to Cafeteria Network is a group of Montana food producers, processors, foodservice professionals, and community members who collaborate to share best practices and resources about Farm to Cafeteria programs across the state. A program of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), Farm to Cafeteria Network was created in 2009 as the result of ideas and expertise from the statewide food policy coalition, Grow Montana. Learn more at www.farmtocafeteria.ncat.org or call (406) 494-4572



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The Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) is a grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to solutions that promote resource conservation and local economic vitality in Montana. Since 1974 AERO's programming has been nurturing individual and community self-reliance through programs that support sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and environmental quality. www.aeromt.org