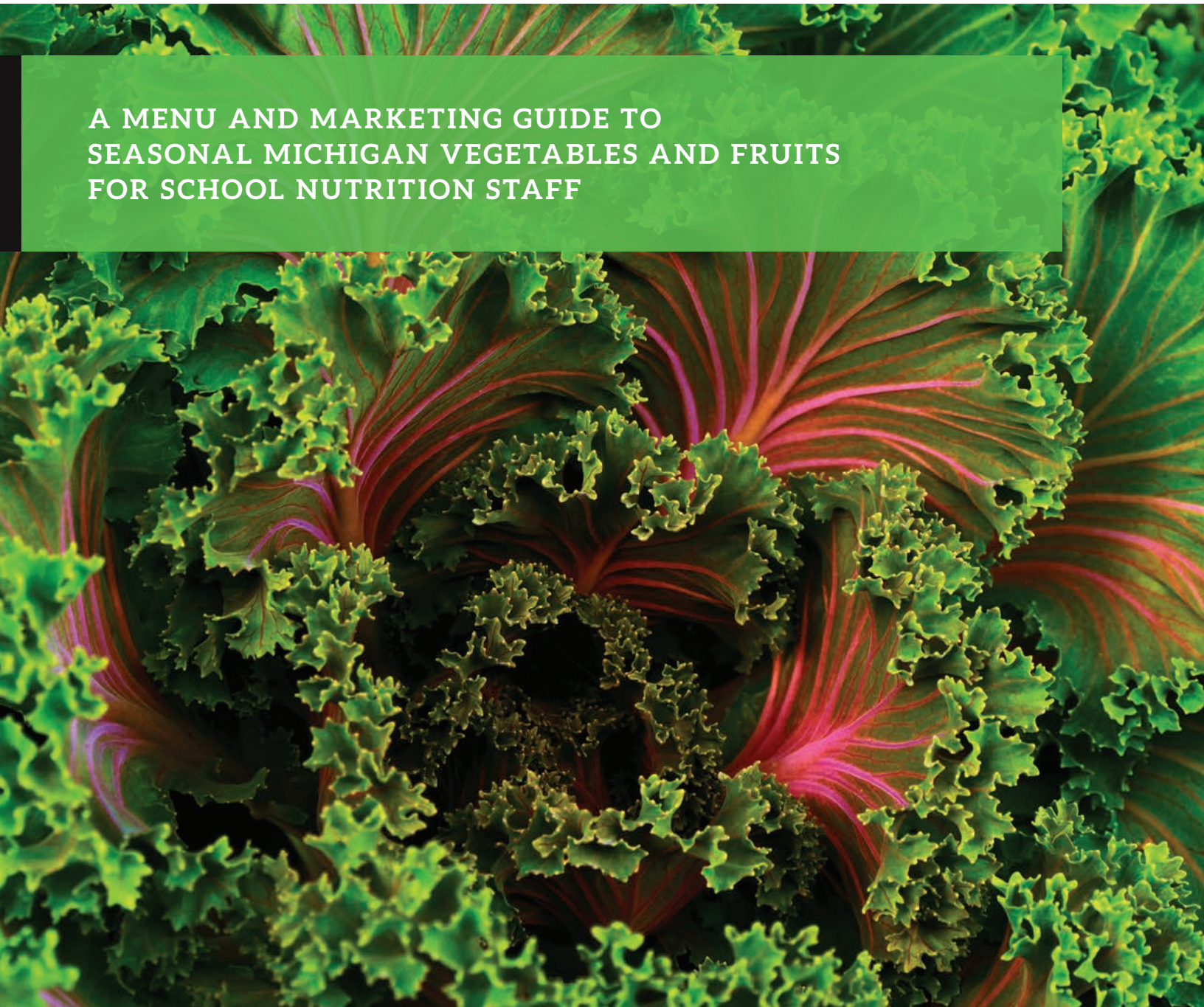


MAKING MICHIGAN RECIPES WORK FROM MENU TO TRAY

MAKING
MICHIGAN
RECIPES
WORK

A MENU AND MARKETING GUIDE TO
SEASONAL MICHIGAN VEGETABLES AND FRUITS
FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF



MICHIGAN FARMERS GROW A WIDE VARIETY OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS, MANY OF WHICH ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL OR MOST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

Serving Michigan vegetables and fruits in school meal programs promotes the development of lifelong healthy eating skills for youth, while supporting local farmers and Michigan's economy. Local food is fresher than food that has been grown to be shipped long distances, which means it is more flavorful and nutritious. This guide is designed to help school nutrition staff work with their food service director and nutrition team to use more Michigan fruits and vegetables in school recipes through menu planning, marketing and education tips.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND FLEXIBLE MENUS

Work with your food service director to determine acceptable ways to substitute seasonal Michigan foods in your menu. Sometimes a substitution can be as easy as using a local version of a vegetable or fruit when it is in season. Another form of substitution is to use different local vegetables or fruits in the same recipe throughout the year, depending on when they are available locally. This also offers flexibility to your local farmers to bring you a different, but similar product if your original requested item is unavailable. An example of this is the Michigan Salad recipe, which calls for a total of 6 cups of leafy greens. The original recipe was written to use iceberg and romaine lettuce. For this curriculum, the recipe is adjusted to use kale. Other leafy green substitution options could include field greens, arugula, mesclun mix or baby Swiss chard.

SUBSTITUTION IDEAS

EASY SWITCHES

Using locally grown vegetables in these dishes or using a different local vegetable in its place is a simple way to add local produce to your meals without having to calculate conversions or adjust your recipes.

SALAD AND SANDWICH TOPPERS:

Sliced: cucumber, tomato, young zucchini or summer squash, radish, turnip, jalapeno pepper, bell pepper

Sliced, diced or shredded: carrot, onion, young zucchini or summer squash, cucumber, tomato, red cabbage, daikon radish, radish, turnip, kohlrabi, beet

SOUP INGREDIENTS:

Greens: kale, Swiss chard, collard greens, spinach, mustard greens, beet greens, turnip greens, cabbage

ROASTED VEGETABLES:

Celery root (celeriac), winter squash, carrot, parsnip, sweet potato, potato, broccoli, cauliflower, garlic, onion, bell pepper, turnip, asparagus, eggplant, mushroom, kohlrabi, green beans, beet, rutabaga, Brussels sprouts, Romanesco, pumpkin, rhubarb

STEAMED VEGETABLES:

Carrot, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus, green beans, sweet corn

SWITCHES THAT MAY REQUIRE RECIPE ADJUSTMENTS

Substitution should not impact meal pattern requirements as long as you are mindful of the serving size and staying within the same vegetable subgroup. Depending on the recipe, preparation may need some minor adjustments based on cooking time of the vegetable that is being substituted. For example, asparagus cooks very quickly while root vegetables require longer cooking times to become soft.

SOUP, STEW OR STIR-FRY INGREDIENTS:

Chopped or pureed: Celery root (celeriac), winter squash, carrot, parsnip, sweet potato, potato, peas, green beans, garlic, onion, bell pepper, turnip, asparagus, eggplant, mushroom, broccoli, kohlrabi, cauliflower, sweet corn, beet, rutabaga, Romanesco, pumpkin, celery



USING CYCLE MENUS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Cycle menus provide plenty of opportunities to use local foods in your meal program when they are in season.

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS ON HOW TO FIT LOCAL FOOD INTO YOUR CYCLE MENU:

- 1** Some Michigan foods are available for all or most of the school year, including carrots, garlic, leeks, mushrooms, potatoes, onions, parsnips, potatoes, winter squash, sweet potatoes, turnips and apples. These can be staples on your menu cycle.
- 2** Other items are available for all or most of the school year in some areas of Michigan from farmers that have hoophouses. These include green onions, spinach, fresh herbs, arugula, Asian greens, beets, Swiss chard and beet greens, kale, other greens, spring onions, radishes and salad greens.
- 3** Summer food service cycle menus have even more items available for the extent of the program. These include green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, Romanesco, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes.
- 4** Talk to your food service director about flexible cycle menu options. Could you try experimenting with keeping half of the menu flexible to allow for substitutions? Could you allow for substitutions in easy places like soups and side dishes? One way to do this is to include a "seasonal vegetable" on your cycle menu to provide more flexibility.

The background of the page features a close-up photograph of fresh produce. In the foreground, several slices of red-skinned apples are arranged, showing their white, crisp interiors. Behind them, several whole, bright orange carrots are visible. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the fruit and vegetables. A semi-transparent green overlay covers the middle portion of the image, containing the text.

FLEXIBLE SIDE DISHES

Consider substituting different fruits and vegetables in and out based on when they are in season in Michigan. Slice fruit or chop vegetables into sticks or bite-sized pieces for an easy side dish. A 2011 study by Cornell University found that consumption increased 73 percent when middle school students were offered sliced fruit instead of whole fruit.

Source: Wansink, Brian, David N. Just, Andrew S. Hanks, Laurie E. Smith, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, "Pre-Sliced Fruit in School Cafeterias: Children's Selection and Intake" Volume 44, Issue 5, May 2013, Pages 477-480

SALAD BAR OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to lettuce, there are many leafy vegetables grown in Michigan that can be used as a base for a green salad. Some examples include kale, spinach, Asian greens, mixed field greens, cabbage, arugula and baby Swiss chard. You can also find local romaine, green leaf and red leaf lettuces.

These items can be rotated in and out depending on when they are in season. Try chopping or shredding vegetables to make them attractive and easy to eat in a salad.

A WIDE VARIETY OF SALAD TOPPINGS ARE AVAILABLE FROM MICHIGAN PRODUCERS

VEGETABLES:

Carrots, bell peppers, cucumbers, beets, tomatoes, kohlrabi, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, onions, radishes, celery, green beans, snap peas, salad turnips, fresh herbs

FRUITS:

Blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, melon, apples, peaches, dried cherries, cranberries, blueberries

PIZZA TOPPINGS OFFER VERSATILITY

You can top a pizza with almost anything! Michigan farmers grow a wonderful variety of vegetables and herbs that make fantastic pizzas.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW IDEAS:

- Fresh herbs: garlic, oregano, basil, fennel bulb, chives
- Vegetables: broccoli, arugula, asparagus, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes, bell peppers, eggplant, spinach, jalapeno peppers

SPRUCE UP SANDWICHES WITH FLAVORFUL LOCAL TOPPINGS

DO YOU USE ITEMS LIKE SLICED TOMATOES AND LETTUCE TO TOP SANDWICHES AND BURGERS?

- Substitute iceberg lettuce with Michigan leaf lettuce, cabbage slaw or spinach
- Take advantage of Michigan farm-fresh tomatoes in summer and fall when they are juiciest and most flavorful

WHICH MICHIGAN PRODUCE ITEMS MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR RED-ORANGE, DARK GREEN, AND BEANS AND PEAS VEGETABLE SUBGROUPS?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program refer to five subgroups of vegetables that count toward the daily and weekly vegetable requirements. This list is not all-inclusive, but includes vegetables commonly grown in Michigan.

DARK GREEN VEGETABLES

Beet greens
Bok choy
Broccoli
Collard greens
Dark green leaf lettuce
Kale
Mesclun
Mustard greens
Parsley
Romaine lettuce
Spinach
Turnip greens

RED-ORANGE VEGETABLES

Carrots
Pumpkins
Red bell peppers
Sweet potatoes
Tomatoes
Winter squash (Acorn, butternut, hubbard, etc., excluding spaghetti squash)

BEANS AND PEAS

Black beans
Great northern beans
Kidney beans
Navy beans
Pink beans
Pinto beans
Red beans
Soy beans
White beans

STARCHY VEGETABLES

Corn
Fresh green peas
Parsnips
Potatoes

OTHER VEGETABLES

Asparagus
Beets
Brussels sprouts
Cabbages
Cauliflower
Celeriac
Celery
Cucumber
Eggplant
Garlic
Green beans
Green peppers
Kohlrabi
Mushrooms
Onions
Radishes
Rhubarb
Snap peas
Snow peas
Spaghetti squash
Turnips
Wax beans
Zucchini

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN INTRODUCING NEW MENU ITEMS

New and unfamiliar recipes may take extra time to prepare at first until you get the hang of it. Try making a small batch for tasting the first time to practice the techniques and make samples for taste testing.

Children may not accept a new food until they have had multiple opportunities to try it. Don't get discouraged if they don't like it the first time! Taste testing can be a valuable tool to help children learn to like new foods. Learn some tips for successful taste testings on page 13.

HOW MUCH TO EXPECT?

When using local fruits and vegetables in your recipes, you may want to know how many pounds you are getting. This chart can help you know how many pounds of produce come in common sale units such as bushels and crates, and how that translates to serving sizes as per the USDA Food Buying Guide for School Meal programs.

FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	COMMON WHOLESALE UNIT	APPROXNET WEIGHT (U.S. POUNDS)	SERVINGS PER USDA FOOD BUYING GUIDE PURCHASE UNIT (POUND)	APPROX. SERVINGS PER WHOLESALE UNIT	SERVING SIZE PER MEAL CONTRIBUTION
Apples	Bushel	48	14.8	710.4	1/4 cup raw unpeeled fruit (depending on apple size, may only be a portion of the apple, figure is based on cored apple)
	Loose pack	38-42	14.8	562.4 - 621.6	1/4 cup raw unpeeled fruit (depending on apple size, may only be a portion of the apple, figure is based on cored apple)
	Tray pack	40-45	14.8	592 - 666	1/4 cup raw unpeeled fruit (depending on apple size, may only be a portion of the apple, figure is based on cored apple)
	Cell pack	37-41	14.8	547.6 - 606.8	1/4 cup raw unpeeled fruit (depending on apple size, may only be a portion of the apple, figure is based on cored apple)
Asparagus	Crate	30	4.8	144	1/4 cup cooked vegetable (figure is based on asparagus being trimmed prior to preparing)
Beans (green)	Bushel	56-60	11.1	621.6 - 666	1/4 cup whole, cooked vegetable
Blackberries	12, half-pint basket	6	11.9	71.4	1/4 cup raw fruit
Broccoli	Wirebound crate	20-25	9.8	196 - 245	1/4 cup raw vegetable spears
	Wirebound crate	20-25	10.2	204-255	1/4 cup cooked, drained vegetable
Brussel sprouts	Carton, loose pack	25	8.5	212.5	1/4 cup cooked, drained vegetable
Cabbage	Open mesh bag	50	17.7	885	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable
	Open mesh bag	50	11.2	560	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable with dressing
	Open mesh bag	50	26.4	1320	1/4 cup raw shredded vegetable
	Open mesh bag	50	13.8	690	1/4 cup cooked drained shredded vegetable
	Flat crate (1 3/4 bushel)	50-60	17.7	885 - 1062	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable
	Flat crate (1 3/4 bushel)	50-60	11.2	560 - 672	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable with dressing
	Flat crate (1 3/4 bushel)	50-60	26.4	1320 - 1584	1/4 cup raw shredded vegetable
	Flat crate (1 3/4 bushel)	50-60	13.8	690 - 828	1/4 cup cooked drained shredded vegetable
	Carton, place pack	53	17.7	938.1	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable
	Carton, place pack	53	11.2	593.6	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable with dressing
	Carton, place pack	53	26.4	1399.2	1/4 cup raw shredded vegetable
	Carton, place pack	53	13.8	731.4	1/4 cup cooked drained shredded vegetable
Cantaloupes	Crate	40	5.73	229.2	1/4 cup cubed or diced fruit (figures based on 5 inch diameter, 30 oz cantaloupe)
Carrots	Film plastic bags Mesh sacks Cartons holding 48 one pound film bags	55	10.3	566.5	1/4 cup raw vegetable strips (about 3 strips, 4-inch by 1/2-inch) (figures based on carrots received with green tops removed)

FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	COMMON WHOLESALE UNIT	APPROXIMATE NET WEIGHT (U.S. POUNDS)	SERVINGS PER USDA FOOD BUYING GUIDE PURCHASE UNIT (POUND)	APPROXIMATE SERVINGS PER WHOLESALE UNIT	SERVING SIZE PER MEAL CONTRIBUTION
Carrots (continued)	Film plastic bags Mesh sacks Cartons holding 48 one pound film bags	55	10.6	583	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable (figures based on carrots received with green tops removed)
	Film plastic bags Mesh sacks Cartons holding 48 one pound film bags	55	15.4	847	1/4 cup raw, shredded vegetable (figures based on carrots received with green tops removed)
	Film plastic bags Mesh sacks Cartons holding 48 one pound film bags	55	10.9	599.5	1/4 cup raw, sliced vegetable (5/16-inch slices) (figures based on carrots received with green tops removed)
	Film plastic bags Mesh sacks Cartons holding 48 one pound film bags	55	8.16	448.8	1/4 cup cooked, drained sliced vegetable (5/16-inch slices) (figures based on carrots received with green tops removed)
Cauliflower	WGA crate	50-60	12.5	625 - 750	1/4 raw, sliced vegetable
	WGA crate	50-60	12.3	615 - 738	1/4 cup raw florets
	WGA crate	50-60	8.8	440 - 528	1/4 cup cooked drained florets
Cherries (sweet)	Lug	20	8.5	170	1/4 cup raw, pitted cherries (about 7 whole cherries)
Cherries (tart)	Lug	20	6.4	128	1/4 cup cooked, pitted fruit, sugar added
Celery (trimmed)	Crate	60	12.2	732	1/4 cup raw vegetable sticks or strips
	Crate	60	12.5	750	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable
	Crate	60	12.3	738	1/4 cup raw, diced vegetable
	Crate	60	8.7	522	1/4 cup diced, cooked, drained vegetable
	Crate	60	8.1	486	1/4 cup sliced, cooked, drained vegetable
Corn (sweet) with husks	Wirebound crate or packed carton of 5 oz. ears	50	1.67	83.5	1 medium ear (about 1/2 cup cooked vegetable)
	Wirebound crate or packed carton of 5 oz. ears	50	3.35	167.5	1/4 cup cooked vegetable (about 1/2 cob)
Corn (sweet) without husks	Wirebound crate or packed carton of 5 oz. ears	50	2.33	116.5	1 medium ear (about 1/2 cup cooked vegetable)
	Wirebound crate or packed carton of 5 oz. ears	50	5.27	263.5	1/4 cup cooked vegetable (about 1/2 cob)
Cucumbers	Bushel	48	11.1	532.8	1/4 cup unpared, diced vegetable
	Bushel	48	12.4	595.2	1/4 cup unpared, sliced vegetable
	Bushel	48	10.5	504	1/4 cup pared, diced or sliced vegetable
	Bushel	48	9.71	466.08	1/4 cup pared vegetable sticks (about 3 sticks, 3-inch by 3/4-inch sticks)
	Bushel	48	11.8	566.4	1/4 cup unpared vegetable sticks (about 3 sticks, 3-inch by 3/4-inch sticks)
Eggplant	Bushel	33	6.7	221.1	1/4 cup pared, cubed, cooked vegetable
Garlic	Carton of 12 cubes or 12 film bag packages, 12 cloves each	10	information unavailable	information unavailable	information unavailable
Grapes, seedless with stem	12 qt. basket	20	10.5	210	1/4 cup whole fruit
	12 qt. basket	20	9.27	185.4	1/4 cup fruit halves
Honeydew melon	2/3 carton	28-32	4.9	137.2 - 156.8	1/4 cup fruit cubes

FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	COMMON WHOLESALE UNIT	APPROXIMATE NET WEIGHT (U.S. POUNDS)	SERVINGS PER USDA FOOD BUYING GUIDE PURCHASE UNIT (POUND)	APPROXIMATE SERVINGS PER WHOLESALE UNIT	SERVING SIZE PER MEAL CONTRIBUTION
Kale fresh, trimmed, with stem	Carton or crate	25	35.7	892.5	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable (no stem, credits as 1/8 cup in NSLP/SBP)
	Carton or crate	25	10	250	1/4 cup cooked drained vegetable (no stem)
Kale, fresh untrimmed	Carton or crate	25	11.8	295	1/4 cup cooked, drained vegetable
Lettuce, fresh, dark green leafy, untrimmed	Carton packed, 24	43-52	21.7 - 31.3	933.1 - 1627.6	1/4 cup raw vegetable pieces (credits as 1/8 cup in NSLP/SBP), range of servings reflects loose lettuce on the lower end and head lettuce (such as romaine) on the upper end
Lettuce, green-house, dark green leafy, untrimmed	24 qt. basket	10	21.7 - 31.3	217 - 313	1/4 cup raw vegetable pieces (credits as 1/8 cup in NSLP/SBP), range of servings reflects loose lettuce on the lower end and head lettuce (such as romaine) on the upper end
Onions, mature, fresh, all sizes, whole	Dry, sack	50	9.3	465	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable
	Dry, sack	50	14.2	710	1/4 cup raw, sliced vegetable
	Dry, sack	50	7.9	395	1/4 cup cooked vegetable pieces
	Dry, sack	50	7.1	355	1/4 cup cooked, whole vegetable
Onions, green	Bunched carton of 12 dozen	10 - 16	15	150 - 240	1/4 cup raw vegetable with tops
	Bunched carton of 12 dozen	10 - 16	13.8	138 - 220.8	1/4 cup cooked with tops
	Bunched carton of 12 dozen	10 - 16	6.7	67 - 107.2	1/4 cup raw chopped or sliced vegetable without tops
Peaches Size 64 & 60 (medium, 2-1/2 inch diameter) many different sizes for peaches are outlined in the USDA Food Buying guide, please refer to the guide for other sizes	Bushel	48	3.5	168	1 whole raw peach
	Bushel	48	7	336	1/4 cup fruit (about 1/2 a peach)
	Bushel	48	5.1	244.8	1/4 cup raw, diced fruit
	Bushel	48	7.7	369.6	1/4 cup raw, sliced fruit
	2 layer carton or lug	22	3.5	77	1 whole raw peach
	2 layer carton or lug	22	7	154	1/4 cup fruit (about 1/2 a peach)
	2 layer carton or lug	22	5.1	112.2	1/4 cup raw, diced fruit
	2 layer carton or lug	22	7.7	169.4	1/4 cup raw, sliced fruit
	¾ bushel, carton crate	38	3.5	133	1 whole raw peach
	¾ bushel, carton crate	38	7	266	1/4 cup fruit (about 1/2 a peach)
Pears, all sizes	¾ bushel, carton crate	38	5.1	193.8	1/4 cup raw, diced fruit
	¾ bushel, carton crate	38	7.7	292.6	1/4 cup raw, sliced fruit
	Bushel	50	7.9	395	1/4 cup raw, pared, sliced fruit
	Bushel	50	5.7	285	1/4 cup cooked, pared, fruit halves, sugar added
Peppers, bell fresh, Medium or Large Whole	Bushel	25-30	9.7	242.5 - 291	1/4 cup chopped or diced raw vegetable
	Bushel	25-30	14.7	367.5 - 441	1/4 cup raw vegetable strips
	Bushel	25-30	9.8	245 - 294	1/4 cup cooked, drained vegetable strips
Plums	Carton or lug	28	4.99	139.72	1 whole raw plum (figures based on 2" diameter plum)
	Carton or lug	28	10.7	299.6	1/4 cup quartered fruit
	½ bushel basket	30	4.99	149.7	1 whole raw plum (figures based on 2" diameter plum)
	½ bushel basket	30	10.7	321	1/4 cup quartered fruit

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Potatoes, White or Russet	Bushel	60	8.9	534	1/4 cup pared, cooked, diced vegetable
	Bushel	60	8.4	504	1/4 cup pared, cooked, mashed vegetable
	Bushel	60	9.9	594	1/4 cup pared, cooked, sliced vegetable
	Bushel	60	5.3	318	1/4 cup pared, cooked hash browns (1/4 cup vegetable)
	Bushel	60	9.7	582	1/4 cup diced, cooked vegetable with skin
	Barrel	165	8.9	1468.5	1/4 cup pared, cooked, diced vegetable
	Barrel	165	8.4	1386	1/4 cup pared, cooked, mashed vegetable
	Barrel	165	9.9	1633.5	1/4 cup pared, cooked, sliced vegetable
	Barrel	165	5.3	874.5	1/4 cup pared, cooked hash browns (1/4 cup vegetable)
	Barrel	165	9.7	1600.5	1/4 cup diced, cooked vegetable with skin
	Box	50	8.9	445	1/4 cup pared, cooked, diced vegetable
	Box	50	8.4	420	1/4 cup pared, cooked, mashed vegetable
	Box	50	9.9	495	1/4 cup pared, cooked, sliced vegetable
	Box	50	5.3	265	1/4 cup pared, cooked hash browns (1/4 cup vegetable)
	Box	50	9.7	485	1/4 cup diced, cooked vegetable with skin
Potatoes, Red whole	Bushel	60	9.88	592.8	1/4 cup diced, cooked vegetable with skin
	Barrel	165	9.88	1630.2	1/4 cup diced, cooked vegetable with skin
	Box	50	9.88	494	1/4 cup diced, cooked vegetable with skin
Raspberries	½ pint baskets	6	12.1	72.6	1/4 cup raw, whole fruit
Spinach, fresh, partly trimmed	Bushel	18-20	30.7	552.6 - 614	1/4 cup raw, chopped vegetable (credits as 1/8 cup in NSLP/SBP)
	Bushel	18-20	20.4	367.2 - 408	1/4 cup raw vegetable with dressing (credits as 1/8 cup in NSLP/SBP)
	Bushel	18-20	7.6	136.8 - 152	1/4 cup cooked, drained vegetable
Strawberries	24 quart crate	36	10.5	378	1/4 cup raw, whole fruit
Sweet potatoes	Bushel	55	6.6	363	1/4 cup baked vegetable
	Bushel	55	5.5	302.5	1/4 cup cooked, mashed vegetable
	Bushel	55	9.1	500.5	1/4 cup cooked, sliced vegetable
	Crate	50	6.6	330	1/4 cup baked vegetable
	Crate	50	5.5	275	1/4 cup cooked, mashed vegetable
	Crate	50	9.1	455	1/4 cup cooked, sliced vegetable
Tomatoes, whole, all sizes	Crate	60	7.6	456	1/4 cup diced vegetable
	Crate	60	10.4	624	1/4 cup vegetable wedges
	Lug box	32	7.6	243.2	1/4 cup diced vegetable
	Lug box	32	10.4	332.8	1/4 cup vegetable wedges
	2 layer flat	21	7.6	159.6	1/4 cup diced vegetable
	2 layer flat	21	10.4	218.4	1/4 cup vegetable wedges
Tomatoes, green-house	12 quart basket	20	7.6	152	1/4 cup diced vegetable
	12 quart basket	20	10.4	208	1/4 cup vegetable wedges
Turnips	Without tops, mesh sack bunched, crate	70-80	11.2	784 - 896	1/4 cup raw, pared, cubed or diced vegetable
	Without tops, mesh sack bunched, crate	70-80	8.7	609 - 696	1/4 cup pared, cubed, cooked, drained vegetable
	Without tops, mesh sack bunched, crate	70-80	5.6	392 - 448	1/4 cup cooked, drained, pared, mashed vegetable
Watermelons	Melons of average or medium size	25	6.1	152.5	1/4 cup diced fruit, without rind

Table adapted from USDA Food and Nutrition Service "Pecks to Pounds" translation chart (http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Pecks_for_Pounds.pdf) and Food Buying Guide for School Meal Programs (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs>)

ON THE FRONT LINES: HOW YOU CAN BE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN'S LUNCH CHOICES

Children don't just learn in the classroom at school; the lunchroom offers tremendous opportunities to teach students healthy choices and life skills that will influence their success in school and their adult lives. As a school nutrition staff member, you are also a teacher and a coach. With your help, students can learn how to support local farms to keep their communities healthy while choosing foods that are healthy for their bodies.

TALKING TO STUDENTS ABOUT MICHIGAN FOODS

Learn as much as you can about the new foods you will be serving so that you can talk to students about them. This includes tasting it for yourself.

- 1 What are the ingredients?
- 2 Do you know the name of the farmer who grew the fruit or vegetable? If not, you can at least share with students that it was grown in Michigan.
- 3 How was it prepared?
- 4 What does it taste like? Can you compare it to something they may be familiar with? Do you like it? Students look up to you and value your opinions.
- 5 What nutrients does it have and what good will it do for their bodies? For example, "This spinach is full of calcium to make your bones strong."
- 6 Don't assume students will choose the new foods on their own. Use suggestive selling techniques and verbal prompts. For example, ask students, "Would you like a Michigan apple to go with your sandwich?"
- 7 Invite local farmers to visit the cafeteria or classroom to talk to students about the different foods they grow.

PRESENTATION

Come up with fun and creative names for local food items. You can ask students to help you come up with names. This idea comes from the Smarter Lunchrooms movement (see more on page 14), which suggests names should be age-appropriate. Younger students are attracted to names like "X-Ray Vision Carrots" and "Super Strength Spinach," whereas older students prefer descriptive adjectives like "Succulent Summer Corn" and "Crisp Celery and Carrots." More examples are included in the chart provided. By doing just this one free thing, schools have increased consumption of a menu item by 40-70 percent. Take it a step further and slip the words "Michigan" or "local" in the titles as well.

- Conduct a taste test in line to let students try before they buy.
- Locate healthy items at the front of the display.
- Think about how you can include Michigan foods in your convenience item offerings. Healthy express lines have been shown to increase selection of nutrient dense foods by about 30 percent.*

HEALTHY EXPRESS LINES HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO INCREASE SELECTION OF NUTRIENT DENSE FOODS BY 30+%.*

MARKETING

- Signs are great visual prompts to get students excited about Michigan foods. Create your own, or use this template from Food Hub.org: food-hub.org/files/resources/Eating_local_cafeteria_sign.pdf
- Promote local foods in newsletters, fliers and shared menus
- Teachers can be great partners! Provide classroom resources such as those provided by Michigan Harvest of the Month (see page 14)

TASTE TESTING

Taste testing is the practice of offering small samples of a new food to students (and adults!) to try it out in a supportive and positive setting. Students can vote on whether they tried it, liked it, and would be willing to try it again. Taste tests help students learn new foods and help nutrition staff collect information about new recipes.

- Know that students may not like a new dish the first time you make it, and that's OK.
- Teach students that tastes change. The goal is to try new foods and it's OK if they don't like it today; they can try again another day. Did you like it **today**?
- It may take 10-15 tries, if not more, before a child likes a new food.
- Let students vote with stickers or in some other interactive way to indicate if they did or did not like it today.
- Use individual trays or paper cups to make the food samples seem more special and appealing to students. You can also decorate the sampling area, dress in the color of the new fruit or vegetable being sampled, and invite a farmer, teachers, volunteers or the principal to help serve the new recipe to build excitement.
- Consider choosing an easy recipe for your first taste test to get the hang of the process and inviting volunteers or students to assist in the sample preparation and serving.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CULTIVATE MICHIGAN

Cultivate Michigan helps institutions locate, buy and use seasonal Michigan foods. Click on the “Featured Foods” tab on www.cultivatemichigan.org/ to access marketing materials such as posters and window clings for the serving line.

MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL

Michigan Farm to School is a program of the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems. The program’s website offers many educational resources about how to start or grow farm to school programs, as well as information on upcoming workshops and events and the MI Farm to School Grant Program. The MI Farm to School Grant Program offers Planning and Implementation grants to Michigan K-12 schools/districts and early childhood programs to plan for or implement farm to school programs focused on local food purchasing. Learn more at foodsystems.msu.edu/our-work/farm_to_school.

HOOPHOUSES FOR HEALTH

Hoophouses for Health is a program of the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) that is designed to increase access to Good Food for vulnerable families while increasing the season extension capacity of Michigan farmers. Farmers can receive funding from MIFMA to build a hoophouse, and their debt is repaid by providing healthy food to eligible individuals or schools. Participating farmers can provide vegetables, fruit, and other food products as loan repayment to child nutrition programs at eligible schools or districts that qualify for at least 50% free and reduced lunch and participate in USDA Child Nutrition Programs, such as the National School Lunch Program. Early childhood programs can also receive food from Hoophouses for Health if they participate in the USDA Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) and meet geographic free and reduced price eligibility requirements. The MSU Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) can help establish relationships between participating farmers and eligible schools and programs. More detailed information about the program can be found at: mifma.org/school-and-early-childhood-program-information.

SMARTER LUNCHROOMS

Smarter Lunchrooms is a program offered by Michigan State University Extension coaches who have been trained by experts from Cornell University’s Center for Behavioral Economic in Child Nutrition Program. This program focuses on improving the lunchroom through low cost or no cost solutions that research has shown to result in children making healthier lunch choices. To request a Smarter Lunchrooms coach from MSU Extension, contact Becky Henne at henner@anr.msu.edu. Learn more about the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement at this website: www.smarterlunchrooms.org. Also, check out Michigan Team Nutrition’s Smarter Lunchroom Video at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTyAIO3MfiQ.

MICHIGAN HARVEST OF THE MONTH™

Michigan Harvest of the Month™ is a program of the Michigan Nutrition Network at Michigan Fitness Foundation. They offer trainings for schools and resources for school nutrition staff and educators. Educational resources such as posters and classroom activities are provided to schools at no cost by the Michigan Fitness Foundation. Contact Jamie Rahrig, project manager at the Michigan Fitness Foundation, at 517-908-3842, jrahrig@michiganfitness.org or resources@michiganfitness.org to learn what resources are available to your school. Some resources can be downloaded for free at farmtoschool.tbaisd.org/harvest-of-the-month/. More information about this program can be found at: www.michigannutritionnetwork.org/harvest-of-the-month.

SERVING UP TRADITION: A GUIDE FOR SCHOOL FOOD IN CULTURALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

This guide will walk you through the process of building school meal programs that are both healthy and culturally appropriate for increasingly diverse customers. The full guide is available at: www.massfarmtoschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ServingUpTradition.pdf

THE LUNCH BOX

The Lunch Box is a program of the Chef Ann Foundation that is “dedicated to supporting school districts and food service teams who are transitioning their food programs from processed foods to scratch cooking and fresh ingredients.” The Lunch Box recipe and menu database is a searchable database of “kitchen- and kid-tested recipes” that have been analyzed for USDA meal components and can be scaled with the click of a button. Sample lunch and breakfast sample menus can also be downloaded at: www.thelunchbox.org/recipes-menus.

TASTE TESTING GUIDES

GROWING MINDS

www.growing-minds.org/documents/farm-to-school-taste-tests.pdf

OHIO ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/OAFHK-2012-Taste-Testing-Toolkit-WEB.pdf

VERMONT FEED

www.food-hub.org/files/resources/FEED_TasteTestGuideFINAL_lores.pdf

THE USDA TEAM NUTRITION RESOURCE LIBRARY

Taste test posters and stickers such as the “Make Today a Try-Day” design: www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resource-library

TASTE TESTING VIDEOS

GROWING MINDS

www.growing-minds.org/video-farm-to-school-taste-tests/

GEORGIA ORGANICS BRIGHT IDEAS FOR TASTE TEST SUCCESS

www.vimeo.com/71532219

CURRICULUM RESOURCES TO SHARE WITH TEACHERS

MICHIGAN APPLES LESSON PLAN

www.michiganapples.com/Just-for-kids/For-Teachers

NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL

A searchable database of resources, including curriculum. www.farmtoschool.org/resources

THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LITERACY CURRICULUM MATRIX

An online, searchable, and standards-based curriculum map for K-12 teachers. www.agclassroom.org/teacher/matrix

THE GROWING MINDS

The Growing Minds farm to school program in North Carolina has developed a set of lesson plans that have connections to the Common Core, Essential Standards, and age-appropriate literature.

www.growing-minds.org/lesson-plans-landing-page/



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