10 CENTS A MEAL FOR SCHOOL KIDS & FARMS

WHAT A DIME CAN DO:
An Evaluation of the 10 Cents a Meal Pilot

10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms (10 Cents), administered by the Michigan Department of Education, matches what participating schools spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes with grants of up to 10 cents per meal. This brief is part of What a Dime Can Do, an evaluation report on two years of the pilot program (2017-18 and 2018-19).

10 CENTS ON THE MENU:
Fruits, Vegetables, and Legumes Served through the Year

Product Diversity

One of the potential outcomes of 10 Cents is for school food service directors (FSDs) to purchase and serve a wider variety of fruits, vegetables, and legumes (FVL). Purchasing data indicated this is happening; a tremendous diversity of Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables was used by the 32 grantees in 2017-18 and 57 grantees in 2018-19.

- Cumulatively, FSDs reported purchasing 15 types of fruits and 41 types of vegetables in the two program years.[1] For this evaluation, products were standardized into product types.

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For example, Gala apples were categorized as apples and different types of herbs (parsley, cilantro, etc.) were categorized under that single product type. *The resulting number of product types is smaller than but does not conflict with reporting for 10 Cents pilot years.*

- On average, a grantee purchased seven types of fruit and 14 types of vegetables in 2017-18, and six types of fruit and 12 types of vegetables in 2018-19. The range of fruit types purchased varied from 1 to 12 in 2017-18, and up to 13 in 2018-19. Vegetables types varied to as many as 29 in both years, from as few as two in 2017-18 and 1 in 2018-19.
- There were four Michigan-grown fruits used by a majority of FSDs. **More than half of grantees served blueberries, cherries, peaches, and strawberries in school food programs both years, and all but one served apples.**
- There were eight widely popular Michigan-grown vegetables used by a majority of FSDs. Both years, **more than half of FSDs incorporated Michigan-grown asparagus, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, and summer and winter squashes into their school meals.**
- Students had the opportunity try varieties of produce that are uncommon in school meal programs. These included saskatoon berries, microgreens, mustard greens, rainbow carrots, and tomatillos.

Beyond fruit and vegetable product types, FSDs offered students even greater diversity through the many varieties of products they served. For example, in 2018-19, FSDs reported serving a total of 14 varieties of apples, five varieties of beets, nine varieties of winter squash, six different types of radishes, and five types of melon including watermelon.

FSDs also purchased Michigan-grown legumes through 10 Cents. In 2017-18, one quarter of participating districts served dry beans, and this increased to 35% the following school year. Types of legumes included black beans, garbanzo beans, and Great Northern beans.[2]

Photo Credit: Khalid Ibrahim
Courtesy of MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

[1] Products were standardized into product types (e.g., Gala apples were categorized as apples). [2] See *What Foods Were Served charts* for the percent of participating districts serving Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables by product types in 2018-19.

Fruits, Vegetables, and Legumes Served through the Year (cont.)

Seasonality

Across all grantees, Michigan-grown products were purchased each month of the traditional school year. Product types included apples, blueberries, peaches, and strawberries, which were served each month both years. Cherries and cranberries were also served each month in 2018-19. Vegetables used throughout the school year in both years were asparagus, carrots, green beans, and peppers. Celery, corn, summer squash, beets, and lettuce were also served every month of the school year in 2018-19. Michigan-grown legumes were purchased most months of the school year both years (excluding February in 2017-18 and June and July in 2018-19).[3]

Looking beyond which products were purchased by month, the frequency and dollar value of purchases reflects the seasonality of agricultural production. By dollar value, the most 10 Cents purchases were made in October in both years. Across all districts, the highest number of vegetable types purchased was also in October: 37 in 2018-19, and 33 in 2017-18.

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The number of fruit types purchased peaked in the fall, in September, both years (15 in 2018-19; 13 in 2017-18). The variation in the number of products types served across all districts both years can be seen in the adjacent table.

Total Number of Product Types Purchased by Month in 2017-18 and 2018-19

	PROGRAM YEAR	FRUITS	VEGETABLES
SEPTEMBER	17-18	13	32
	18-19	15	35
OCTOBER	17-18	12	33
	18-19	13	37
NOVEMBER	17-18	7	30
	18-19	11	32
DECEMBER	17-18	8	24
	18-19	10	31
JANUARY	17-18	8	29
	18-19	10	30
FEBRUARY	17-18	7	24
	18-19	9	28
MARCH	17-18	7	18
	18-19	12	29
APRIL	17-18	9	25
	18-19	11	28
MAY	17-18	7	30
	18-19	9	30

Note: Yellow indicates the month with the least number of product types and orange indicates the month with the greatest number of product types across all districts. This table includes months when schools are traditionally in session for a full month during the regular school year. Schools are typically in session only part of June so it is not included here.

[3] See *What Foods Were Served charts* for the range of types of fruits, vegetables, and legumes purchased by month in 2018-19.

10 CENTS ON THE MENU:
Fruits, Vegetables, and Legumes Served through the Year (cont.)

What's on the Menu

Tracking data showed that FSDs incorporated Michigan-grown products into their school meal programs in different ways and to different degrees throughout the year. School menus and experiences for students were unique at each participating district. The examples below help illustrate what students may have seen on the menu, from limited produce usage to a wide variety of Michigan fruits, vegetables, and legumes.[4]

- **Example A:**
  In one district, a student would have regularly been served Michigan-grown apples and blueberries from September through March and often served strawberries, peaches, plums, and cranberries.

  Asparagus, green beans, and lettuce would have appeared on their menu every month from September through April. During the peak Michigan harvest months of September and October, this student would have had an opportunity to eat 9 types of Michigan-grown fruits and 15 types of vegetables including carrots, cucumbers, peas, tomatoes, and sweet peppers. They would have seen winter squash at least once every other month throughout the school year. Example A is represented in the Calendar Snapshot chart by the foods listed in orange.

School menus and experiences for students were unique at each participating district.

- **Example B:**
  In another district with more moderate program utilization, a student would have been served Michigan apples from November through March, and other fruits intermittently such as blueberries and cherries in February, peaches in November and March, and even Saskatoon berries in January. Periodically from November to March, 14 types of vegetables would have been on the menu, including green beans, radishes, beets, and winter squash. Michigan-grown black beans were served in February. Example B is represented in the Calendar Snapshot chart by the foods listed in blue.

- **Example C:**
  A student in another district with much more limited program utilization would have had the chance to enjoy Michigan-grown apples in October, December, and April. Example C is represented in the Calendar Snapshot chart by the foods listed in green.

[4] See What's on the Menu: A Calendar Snapshot of Three 10 Cents School Districts for another illustration of these data.

The Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) leads evaluation of 10 Cents. The work presented here is part of What a Dime Can Do: An Evaluation of the 10 Cents a Meal Pilot by Colleen Matts, CRFS; Kathryn Colasanti, School of Social Work, University of Michigan (formerly CRFS); and Elissa Trumbull, consultant, and was funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. To learn more, visit **tencentsmichigan.org** and **canr.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal.**

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