



Newsletter of the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: A project of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)

Delivering Local Food to Local Institutions

Farmers and ranchers are discovering new markets for their products in local institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals, and businesses that run cafeterias for employees and guests. These cafeterias may have conventional, large-scale supply lines, but they are increasingly aware of the advantages of buying produce and meat from local farms. Chefs, consumers, and nutritionists appreciate the high quality of just-picked produce and grass-fed beef. Farmers are pleased to sell products close to home, and are often willing to tailor production for appreciative customers, building long-term relationships. This issue of ATTRAnews looks at this emerging sustainable food system, where local farmers and local institutions all benefit.

Prescription for a Healthy Community

An increasing number of American hospitals are working with nearby farmers to improve the health of their patients and communities. City hospitals are often located in "food-insecure" areas, where the level of poverty is high and there are few places to buy fresh, affordable food. Some hospitals are setting up farmers' markets for their employees and the surrounding neighborhood. Other hospitals are starting to purchase and serve fresh, locally grown produce, meat, and dairy products in their public cafeterias and patient meals.

These policy changes are rooted in concern for the health of the community. Staff members recognize a conflict between their medical advice to patients and the food served at the hospital. Because doctors want the medicines they prescribe to be effective, for example, they may advise hospitals to purchase meat that has been raised without antibiotics. Or they may recommend multiple servings of fresh, organic fruits and vegetables and hormone-free dairy products.

One good step is for hospitals to offer healthy snacks and drinks in vending machines — an important source of nutrition for workers and visitors who are up all night with patients. Quite a few hospitals begin the change to healthier food by serving certified Fair Trade, shade-grown, or organic coffee. Another trend is to remove the fast food franchises that have sprung up in hospitals over the last decade.

The changes are often overseen by a committee of staff from the hospital food and nutrition services, the purchasing department, and nurses and doctors. The committee may suggest other activities such as composting kitchen waste and starting hospital gardens for food, flowers, and therapy.

It takes a determined group to make these changes happen. Hospitals are often locked into contracts with food service companies. Generally these contracts allow only 10 to 15 percent of the food to be purchased from other vendors. After the administrators see the difference that fresh food makes in the kitchen and throughout the facility, they may be willing to renegotiate the contracts at renewal time.



Hospital Farmers' Markets for Employees and the Neighborhood

Five years ago Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C., started a farmers' market at the hospital as part of its *Live for Life* employee health program. This past summer the Durham Regional Hospital opened a farmers' market of its own in response to employee requests.

Allen Memorial Hospital in Waterloo, Iowa, sponsors a farmers' market for employees and residents of the diverse, densely populated neighborhood. Co-sponsors include a senior center, a housing project, a school, a church, and the local emergency medical service.

The Friday Fresh Farmer's Market at Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Oakland was established in 2003 as a result of the efforts of Preston Maring, M.D., a gourmet cook with a passion for fresh, flavorful, organic ingredients. Kaiser now sponsors 25 organic farmers' markets at hospitals in five states.

GROWN Locally Community Farming Co-operative, Iowa

This 14-farm co-op in northeast Iowa started by selling and delivering its fresh produce collectively to local institutions. Co-op managers use many of the same systems as large distributors, such as industry

standard packaging, on-line ordering, and monthly billing. But unlike conventional distributors, delivery is within 24 hours of harvest, so products are of the highest quality. When kitchens order and take delivery from

GROWN Locally, they deal directly with the growers. The co-op now offers services for families, too, such as farm shares, food baskets, and advice from a registered dietician. (563)-3847, www.grownlocally.com

Inside

www.attra.ncat.org

Farm to Institution Resources.....Page 2
Related ATTRA Publications.....Page 2

How Farmers Work with Schools.....Page 3
Successful Examples.....Page 3

2006 Sustainable Ag Funding.....Page 4
New and Updated Publications.....Page 4

RESOURCES

Community Food Security Coalition

Some of the best resources about farm to school and farm to college programs come from this nonprofit organization. CFSC is dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. The coalition has more than 325 member organizations. It puts on workshops and a yearly national conference and publishes reports and manuals on specific topics.

Community Food Security Coalition

PO Box 209, Venice, CA 90294; 310-822-5410; www.foodsecurity.org

- CFSC Farm to School Program: www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html
Contact Director Marion Kalb, marion@foodsecurity.org
- CFSC Farm to College Program: www.farmtocollege.org
Contact Manager Kristen Markley, kristen@foodsecurity.org



Center for Food and Justice

A division of the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College in California, the Center works for a sustainable and socially just food system. It offers services to school districts interested in starting a farm to school program. The center publishes a series of relevant publications and runs the National Farm to School Network.

Center for Food & Justice, <http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj>
(323) 341-5090, www.farmtoschool.org

Healthy Food, Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Communities

Stories of Healthcare Leaders Bringing Fresher, Healthier Food Choices to their Patients, Staff and Communities

Published by the Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy
(612) 870-0453, www.iatp.org

Food and Food Purchasing: A Role for Health Care

This downloadable document outlines the development and philosophy of the movement for healthier food in health care facilities. Excellent Web site, too.

Published by Health Care without Harm
(703) 243-0056, www.noharm.org

ATTRA's Local Food Directory

Find Farm-Fresh Food in Your State

www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/localfood_dir.php

Across the country there's renewed interest in locally grown food. People are eager to find high quality, fresh products grown in their own communities. At the same time, many farmers and ranchers are beginning to market their products directly to consumers.

Agencies and organizations are helping producers and consumers connect with each other through a variety of published and on-line local food directories and other promotional programs.

ATTRA has assembled an on-line database of local food directories, useful for producers and consumers alike. ATTRA's *Local Food Directory* includes national, regional, state, and community directory resources. We welcome suggestions of additional resources to include in this directory. Contact Tracy Mumma, tracym@ncat.org, for more information.



ATTRA Publications about Farm-to-Institution Sales and Direct Marketing

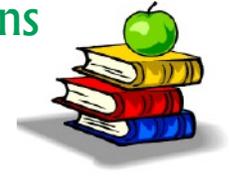
All these publications, and many more on all aspects of sustainable agriculture, are available for free from ATTRA at 800-346-9140 or www.attra.ncat.org

Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions: A Resource Guide For Farm-to-School and Farm-to-Institution Programs (IP242)

This 28-page publication looks at the benefits and problems: how to get started, find funding and assistance, and create a success. Includes resources and details about established programs in many states.

- Adding Value through Sustainable Agriculture Entrepreneurship: Overview and Resources (on-line only)
- Adding Value to Farm Products (IP141)
- Alternative Beef Marketing (CT089)
- Community-Supported Agriculture (CT090)
- Direct Marketing (IP113)
- The Economics of Grass-based Dairying (IP210)
- Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism (IP109)
- Farmers' Markets (IP146)
- Food Dehydration Options (IP147)
- Grain Processing: Adding Value to Farm Products (IP 140)
- Green Markets for Farm Products (CT140)
- Keys to Success in Value-Added Agriculture (IP172)
- Market Gardening: A Start-up Guide (IP195)
- Moving Beyond Conventional Cash Cropping (IP201)
- Oilseed Processing for Small-Scale Producers (IP134)
- Pork: Marketing Alternatives (IP153)
- Selling to Restaurants (IP255)
- Sorghum Syrup (CT139)
- Soyfoods: Adding Value to Soybeans (CT153)
- Value-added Dairy Options (CT151)

How Farmers Work with School Districts and Institutions



When farmers supply their local school districts with food for school lunches, it's good for the whole community. Students learn that fresh food is delicious. Instructors have new opportunities to teach about agriculture, natural history, and economics. School districts can save money and provide healthy, nutritious meals. Farmers benefit from the steady nearby market. School district funds stay within the community, which is great for local businesses.

Each school district has unique requirements for its food service. Because of the uncertainties of agricultural production, it often works best for a group of farms to join together to supply school kitchens. Food services may be able to order from the farms through current distributor. Districts may have an employee whose responsibility it is to source and deliver produce to school kitchens. When districts are able to predict what their needs will be, they may contract with farmers to grow certain crops at a specific price.

Institutional Insight for Farmers

Food service kitchens are under pressure to provide nutritious food, work fast, follow food safety rules, and save money. Very often their supplies come from a single distributor who has extensive liability insurance coverage and is willing to wait 90 days for payment, unlike most farmers.

Institutions are likely to be worried about the reliability of new lines of supply. They need to be convinced that local food will meet their needs for cost, quality, efficiency, timeliness, reliability, and food safety. Many schools have de-commissioned their kitchens to save money, so they may have fewer employees and less space for food preparation. Dealing with multiple vendors and fresh food is more complicated than dealing with pre-packaged food from a single source.

Finding Partners: *The details of insurance and delivery may present special problems for farm to school programs. Difficulties can be eased when farmers and school districts enlist help.*

Nonprofit Organizations *can be excellent for helping launch programs, but may not carry them long-term.*

- The successful Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Farmers' Market Salad Bar was initiated in 1997 by the Occidental-UCLA Community Food Security Project (now the Center for Food and Justice). www.foodsecurity.org/f2s_case_santamonica-malibu.pdf
- Community Alliance with Family Farmers developed a Growers Collaborative to serve as a "farmers' market for the institutional customer." First organized to facilitate sales to California's Ventura County schools, the collaborative is expanding with the help of other nonprofits. www.caff.org

Public Entities *may be able to provide all kinds of services, including financial subsidies.*

- The North Carolina state legislature funded farm to school programs, with the state Department of Agriculture and the Department of Defense providing transportation, warehouses, and administrative services. www.farmtoschool.org/nc
- Cornell University Farm to School Program is a partnership of farmers, suppliers, food service directors, farm organizations, and community members. They develop strategies to increase the amount of locally grown foods served by New York's school, college, and university food services. www.cce.cornell.edu/farmtoschool

New North Florida Marketing Cooperative

Formed in 1995, this group of farmers began by selling farm-fresh produce to 13 schools in Gadsden County, Florida. Now they serve 300,000 students in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. The 100-member Cooperative grows collards, field peas, muscadine grapes, and turnip greens, delivering two or three times a week. They have developed a niche market, as there is little competition in providing fresh, washed, chopped, bagged, and delivered greens. Cooperative members initially gained the respect of the school food purchasers by donating a sample of their product — 3,000 pounds of greens. The children loved the greens, which was a big factor in administrative acceptance of the product.

www.foodsecurity.org/f2s_case_florida.pdf

University of Montana Farm-to-College Program, Missoula

The university is saving money in what began as a "Grow Montana" partnership between the University Dining Services and graduate students in the Environmental Studies Program. The project buys fresh produce and other Montana-grown and -processed food to serve in the six cafeterias and cafés on the Missoula campus. More than 40 Montana food vendors supply beef, milk, eggs, vegetables, fruit, bread, safflower oil, tortillas, salsa, and other products. Since the program began in 2003, the dining service has spent \$665,000 on local food. Grow Montana was founded by NCAT, the U of M, and other groups. The coalition is funded by WK Kellogg Foundation and Stranie Ventures, LLC. Contact Crissie McMullan, (406) 721-1664, crissienc@yahoo.com

Calypso Farm and Ecology Center, Alaska

In Alaska, where 95 percent of the food comes from outside the state, Calypso Farm and Ecology Center in Fairbanks is working hard to connect people with agriculture. The farm operates a 60-member Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) program and several educational projects. Their Schoolyard Garden CSA Initiative creates gardens that are used as educational tools during the school year. In the summer, the gardens are maintained as CSAs by high school students, who learn about agriculture and small business practices, building employable skills. Calypso Farm has developed a helpful guide to starting similar programs. To receive a copy of the guide, contact Megan Phillips, (907) 451-0691, www.calypsosfarm.org



Congress Completes Work on FY06 Spending Bill

In November, the final Fiscal Year (FY) '06 agricultural appropriations bill was passed by Congress and signed by the President. Ferd Hoefner of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition provided these updates on key programs. Hoefner said that while Congress restored funding for programs above the President's proposed budget, these programs have been level funded or underfunded for several years. The President's FY07 agricultural spending proposal is expected in early February.

All figures are in millions.

Sustainable Agriculture Program	Final '06 Funding	President's '06 Proposed	'05 Final
SARE	\$12.4	\$ 9.2	\$12.5
SARE Professional Development	\$ 4.1	\$ 3.8	\$ 4.1
ATTRA	\$ 2.5	\$ 0.0	\$ 2.5
Rural Business Enterprise Grants	\$40.0	\$ 0.0	\$40.0
Value-Added Producer Grants	\$20.5	\$15.5	\$15.5
Renewable Energy Sec. 9006	\$23.0	\$10.0	\$23.0
Outreach/ Assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers/ Ranchers (SDA)	\$ 6.0	\$ 5.9	\$ 5.9

Using School Gardens to Teach about Agriculture

It's great for schools to serve farm-fresh food to their students. And it's even better when schools take the opportunity to teach about where the food comes from and why local farms are important. School gardens can be a big part of this educational process. Here are some of the best sources for curriculum that uses school gardens.

Life Lab Science Program

1156 High Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 • (831) 459-2001, www.lifelab.org

National Gardening Association's Kids Gardening Program

1100 Dorset St., S. Burlington, VT 05403 • (800) 538-7476, www.kidsgardening.com

French Fries and the Food System: A Year Round Curriculum Connecting Youth with Farming and Food.

Published by the Food Project
 P.O. Box 705, Lincoln, MA 01773 • (781) 259-8621, www.thefoodproject.org

New and Updated ATTRA Publications

- ◆ Los Escarabajos del Pepino (Cucumber Beetles, in Spanish) (SP212)
- ◆ Guide to ATTRA's Organic Publications (AT005)
- ◆ Hooped Shelters for Hogs (CT149)
- ◆ Local Food Directory (on-line only: http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/localfood_dir.php)
- ◆ Organic Certification Process (IP262)
- ◆ Wind-Powered Electric Systems for Homes, Farms and Ranches: Resources (IP192)

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