



Missouri F2S Guide for
**School Food Nutrition
Professionals**

PART I. F2S Introduction

What is Farm to School?

In Missouri, Farm to School (F2S) 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; and (3) edible school gardens with hands-on learning activities.

Importantly, schools don't have procurement deadlines, quotas, or requirements to meet! F2S can fit any school budget or emphasize any food category.

During the 2013-14 school year, 143 Missouri School Food Authorities (SFAs) participated in F2S, reaching about 431,990 PreK-12 students. Plus, there are at least 116 school gardens across the state. 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.

How do Schools and Students Benefit from F2S?

Nationally, F2S districts report reduced food wastes, lower school meal program costs, and increased participation in school meals. Further, 38% of reporting schools found greater community support for school meals, and 28% found greater acceptance of healthier school nutrition standards (USDA, 2015).

In a USDA survey, over 96 percent of F2S schools report that they are serving more nutritious meals. Changes include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; lean protein and low-fat dairy; and less sugar, sodium, and fat (USDA, 2015).

The number of Missouri children facing food insecurity has more than doubled in the last ten years. F2S programs are an opportunity for students to increase their intake of essential nutrients, helping them to lower their risk factors for chronic health conditions (Carpenter, 2015; University of Missouri, 2016).

Childhood obesity is a persistent problem in Missouri, and our youth need to consume more fruits and vegetables. F2S activities like school gardens build students' knowledge of food, nutrition, and health and improve student consumption of fruits and vegetables at school and home (CDC, 2018; NFSN, 2017; Berezowitz, et. al, 2015; Sharps & Robinson, 2016).

Farm to School purchases help to revitalize local economies. For example, in the 2013-14 academic year, 124 School Food Authorities spent more than \$13 million on Missouri Grown foods and fluid milk, potentially generating \$22.6 million in local economic activity (USDA, 2015; IMPLAN, 2019; see also NFSN, 2017a, b.).

What Missouri-Grown Products are Available?

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. Thus, if you have not been able to access local products directly from farmers, you can ask your food distributor about Missouri Grown products that are readily available.

Tip: Dairy products, rice, beef, poultry, and pork are readily available all year. Summer-fall crops, like tomatoes, beans, and apples, can be frozen for use in winter months. Other crops like potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash, and onions can be retained through winter in cold storage.

You Have Many Choices

School food nutrition personnel can join the F2S initiative in one or more of many ways:

- Purchase* one or more Missouri Grown products in season for meals or snacks; or
- Host a Missouri Grown tasting event for school families; or
- Demonstrate food safety by preparing and cooking locally grown products with students; or
- Ask community volunteers to build a school produce garden to help feed students.

**Food procurement is normally a partnership of School Food Authorities, directors, local farmers, food processors, and distributors.*

Remember: You don't have to do this alone! Quite often, teachers, related programs, parents/guardians, farmers, distributors, and community organizations become engaged in F2S activities.



Collaboration Success Story: “Farm to Fort

The Fort Osage R-1 School District has several strong programs across the District related to food, agriculture and nutrition. Examples include a special needs’ classroom growing herbs; an elementary school that serves produce from its garden; culinary arts classes that teach students how to prepare local produce; and students in an environmental club who turn some of the cafeteria waste into rich organic matter through composting. Added to that is a robust F2S initiative, playfully called “Farm to Fort,” that features locally grown produce in school meals. According to Food and Nutrition Director Stacie Waller, when their farm to school committee realized that several related programs existed across their District, it made good sense to start collaborating. For example, FFA members have helped to promote Farm to Fort in Jefferson City and were awarded a \$1,000 grant at the No Kids Hungry Summit for their efforts. Fort Osage proves that there are numerous benefits of reaching out to related programs. “We get to reap the benefits of their hard work by combining ideas and leveraging resources. We are excited to ‘Grow’ this program,” Waller said.

When you recruit collaborators and volunteers, be sure to emphasize the intended outcomes of F2S:

- Increased student consumption of fresh, healthy foods;
- Enhanced public knowledge of agriculture, health and nutrition
- Improved market opportunities for local producers and regional farmers.

Building an F2S Support Network

You may find that others — including administrators and your School Food Authority — may not know about Farm to School and its health, education, and economic benefits. If so, it may be up to you to get them involved. Why? The most successful F2S programs have the support of school administrators, teachers, families, and others.

A good size for your support network is 8-10 people. Include those who will help you keep the program running. Possible people to include in your support network:

School

- Administrators
- Food nutrition and service staff
- Teachers and teacher aides
- Parents and other family members
- Groundskeeper
- Webmaster
- Students, including 4-H and FFA teens
- School district personnel

Community

- Farmers and ranchers
- Extension professionals and Master Gardeners
- Local businesses, restaurants, and grocers
- Nonprofit groups and faith-based organizations
- Leader of a food bank or farmers' market
- Local offices of state agencies, especially health
- Banks, foundations and civic groups
- TV, radio or news media

Consistent communication — including seeking ideas, addressing concerns, and praising good work — will create a strong F2S network. Be sure to tap into team members' expertise to address challenges. They can help you build momentum within your school and community. The more people that support your cause, the easier it will be to expand your program and achieve better results!

Think Big Picture: What Are the Priorities?

Once you have your support team together, discuss your school (or district) needs. Do you want to improve the nutrient intake of your students? Would a school garden help to educate students and their families about good nutrition? Do you want to create a community food system that supports the local economy? Are you looking for positive publicity that can bring community support for your school? By identifying what you value, and the priorities for your school, you can help your F2S program stay on track.

It's a good idea to set broad goals, such as "Improve student nutrition," but adding more concrete, measurable objectives will help identify your desired outcomes. Two examples of measurable objectives are "Increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables by 10%" and "Reduce the fat content of meals and snacks by 10%." Create clear and achievable objectives that will move your food nutrition program toward its big goals. It's okay to take small steps!

Create Visibility: Publicize your Food Nutrition Successes

Host a local foods dinner or tasting event at the school to involve parents and gain community support. Invite farmers to meet students and their families. Alert the local media about what you're trying to accomplish, the and steps you're taking, and provide examples of successes.



Part II. Purchasing Missouri Grown Products

In the previous section you learned about getting started with a Farm to School Program (F2S.) This section focuses on purchasing Missouri Grown products.

Planning Ahead

Chances are you will need to seek administrative support to purchase of Missouri Grown products. You'll feel better equipped to present this idea to administrators and food nutrition directors if you do a bit of "homework." Here's how to commence planning:

Build knowledge about school policies and processes

To Do Item

- Determine if your School Food Authority's budget contains a line for Missouri Grown (local) food purchases.
- If not, find out who has the authority to make budget adjustments. Work with that person to seek administrative approval to modify the budget. Remember to start small, perhaps with one seasonal purchase!
- Check with your food distributor to see (a) what Missouri Grown products your school may already be purchasing and (b) what products the distributor carries that are available from MO farms and ranches.
- Know your district's requirements for accepting a new local vendor. For example, does your district require Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification? If your school has a contract with a food service management company, there may be restrictions on accepting new local vendors.
- Determine your school's or district's cold storage and freezer capacity, so that the shelf life of seasonal fruits and vegetables can be extended.
- Determine volume or amount needed of select fresh items, like lettuce, strawberries or potatoes. Learn [which month](#) is the best to make purchases of seasonal crops.
- Become familiar with and your school's liability coverage requirements.

Note

Develop working relationships with farmers and ranchers.

To Do Item

- ❑ Create a checklist of questions to ask farmers. Be prepared to explain the types and amounts of products you will need, and timing, packing and grading preferences.
- ❑ Call or contact farmers well in advance of the growing season. Learn what foods the farmer sells, what months the food will be available and how deliveries might be handled.
- ❑ Go to a nearby farmers' market, as it is an ideal venue to meet local farmers and ranchers. Ask them if they have the production capacity to work directly with your school.
- ❑ Find out if the farmer already participates in Farm to School. If so, ask, "Would you mind if I called the food nutrition director to ask for a reference?"
- ❑ Ask the farmer about growing and handling practices to help ensure food safety.
- ❑ Learn if the farmer carries product liability insurance, and what type of coverage.
- ❑ See if the farmer is willing to host school field trips, give presentations at school, or serve on your F2S committee. Emphasize that you need farmers to support F2S activities!
- ❑ Create a backup sourcing plan in the event a farmer cannot deliver as scheduled. Your plan should include alternative menus and the names of other farmers and food vendors.
- ❑ Clearly communicate your needs and expectations with the farmer. Be thorough!

Tip: When you meet with farmers, be sure to ask if they have worked with other schools. Ask, "What have you learned from working with other schools that can help us build a successful working relationship?" You might also call that school and ask a similar question about working with the farmer.



Note

Talk with vendors and distributors.

To Do Item

- ❑ Create a checklist of questions to ask vendors and distributors. Be prepared to explain the types and amounts of products you will need, and timing, packing and grading preferences.
- ❑ Find out what Missouri Grown products they offer. Learn how the vendor tracks the origin and safety of the products. Emphasize that you need vendors to support F2S activities!
- ❑ Ask how often the vendor will communicate seasonal availability of products to you.
- ❑ If the vendor already participates in Farm to School, ask for suggestions on how to develop a successful partnership at your school e.g., what works, what doesn't)
- ❑ See if the vendor can provide farmer profiles and other information that can be used to help promote the F2S program in your community.
- ❑ Clearly communicate your needs and expectations!

Managing Costs

A 2015 USDA report showed that F2S programs have reduced food wastes and lowered school meal costs while increasing participation in nutritious school meals. Many food nutrition directors and nutrition staff in Missouri have already made the move to F2S projects!



The 5 BEST Budget Savings Tips

1. Take advantage of the peak harvest season as local prices can be lower. When produce is delivered straight from a local farm, there should be less spoilage and a longer shelf life.
2. Don't be afraid to use small or misshapen fruits and vegetables for prepared dishes. The nutritional value and flavor are the same and cost savings can be quite good.
3. Manage waste by training and coaching kitchen staff. Keep a close eye on portion sizes (Wickford, undated).
4. Develop a good relationship with food distributors. Be frank about your need to reduce costs. Ask to be notified when surpluses happen and be flexible about changing your menu (Wickford, undated).
5. Engage students in simple gardening activities, like container tomatoes. Research shows that at schools with gardens, more students eat their fruits and vegetables and participate in meals.

Menu Cost Savings

First, consult with your local farmers and food distributor when planning your menus. This strategy should help you take advantage of produce items when they are in season and plentiful. You can also pair a more costly fruit or vegetable with a lower-cost item elsewhere on the menu.

Also consider the simplicity and flexibility of salad bars. They are a great way to feature minimally processed items that are affordable and in season. Another idea: List “fresh seasonal vegetable” or “fresh seasonal fruit” on the menu instead of a specific one, in order to give yourself additional flexibility and take advantage of peak harvest seasons or distributor surpluses.

Another surprising fact: Some of your more costly frozen menu items can be prepared from scratch, realizing more menu cost savings. Do a bit of number crunching to determine what makes sense for your school.

Along the same line, bulk purchases of seasonal items that can be frozen for winter months can help with menu costs. Tomatoes, beans, apples, and berries are great examples.

Labor Cost Savings

If you are developing your first budget, you will need to include the “hidden” costs of a school lunch program beyond the food: Transportation, labor by food nutrition staff, and facility overhead all become a part of your total costs. The more accurate you calculate that total cost, the more you will understand and be able to explain your cost-per-serving to school officials and families.

If labor costs are significant, determine if hours spent on preparing food is a factor. If so, you might be able to build a case for an investment in a food processor, potato peeler or other time-saving kitchen equipment. But again, you must have an accurate budget to demonstrate your needs and the potential cost savings.

Alternatively, pre-cut or minimally processed items might be available. Chances are, the cost may be slightly higher than with whole food, but if the purchase significantly saves time (labor), it may make sense for your school. Be sure to confirm that processing facilities have appropriate food safety procedures and licensing.

Finally, a fun way to engage families is through “light processing.” For example, in the fall, invite the community to a corn shucking event. Imagine the labor costs you can save! Just ensure that all food handling requirements are met.

Purchasing Strategies

Keep talking to your suppliers. Be frank about your budget situation and nutrition goals. Good communication can lead to future opportunities and savings. For example, if your school can handle a last-minute surplus of produce, you may be able to get a discount because you are helping the vendor with an unexpected abundance of an item that could otherwise spoil.

You already know that purchasing larger quantities may result in lower unit costs. If your school cannot buy in large quantities, talk to one or two nearby food nutrition directors about coordinating purchases with them. As a group, talk to a vendor about cost savings by a larger, joint purchase. You may have to work out logistics like delivery, processing, freezing or cold storage. But if your school has a tight budget, it’s worth a try.

Think creatively and keep an open mind. Smaller sized or nonstandard grade items may be less expensive. In fact, a small apple could work better for PreK through Grade 2 children. Also, if produce is going to be chopped or made into a sauce (e.g., tomato, apple) a uniform shape is less important.

F2S Grants to Help with Processing or Storage Capacity

If your school is held back by a lack of equipment to process and store locally grown products, you should learn about state and national Farm to School grant programs. Equipment examples include washing, bagging, packaging, coolers, or freezers.

Missouri Agriculture and Small Business Development Authority (MASBDA). To enable more farmers and schools to participate in Farm to School, MASBA offers “value added” grants that help with processing equipment and storage challenges. For example, grants and small agribusiness loans are available to acquire packaging equipment or construct greenhouses or hydroponic systems that can extend the growing season for Missouri fruits and vegetables. <https://agriculture.mo.gov/abd/financial/farmtoschool.php>

USDA offers Farm to School [matching grants](#) for “training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs.” USDA pays for 75%; the school contribute 25% in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Learn more: http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/USDA_F2S_Grants_fact_sheet.pdf

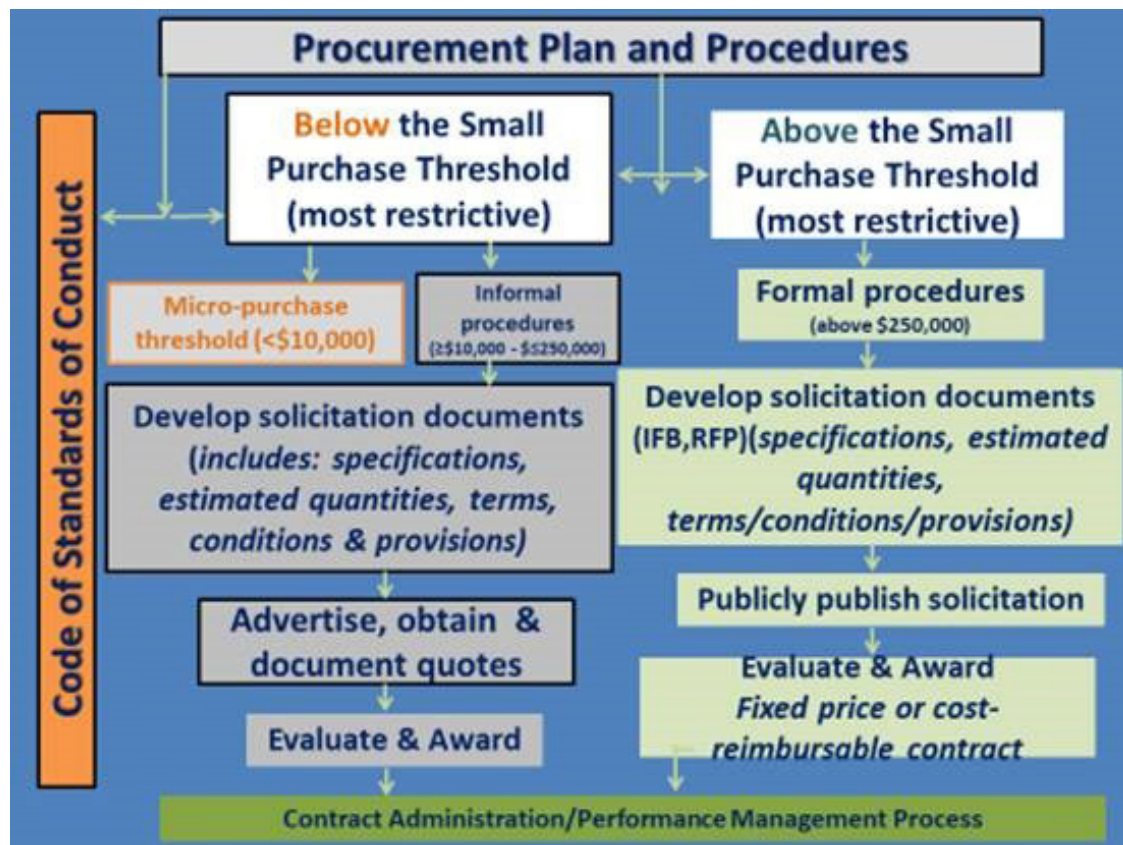
Bidding and Procurement

Schools and other entities participating in federal child nutrition programs (e.g., [National School Lunch Program](#), [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), and the [Summer Food Service Program](#)) must adhere to federal guidelines when purchasing locally raised or grown agricultural products. The federal government allows districts to establish their own definition of “local.”

The federal [Office of Management and Budget](#) sets purchasing thresholds that direct how a school food authority should proceed with procurement. However, a state or district can set more restrictive thresholds than the federal government. If a state or local threshold is more restrictive, it always supersedes the federal threshold. Because purchasing thresholds pertain to the aggregated purchase total, schools should forecast purchases for an entire academic year.

The three methods of school procurement are micro-purchase, informal purchase, and formal purchase. Figure 1 is a Procurement Decision Tree that is designed to help food nutrition staff determine which procurement process to follow based upon purchasing thresholds.

Figure 1. Procurement Decision Tree. Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.



Currently, the federal government has set a threshold of less than \$10,000 for micro-purchases. This micro-purchase threshold is a great option for districts that only buy small amounts of a given commodity during the school year. A micro-purchase may be made without soliciting competitive bids, but accurate recordkeeping is essential.

Because purchasing thresholds pertain to an aggregated purchase total, schools must forecast purchases for an entire academic year. As shown in Figure 1, if the sum of multiple micro-purchases of one commodity is forecasted to exceed \$10,000, then the informal small purchase method must be used to achieve competition among qualified suppliers.

Currently, the federal government has set the threshold for informal purchases as a range between \$10,000–\$250,000. Aggregated purchases exceeding \$250,000 require the formal procurement process. Again, these are the current [federal](#) limits and your district may have lower thresholds that are more restrictive and supersede the federal threshold.

Purchasing Examples Below the Small Purchase Threshold

Micro-purchase threshold

District A intends to purchase apples from one local farmer, and the aggregated total is estimated at \$200. District A can consider a micro-purchase as the aggregated total will fall below the \$10,000 threshold.

Informal Purchases

District B plans to purchase locally processed ground beef weekly and the aggregated amount is estimated to total \$13,250. District B must follow the procedure for an informal purchase because the aggregated total is above the \$10,000 threshold yet under \$250,000.

For informal procurement, school food authorities should develop a written solicitation that provides (a) an accurate description of the needed products, including size, quality, and amounts; (b) required delivery dates; (c) geographic preference or district's definition of "local"; (d) licensing or certification requirements; and (e) criteria for selection. It is best practice to obtain the quote or bid in writing so that you have documentation in the event you have a dispute over a delivery. Districts must obtain price and rate quotations from at least two qualified sources, and to the extent practicable, purchases should be equitably distributed among qualified suppliers.

Formal Purchase Threshold

When a district forecasts that the aggregated purchase for one commodity and/or per transaction will be over \$250,000 by the end of the school year (including summer), the district must use the formal procurement method. With formal procurement, the district issues either an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP) to launch a competitive bidding process. Bids can be sent directly to qualified vendors. Public advertisement is required. Bids are obtained from more than one farmer, rancher, grower, or producer. Responses are evaluated and either a fixed price or cost reimbursement contract is awarded ([DESE, 2018](#)). Again, to the extent practicable, purchases should be equitably distributed among qualified suppliers.



Buying Local: Advice for Food Nutrition Professionals in F2S Programs

- Include a definition for “locally grown” in your District Procurement Policy or Food Service Procurement Procedure.
- Your Procurement Policy and Procedures can include steps for using geographic preference to target local foods.
- Your Procurement Policy and Procedures can include the district’s Farm to School plan, including the use of an Information for Bid (IFB) to survey the market.
- If you anticipate that you may need to purchase from a single, local source (i.e., one farmer, rancher, grower or producer), your Procurement Plan should contain language that justifies the value of local products.
- Always verify your district’s policies and procedures for formal and informal bidding processes.

To learn more about procurement methods and requirements, refer to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s [Procurement](#) page or this guide called [Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs](#).

PART III:

Food Safety and Handling

While buying locally grown foods can help to reduce spoilage, if those foods are not properly stored and skillfully prepared, waste can still occur. This section provides resources to help your food nutrition staff build skills to reduce food waste and prevent food borne illness brought on by improper storage, handling, and preparation of locally grown foods.

This next section includes information on these topics:

- School Food Safety Plans
- Help with Food Nutrition Staff Training
- USDA Produce Safety University
- Missouri Culinary Skills Institute
- Storage and Preparation Facilities
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Handling
- Local Meat, Dairy and Eggs
- Food Processing and Storage
- Grants to Help with Processing and Storage Capacity

School Food Safety Plans

Schools must develop a food safety plan which is based on the seven principles of [Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point](#) (HACCP) planning. HACCP is a “a management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption of the finished product.” In addition to the plan, schools must develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that employees must follow to implement the school’s food safety plan. Products purchased from local farms can fit into a school’s food safety plan. Interested in learning more about HACCP? Go to <https://www.fda.gov/food/guidance-regulation-food-and-dietary-supplements/hazard-analysis-critical-control-point-haccp>

Help with Food Nutrition Staff Training

Using fresh, unprocessed food requires different preparation and cooking techniques than using packaged or frozen foods. By offering knife skills, culinary lessons, and other to food nutrition training, F2S can be more effective, and the school food system improved overall. Classes may be available online or at the local technical or career center.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service offers Produce Safety University (PSU). The week-long training course is designed to help school food nutrition staff "identify and manage food safety risks associated with fresh produce. PSU addresses produce purchased from traditional suppliers, direct from farmers, and through the DoD Fresh program." Learn more: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/ofs/produce-safety-university>

The Missouri Culinary Skills Institute (CSI) provides hands-on culinary training designed to increase student acceptance of school meals and improve the health status of PreK-12 students. To date, 49 training sessions, led by a nutritionist and a chef, have advanced the knowledge and skills of 203 school nutrition professionals across the state. A majority of the graduates (75%) reported adopting CSI recipes that are low sugar, low fat, and low sodium, and/or incorporate fresh Missouri Grown products. The Department of Health and Senior Services DHSS works with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri School Nutrition Association to meet the professional development needs of school nutrition professionals. Learn more: <https://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/culinaryskills>

Storage and Preparation Facilities

Updating or expanding school kitchen facilities and equipment is often a step in creating a Farm to School program. As a work around to budgetary constraints, schools can partner with others to share storage, refrigeration and preparation space.



Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Handling

Create or update [standard operating procedures](#) (SOP) for handling local produce, and keep up to date with the newest produce washing codes and techniques. For detailed information on fresh fruit and vegetable handling, see the USDA-FNS publication From USDA's Institute of Child Nutrition, [Best Practices for Handling Fresh Produce in Schools](#), which contains recommendations for reducing the risks of food borne illness and minimizing the chances for fruits and vegetables to become contaminated.

Local Meat, Dairy, and Eggs

Geographic preference can be applied when procuring meat and poultry for schools, but meat must come from a USDA or State inspected facility; milk must be pasteurized and come from a source that is licensed and inspected; eggs must be pasteurized and come from an FDA inspected facility.

You might look into the [Mo Beef for Mo Kids](#) initiative. It's an example of how the state's commodity groups are supporting F2S lunch programs. You can also talk directly with a local farmer and/or inspected meat locker to see if they are willing and capable of supplying ground beef.

The Missouri Department of Agriculture (<http://mda.mo.gov>) is responsible for licensing and inspecting farms and processing plants.

Matching Grants to Help with Equipment Purchases

Don't forget that the Missouri Agriculture and Small Business Development Authority and USDA offer Farm to School grant programs to help schools and small agribusinesses acquire equipment to address growing, handling, and storage challenges.

Conclusion

The information in this guide is intended to help you plan, launch, sustain, and grow a Farm to School program. School districts have found that F2S is highly rewarding, with many benefits for students, families, schools, farmers, and local economies. Should you have questions, we are available to help, as are numerous food nutrition professionals and farmers across Missouri. Good luck with your F2S efforts!

F2S Contacts: We're Here to Help!

University of Missouri Extension, Human Environmental Sciences

Contact: Lorin Fahrmeier

fahrmeierl@missouri.edu or 660-259-2230

MU Extension coordinates [Missouri Farm to School](#) programs and has expertise in nutrition education, preparing foods, and creating school gardens. Available are learning materials on health and nutrition, [cooking](#) and [storing foods](#), and [gardening](#) — all based on University research.

Missouri Department of Agriculture

Contact: Taylor Tuttle

Taylor.tuttle@mda.mo.gov 573-751-5019

Through its [Missouri Value-Added “Farm to School” Grant Program](#) the department provides funds to small agribusinesses that enable them to process locally grown agricultural products for use in MO schools. [Missouri Grown](#) is a web showcase of locally grown agricultural products. [MoBeef for MoKids](#) is a joint program of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the Missouri Beef Industry Council and OPAA Food Service to increase the amount of Missouri-raised beef on school lunch menus. The Department also heads the state Farm to School Taskforce.

Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Contact: Barbara Shaw

Barbara.shaw@dese.mo.gov or 573-751-1920

DESE provides [Farm to School](#) links to resources that enable schools to incorporate more Missouri grown products into school meals and snacks. Their [Procurement page](#) includes essential links on purchasing guidelines.

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services

Contact: Lisa Farmer

Lisa.farmer@health.mo.gov or 816-521-7740

Early childhood (PreK) programs should contact DHSS about its [Growing with MO Harvest of the Season](#), a initiative with resources on edible gardens and buying locally grown products. Their staff members also teach a [Missouri Culinary Skills Institute](#) for food nutrition staff.

Missouri Office of Administration

Contact: Melissa Sackett

melissa.sackett@oa.mo.gov or 573-526-2716

The OA performs numerous management functions for the Executive Branch of state government. Among its duties is oversight for purchases by state universities and state and local government entities. Their [Vendor Information](#) page explains how to sell products and services to the state.

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Part IV: Learning Resources

F2S Planning

The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit from USDA's Food Nutrition Service is offered online or as a free PDF booklet

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S-Planning-Kit.pdf>

USDA also offers matching grants for F2S planning, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs. Learn more at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-school-grant-program>

Note

The Food and Nutrition Services of the San Diego Unified School District has several examples of Farm to Schools initiatives that can be adapted for Missouri Schools <https://www.sandiegounified.org/food-nutrition-services-1>

Procurement

Defining Local and Finding Local Foods from USDA's Food Nutrition Service: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-school-resources#Defining%20Local%20and%20Finding%20Local%20Foods>

Fiscal Guidance for Federal Grant Programs (2018, revised) from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/fas-GeneralFederalGuidance.pdf>

Frozen Local: Strategies for Freezing Locally Grown Produce for the K-12 Marketplace by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: https://www.iatp.org/sites/default/files/2012_12_11_FreezingReport_JB_web.pdf

Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Community Food Systems is the main resource page developed for PreK- 12 schools, early childcare facilities, and summer feeding programs: https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S_Procuring_Local_Foods_Child_Nutrition_Prog_Guide.pdf

Procurement in the 21st Century by the Institute of Child Nutrition, The Mississippi State University: <https://doe.sd.gov/cans/documents/ICN-procurement.pdf>

Produce Calculator Tool from Oklahoma Farm to School can help you determine how much product you need, and how much it will cost per serving (Excel file): http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Content/Documents/Oklahoma_produce-Calculator-excel03.xls

Seasonal and Simple from land grant universities in Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas, available as an app or online at <https://seasonalandsimple.info/in-season.aspx?month=July&state=MO>

The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit from USDA's Food Nutrition Service contains several sections on procurement topics. It is offered online or as a free PDF booklet: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S-Planning-Kit.pdf>

Note

USDA links related to school food and nutrition programs are a bit easier to find on this page from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <https://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/farm-school>

Food Safety

Food-Safe Schools: Creating a Culture of Food Safety, from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service's Office of Food Safety, The Center of Excellence, and the Institute of Child Nutrition, contains research-based resources with specific action steps (see ACT) on building a Food-Safe School, available as a free PDF (56 pages) or online: <https://foodsafeschools.org/f>.

FoodSafety.gov is the federal government's general food safety site, with critical information on recalled foods, emergency preparedness and response, and for determining if partially thawed food is safe following a power outage. A companion app is available for Android and Apple devices.

Garden to Plate: Food Safety for School and Community Gardens by Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3152.pdf>

HACCP-Based Standard Operating Procedures from the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi: <https://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/food-safetyhaccp>

Missouri Culinary Skills Institute is a partnership of the Department of Health and Senior Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri Chapter of the School Nutrition Association: <https://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/culinaryskills/>

Produce Handling and Safety information is also available from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <https://dese.mo.gov/financial-admin-services/food-nutrition-services/farm-school>

Reducing Food Waste

Ways to Lower Food Costs in School Nutrition Programs from the Iowa Department of Education: <https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Ways%20to%20Lower%20Food%20Costs%20in%20School%20Nutrition%20Programs.pdf>

Sharing the Table: A Roadmap to Reducing and Recovering Surplus Food in Schools: http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/Sharing_the_Table_A_Roadmap_to_Reducing_and_Recovering_Surplus_Food_in_K12_Schools.pdf

Strategies to Reduce Food Waste in Schools & Child Nutrition Programs from NO Kid Hungry: <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/download-resource/Strategies%20to%20Reduce%20Food%20Waste%20in%20Schools%20%26%20Child%20Nutrition%20Programs.pdf>

Working with Farmers

Collaborating with Farmers/Growers by Georgia Farm to School, a toolkit that offers great suggestions on learning to communicate effectively with agricultural producers: <http://gafarmtoschool.org/farmer-partner-and-grower-collaboration/>

Pecks to Pounds by the Maryland Department of Agriculture., a simple chart that “translates” farm packing (e.g., pecks, bushels, crates) into pounds by produce type: https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Pecks_for_Pounds.pdf

How to Start a School Garden

The Garden Starter from Grow Well Missouri:

<http://foodsecurity.missouri.edu/garden-starter/>

Starting and Maintaining a School Garden from the national Farm

to School Network: [http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/](http://www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/School_Gardens_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

[School_Gardens_Fact_Sheet.pdf](http://www.farmtoschool.org/School_Gardens_Fact_Sheet.pdf) and <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

Growing with Missouri (PreK), from the MO Department of Health

and Senior Services: [https://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/](https://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/farmtopreschool/pdf/grow-with-mo-toolkit.pdf)

[nutrition/farmtopreschool/pdf/grow-with-mo-toolkit.pdf](https://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/farmtopreschool/pdf/grow-with-mo-toolkit.pdf)

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Notes

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