



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2014-133

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Tamra Jackson, Nutrition Programs Supervisor
Support Systems and Resources Division

DATE: October 27, 2014

SUBJECT: The Wyoming Farm to Plate Program

WYOMING "FARM TO PLATE" PROGRAM ENCOURAGES LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS

CHEYENNE - As we continue to hear more about local foods, many of us are trying to incorporate them into our diets. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) is encouraging Wyoming schools that participate in the USDA National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to use more local foods.

The USDA Farm to School Initiative has led directly to the Wyoming Farm to Plate Task Force that was formed in 2012. The task force is comprised of several organizations working together to promote and educate Wyoming people on how to purchase and use local products. The WDE, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, University of Wyoming Extension, Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom, and Wyoming Business Council are the core members of the Task Force. Rather than each organization having its own "Farm to Plate" program, we put all of the expertise and experience in one pot.

Since its inception, the task force has put together many publications for producers and institutional buyers on how to sell/purchase locally. The Wyoming Department of Agriculture Consumer Health Services is responsible for the education and regulation of food safety in Wyoming and has aided the task force immensely through education and resources on good agricultural practices and food safety issues. In addition to the publications, the task force has conducted several webinars and trainings across the state. Some of these were recorded and are available for viewing on You-

Tube. All of our resources are currently available on the Wyoming Department of Education Farm to School web page:

<http://edu.wyoming.gov/beyond-the-classroom/nutrition/farm-to-school>

Additionally, the task force has released Wyoming Farm to Plate Success Stories. This booklet showcases specialty crop and Farm to School successes in Wyoming. Check it out to see what's happening in your area.

We're extremely proud of the schools, childcares, and other institutions for making the effort to include local foods on their menus. Just as important are the producers who are working with these institutions and perhaps growing new items in order to meet the needs of buyers. All of these people are facing labor shortages, budget cuts, variable markets, and mother nature, yet they continue to provide local foods for their communities.

Wyoming may be "produce-challenged," but with aid from Wyoming Specialty Crop Block Grant monies for season extension-specialty crops are making their own market in Wyoming. Of course, don't forget the local beef, lamb, pork, and bison. There are so many Wyoming products already being introduced.

In short, congratulations and thank you to the producers, schools, organizations, and community members paving the way for local foods. By all working together we are making this a success for everyone.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about Farm to School (Plate) in Wyoming, please contact Tamra Jackson with the WDE at tamra.jackson@wyo.gov or 307-777-6263, or Brook Brockman with the Wyoming Department of Agriculture at brook.brockman@wyo.gov or 307-777-5612.