



It's Tough to Beet:

Montana Harvest of the Month

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MONTANA HARVEST OF THE MONTH

The Montana Harvest of the Month (HOM) program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana schools and communities. Each month, the schools participating in the program focus on promoting one locally grown item (e.g., winter squash) by serving it in a meal, offering taste tests to students, and doing educational lessons and activities surrounding both the nutritional and agricultural aspects of the food. The two primary goals for this program are to expose children and adults to new, healthy foods and to support Montana's farmers and ranchers.

The program is currently open to K-12 schools, afterschool programs, early care and education sites, healthcare facilities, and summer food service programs. It is free to participate and sites source and purchase their own foods.

HOW IT WORKS – SCHOOLS

- Form a team.**
 - Administrator
 - School Nutrition Professional
 - Educator
 - Others
 - Showcase HOM food.**
 - Educational Activity
 - Taste Test
 - School Meal/Snack
 - Promote.**
 - Students
 - Team
 - Staff
 - Community/Parents
 - Evaluate.**
 - Baseline
 - Monthly Taste Test
 - End of Year
 - Student Survey*
 - Interviews*
- *Mini-grantee Sites Only

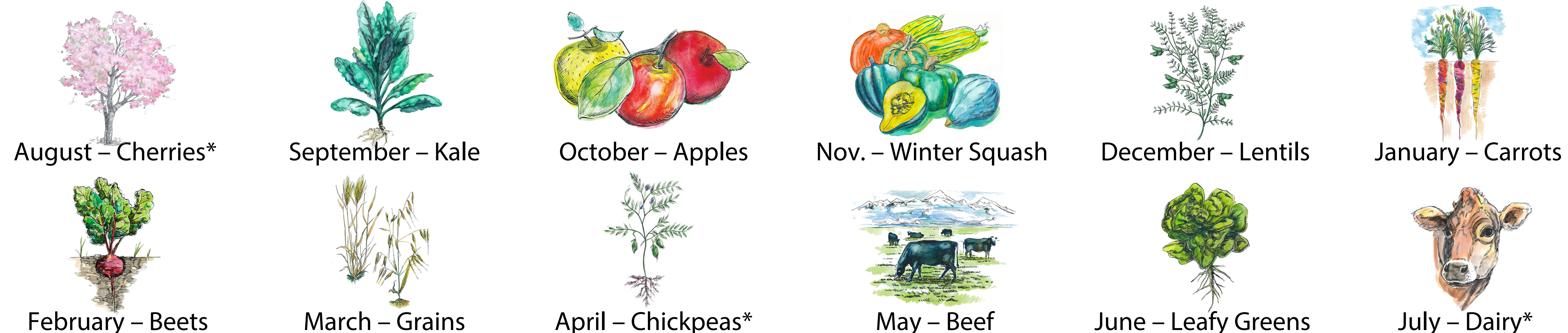
MATERIALS + RESOURCES



Additional Materials Include:

- Menu Templates
- Table Tents
- Farm to Plate Videos
- Guides + Implementation Checklists
- Serving Line Signs
- And more!

CALENDAR – 2019-20



*Chickpeas and dairy were added in 2018-19. Cherries were added and summer squash removed in 2019-20.

ADVENTUROUS EATERS

- The HOM **taste tests** have been effective in getting students to try new foods. Sites use the Tried It, Liked It, Loved It voting system.
- In 2017-18 **694** taste tests were reported.

Best practices:

- Have students prepare and/or serve taste tests.
- Involve students in promoting HOM foods by making posters or including in announcements.
- Serve HOM foods multiple times using different preparations throughout the month.

Students were surprised with how much they loved the kale salad. The next day a few students were even disappointed that we didn't have kale salad everyday.

COMMUNITY + COLLABORATION



Hardin High School Garden Club is developing recipes to include traditional foods into the HOM recipes. They are taste testing at community and school events.



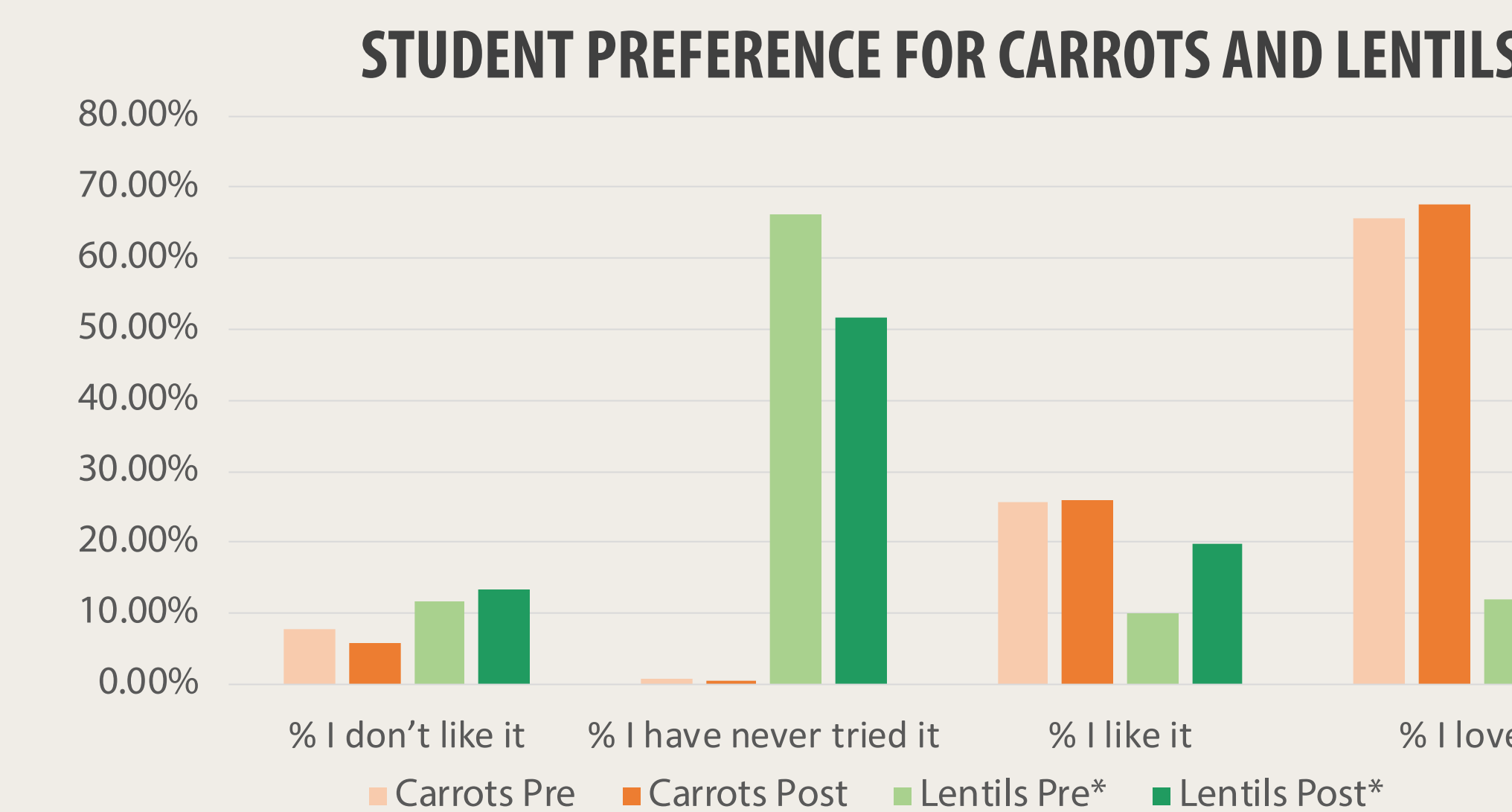
Educators and food service staff are working together to link classroom activities with school or program meals or snacks.



Students and student clubs are taking leadership in HOM by researching, preparing, and serving taste tests as well as creating school gardens to grow some of the HOM foods!



HOM is expanding to make community connections and increase exposures. The program is now open to more audience groups and being pilot tested in grocery stores and food pantries.

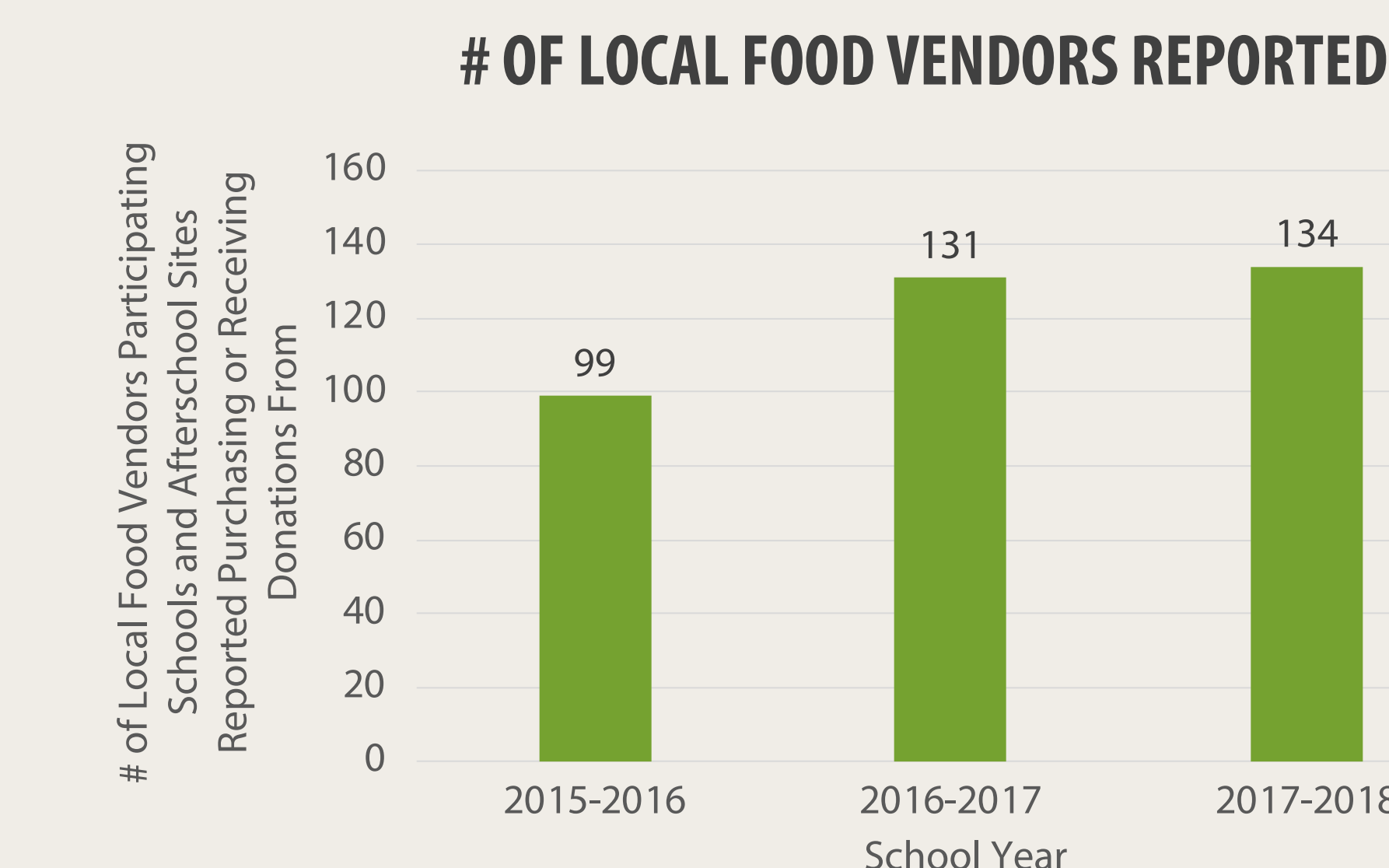
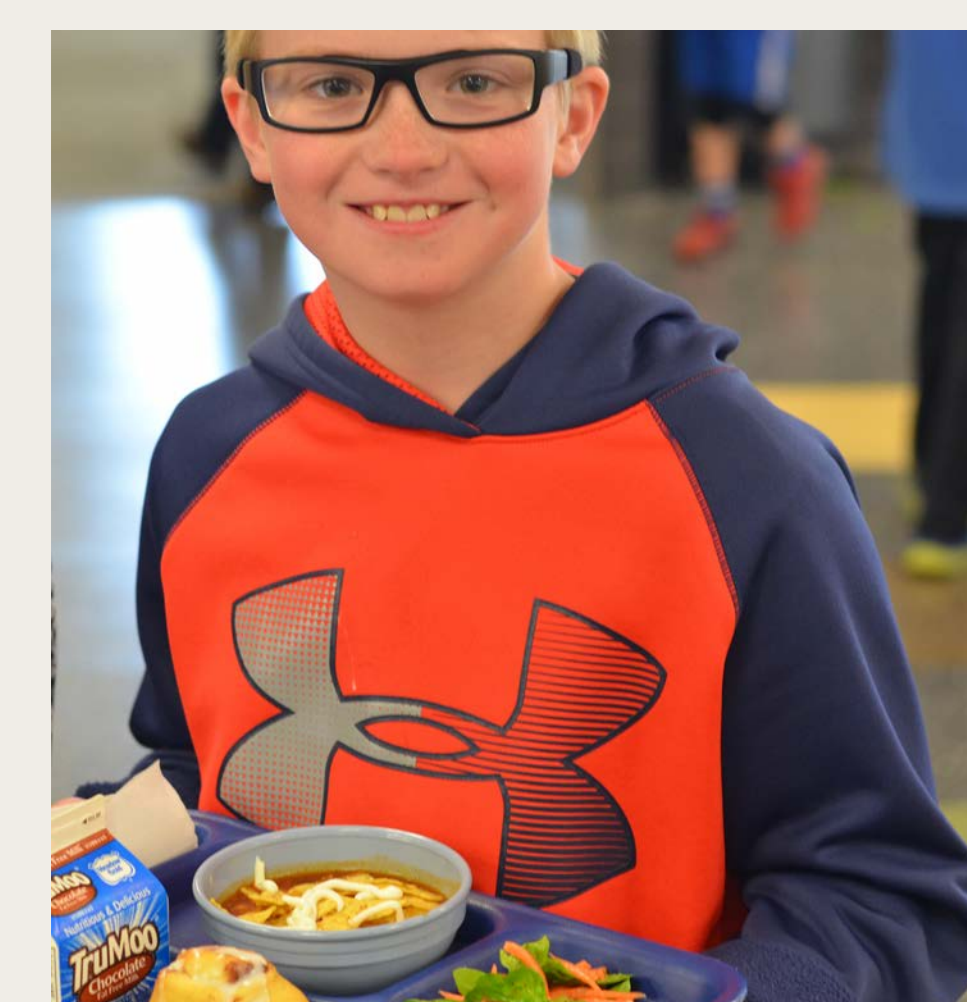
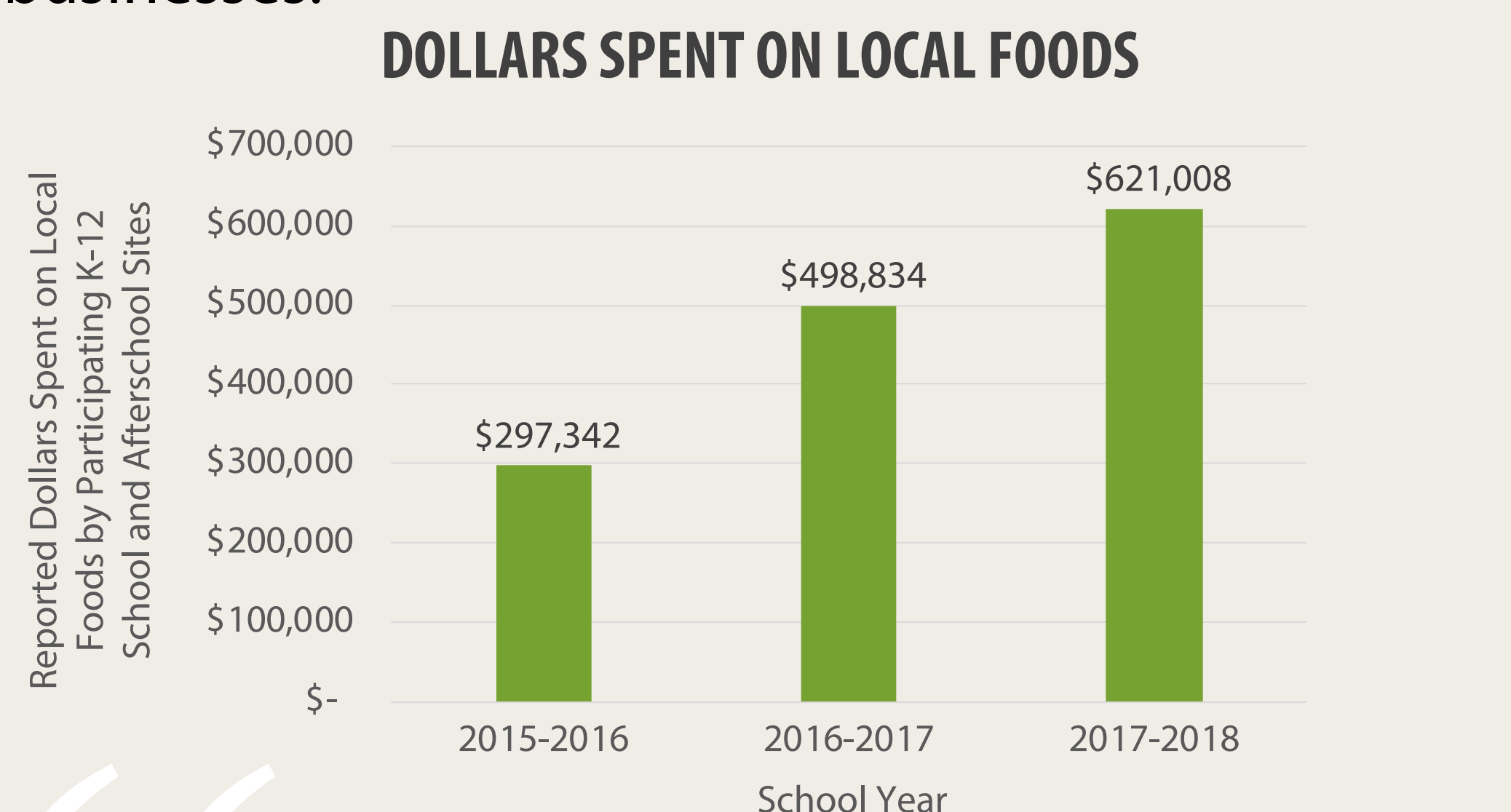


Above: In school years 2016-17 and 2017-18, mini-grantee sites participated in additional evaluation including pre and post student surveys to measure knowledge of and preferences for the HOM foods. Statistically significant increases (p < 0.05) between pre and post surveys were found for beets, lentils, milk, whole grain bread, and winter squash. Right: Example from the student survey.

Food I am Rating	I have never tried it	I don't like it	I like it	I love it
Lettuce	7	2	1	1

LOCAL PRODUCERS + BUSINESSES

The program is growing opportunities for local food producers and businesses.



The #1 success for the kitchen is being introduced to new menu ideas and trying new things. Many of our HOM experimental recipes have stayed on the menu even when they aren't that month's feature. The #1 success for the students has to be all the cooking classes. Many students have commented that it was one of their favorite activities all year. – Participating School Nutrition Professional



PARTNERS

Montana Team Nutrition, Montana State University, Montana Office of Public Instruction, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, Montana Department of Agriculture, MSU Food and Health Lab

FACEBOOK @MONTANAFARMTOSCHOOL

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