

Missouri Farm to School



In Missouri, Farm to School (F2S)/Early Care Education (ECE) is a voluntary program with three core elements:

1. School procurement of fresh foods from local farmers
2. Education in food, agriculture, health and nutrition
3. Edible school gardens with hands-on learning activities.



Farm to School/Early Care Education incorporates the use of fresh, healthy foods from local sources in Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs), including the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Service Program, and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.



Popular F2S activities across Missouri include locally sourced summer meals, early childhood nutrition projects, fresh salad bars, and educational gardens where students grow, harvest and prepare their own food.



Do not feel overwhelmed, Farm to School can begin with something as simple as cherry tomatoes. Start considering what Farm to School looks like for your school. Would it be purchasing Missouri grown products? Starting a school garden? Both? Whatever you want to grow, we are here to help!



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Missouri Farm to School Q&A

How does Farm to School benefit producers and Missouri youth?

Producers can diversify their consumer base, creating a stable market for products, while increasing financial opportunities by selling to an institutional market. When local foods are offered consumers are more likely to choose the menu item, meaning less food waste and an increased consumption of vital nutrients.

What are local foods?

Agriculture is the state's leading industry, so schools have access to a variety of Missouri grown and processed meats, eggs, dairy, grains, fruits and vegetables. For those new to F2S, "locally grown" means grown in Missouri or no more than 30 miles across the state line in a border state. If you have not been able to access local products directly from farmers, ask your food distributor about Missouri grown products that are available. Each CNP sets its own definition for what counts as "Locally grown or raised."

Can the following products be served in CPNs?

Local fruits and vegetables - Yes. Produce from a home, school or community garden, farmers market or purchased directly from a producer can be served.

Local meats - Yes. Meat must come from a USDA- or state-inspected facility. Products must include proper labeling.

Local dairy foods - Yes. Milk must be pasteurized and come from a source that is licensed and inspected.

Fresh chicken eggs - Yes. Your farmer must acquire an egg license from the Missouri Department of Agriculture. Eggs must meet a grade B or higher standard and be properly labeled.

Local poultry - Yes. Poultry processed under federal or state inspection may be served.

Additional local options - Honey, maple syrup, nuts, popcorn, beef sticks, condiments and pickles.

Do producers need to be Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified to sell local produce to CNPs?

No, GAP certification is voluntary. Suppliers are encouraged to follow these food safety practices.

Can products be donated to a CNP and used as a tax write-off?

Donations are allowed and may be used for tax purposes. The MO Beef Kids initiative is a good example of how the state's commodity groups are supporting F2S lunch programs. Learn more at mobeefkids.com.