



FARM TO PLATE TALKING POINTS-PRODUCERS

BACKGROUND

- Nearly one in four children are at-risk for hunger
- The Senate Agriculture Committee passed a CNR (Child Nutrition Reauthorization) bill – The Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010
- As part of CNR, Farm to School is broadly defined as a program connecting school and local farms with the objectives of:
 - Serving healthy meals in school cafeterias
 - Improving student nutrition
 - Providing agricultural, health and nutrition education opportunities
 - Supporting local and regional producers
- 43 states currently have school districts with Farm to School programs
 - Over 300,000 students are served through these programs
 - Producers focus on three to four seasonal items that can be served year-round
- Farm to Plate programs are as diverse as the products available
- It takes an entire community to fully embrace the Farm to Plate concept

WHY IMPORTANT?

- Farm to Plate programs...
 - Increase participation in school meal programs
 - Help strengthen schools food service programs
 - Facilitate agricultural, health and nutrition education opportunities
- Mealtime can be a place of learning and discovery where children learn to eat well and enjoy nutritious foods
- Food is more likely to be appreciated and enjoyed when people have a connection with where their food came from

BARRIERS TO PURCHASING LOCAL FOODS

- Limited variety and availability
- Difficulty/inconvenience of communicating with producers to arrange transactions
- Higher costs for certain products
- Lack of knowledge of local food sources-where and what are they?
- Lack of knowledge of local food needs-who will buy and how much?
- Need for additional training
- More preparation or storage areas
- Additional labor for food preparation
- Additional appliances for processing local foods



GOOD FOR KIDS

- Choice of healthier options in school meals results in an average increase of one serving per day of fruits and vegetables
- Quality, local items taste better; Studies show children prefer quality, local items to non-local products
- Farm to Plate programs can help improve children's health; help alleviate childhood obesity and Type II Diabetes
- Providing children with wholesome and nutritious foods supports their physical and mental wellbeing

GOOD FOR PRODUCERS AND LOCAL ECONOMY

- Transactions from Producer to Local Business/Institution keep dollars local strengthening the local economy and creating jobs
- For every \$1.00 spent on local foods, \$1.00-\$3.00 circulates in the local economy
- Selling locally opens up new markets for producers
- Selling locally can benefit fledgling producers by providing a consistent and secure customer base
- Local markets support small, mid and large scale operations as well as processors and distributors

5 Reasons to Start a Farm To Plate Program

1. To provide quality and nutritious foods for growing children and the community.
2. To serve high-quality foods that don't have to travel farm from producer to consumer-they are fresh, flavorful and have a longer shelf life.
3. To increase school lunch participation rates by offering foods students will eat!
4. To demonstrate to the community that schools and other food service businesses support local foods and producers.
5. To take advantage of the variety and quantity of foods available locally while reducing transportation costs and carbon footprint.



WHAT PRODUCERS CAN DO

- Take Stock
 - Assess your operation. Determine what quantities or products you are able to supply
 - Evaluate staffing or equipment needs for selling locally
- Expand your roots
 - Let school, restaurants, stores, etc. know about your operation and what you can offer
 - Ask local schools, restaurant, stores, etc. what they are looking for
- Sell your wares
 - Develop a marketing packet that you can leave with potential buyers to review
 - Bring or leave sample items for a taste test
- Visit the neighbors
 - Take time to personally visit with potential buyers
 - Research shows people want to have a connection to producers and the foods they eat

ECONOMIC: AFFORDING LOCAL FOODS

- Local foods can cost more, but can also cost less. Distribution costs, seasonality, availability, relationships between buyers/sellers and additional preparation time are all factors to consider
 - Buying in season can drive prices down
 - Farmers can sell at a lower price when they have a guaranteed market
 - Schools can buy “seconds” and process or freeze them for later use
 - Local foods can be combined with less expensive items to “stretch” their use
 - Volunteer help can save on labor costs
 - Use existing funding opportunities to purchase local (FFVP or DoD Fresh)



5 Reasons Why Local Is Better

1. Price: You will always find better prices when foods grown nearby are in season and abundant.
2. Taste: Foods in season are at their peak and taste better.
3. Travel: Reducing the miles a food has to travel from producer to consumer means a fresher product that lasts longer and has a smaller “carbon footprint”.
4. Missing Out: When we eat foods from far away, we miss out on fantastic local foods that have been grown and perfected by local producers.
5. “Big Food”: Purchasing through large, wholesale distributors puts money in the pockets of a few large corporations instead of in our local economy.

DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

Getting products from the producer to the consumer is often challenging. Some options include:

- Producers deliver directly to the consumer
- Producers may add destinations to an established delivery route
- Producers can collaborate by bringing all products to one place and having a single producer do all the deliveries
- If purchasing through traditional wholesalers, delivery will be combined with regular orders

A Purchasing Agreement Should Include:

- Detailed description of product, including type and quality (grade)
- Count/Volume of products
- Cost per unit, total cost, payment terms, invoicing and payment process
- Delivery details-refrigeration, time of day, frequency, location, unloading
- Packing requirements-standard box, loose pack, bulk, etc.
- Post-harvest handling practices-cleaning, processing, cooling
- Names and phone numbers of the contact people.