Connecting Local Schools and Farms

Farmers and processors of diverse food products throughout the region are vital components of the farm-to-school program. For the Waupaca County Farm-to-School Program we turn to these experts on the "supply side" for their products, but also for their expertise, guidance, and entrepreneurial spirit to support the effort. The initiative hopes to cultivate relationships with educators, nutritionists, food service directors, producers and processors who are interested in creating real systemic change.

Food Service Director Survey found that all are currently using & cutting whole fruits/vegetables and willing to consider paying more for local fresh produce, most have extra cooler space, all could pay within 30 days, deliveries accepted M-F, most host staff training, most are willing to help teachers incorporate food and nutrition education/activities into classroom, most would like help promoting their local purchasing efforts (fliers/posters/activities).

Producer Survey Results found that all are interested in selling direct to schools, most limit pesticide use (none certified organic), many (2/3) have some past experience with schools, most will deliver under 30 miles, minimum sale required ($50 - $400), none require COD, most have liability coverage, most are willing to be guest classroom speaker.

Get involved!

The Waupaca County Farm to School Initiative is a community endeavor. The initiative depends on support from all parts of our community to make our residents healthier.

Please consider a tax deductible donation to help keep this project growing! Contributions may be sent to UWEX Farm-to-School, 811 Harding St., Waupaca, WI 54981.

You may also be interested in our Homegrown Fundraiser which highlights local producer products and raises money for our schools, wellness partners and the Farm-to-School program.

For more information on how you can get involved in farm-to-school programming at your school, please contact the UWEX, your principal or your food service coordinator.

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Waupaca County Farm-to-School Initiative

Creating a connection between local farmers and schools for healthier children
Vision
By building respectful, working relationships between school educators, the school food service and our local food producers, we will establish a Waupaca County farm-to-school model to grow and thrive into the future.

Mission
The Waupaca County Farm to School Initiative seeks to introduce healthy foods grown locally to schoolchildren while developing stable markets for the producers and processors of those foods.

Building partnerships
Waupaca County Farm-to-School Initiative is supported by Serve Wisconsin (AmeriCorps), UWEX and DHHS. The program is modeled after a state effort called Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch. The AmeriCorps members that will facilitate this initiative are a Food Procurement Member, who will work to connect local farmers, processors, and distributors with school staff to increase access to healthy local food and a Nutrition Education Member, who will help school staff by developing and implementing programs to educate children and families about the benefits of making healthy local eating choices.

Broad Goals and Outcomes
To provide an innovative approach to decreasing childhood obesity by creating healthy eating habits and increasing access to local foods in schools.

At the end of the first year, school food service will reflect a 3% increase in the amount of healthy, local food purchased and 50% of participating students will show increased consumption of healthy foods.

How can we do this?
Understand the barriers and opportunities involved in creating institutional markets for local food products, with a particular focus on the public schools and their food service.

Pilot a program to increase the amount of fresh, local and sustainably grown foods in school lunches and snacks so that children of all income levels have access to Wisconsin's highest quality agricultural products.

Create effective links between classrooms, school cafeterias and local farms with educational opportunities focusing on the local food system and nutrition.

Work with allied organizations to explore how "value-added" / minimally processed local products can serve the local institutional market.

Long-term goals
Continue to strengthen supply and demand for locally and sustainably grown food products in public schools.

Secure continued funding to facilitate institutionalization of a district-wide farm-to-school program.

Develop a local or school-district food policy or procedures that incorporates precedent for school food services purchasing local and sustainably raised food.