

Farm to Institution

Opportunity..... or Mirage?

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What is it?

Selling to food service in:

- Schools (elementary, etc.)
- Universities
- Retirement homes
- Hospitals
- Prisons
- Military bases



Where's the Local Produce?

Locked Out!

- Contract agreements
- Know-how on handling
- Food preferences
- Logistics
- Availability/seasonality
- USDA surplus food programs



Who is pushing for a change?

- Concerned parents
- Nutritionists
- Students!
- Organizations promoting rural development
- Various government agencies



The Typical Hitches

- Matching food supply to the need, & timing
- Assure food quality and safety
- Liability insurance
- Processing, packaging and storage facilities
- Efficiently distribute and transport products



Opportunities.....seasonal

Produce every kid loves

- Apples
 - University of Missouri campus; fall 2006 (apple crop froze in 2007)
- Watermelons
 - Ashland, MO; fall 2007 from a Missouri River Bottom farm



Taylor your relationship

- Vegetable research program & MU campus dining/fall 2005
- High tunnel cucumbers
- Pepper variety trial
- Tomatoes from 'Tomato Fest' planting
- Established relationship with their chef
- Tomato Fest, with Eric & his heirloom tomato salsas



Taylor your relationship...continued

- Bradford Research farm resumed supplying in Summer/fall of 2007
- Prices in \$ per pound-tomatoes, 0.85 to 1.00 eggplant & cukes, 0.50
- Prices in \$ each cantaloupes, 1.50 watermelon, 3 (S) & 5 (L) winter squash, 0.85
- \$1500+ in sales each year
- 2005 prices were less-tomatoes & peppers, 0.70 heirloom tomatoes, 1.00 cucumbers, 0.40

I'm head chef for campus dining now....



Taylor your relationship...comments

- Spring & late summer/fall are best opportunities
- Use season extension where reasonable
- Salad crops in spring & fall
- Popular home grow veggies for summer 'slow period', e.g. melons & tomatoes
- Salad 'add ons' like cucumbers and peppers
- Various squashes for fall



Opportunities with universities

- Saint Louis University- has a progressive program (Gardens to Tables Newsletter)
- University of Missouri-special meals, like 'Taste of Missouri'; moved from the spring to fall
- College of the Ozarks
- Others?



Opportunities with schools...



- Consider starting small, developing from there
- School gardens are a good way to start
- Find a teacher to take 'lead'
- Educate administration and cafeteria workers
- Use existing educational materials

Project Green Bean

- A Fall 2007 Garden Project for Health, Education and Fun
- Two schools in MO
- Grew & ate the beans
- Impacted a lot of kids
- Expand as a model?
- Total sales \$\$ would be small



Opportunities with schools...

Healthy Fundraisers

- Dried Cherries
- Pecans
- Jerky 'snack sticks'
- Healthy food for celebrations (no candy for Halloween!)
- Laptop lunches



Opportunities with schools...

- Bistro Kids in KC, working with Oakhill Day School in Gladstone
- Consider partnering with others
- Private schools can spend more than public schools (up to \$4 per day)
- May want to consider working with a distributor serving the food industry
- Bring kids to your farm!



And we didn't even mention

- Retirement homes
- Hospitals
- Prisons
- Military bases
- Summer meal programs
- State homes



Reality!.....from *Growing for Market*, Oct. 2007

Wisconsin study identified major obstacles

- WI Homegrown Lunch got a SD to double its fresh produce spending, and that only amounted to \$2500/yr
- School food service programs have to pay their own way, and offer foods kids want to eat.
- Centralization of food service, meaning most individual cafeterias don't cook anymore.
- Fresh produce needs to be ready to use.
- Price, procurement and supply (cheap, answer your phone, deliver – NOW!)

Conclusions & resources

- National trend you'll hear more about
- May be a good way to modestly increase your sales
- A way to promote your business
 - stealth marketing?
 - community development?
- Lot's of publications and resources
- ATTRA
- Farmer Resource Guide 'managing risk through sales to educational institutions'
- Oklahoma Farm to School Program
- Community Food Security Coalition