

Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions: A Resource Guide for Farm to Institution Programs

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As the local food movement has gained momentum in the past decade, the number of farm to institution programs across the nation also has grown. This publication offers examples and insight into the farm to institution world. Farmers, food-service managers, and community members can use this publication to gain knowledge and resources about how to begin or expand a farm to institution program.

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Students at O'Farrell Head Start in San Diego compare the size, shape, and weight of sweet potatoes they grew in their Farm to Preschool program. Photo: Kristine Smith, courtesy of Neighborhood House Association

Introduction

Farm to institution can mean different things to different people, organizations, and institutions. In this publication, the term refers to programs in institutions such as schools, colleges, hospitals, correctional facilities, and senior living centers that serve healthy, local food while engaging the broader community in that effort.

Though each farm to institution program is unique, they generally share similar values and goals. Farm to institution programs often seek to provide fresh, nutritious, locally sourced food

in cafeterias. They support local economies by purchasing from regional producers and processors and educate communities about the value of eating and growing healthy, local food. Finally, farm to institution programs strive to create and improve relationships between institutions and the local community.

Farm to institution programs have wide-reaching benefits. Research compiled by the National Farm to School Network shows that student meal participation has increased an average of 9% with farm to school programs, generating more revenue from school meal programs.

The Potential Benefits of Farm to Institution Programs

For farmers, ranchers, and food processors, building a relationship with an institution can:

- Diversify the customer base
- Create a stable market for products
- Provide opportunities to engage the community in an agricultural operation

For food-service professionals, buying fresh food from local producers can:

- Increase participation in meal programs
- Improve the quality of the institution's food service
- Earn the institution recognition and increased business for its efforts around local food

For parents, community organizers, and educators, helping to build a farm to institution program can:

- Increase community awareness of local farming and food systems
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and improve access to fresh, nutritious food
- Engage the community in collaborative, hands-on learning experiences
- Strengthen local economies and food-based livelihoods

Related ATTRA Publications

www.attra.ncat.org

An Illustrated Guide to Growing Safe Produce on Your Farm

Food Miles: Background and Marketing

New Markets for Your Crops

Planning for Profit in Sustainable Farming

Tips for Selling to Aggregators/Grower Marketing Co-ops

Tips for Selling to Institutional Markets

Moreover, students involved in farm to school programs showed improved eating habits and began to opt for healthier foods at a younger age. The organization also found that each dollar invested in local procurement by schools stimulates an additional \$2.16 of local economic activity (National Farm to School Network, 2013).

In addition to providing economic and health benefits, farm to institution programs also promote responsible environmental stewardship by supporting sustainable growing practices and reducing carbon emissions associated with food miles.

Models of Farm to Institution Programs

There are many ways to bring local food into an institution. Below are a few of the most common models of farm to institution programs. For specific examples, refer to the case studies later in this publication.

Special Events

One great way to start a farm to institution program is to offer a special event such as a “locally grown lunch” that features local food. Special events help showcase efforts around local food while allowing food-service professionals to ease into the challenges of local food procurement and preparation.

Salad Bar

Offering and labeling fresh, local items on a salad

bar may increase your cafeteria sales as well as improve consumers' health. Salad bars are an easy way to incorporate local food in cafeteria meals on a daily basis, though seasonal availability may be a limiting factor.

Incorporation into Main Meal

Once a farm to institution program has established relationships with local vendors, it will be easier to increase local purchasing and regularly feature local items on everyday menus.

Employee CSA or Farmers Market

An innovative way to support local farmers while encouraging employees to eat healthy, local food is through an employee CSA program or on-site farmers market. This model is growing in popularity as a part of farm to institution programs.

Catering

Many institutions offer catering services that boast an “all-local” meal option as a way to promote farm to institution programs. Such events are also a great place to advertise and educate about local food.

On-Site Garden

There are many educational and therapeutic benefits of gardening, making gardens an important component of many school, prison, and hospital farm to institution programs. While many institutions utilize their gardens' food in the cafeteria,

others use the produce for cooking classes, nutrition lessons, and other educational activities.

Program Implementation and Considerations

Successful farm to institution programs are built over time and depend heavily on strong relationships among various stakeholders including food-service professionals, producers, community members, administrative staff, county sanitarians and health officials, and others.

To begin a farm to institution program and build such relationships, those leading the initiative might organize a community meeting to get others on board and to form a food advisory committee (Sanger and Zenz, 2004). Next, the advisory committee should create a plan for the

program that starts small, perhaps focusing on one local product or featuring one local meal, and then scale up incrementally.

In addition to sourcing food locally, a farm to institution plan should include an outreach strategy that informs the public about efforts around healthy, local food. Once the basic systems and support are in place, the institution can build on its successes to expand into a well-organized farm to institution program.

The table below highlights some common considerations for producers and institutions currently involved in or interested in starting a farm to institution program. The case studies highlighted later in this publication provide additional tips and examples of how varying models have proved successful for different types of institutions.

Table 1. Farm to Institution: Common Considerations for Producers and Institutions

| Considerations | Producers | Institutions |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Communication and agreements | <p>Arrange an initial in-person meeting to begin establishing a relationship with the institution.</p> <p>Maintain clear and consistent communication by being easy to reach via phone and email.</p> <p>Provide timely responses and reliable services.</p> <p>Ask the institution if they require a contract with producers/vendors.</p> <p>Be prepared with your product availability and pricing in advance, if possible.</p> | <p>Communicate clear expectations regarding packaging preferences, volume demand, delivery dates and times, price points, purchasing requirements, and any other pertinent information.</p> <p>Create buy-in by inviting producers to your venue and by visiting their farms to create a mutual understanding of your capacities.</p> <p>Specify preferred mode of communication (phone, email, fax, etc.).</p> <p>Specify any contract requirements.</p> |
| Food safety | <p>Good Agriculture Practices and Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) are growing guidelines to reduce risk of contaminated produce. Some state institutions require producers be GAP/GHP certified, while for others certification is voluntary. Still, following GAP/GHP guidelines enhances producer credibility. For more information about certification and guidelines, visit www.ams.usda.gov.</p> <p>For ideas on how to write your own farm food safety plan, see University of Minnesota's template at http://safety.cfans.umn.edu/fsp4u</p> | <p>Check with your county sanitarian about food safety requirements specific to your region.</p> <p>Adopt a "Local Producer Checklist," an easy way to hold partner producers accountable for safe growing practices. One great example is Iowa State University Extension's checklist that addresses facets of food production and handling for produce. www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2046A.pdf</p> |
| Marketing | <p><i>Direct:</i> Working directly with the institutional buyer.</p> <p><i>Cooperatives:</i> Selling products to a growers cooperative or food hub.</p> <p><i>Wholesale Distributor:</i> Selling in bulk to a buyer at a terminal market who then resells to the institution.</p> | <p>There are many ways to get the word out about your local food.</p> <p><i>On the service line:</i> Provide information products such as signs and posters in the institution that explain where products are from.</p> <p><i>Posters and newsletters:</i> Advertise around the institution with eye-catching materials and information for both staff and customers.</p> <p><i>Press releases:</i> Local newspapers, sustainable agriculture list-serves, social media are all great venues.</p> |

| Considerations | Producers | Institutions |
|---|--|---|
| <i>Processing, packaging, and labor</i> | <p>Inquire about the institution's capacity and expectations regarding processing and packaging.</p> <p>Can they use raw products? What packaging will optimize the quality of the product and meet the institution's preferences?</p> | <p>Consider what capacities the kitchen facility and staff has and doesn't have: chopping, cooking, storing, freezing, etc.</p> <p>Communicate these capacities and related needs to producers/vendors.</p> <p>Are there ways to make the kitchen more amenable to local purchasing? Can you train food service staff in additional culinary skills, manage your budget to accommodate increased labor, invest in kitchen equipment or storage space?</p> |
| <i>Distribution and delivery</i> | <p>Consider how often the institution needs your product and what will be your line of distribution.</p> | <p>Communicate what times/days are best for delivery; check with current distributor to see about carrying local products.</p> |

Supportive Policies

From federal legislation to institution-specific policies, efforts are increasing to make it easier for institutions to source food locally. Below are a few examples of supportive policies that already exist and others that can be created on an institution-by-institution basis.



A server displays local beef at University of Montana's annual Fall Festival. Photo courtesy of UM University Dining Services

Federal Geographic Preference: Institutions that receive funds through federal Child Nutrition Programs are eligible to apply a geographic preference option to purchase local, unprocessed food in the bidding process even when it isn't the cheapest (USDA, 2011).

Institutional Purchasing Policies: Institutions can demonstrate their commitment to local purchasing and sustainable food practices by developing a food purchasing

policy. For ideas and considerations in doing so, see the Food Alliance's publication, *A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy*. For details, see Further Resources.

Wellness Policies: Many institutions have wellness policies that promote healthy lifestyles for employees and guests/students/inmates. These wellness policies can be modified to include a focus on nutritious food, making it the perfect place to highlight an institution's commitment to and goals for purchasing healthy, local food.

Summary

Farm to institution programs are growing quickly across the nation as people embrace the economic, environmental, and health benefits of eating local food. As programs expand, the number of resources available for those involved in farm to institution programs is also growing. This publication merely touches on the basics of bringing local food to local institutions. For more detailed information, see the Further Resources section. You can also check in your area to see what institutions are buying food locally and to learn from their experiences.

Case Studies

Case Study: Farm to College University of Montana Serves Up Local Products

When the University of Montana (UM) in Missoula began purchasing local food in 2003, it went for the proverbial low-hanging fruit: oil, beef, and wheat. “They’re available year-round, so it seemed like a good place to start,” says Ian Finch, Farm to College Coordinator. Since then, the program has grown significantly and now purchases a variety of products from 120 different farmers, ranchers, and businesses.

University Dining Services (UDS) at UM serves over 3,000 meals a day across campus and spends more than 20% of its total food budget on local food items. Students eating in one of the university coffee shops, at a dining hall, in the UDS-managed food court, or at a catered event on campus will often spot the UM Farm to College logo displayed alongside food items.

“Marketing is huge,” Finch says. “You need to let others know what you’re doing; otherwise it won’t pay off. Support from administration depends on how well you’re getting the word out.” Meal plan sales and student buy-in are also affected by marketing, which is one reason UDS offers extensive outreach and educational activities. They exhibit farmer profiles in the dining halls, speak in college classrooms, hold special events that highlight local food, provide extensive labeling, develop informative webinars, and much more.

UM embraces Farm to College for many reasons, and all of them can be summed up with what has become the organization’s guiding philosophy: it’s just the right thing to do.

Mark LoParco, Director of UDS, has been the driving force in creating and spreading this philosophy. LoParco was instrumental in getting the program started in 2003 when he partnered with four UM graduate students to start a pilot “Montana Mornings” breakfast that featured local eggs, bacon, and milk. From there, local food and LoParco’s philosophy grew into every aspect of UDS.

One of UM Farm to College’s biggest successes is its innovative use of organic safflower oil. The oil was chosen because of its health properties and versatility—it can be used in every food-service application from salad dressings to fry oil. The product comes from the Oil Barn, a

farmer-owned operation in north central Montana, and is healthier than traditional vegetable oil alternatives. Not only is it better for consumers, it’s better for the environment as well. After the oil has been used, it is collected and returned to the Oil Barn farm where it is converted into biodiesel to fuel their tractors.

As with all food purchases, UDS must be timely when ordering oil because the company delivers to Missoula only once every three weeks. In order to orchestrate the logistics with a growing number of local businesses, the university’s central purchasing committee, comprised of chefs and food-service professionals, meets once a week to discuss such issues as order timing, menus, and more.

Another challenge with increasing the amount of local food served at the university has been developing kitchen and storage capacity to process whole, raw items and store them for year-round use. To meet their scratch-cooking needs, UDS purchased a patty machine to manufacture their own hamburger patties and two vacuum packing machines that allow them to blanch and package products for freezing. Most recently, UDS has developed a campus food hub comprised of a freezer, cooler, and dry storage space that allows the organization to buy in bulk (e.g., thousands of pounds of onions) and store items for distribution among the campus’s five kitchens. Due to these and other long-term cost-saving initiatives, UDS has not experienced an increase in food costs associated with local foods procured through the UM Farm to College Program.

In addition to purchasing and preparing local food, UM’s Farm to College program is also involved in growing it. Its Edible Campus Project looks for under-utilized areas of campus where food can be grown. UDS currently has two sizeable gardens and is planning to establish an orchard soon. “Gardens are a great way to garner student involvement and support,” Finch says.

For others starting farm to college programs, Finch recommends starting small with one meal that showcases efforts around local food. He also stresses the importance of being flexible and patient with producer partners who might not have a solid understanding of your institution’s needs at first. “Clear dialogue is key to working out the kinks. Over time, you’ll both know how to meet each others’ needs and your efforts will be rewarded.”

The University of Montana embraces Farm to College for many reasons, and all of them can be summed up with what has become the organization’s guiding philosophy: it’s just the right thing to do.

Mini Case Study: Real Food Challenge

Real Food Challenge seeks to encourage and facilitate universities in purchasing more local and sustainably grown food by training college students to lead campaigns on their campuses.

A project of Boston-based Real Food Generation, Real Food Challenge is comprised of regional groups of university students who run campus campaigns. The program organizes regional summits and trainings to help teams develop full action plans. Examples of activities and resources provided by Real Food Challenge include Days of Action (like National Food Day), Campus Commitment (colleges agree to purchase 20% local food by 2020), and the Calculator, a tool that allows institutions to track and assess food purchasing.

For more information about getting involved, visit www.realfoodchallenge.org.

Case Study: Farm to Preschool San Diego Head Start Goes Local

Efforts to bring local food into childcare and preschool programs were recognized in 2011 with the creation of a nationwide Farm to Preschool network. The program, structured as a subcommittee of the National Farm to School Network, is geared toward institutions serving children ages zero to five. Much like its parent organization, Farm to Preschool promotes local food procurement and gardening, as well as efforts to educate students and

their families about the value of eating healthy, local foods.

Zoë Phillips, Farm to Preschool Project Director at Occidental College, is quick to emphasize the value of working with this young age group. “Childhood obesity is at an epidemic level,” Zoë says, “and is magnified among low-income children and children of color, including those under five years of age.” Developing healthy habits early is key in addressing obesity and nutrition issues.

In San Diego, the non-profit organization Neighborhood House

Association (NHA) and Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI) at Occidental College have worked together to build model Farm to Preschool programs in 26 area Head Start schools. According to Kristine Smith, Director of Nutrition Services for NHA, the program started by revamping menus in 2009. “We now make all food from scratch in a central kitchen and use as many organic and local ingredients as possible,” Smith says. With an average of 5,750 meals served a day, that’s no easy feat.

The program’s biggest challenge has also been its greatest reward. Initially, Smith faced skepticism from parents and teachers who claimed kids wouldn’t eat salmon tacos made with cabbage and homemade Jalisco dressing instead of fried animal-shaped fish sticks. “We tried it anyway – and it worked!” Smith exclaims. “It has been exciting to find that kids really do like to eat healthy foods. They eat hummus, rotini alla bolognese, all different kinds of salads... These kids eat better than a lot of their parents and even our staff here!” Annual evaluations from parents show a 96% approval rating of the new menus.

A significant reason these kids are eating healthy foods is because they’re also learning about why it’s important to do so. NHA’s Farm to Preschool educational efforts include a “Harvest of the Month” program that highlights one seasonal food monthly and provides parents with recipes and nutrition information for that product. They also invite parents on school field trips to gardens and farmers markets, provide an educator guide for teachers to incorporate food into their curriculum, and developed a cooking curriculum for seven school menu items a month.

As the Farm to Preschool movement grows, participating programs are gaining increasing recognition for their achievements. In 2012, a national survey administered by the Farm to Preschool network reached 494 early care programs, with estimates that this number represents only a fraction of existing and beginning Farm to Preschool programs. The same year, NHA and Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI) at Occidental College were among 20 recipients of Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move! Child Care” awards for their farm to preschool efforts. Other organizations like Ecotrust in Oregon and Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) in North Carolina are also experiencing tremendous success and attention for their innovative farm to preschool models.



Preschool students in San Diego learn about growing food at the school’s educational garden. Photo: Kristine Smith, courtesy of Neighborhood House Association

Case Study: Farm to School Northeast Iowa's Collaborative Model for Regional Farm to School Success

There are few examples of regionwide farm to school programs, as most focus on a single school district. Yet in northeastern Iowa, six counties have joined forces to create both the demand and supply for healthy, local foods.

The movement took off in 2006 when the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community Program invested in nine communities throughout the country to work on system and policy changes to create healthier, more vibrant communities. The Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative (FFI) became one of those sites and is different from the other eight in that it is rural with a population just over 100,000 people and 20 public school districts. The other collaborative sites include urban areas like Seattle and Philadelphia.

While the Northeast Iowa FFI has made systemic and community-driven policy change a guiding principal of its work, it also gives people the skills to understand healthy behaviors and the associated long-term benefits. The project works to create school environments that sustain, support, and promote those behaviors. From its inception, the Northeast Iowa FFI has focused on building relationships and bringing people together to create healthier communities.

Despite a landscape scattered with farms, fertile soil, and rolling bluffs, it became clear that the need for farm to school education was vast. Like elsewhere in the United States, children in northeast Iowa do not know where their food comes from. Approximately 85% of the food consumed by Iowans is imported into the state.

In 2009, the Northeast Iowa FFI applied for two AmeriCorps service members to help shape the regionwide Farm to School program. These service members brought together stakeholders from Iowa State University (ISU) Extension, Luther College, and Pepperfield Project, a not-for-profit educational farm, to begin initial conversations. This group created a structure for outreach and determined the program's focus would be on school gardens, local food procurement, and nutrition education.

These partners looked for anyone who would



*Students at North Fayette School planting seeds in their school garden.
Photo: Courtesy of Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative*

listen—teachers, administration, cooks, school custodians—to commit to joining a regionwide Farm to School pilot program. Six schools were willing to participate. They dabbled with starting school gardens and purchasing local foods for Home Grown School Lunch Week. In early 2010, the team hosted a teacher workshop about farm to school education. Enough teachers participated in the course to have it accredited with the American Education Association. The school representatives involved with the program shared their success stories and the news began to spread.

The Northeast Iowa FFI created a catalog of its services, known as the School Wellness Action Plan, to help schools think comprehensively about their activities. The plan became an agreement in which the Northeast Iowa FFI provided start-up funds and regular support while the schools formed wellness teams that met on a regular basis. In just the first year, 12 schools developed wellness goals using FFI's School Wellness Action Plan. The planning document continues to provide important guidelines and insight for northeastern Iowa schools as they work to expand and improve their farm to school programs.

Because farm to school programs are most effective when multiple parties are involved, the Northeast Iowa FFI's approach reaches out to farmers, school cooks, teachers, students, school staff, and community members. They host hands-on farm to school educational workshops for teachers and



Kitchen staff proudly display the fruit of their labor from a farm to school workshop. Photo: Courtesy of Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative

a myriad of professional-development opportunities for school food-service staff. Students have been active in building and tending 14 school gardens, with six schools offering cross-age teaching, a method that involves training high school students to be local foods educators who deliver lessons to elementary school students.

The Northeast Iowa FFI has begun to focus on increasing access to healthy local foods in schools by capitalizing on the collective purchasing power of small rural districts. The initiative includes the creation of a regional seasonal menu, made possible by the active involvement of regional food-service staff.

After five years of relationship building and program development, 18 of the Northeast Iowa FFI's 20 school districts are invested in farm to school efforts, showing that the model of a region-wide program relying on rural district collaboration has great potential for farm to school success.

To learn more, visit www.iowafoodandfitness.org/site/f2s.html

Case Study: Farm to Hospital Good Food is Growing at Fletcher Allen Health Care

From growing herbs and vegetables in a rooftop garden to operating the Center for Nutrition and Healthy Food Systems, Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington, Vermont, has made remarkable

Mini Case Study: National Farm to School Network

In 2007, dozens of organizations collaborated to create the National Farm to School Network, a nationwide effort that supports farm to school implementation in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. National Farm to School Network focuses its work on policy development, training and technical assistance, information development and dissemination, and research and evaluation to increase the quantity and quality of farm to school programs across the country.

The National Farm to School Network establishes relationships between school children and local foods by supporting the integration of local foods into school cafeterias and by introducing food-related curricula that can be used in classrooms, school gardens, cooking classes, and more. In 2012, the Farm to Preschool subcommittee was created (see the Farm to Preschool case study for more details). To take advantage of the network's extensive resources, visit its website at www.farmtoschool.org.

Mini Case Study: FoodCorps

FoodCorps is an AmeriCorps program that places young professionals in K-12 public schools with the goal of helping connect students with local, healthy food. The program began in 2006 when the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) launched a Montana FoodCorps program that later served as a model for the establishment of a national organization in 2009. FoodCorps members' work focuses on the program's three fundamental pillars: access, knowledge, and engagement, all of which encourage schools to procure local food, educate children about nutrition and local food, and build and maintain school gardens.

Currently, FoodCorps has members serving in 12 states and aims to expand to all 50 states by 2020. Eligible host sites are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, public agencies, or schools. For more information on becoming a host site or a service member, visit www.foodcorps.org or see Further Resources.

achievements with its Hospital Supported Agriculture program. Serving around two million meals a year, the institution's local food model has helped influence farm to hospital programs across the country and inspired other Burlington institutions and restaurants to embrace local food.

In 2006, Fletcher Allen was among the first health-care organizations to sign the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge, an initiative started by Health Care Without Harm to encourage hospitals and care providers to include more nutritious, local foods in their institutions. Fletcher Allen's commitment was led by Diane Imrie, the hospital's nutrition director, who insisted that fresh food is vital to patients' health and aids in the healing process. Imrie's ideas and leadership helped bring more local food into the hospital while at the same time shedding light on the environmental and economic benefits of purchasing locally.

Fletcher Allen's Production Specialist, Scott Young, orders thousands of pounds of food each week from nearly 70 Vermont producers. Young says local procurement gives him "peace of mind" because he knows exactly where the food is coming from and can control food-safety issues better than if buying from a mass producer. To illustrate his point, he uses the example of a nationwide beef recall that occurred prior to Fletcher Allen's switch to local grass-fed beef. "People weren't sure who was affected by the recall or where the

contamination originated; our provider couldn't even tell us where our meat came from," Young says. Now, hospital food professionals work with producers they know and trust, thereby mitigating potential safety issues and eliminating guessing.

As a large institution, Fletcher Allen has used its purchasing power to increase the amount of healthy and local products carried by U.S. Foods, its broadline vendor. U.S. Foods in Vermont now carries items like hormone-free chicken and locally produced yogurt, products it didn't carry a few years ago. Other large vendors in the area have also adapted their supply to meet the growing demand for good food as other Burlington institutions continue to increase their requests for local and healthy products.

In addition to buying local food through its broadline vendor, Fletcher Allen also purchases directly from dozens of regional producers. "We had a contract with one farmer who planted two fields of onions just for us," Young says. "This year he's planting three!"

The hospital also grows some of its own food in three separate initiatives: a healing garden run by Nutrition Services employees, a rooftop garden on their LEED-certified oncology unit, and a beekeeping operation at the Fanny Allen branch campus where the largest production garden is also located.



Rooftop garden on Fletcher Allen's oncology unit. Photo: Michael Carrese, courtesy of Fletcher Allen Health Care



Food-service professional Billy Cosman shows off locally grown corn in the Fletcher Allen central kitchen. Photo: Michael Carrese, courtesy of Fletcher Allen Health Care

To share its best practices in farm to hospital, Fletcher Allen created the Center for Nutrition and Healthy Food Systems. Originally funded by a federal grant, the Center hosts workshops and conferences to educate other health-care facilities in Vermont and the region about ways to incorporate healthier food in their institutions.

One of the most important lessons food professionals have learned at Fletcher Allen is how to deal with budget restrictions when switching to local food. “The biggest roadblock can be cost,” says Young, “but our food team meets every other week to discuss ways we can save money on other products to afford some of the more costly local items. What we’ve learned is—don’t give up because it’s expensive. Explore other ways to cut costs and rearrange your budget. It’s definitely worth it.”

Fletcher Allen strives to be sustainable not only with its food services but also through energy efficiency, waste reduction, and other efforts headed by the employee-formed “Green Team” and management-level Sustainability Council. The hospital sends 400 pounds of organic waste to compost each year, no longer uses Styrofoam for to-go food, and has recycling bins in operating and patient rooms. Fletcher Allen is well on its way to meeting its goal to be the greenest health-care facility in the nation.

Mini Case Study: Healthy Food in Health Care

Healthy Food in Health Care (HFHC) is a program of the international coalition Health Care Without Harm, founded in 2005 to promote health-care practices that support a healthy environment and healthy people. The Healthy Food program strives to harness the purchasing power and expertise of the health-care sector to advance the development of a sustainable food system.

Regional organizers use advocacy and education to support health-care facilities in implementing programs that connect all aspects of the food system with health. Efforts include increasing procurement of sustainable food, creating clinician advocates, and inspiring health-care institutions to become leaders in shaping a food system that supports prevention-based health care.

The HFHC program also helps to coordinate the Healthier Food Challenge of the Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI), a national sustainability initiative for the health-care sector. Several programs, such as Balanced Menus, Local & Sustainable Purchasing, and Healthy Beverages are embedded in HHI. For more resources from Healthy Food in Health Care, see the Further Resources section.



Dixon Melon owner Harley Heddick and his grandson provide melons for several institutions in Western Montana. Photo courtesy of UM University Dining Services.

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USDA. 2011. Procurement Geographic Preference Q & As. www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011_os.pdf

Further Resources

Books, Articles and Websites

Brief Summary: Workplace Community Supported Agriculture Model. 2009. By Theresa J. Nartea. Virginia State University Cooperative Extension. Petersburg, VA. http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/news/fbmu/2009/06/Article_3.html
This simple description of a workplace CSA also has a few examples.

Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce. 2011. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM2046A.pdf
Use this handy checklist to document different facets of food production and handling for produce, such as production practices, transportation, facilities, and worker health and hygiene.

Community Supported Agriculture for the Workplace: A Guide for Developing Workplace Community Supported Agriculture Distributions. 2008. By Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture. Farm to Firm. Deerfield, MA. http://agmarketing.extension.psu.edu/ComFarmMkt/PDFs/guide_dev_comm_supp_2008.pdf
This document discusses the logistics of workplace CSAs. Also includes a handful of helpful templates.

Farm to School: Geographic Preference Option. 2012. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s/Geographic.htm.
Intended for food-service programs with Child Nutrition Services, this resource describes how and when to apply geographic preference when purchasing local food using a process.

Farm to School: National Publications. 2012. Farm to School Network. www.farmtoschool.org/publications.php
This website provides numerous publications featuring research, statistics, and reports about farm to school.

Food Safety Plan For You: A Farm Safety Plan Template. 2011. University of Minnesota Extension. <http://safety.cfans.umn.edu/fsp4u/>
These templates for Standard Operating Procedures and Logsheets can be adapted for your farm to help establish a food-safety plan.

Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy. No date. Food Alliance. www.sustainablefoodpolicy.org
This 16-page guide provides steps and considerations for developing an institutional food-purchasing policy.

Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. 2012. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR_2010.htm.
Provides details about the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act.

National Association of College and University Food Services (NACFUS) Sustainability Guide. www.nacufs.org/resources-sustainability/nacufs-sustainability-guide
This guide was created to assist college and university dining-services management teams become transformative leaders in developing sustainable food-service operations on campus. Available for purchase.

Nutrition Standards for School Meals. 2012. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm
Learn more about the most recent requirements for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs.

Workplace Community Supported Agriculture: Connecting Local Farms to Local Employees. 2006. By Denise M. Finney. Center for Environmental Farming Systems, University of North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Raleigh, NC. www.cefs.ncsu.edu/resources/csa/csaguide.pdf
This 30-page document from North Carolina Extension has great ideas for how to connect your business with local food via an employee CSA.

Veggies Go Farm to Cubicle. 2012. By Nancy Matsumoto. The Wall Street Journal. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444017504577647871557408142.html>.
This article discusses the workplace CSA movement and gives a few examples.

Organizations, Associations, and Agencies

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

606 SE 9th Ave.
Portland, OR 97214
888-KID-HLTH
www.healthiergeneration.org

This organization offers many online resources for healthy school programs, as well as tips about fitness, nutrition, and wellness at home.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)

306 West Haywood St.
Asheville, NC 28801
828-236-1282

www.asapconnections.org

ASAP works to connect Western North Carolina producers with local markets via multiple programs, publications, and trainings in farm to institution.

Center for Ecoliteracy

The David Brower Center
2150 Allston Way, Suite 270
Berkeley, CA 94704-1377
510-845-4595

www.ecoliteracy.org

The Center for Ecoliteracy has instructional tools for incorporating sustainability in the classroom, including healthy and local foods.

DC Central Kitchen

425 2nd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202-234-0707

info@dccentralkitchen.org

www.dccentralkitchen.org

DC Central Kitchen highlights inspiring examples of students leading efforts toward hunger relief.

Cooperative Food Empowerment Directive (CoFED)

info@cofed.org

www.cofed.org

With over 40 student teams across North America, CoFED is a network and training program that empowers students to create ethically sourced, cooperatively run food enterprises on college campuses.

The Edible Schoolyard Project

www.edibleschoolyard.org

This organization provides online lesson plans and resources for incorporating food and gardening in the classroom.

Farm to Institution New England (FINE)

802-436-4067

www.farmtoinstitution.org

A six-state collaborative, FINE seeks to start more farm to institution programs in New England.

FoodCorps

281 Park Ave. South
New York, NY 10010
info@foodcorps.org
www.foodcorps.org

A quickly growing project of AmeriCorps, FoodCorps is a nationwide team of leaders that connects kids to real food via hands-on food education, building and tending school gardens, and facilitating local food procurement for public school institutions.

Healthy Food in Health Care (HFHC)

www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org

A program of Health Care Without Harm, HFHC harnesses the purchasing power and expertise of the health-care sector to advance the development of a sustainable food system. HFHC coordinates the Healthier Food Challenge of the Healthier Hospitals Initiative (HHI), a national sustainability initiative for the health-care sector, and offers a pledge that 220 facilities across the nation have taken.

Institutional Food Market Coalition (IFM)

Dane County UW-Extension
5201 Fen Oak Dr., Room 138
Madison, WI 53718
608-224-3710

www.ifmwi.org

IFM is a Wisconsin-based organization seeking to connect local producers and institutions.

Life Lab Science Program

1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
831-459- 2001

www.lifelab.org

Life Lab is a national leader in farm- and garden-based education and offers many curricula and lesson plan resources.

The Lunch Box: Healthy Tools to Help All Schools

P.O. Box 20708

Boulder, CO 80308

www.thelunchbox.org

info@thelunchbox.org

The Lunch Box has designed several resources specifically for food-service directors in schools that can adapt recipes to meet elementary and secondary school nutrition requirements, among other helpful tools. Free sign-up is required to access training and recipe resources.

National Farm to School Network

P.M.B # 104

8770 West Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 1300

Chicago, IL 60631-3515

www.farmtoschool.org

This organization is the leader in farm to school programs. Its website features an interactive map of programs by state, as well as many other resources such as webinars, policy, and news.

Real Food Challenge

www.realfoodchallenge.org

This nationwide campaign focuses on getting colleges on board with “real food” that is locally grown and/or fair trade. Real Food Challenge provides tools such as trainings, a “real food calculator” app, and a campus commitment that university presidents can sign.

School Food FOCUS

Public Health Solutions

40 Worth St., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10013

646-619-6728

www.schoolfoodfocus.org

School Food FOCUS advocates policies that would restore the right of all children to access healthy food.

USDA’s Team Nutrition

3101 Park Center Drive, Room 632, Alexandria, VA 22302

703-305-1624

www.fns.usda.gov/team-nutrition

A program of the USDA, Team Nutrition has state representatives that help schools understand and follow child nutrition program guidelines. Its website is full of helpful resources for teachers and food-service professionals.

Individual Contacts

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563-382-2949

www.iowafoodandfitness.org

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111 Colchester Ave., Burlington, VT 05401

802-847-3642

Diane.Imrie@vtmednet.org

Videos and Films

Pressure Cooker (2008)

www.takepart.com/pressurecooker

In this inspirational film about how food can empower, a culinary teacher in Philadelphia works in the kitchen with inner-city youth to help them earn college scholarships.

What’s on Your Plate? (2009)

www.whatsonyourplateproject.org

This documentary follows two 11-year old girls as they explore the food system in New York City and speak with food activists, farmers, storekeepers, and others to discover what’s on their plate.

Lunchline (2012)

www.lunchlinefilm.com

This documentary explores the past, current challenges, and potential future of the National School Lunch Program that began in 1946.

Cafeteria Man (2012)

www.videoproject.com/caferiaman.html

This documentary highlights how Baltimore schools food-service director, Tony Geraci, and a community came together to overhaul pre-plated, processed school lunches and replace them with locally grown, healthy meals. You can organize a screening of this inspiring tale at your school or in your community.

Our Land (2013)

www.ourland.tv

The Greenhorns produced this 10-minute web series about sustainable food and farming.

Webinars

National Farm to School Network Webinars

www.farmentoschool.org/webinars.php

The National Farm to School Network features a “Lunch Bites” webinar the second Tuesday of every month at 1 p.m. EST. The webinars are 20 minutes long with additional time for questions and answers.

National Good Food Network

<http://ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-cluster-calls/ngfn-cluster-calls>

The National Good Food Network offers monthly webinars that are often relevant for stakeholders in farm to institution programs, from producers to food-service professionals.

Notes

**Bringing Local Food to Local Institutions:
A Resource Guide for Farm to Institution Programs**

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