



13 WAYS TO BEGIN INCORPORATING LOCAL FOODS INTO SCHOOL MEALS

- 1. Identify 5 to 10 food products (vegetable, fruits, dairy, proteins and grains) you use most by volume.**
 - a. Can your source some of these items locally?
 - b. Could some local items be substituted on a trial or limited basis?
 - c. Start Slowly: Begin by sourcing a few products you know your program can afford and use

- 2. Discover local producers and distributors near you.**
 - a. Set up meetings with local producers to discuss availability and feasibility of them serving your school or institution
 - b. Call/visit local producers to sample products
 - c. Ask your distributor for locally sourced items

- 3. Commit to buying one local food product each month.**
 - a. Develop a process for purchasing local foods

- 4. Invite local producers, legislators, school board members, parents, etc. to eat lunch at your facility.**
 - a. This builds community relationships and highlights the quality foods you are serving

- 5. Design your menus to take advantage of fluctuations in the local and seasonal food supply.**
 - a. Seek seasonal recipes and workshops on using fresh, local and seasonal products
 - b. Create menus around foods that are in season or available in surplus that can be purchased at reduced prices

- 6. Select local food products available in the winter.**
 - a. Root crops, carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes beets, greens, winter squash, meats and cheeses are available during the cold, winter months
 - b. Producers can also use greenhouses or root-cellar storing to make some items available year round

- 7. Involve interested teachers, administrator, parents and the community in your plans.**
 - a. Share the workload with others to keep the program manageable



8. Encourage classroom involvement.

- a. Enlist students to think up creative names for dishes you are trying

9. Share and exchange menu ideas with other food service staff, teachers, producers and local culinary professionals.

- a. Ask interested parties to take part in your changes; Many are willing to volunteer their services

10. Create a long-term strategy to gradually introduce new items in small batches along with regular menu items over a long period of menu cycles.

- a. Introduce new items six to eight time before judging the items success
- b. People young and old often have to try a new food multiple times before liking it

11. Increase participation in local foods by offering classroom samples to taste and discuss.

- a. Taste testing new menu items in the classrooms warms students to new foods before they appear on the menu
- b. Make small batches to try in the classroom. Have teachers collect feedback using a survey (math curriculum)

12. Add pizzazz to your program by picking a day, a week or month to highlight new foods.

- a. Attach your efforts to a school theme or create your own
- b. Hold local food lunches once a month or quarter to correspond with a theme; This will generate excitement about your food program

13. Share your stories with your community through the school newsletter or local paper.

- a. Invite the media to your "local food" events