

Make it Fresh:

A Guide to Procuring Local Foods



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Purpose

An increasing number of Child Nutrition (CN) Program operators are sourcing local foods and providing complementary educational activities that emphasize food, agriculture and nutrition across the state of Iowa. While interest and enthusiasm for buying local foods has grown across the state, uncertainty about how to properly procure locally grown products remains an obstacle. This document aims to assist CN Program operators in navigating the regulations by providing information and resources that CN operators need to successfully incorporate local products into their menus.

Photo credit: Waukee Community School District



What is Farm to School

Iowa Lawmakers passed Farm to School legislation in 2007 to establish a program that would:

- Link elementary, secondary, public and non public schools with Iowa farmers;
- Provide schools with fresh and minimally processed Iowa-grown food for inclusion in school meals and snacks; and
- Encourage children to develop healthy eating habits and provide them with hands-on learning activities.

The Farm to School Program is coordinated by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education.



“I appreciate the opportunities to connect agriculture and local food to my FCS curriculum. Making students aware of how things grow and how to prepare fresh foods not only provides quality nutrition but also connects learning opportunities. Many of our students have not had the opportunity to visit a farm or prepare and eat locally grown food.”

Kristie Kuhse,
Waverly Shell Rock

Benefits of Procuring Local

Local procurement improves access to healthy food and provides higher quality meals due to the use of fresher products. Purchasing local supports surrounding communities and economies, helps the environment and makes for a safer food supply while building a more resilient food system. Additional benefits include good public relations, allows the purchase of small quantities, has lower transportation costs, offers special produce varieties and provides a known product source. Using local food in Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs) may help support local wellness initiatives. The purchase of local foods supports the mission of CNPs to serve children nutritious meals and support American agriculture with positive effects on small and mid-size local businesses.



“Farm to School teaches students work ethic. There are very few things in school that actually teach a child to roll up their sleeves and work. Students building shelters for their animals, carrying feed and water and delivering baby animals have been some of the most rewarding experiences in my career.

Students have to solve problems. Students have designed and built wind turbines, a heating system for a chicken house and learned to do a sandpoint. Students have to maintain the school garden in the summer so they give up their time to tend and harvest the vegetables.

Probably the most important thing we have learned is giving back to others. Students collect eggs each day and take them to elderly people in our community and to those that are less fortunate.”

Dr. Mike Wells,
Essex CSD

Local Foods

Local foods are 100 percent domestic foods. These are agricultural commodities that are produced or raised in the United States or any territory of the U.S. The use of local foods supports the USDA's Buy American provision to ensure that, to the maximum extent practicable, agricultural commodities are used in program meals. Local foods can span the meal tray. Local foods can include fruits, vegetables, dried beans or legumes, grains and flour, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, processed products and dairy. These products come from local farmers, ranchers, dairies, fisherman, food processors and distributors of all sizes.



Definition of Local

When it comes to local foods, defining “local” is up to the School Food Authority (SFA). There is no federal definition of local. Defining local is the first step in procuring local foods.

Consider who should or needs to be involved in developing a definition for local food sourcing. This team may involve food service directors, teachers, parents, community partners, farmers and other community members to help establish a definition that builds community awareness of local foods. If the definition requires approval from administration, include them in the decision-making process. Each SFA will develop a definition of local that works for their particular needs and goals.



“Define the term “local” in a way that makes the most sense for your district and aligns with the goals and values of your Farm to School Program.”

Kaitlyn Scheuermann,
Waukee



Consider the following characteristics of the SFA, the community and current food sources:

- USDA Child Nutrition Programs the SFA operates
- Program meal pattern requirements
- Size of the school district/non public school
- Food purchasing requirements and procedures
- Frequency of local food purchases
- Foods available locally by season
- Locations of farmers and local food sources that might work with the SFA
- The food distributors' definition of local food, if applicable

There are a number of options for an SFA to define local including:

- The local community
- Within the state of Iowa
- Within a "X" mile radius
- Within the tri-state counties surrounding the SFA
- Iowa and bordering states

An SFA can define local as a certain number of miles, within the county, within the state and may also include more than one state. When defining local, the SFA wants to consider:

- What products to source and where to find them;
- What is the CNPs vision and what types of producers can support that vision;
- Are there local producers who could provide food and also educational activities and farm visits;
- Does the SFA's commercial distributor offer products that meet the definition of local?

The broader the geographic definition, the more opportunities to access local foods and sources. It is best to be flexible when defining local. This helps ensure that the SFA's needs for local foods are met and encourages competition among farmers. Publicly share the SFA's definition of local and use it as a networking opportunity for building support.





“Research local first! There are so many local farmers willing to do whatever it takes to get food to your school. I had a very positive experience with all my local farmers.”

Danielle Newton,
Diagonal

Find Local Foods

Direct from producer

Purchasing directly from local farmers allows you to purchase sustainable foods at a competitive price while supporting your local community. Building relationships with the farmer provides the opportunity for open lines of communication so that both sides can address any concerns. Being able to work together and find solutions to problems is the first step toward building lasting, viable partnerships. The steps below will help build and maintain relationships with farmers and producers.

Tips for Buying from Local Farmers & Producers

1. Research farmers in the SFA's area by searching the internet, word of mouth or road stands. Find local food by visiting the [Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Network Local Food Procurement website](#).
2. Prepare a list of products the SFA wants
Review the SFA's cycle menus and decide which menu items could be locally sourced. Prepare a list that includes the product, volume and frequency of purchase – this is referred to as a Request for Information (RFI). See the “Incorporating Local Foods in the Menu” section of this guide for more information.
3. Set up business appointments
Contact farmers by phone or email to set up appointments. If the SFA leaves a message, indicate what time they can be reached.
4. Request free samples
If the SFA hasn't had the opportunity to try a sample of the product, ask the farmer if he or she can provide a free sample of the product.
5. Visit farmers at their farms
Visiting a farm not only indicates the SFA's interest in the farmer's product, it allows them to learn more about food safety, availability, pricing and potential challenges.
6. Talk to farmers early in the year
Contacting farmers in the early winter allows them to plant the items in the amounts that the SFA wants to purchase. Work with the farmer to create realistic purchasing volumes and delivery schedules.

Benefits of Purchasing Directly from Farmers:

- Get fresh products and a potentially greater variety of produce
- Build community connections
- Observe on-farm practices directly
- Keep dollars in your community
- Access opportunities for education, field trips and deeper engagement with farmers

7. Be aware of the SFA's insurance coverage requirements

Although most farmers carry liability insurance, SFAs may want to request proof of insurance if their local policy requires vendors to carry a certain amount of liability insurance. Below are some resources that may be helpful:

- [Insurance Coverage Options for Fresh Produce Growers](#)
- [Food Safety and Liability Insurance](#)
- [Food Safety and Liability Insurance for Small Scale and Limited Resource Farmers](#)

8. Ask farmers to provide a weekly availability list

If the SFA will be purchasing regularly from a farmer, they may want to get updated information about the availability, the size and quality of their products and the price per unit.

9. Create a system for supply replacements with the farmer

Since the weather doesn't always cooperate, it's possible that the produce that the SFA planned to purchase is unavailable. Consider having an inventory of alternate products.

10. Decide on micro-purchase or small purchase (3 Bids and a Buy) method

The amount and frequency of the SFA's local purchases will dictate whether they use a micro-purchase or small purchase. If they are just starting out and want to make a one-time purchase, the micro-purchase method might work best. For repeat or consistent purchases, the small purchase method should be used. See the "[Procurement Regulation](#)" section for more information.

11. Establish a payment schedule plan

Schools typically pay for items within 30-90 days of receipt. Communicate up front and work together to determine a payment schedule.

12. Invite the local farmers to school lunch to sample the foods on the school's menu

Invite the farmer to enjoy lunch with the students and see the SFA's program in action! This may also be a great opportunity for the farmer to provide education and information to students about the farm and products grown or raised.

13. Start small

Especially if the SFA is just starting out, it's a good idea to start small. Begin by contacting one or two farmers to purchase just a few menu items.

14. Promote with partners

Promote the local products on the SFA's menu. Use the help of teachers, students or parents to help advertise local menu items on social media, newsletters and posters.



Community Supported Agriculture

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) are arrangements in which customers purchase a “farm share” at the beginning of the season and then receive regular boxes of seasonal products as they are available. The farmer chooses what goes in each box, so customers get a variety of seasonal produce. CSAs can be a good option for smaller programs to sample new foods and bring in educational opportunities. They also allow programs to learn about seasonal availability of farm products.

- This is an example of forward contracting.
- SFAs may utilize the micro-purchase method or the small purchase method when purchasing from a CSA.
- The [Iowa Community Supported Agriculture Directory](#) may be helpful in finding local CSAs.



“Partnering with a local food hub has been critical to our success. It provided a streamlined approach to ordering, transporting and sourcing the large quantity of local products needed for a district our size, while also alleviating some of the food safety concerns of working directly with farmers.”

Kaitlyn Scheuermann,
Waukee

Food Hubs

Food hubs are businesses that combine products from multiple farms within a geographic range and distribute that product to food purchasers within a specific range. Food hubs are typically local or regional in scope and may prioritize working with historically underserved farmers and/or organically grown foods.

- If SFAs make a one-time purchase at the food hub, they can use the micro-purchase method.
- If SFAs know they are going to purchase from a food hub, they will need to follow informal or formal procurement methods. For purchases under the federal small purchase threshold of \$250,000 or local small purchase threshold, if more restrictive, get quotes from at least three vendors and provide reasons for purchasing from the food hub. They can choose to compare only local vendors.

The [Iowa Food Hub Directory](#) may be helpful in finding local food hubs.

Benefits of Purchasing Directly from a Food Hub:

- Larger quantities available than through farm-direct procurement
- Diverse availability of products
- Only local products sourced
- Information on farm source can be provided
- Often, some level of stored products is maintained year-round
- Minimally processed or frozen local foods available year-round
- Administrative burden limited by working with one vendor



School gardens

- SFAs may use products grown in school gardens in school meals, snacks and taste tests. While school gardens and farms rarely produce enough food to make up a large portion of school meals, they can contribute to increasing acceptance. Fruits, vegetables and other products grown at the school can increase education opportunities and supplement meals and salad bars.

Photo credit: Hawkeye Hawkeye Child Development Center

[School Gardens using Gardens to Grow Healthy Habits in Cafeterias, Classrooms, and Communities](#)

Donations

SFAs may accept donated food that meets food safety standards and are compliant with meal pattern regulations. When accepting food donations, the SFA should track the source of the food, date accepted and when and in what form the item was served. The [Local Food Donation Tracking Tool](#) may be used to meet these requirements.

HOW FAR DID YOUR FOOD TRAVEL?

FARM to School

LOCAL FOOD DAY



Incorporating Local Foods in the Menu

Local food purchasing is one component of Farm to School, which also includes school gardens and agriculture education. In addition to supporting the development of children's healthy eating habits, local food purchasing keeps dollars local, supports local farmers and strengthens connections between Child Nutrition Programs and communities. Access to local, healthy food coupled with education can help children build healthy eating habits and form the foundation for a healthy life.



Photo credit: Waukee Community School District

Core Elements of Farm to School

Procurement



School Garden



Education

Build a Healthy Lunch

Meat or
Meat
Alternates

Milk

Grains

Fruits

Vegetables

Choose 3 or
more food groups

Take at least 1/2 cup
fruit or vegetable



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Local and regional foods can span the meal tray. Local foods may include fruits, vegetables, beans, grains and flour, meat, poultry, fish, condiments, herbs, eggs, minimally processed products and dairy; these products can come from local farmers, ranchers, dairies, fishermen, food processors and distributors of all sizes. Fresh fruits and vegetables are a common and logical starting place for local procurement. However, the most comprehensive local food buying programs incorporate local products in all of the food categories.

To begin sourcing local products, schools should start by answering the questions:

- Which foods that are already on their school menu could be local?
- What is local in their area and when are these items in season?
- Which local foods will be most popular among students?

Cycle Menus - A cycle menu is a series of menus that is repeated over a specific period of time, such as three-to-five weeks. The menu is different each day during the cycle. And, at the end of the cycle, the menu is repeated. Cycle menus are encouraged in Child Nutrition Programs because they strengthen forecasting, reduce cost and make purchasing easier.

Farm to School Cycle Menu - The Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness cycle menu includes a five-week cycle menu that incorporates Iowa-grown foods including fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy and offers fall, winter and spring variations.

Iowa Gold Star Recipes - Iowa's Gold Star Lunch Menu consists of a five-week cycle menu and recipes that meet the NSLP meal pattern.

Healthier Kansas Menus - Healthier Kansas Menus include menus, recipes, production records and purchasing guidance.

The Lunchbox - The Lunchbox provides recipes, menus, educational initiatives and more that are focused on scratch cooking.

Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services Sample Cycle Menu - Sample menus include five-week cycles for all four seasons, highlighting local, in-season foods. Links for each cycle menu are coming soon.

- [Fall cycle menu](#)
- [Winter cycle menu](#)
- [Spring cycle menu](#)
- [Summer cycle menu](#)










Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Country Fried Pork Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Whole Grain Dinner Roll Fruit Cup Milk  	White Chicken Chili Carrot Sticks Cornbread Banana Milk  	Walking Beef Tacos Corn Refried Beans WG Corn Chips Cantaloupe Milk  	Breaded Cheese Stick With Marinara Sauce Spinach Salad Peaches Milk  	Easy Breakfast Bake with Sausage & Peppers Biscuit Grapes Milk 



Photo credit: Farm to School and Early Care Coalition



Photo credit: Farm to School and Early Care Coalition

Local Food Purchasing Assessment - SFAs may complete a [Local Food Purchasing Assessment](#) to help determine their interest and ability to purchase local foods. The information gathered from the assessment will be helpful when they begin talking with farmers and distributors about procuring local foods.

Determine the Amount to Purchase

When procuring local foods, the amount of food SFAs purchase may be different than when they purchase processed foods. For example, if they typically use frozen sliced carrots, the amount needed will differ if you begin using fresh whole carrots. When procuring fresh local produce, producers must be made aware of the amount the SFA intends to purchase so they know how much to plant and/or if they have enough to meet the specifications. The [USDA's Food Buying Guide](#) will help determine the amount of food needed as it provides the average yield for over 2,100 food items. Yield information is a valuable planning and production tool used to:

- Estimate the amount of food to purchase
- Determine meal pattern contribution for each food component
- Control food cost
- Prevent food waste
- Ensure an adequate amount of food is produced

Example:

The SFA plans to serve the chicken and vegetable bowl and want to use locally grown, whole fresh broccoli. The standardized recipe calls for 5 pounds, 10 ounces of ready-to-cook (RTC), trimmed fresh broccoli. The RTC quantity is the amount of trimmed vegetables needed. But how much will they need if purchasing fresh whole broccoli?

The [Food Buying Guide](#) (FBG) can be used to determine the amount the SFA needs to purchase as demonstrated in the excerpt from the FBG below.

Dark Green Vegetables, - BROCCOLI						
Food As Purchased, AP	Recipe-100 servings(EP)	Purchase Unit	Serving Size Per Meal Contribution	Purchase Units for 100 Servings(AP)	Additional Information	Yield Percent
Broccoli, fresh <i>Untrimmed</i>	5 lb 10 oz or 5.625 lb	Pounds	1/4 cup cut, cooked, drained vegetable	7 (5.625/0.81=7)	1 lb AP = 0.81 lb ready- to-cook broccoli	81 percent

1. Refer to the yield information in the “Additional Information” column for the yield determined from the food needed for the recipe.
 - a. In other words, if the SFA purchases one pound of whole fresh broccoli, which is the AP, they will get 0.81 pounds RTC trimmed broccoli, which is the Edible Portion (EP).
 - b. To determine how much the SFA needs for their recipe, divide the RTC quantity called for in the recipe by the yield data in the “Additional Information” column. If their recipe lists the desired RTC quantity in pounds and ounces, they will need to determine the decimal equivalent. For example, the recipe calls for five pounds, 10 ounces of ready-to-cook trimmed broccoli. Convert the 10 ounces to pounds (10 oz/16 oz per lb = 0.625 lb) which is 5.625 lb.

$$5.625 / 0.81 = 6.94 \text{ lb}$$
 - c. They will want to round up to ensure enough food is purchased. In this example, the SFA would purchase 7 pounds of fresh whole broccoli for this recipe.

Yield Percents - In cooking, a yield percentage is the measure of the factor by which an item changes because of trimming, draining and/or cooking.

- A. [USDA Food Buying Guide](#)
- B. [Yield test culinary training video](#)

Example: Chicken Vegetable Bowl

Using the above instructions, repeat the steps of identifying the yield percentage for each recipe ingredient and calculate the As Purchased, or quantity of ingredients to order.

Ingredient	Recipe - 100 servings	As Purchased (AP)	Yield Percent
Broccoli <i>(fresh, untrimmed)</i>	5 lbs 10 oz	7 lbs (5.61 lbs/.81=6.938 lbs)	81%
Carrots <i>(fresh, without tops)</i>	4 lbs	6 lbs (4 lbs/.7=5.714 lbs)	70%
Onion <i>(mature, fresh, all sizes, whole)</i>	3 lbs 8 oz	4 lbs (3.5 lbs/.88=3.977 lbs)	88%
Zucchini <i>(squash, summer, fresh, whole)</i>	4 lbs 4 oz	5 lbs (4.25 lbs/.95=4.473 lbs)	95%
Red Peppers <i>(Bell, fresh, orange or red, medium or large, whole)</i>	5 lbs 8 oz	7 lbs (5.5 lbs/.8=6.87 lbs)	80%
Chicken <i>(boneless, fresh or frozen tenders)</i>	15 lbs	20.55 lbs (15 lbs/.75=20 lbs)	73%
Rice <i>(Brown, long grain, regular, dry)</i>	6.5 lbs (uncooked)	6.5 lbs	175%

1 lb AP = 0.81 lb ready-to-cook, or serve raw broccoli

Seasonal Availability

To incorporate local foods into the SFA's menus, they need to understand the seasonality and time of year that specific fruits and vegetables are available. "In-season" can mean different things for different regions as different plants require different growing conditions. Eating seasonally helps promote nutritious meals and supports a healthy environment. Foods that are grown and consumed during their appropriate seasons are more nutritionally dense. Growing and consuming crops seasonally not only guarantees a flavorful product, but it allows the environment to cycle through its natural resources and seasons like it would without human intervention.



Photo credit: Farm to School and Early Care Coalition

Seasonality Chart

Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar

Produce	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Apples						
Apricots						
Asparagus						
Beans						
Blueberries						
Broccoli						
Cabbage						
Cantaloupe						
Carrots						
Cauliflower						
Cherries						
Cucumbers						
Eggplant						
Grapes						
Kohlrabi						
Leeks						
Lettuce						
Okra						
Onions						

Produce	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Peaches						
Pears						
Peppers						
Plums						
Potatoes						
Pumpkins						
Radishes						
Raspberries						
Rhubarb						
Rutabaga						
Spinach						
Squash						
Strawberries						
Sweet Corn						
Sweet Potato						
Tomatoes						
Turnips						
Watermelons						
Zucchini						



Funds for IDALS Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar were provided by a USDA Specialty Crops Grant

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Wallace State Office Building
502 East 9th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Ph: 515-281-7657
Fax: 515-281-6178
iowaagriculture.gov



How to get started:

- Research what fruits and vegetables are in season at specific times of the year in your area
 - [Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Harvest Calendar](#)
 - [Seasonal Food Guide](#)
 - [Iowa State University \(ISU\) Fresh Vegetable Guide](#)
- Understand food storage methods that prolong the shelf life of produce
 - [Produce Storage, Produce Safety University](#)
- Explore preservation of fresh produce through freezing and other methods
 - [Freezing Fruits and Vegetables, ISU](#)
 - [Preserving Locally Harvested Produce in School Meals, USDA](#)
 - [Take Advantage of Nature's Bounty: Consider Vacuum Seal](#)

“

“Just do it. Start small, learn some lessons and do more next year.”

Catherine Bergman,
Stratford

Season Extension Methods

Local foods are not exclusively available in the warm summer months as many people think. Items like onions and potatoes, when stored properly, are available for purchase throughout the winter. Additionally, many techniques are available to farmers which can extend the growing season for many plants from March to December in Iowa. Ask prospective producers what specific items they have available at different times of the year.

Photo credit: Farm to School and Early Care Coalition



Seasonal Menu

- [Choose Iowa Food of the Month Resources](#)
- [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#)
- [Iowa Local Food Day Menu](#)
- [Culinary Videos](#)
- [Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Galore Videos](#)

Planning

How long does it take to grow or raise?

Livestock

Animal	Market Ready (on average)
Chickens Broilers Roasters	7-9 weeks 12-20 weeks
Turkey	14-18 weeks
Hogs	6-7 months
Sheep	6-8 months
Cattle	18-24 months
Bison	2-2.5 years

Photo credit: Riceville Community School District



Produce

Each crop has its own growing cycle. Some crops thrive in the warmth of the summer months, while others prefer the cooler months. Some items like lettuce may be harvested 6-8 weeks after planting, corn will take 3-4 months and other plants will take a year or two before the first harvest.



Photo credit: Waverly Shell Rock Community School District

Perennials

A perennial plant is a plant that lives for more than two years. These plants will produce fruits or vegetables roughly the same time each year during the life of the plant. Examples include rhubarb, strawberries and asparagus.

Biennials

A biennial plant is a flowering plant that takes two years, generally in a temperate climate, to complete its biological life cycle. In the first year, the plant undergoes primary growth, in which its leaves, stems and roots develop. Examples: leeks, parsley and fennel.

Annuals

An annual plant is a plant that completes its life cycle, from germination to the production of seeds, within one growing season and then dies. Examples: tomato, squash, lettuce, corn and pepper.

When do I start the procurement process?

Conversations about procuring local foods ideally occur several months prior to needing the ingredient. However, as SFAs are beginning their local procurement journey, they may find themselves looking for items weeks or even days before the item is needed. This is acceptable, but keep in mind that “just in time” ordering may limit their options and the volume of product available.

Once the SFA has an established relationship with a farmer, they can start planning earlier. Long-term planning with farmers can be a great way to reduce prices, get more guaranteed product quantity and build stronger community connections. Before the season, SFAs may plan with their farm partner what crops they’re interested in. This way, the farmer can plan to have the quantity needed and the SFA can have confidence in a reliable supply. Some farmers may offer a discount for agreements set up ahead of time.

Forward Contracting

Forward contracting is any contract established in advance of when the product is delivered. A forward contract establishes a timeline that allows the farmers to adapt their planting and harvesting schedule to meet the SFA's needs well in advance.

Example: Perfect Procurement Community School District (CSD) has decided to purchase local tomatoes to be featured on the salad bar for the month of September. The Food Service Director (FSD) at Perfect Procurement CSD starts by reviewing the production records from the previous September to help forecast the quantity of tomatoes needed for the month of September. In January, the FSD met with the farmer and outlined that Perfect Procurement CSD will need 30 pounds of tomatoes delivered on September 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30. They will need 45 pounds of tomatoes delivered on September 4, 11, 16 and 25, and 28. This is a total of 330 pounds of tomatoes over the course of one month. By knowing how many pounds of tomatoes are needed by the school and when, the farmer can order the appropriate amount of seeds and know when to plant in order to have the plant producing fruit at the time the tomatoes are needed in September to fulfill the contract.

Tip:

Forward Contracting can be used to procure foods for Iowa Local Food Day.

SEPTEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 30 lbs.	3	4 45 lbs.	5	6	7
8	9 30 lbs.	10	11 45 lbs.	12	13	14
15	16 30 lbs.	17	18 45 lbs.	19	20	21
22	23 30 lbs.	24	25 45 lbs.	26	27	28
29	30 30 lbs.	31				

Month	Action
September	Complete production records
October	
November	
December	
January	Finalize contract with farmer
February	Farmer orders seeds
March	
April	
May	Farmer planting
June	School communicates with farmer
July	School communicates with farmer
August	School communicates with farmer
September	Purchase and serve tomatoes

What are the benefits of a forward contract?

- Reliable and consistent supply of local foods
- Local foods available in quantities needed
- Reduces anxiety of not knowing if a product will sell
- Minimizes marketing costs
- Price is set in advance

Nutrition Program Production Assessment

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“The trick to the sweet corn is flexibility. We were able to connect to a farmer to source the corn. It meant we had to find volunteers to process the corn on a Saturday, but I feel it was worth it. We are fortunate in our small town to have volunteers that are willing to invest in their local school.”

Christy Green,
Bedford

What is kitchen production capacity

Logistics such as coordination with farms, staffing lunchrooms and processing raw ingredients have all made implementation of Farm to School challenging. Despite the hurdles, procuring local foods remains a high priority for many SFAs. The Local Food Purchasing Assessment will help you evaluate your needs.

Staffing

Using fresh products may require additional staff time to process the fruits and vegetables. It could also mean additional culinary skills and training are needed.

- [Standardized Recipe Video](#)
- [Yield Test Video](#)
- [Knife Skills Video](#)
- [Mise en Place Video](#)
- [Measuring Techniques Video](#)



Equipment

Purchasing large quantities of local foods may lead SFAs to purchase new equipment to expedite processing. Consider what type of equipment is needed, the space that it would occupy, funding and proper procurement of the equipment. A useful resource is the USDA's [Preserving Locally Harvested Produce in School Meals](#).

To choose the right piece of equipment, first consider what types of food will be prepared. Units are available in a wide range of sizes to process various amounts of food in a given period of time. One unit may process 11 pounds of produce per minute, for example, while a larger unit is capable of processing up to 88 pounds per minute. No matter the equipment size, consider these key features that can help optimize efficiency and performance:

- **Certification:** Look for equipment that has a National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) stamp. NSF food equipment standards include requirements for material safety, to ensure the product will not leach harmful chemicals into food; design and construction, to ensure the product is cleanable and is not likely to harbor bacteria; and product performance.
- **Size:** It's critical to choose equipment that is large enough to meet the needs of the application and to offer flexibility for the kind of foods being prepared. This provides convenience and saves time.
- **Safety Features:** Look for equipment that offers a safety switch, to help minimize the risk of injury. This technology prevents the machine from running if pieces are not all positioned correctly.
- **Stainless Steel Blades:** Equipment with stainless steel blades and cutting tools are easier to clean. Stainless steel tools can be put in a dishwasher or a ware wash product, ensuring proper cleaning and sanitation. This helps save time compared to hand washing tools and ensures that equipment is properly cleaned to eliminate bacteria accumulation that could lead to food safety issues.
- **Removable Parts:** A unit with parts that are easily removable also saves time in cleaning and helps ensure the machine is thoroughly cleaned. Look for equipment that has removable cutting tools and parts.
- **User-Friendly Design:** Certain features help make equipment more comfortable for operators to use, resulting in less operator fatigue.

Administration

The Food Service Director and other administrative personnel may have some added responsibilities when it comes to procuring local foods. Monitoring contracts, recordkeeping, additional staff training, marketing and consumer education may be needed.



Food Safety

In order to provide food that is safe for students and staff, farmers are expected to follow good on-farm food safety and post-harvest handling practices. This includes safe planting, use of nutrients (compost), pest-control mechanisms, harvesting procedures, cooling, washing, packing, delivery, etc.



Food Safety Plan

SFAs should ask farmers to provide a food safety plan that describes how the farm minimizes on-farm and post-harvest food safety risks.

Site visits provide an opportunity to meet the farm staff, observe farm practices and assure that good food safety practices are being followed.

Site Visit

Insurance

Be aware of the SFA's insurance coverage requirements. SFAs will want to check their local policies to see if they require vendors to carry a certain amount of liability insurance.

All products must be packed and stored under sanitary conditions, kept at proper temperature and handled in accordance with good commercial practices.

Packing & Storing

Traceability

Each case delivered should be labeled with farm name, product, lot code, date harvested and date packed.

Farmers must deliver products in clean, new boxes/bags using clean, sanitary delivery vehicles. Product temperatures should be checked upon delivery for appropriate temperature ranges.

Delivery

HACCP

It is important for buyers of fresh whole produce to have assurances that safe food handling practices were followed on the farm and during delivery. SFAs should work with reputable producers with food safety plans that maintain food safety records. However, not all produce growers are required to comply with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. Due to cost, many produce farms in Iowa are not Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified or certified organic. Fortunately, growers can provide documentation of food safety assurances in several ways:

- Onsite review of their farm
- Certificate of attendance at GAP or Produce Safety Alliance training
- Documentation from a third-party audit (i.e. USDA GAP)
- Submission of the [Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Fresh Produce](#). This provides:
 - GAP was followed on the farm
 - The buyer took reasonable care when purchasing fruits and vegetables directly from a grower. The purpose of this guide is to help food buyers evaluate the checklist submitted by a farmer and identify areas of concern.

Food Safety Resources

[USDA Produce Safety Resources](#)

Standard Operating Procedures

- [Direct Purchase of Food Products from Growers or Producers by K-12 School Districts](#)
- [Food Products from Grower or Producer](#) - ISU
- [Purchasing](#) - ISU
- [Receiving](#) -ISU
- [Storage](#) -ISU
- [Preparing Cold Food](#) - ISU
- [Cooking Food](#) -ISU
- [Donated Food](#) -ISU
- [Organic Recycling and Composting](#) - ISU



Principles of Good Procurement

Every purchase using federal funds must be conducted following the principles of good procurement. Procurement should allow for full and open competition, vendors must be both responsive and responsible and the procurement process must be fair and transparent to maintain integrity.

Procurement Plan

The procurement plan is a roadmap for all intended purchases in the next fiscal year. Annually, SFAs are required to complete a procurement plan listing anticipated purchases for the upcoming fiscal year. The SFA procurement plan prototype can be found in IowaCNP download forms (NSLPPROC 002). It is encouraged that the SFA procurement plan be completed when they are making decisions on the upcoming school year budget. The procurement plan is an evolving document and must be updated as there may be purchases made that were not anticipated at the time the plan was completed. The Bureau developed three videos that assist in completing the procurement plan. The link to the procurement videos are listed in the Resources section of this guide.

Level	Amount
Federal micro-purchase threshold	\$10,000
Federal small purchase threshold	\$250,000
Local micro-purchase and small purchase thresholds	Check your SFA Purchasing Policy

[Procurement Decision Tree](#)

Procurement Methods

Micro-Purchase Method

This is one of the two informal methods of procurement. The current federal micro-purchase threshold is \$10,000. A threshold means the dollar value at or below which the SFA may purchase food, supplies and services. The SFA may purchase food, supplies or services without soliciting competitive price quotations if the annual aggregate amount of the purchase is at \$10,000 or less. Local policies may indicate a lower threshold than the federal threshold, in which case the more restrictive (lower dollar value) threshold must be used. The SFA must consider the price to be reasonable based on research, experience, purchase history or other information when purchasing without soliciting competitive price quotations. Documentation is required to show the purchase price is reasonable.

Crazy Carrot Farm
1234 Sample St
Example, IA 12345
(515) 123-4567



Invoice No. 1234567890

June 1, 2022

Bill To	Ship To	Instructions	
Perfect Procurement School 6789 School St Sample, IA 12345	Same as recipient	Payment due in 30 days on July 1, 2022	
QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
6 cartons	Tomatos cherry	\$14.00	\$84.00
10 each	Watermelon	\$6.50	\$65.00
2 bushels	Cucumbers	\$30.00	\$60.00

Subtotal	\$209.00
Sales Tax	
Shipping & Handling	\$50.00
Total Due by Date	\$259.00



When utilizing the micro-purchase method, the SFA should, to the maximum extent practicable, distribute purchases among qualified suppliers to “spread the wealth.” A micro-purchase log should be maintained to document all purchases made using the micro-purchase method. The log provides the program operator a visual to ensure the equitable distribution of federal funds among qualified suppliers. A micro-purchase log prototype can be found in IowaCNP in download forms (NSLPPROC006).

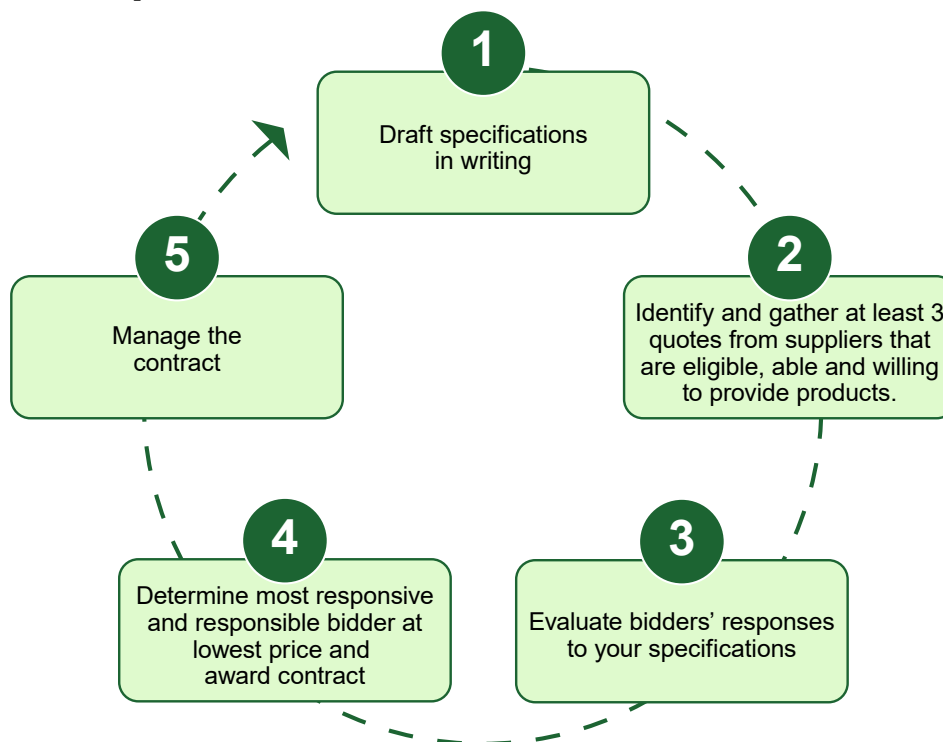
The micro-purchase method might be useful for an SFA who wants to make a one-time purchase of a product. If the SFA makes multiple purchases of local produce without soliciting price quotes throughout the school year, the aggregate value of the purchase must be below the SFA’s micro-purchase threshold. This purchase might be an emergency purchase because of supply chain issues or perhaps the district wants to serve local food for a special event or celebration.

Example: The food service director for the Perfect Procurement Community School District is planning a National School Breakfast Week celebration and wants to serve local eggs. The FSD conducted market research on the cost of the local eggs and based on the amount needed to serve all students, he will spend less than the federal micro-purchase threshold. Since this is a one-time purchase, he can conduct a micro-purchase by procuring local eggs from one farmer without requesting price quotations from two or more egg handlers.

Small Purchase Method

The small purchase method, or 3 bids and a buy, is the second informal procurement method. The current federal small purchase threshold is \$250,000. Purchases \$0 - \$250,000 or under the SFA’s small purchase threshold, if more restrictive, can be made by requesting a price quotation from at least two vendors. We recommend obtaining price quotations from three vendors. The quotation may be informal or formal. A small purchase procurement prototype is available in IowaCNP in download forms (NSLPPROC008). Instructions are provided within the document.

Five Basic Steps of Informal Procurement



Example: The Perfect Procurement Community School District wants to purchase local apples to serve all students at lunch at least once a month. The amount they plan to spend is less than their local small purchase threshold, which is more restrictive than the federal threshold. Using the small purchase method would allow the SFA to identify and purchase from a supplier that is able to provide the quality of apples desired in the quantity and frequency requested for the best price. Patty, the food service director at Perfect Procurement CSD, documents her specifications for apples and sends emails to three farmers in the Iowa Farm to School Directory. The specifications sent are identical and include the following specifications:

- Quality: Fancy grade standard
- McIntosh or Honeygold
- 113-125 count
- Available at least 8 months from September - May
- Must be able to deliver to the high school kitchen site two days prior to service
- Must provide 40-45 cases per month

Patty receives three quotes from vendors that are able to meet her specifications. She reviews and selects the most responsible and responsive vendor that is able to meet all her specifications listed at the lowest price.

Formal Purchase Method

There are two formal methods of procurement – Request for Proposals (RFP) or Invitation for Bids (IFB). These are commonly referred as Competitive Proposals or Sealed Bids, respectively. Purchases above \$250,000 (or above the SFA's formal small purchase threshold if more restrictive), must use a competitive proposal or sealed bid. An "Invitation for Bid" (IFB) prototype (NSLPPROC011) and a Request for Proposal (RFP) prototype (NSLPPROC009) are available in IowaCNP in download forms. Public notification is required when the formal purchase method is used. A sample public notification can be found in IowaCNP in download forms (NSLPPROC012).

Buy American Provision

The Buy American provision is required for procurement of all food products including locally grown and locally raised agricultural commodities in Child Nutrition Programs.

Section 12(n) of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) defines "domestic commodity or product"

- As an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States (U.S.) and
- A food product that is processed in the U.S. substantially using agricultural commodities produced in the U.S. "Substantially" means over 51% of the final processed product (by weight or volume) must consist of domestic agricultural commodities. This means that unprocessed agricultural commodities must be domestic. Processed food must be processed domestically and must contain agricultural food that is over 51 percent domestically grown, by weight or volume as provided in the specifications.



Geographic Preference

Geographic preference follows the product not where the respondent maintains a principal place of business.

The geographic preference option for procuring local foods applies to all Child Nutrition Programs. It enables schools to state a preference for local products, but does not require that purchases be made from local sources. Only the SFA can determine the definition of local for the purposes of the geographic preference procurement option.

Geographic preference can be used for small or formal procurement methods. The SFA's application of the geographic preference option must provide for full and open competition. SFAs should do everything possible to be flexible when defining local. By broadening specifications and providing flexibility with delivery requirements, more vendors may be able to provide bids. If the SFA is unable to obtain three quotes even after altering the specifications and other requirements, it may purchase the product if only two quotes are received. For example, indicating a preference for products within 25 miles when only one farm meets the definition would be considered a restriction on competition. Though the USDA does not recommend this practice, if an SFA is unable to find three quotes even after broadening product specifications, terms and conditions, the SFA may purchase the product if only two bids were received.

Example: Perfect Procurement School has defined their geographic preference to be the state of Iowa. They have properly procured Food to You, a local food hub located in My City, Iowa for the coming school year. Food to You sources tomatoes from Border Town, Nebraska. The tomatoes sourced from Nebraska do not fit the geographic preference of Perfect Procurement School even though they are making the purchase from a food hub located in Iowa.

When using geographic preference option, the procurement must allow for full and open competition.

Geographic preference can only be applied to the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products that retain their inherent character. See table below for Unprocessed Products for Which Schools Can Use the Geographic Option.

Federal regulations do not prescribe the precise way that geographic preference should be applied. There are a variety of ways an SFA can apply geographic preference. For example:

- Award a percent preference or a certain number of points for products sourced within an SFA's definition of local, or
- Use a tiered approach meaning award percent preference or a certain number of points for products sourced within specific mile radius, the further the miles the lower the percent or point preference, or
- Using a sliding scale, meaning assign a certain number of points depending on how many items on the product list can be sourced from within the stated geographic preference area, for instance 10 points for sourcing $\geq 70\%$ of all products within specified geographic area, 7 points for sourcing 50-69% of all products within specified geographic area, etc.

Geographic preference is only used for the purposes of evaluation of bidder responses to determine the responsive bidder who will be awarded the contract. The SFA will pay the full bid price when products are purchased.

Unprocessed Products for Which Schools Can Use the Geographic Option

Product	Included	Not Included
Fruits	Sliced, diced, whole raw, dried or frozen products	Does not apply to any canned products
Vegetables	Sliced, diced, whole raw, dried or frozen products	Does not apply to tomato sauce, canned products or vegetable patties
Meats	Unprocessed frozen products and formed products, such as patties	Does not apply to any meat products that have been cooked, heated or canned or that have any additives or fillers
Fish	Whole, form filets or nuggets It does apply to fresh and frozen fish, including filets that contain no additives or fillers	Does not apply to any seafood products that have been cooked, heated or canned or that have any additives
Poultry	Whole, form or various cuts	Does not apply to any poultry products that have been cooked, heated, canned or that have any additives or fillers
Dairy	Unflavored milk	Does not apply to fluid milk products that contain additives, such as chocolate or strawberry flavored milks, nor any processed dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, etc.
Eggs	Whole, shell eggs	Does not apply to liquid eggs
Grains	Quinoa, rice, barley, etc. If whole form and other grains in ground form such as flour	Does not apply to any products that have been baked or cooked

UNPROCESSED FOODS Geographic preference applies only to unprocessed locally grown or raised agricultural products. Unprocessed products are those that retain their inherent character. One can use the geographic preference procurement option to procure local tomatoes and onions for tomato sauce, but not to procure the tomato sauce itself since the sauce would have been heated.

The following food handling and preservation techniques are not considered to change a product's character and thus are allowable:

Refrigerating	Dicing	Slicing	Cutting
Pasteurizing milk	Chopping	Shucking	Grinding
Adding ascorbic acid	Drying	Dehydrating	Packaging
Forming patties	Cleaning	Butchering	Bagging
Vacuum packaging	Peeling	Washing	Freezing

Tip:

The inherent character of a food is changed when it is cooked and heated. Geographic preference cannot be applied to these foods. For example, a school cannot apply geographic preference when purchasing salsa. A school may apply geographic preference to purchase the raw ingredients such as tomatoes, onions and peppers by using a geographic preference, then they can conduct a competitive procurement process to identify a processor who can combine those ingredients into salsa.

Applying Geographical Preference

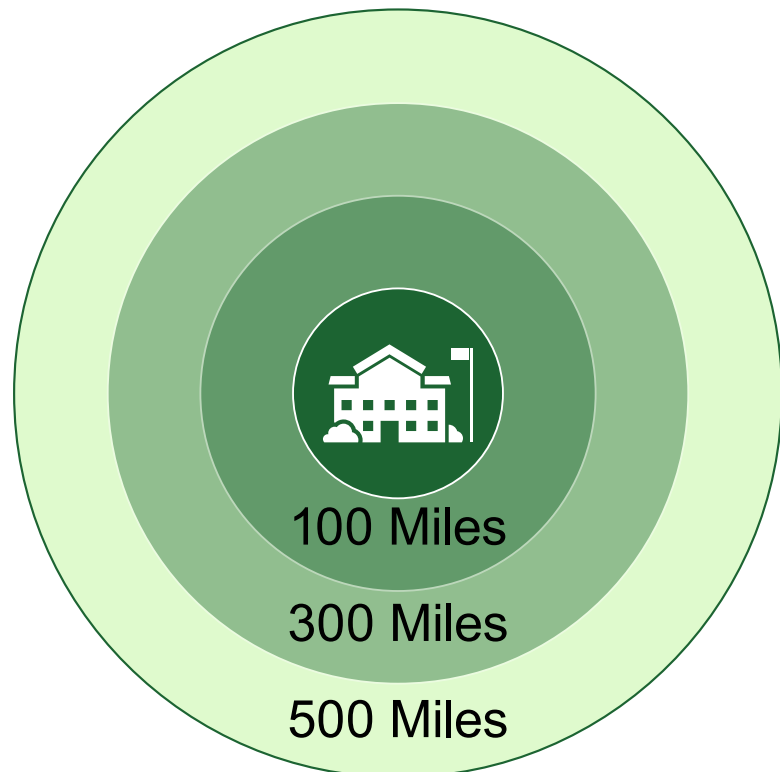
Formal Procurement Method

Geographic preference may be applied when using the formal procurement method and/or an SFA is procuring the services of a distributor. When using this type of procurement an SFA normally finds that the increased value of the contract and the fact the suppliers may be providing the school with many types of products and services increases competition from outside the geographic area. Schools interested in increasing local participation, even if it's as a sub-contract to the prime vendor or producer, geographic preference will most likely benefit local producers.

There are two types of formal procurement methods, a Request for Proposals (also referred to as Competitive Proposals) and an Invitation for Bid (also referred to as Sealed Bid). When either formal procurement methods are used, regulations require a public notification in a newspaper of general circulation is issued advertising the solicitation.

Request for Proposals (RFP) - The RFP can result either in a fixed price or cost-reimbursable, also referred to as cost plus fixed fee contract. The RFP must include an evaluation criteria that allows for consideration of factors in addition to price. Each factor included in the evaluation criteria would be assigned points. Price must still be the primary factor. For the geographic preference option, some of the factors to be considered in the evaluation criteria in addition to price may include tiered points for sourcing a certain percentage of products from the school's local or geographic preference region, farm visits, farm of origin on labels, farm tours and farm education in classrooms. The evaluation factors must be clearly specified in the RFP or the solicitation document.

The graphic below is to depict that the SFA can expand the definition of local.



It is imperative for an SFA to conduct market research before issuing solicitations. It is possible a vendor with a higher bid can win a contract because of geographic preference.

An SFA intending to use the geographic preference when evaluating responses must outline how it will be applied and how much preference will be given in the solicitation document.

Invitation for Bid (IFB) - This formal procurement method is used when the SFA can clearly provide a complete description of the products desired as well as the terms and conditions the vendor must meet in the solicitation document. The contract is awarded to the lowest price, responsive bidder. However, an SFA could include geographic preferences in the specifications. For example, geographic preference could be applied by awarding more points if the apples have been picked within one day of delivery. The solicitation should define local and clearly state how geographic preference points will be applied in determining the contract award. The solicitation should state that geographic preference points are for bidding purposes only and will not affect the actual price paid.

Example: Three elementary schools at Perfect Procurement Community School District receive a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) grant. The estimated value of the fresh produce costs for the FFVP exceeds the SFA's small purchase threshold of \$25,000 and, therefore, the SFA will conduct a procurement for fresh produce using the formal procurement method. The SFA conducts market research on the location of farms, seasonal produce availability and farmer capability to grow and deliver. They also conduct a survey of regional broadline distributors to gain an understanding of the vendor's desire and current practices of working with local growers. Based on the results of the market research, the SFA decided that they would be able to offer one or two local items in the FFVP for the school year. They issue an IFB, with a complete description of the products needed, estimated quantity needed per item and vendor terms and conditions. The SFA will use a product category in defining local and clearly state that the SFA reserves the right to award to multiple vendors (line item evaluation). The solicitation specifically identifies whole and/or minimally processed items within the SFA's defined local area. The SFA further states that for the purpose of awarding a contract, the SFA will apply a one penny = one point to evaluate the bid pricing for the specifically identified items. Any respondent able to provide produce within the specified geographic area will be awarded ten points in the selection process which will be a 10-cent reduction in price for the purpose of evaluating the lowest bidder.

For the purpose of applying geographic preference to items in an IFB, we will illustrate with one product: Gala Apples

One Penny = One Point Geographic Preference Evaluation

	Owen's Orchard	Apple Lane Farms	Zoe's Best
Price per 40 lb case (115 - 138 count/case)	\$32.50 per case	\$33.00 per case	\$33.50 per case
Was geographic preference met? (Award 10 points)	Yes	No	No
Preference Price Adjustment (one penny per point)	\$0.10	\$0.00	\$0.00
Price Adjusted with Preference Points	\$32.50 - \$0.10 = \$32.40	\$33.00 - \$0.00 = \$33.00	\$33.50 - \$0.00 = \$33.50
(price multiplied by volume). Estimated cases in IFB = 360 (115 - 138 count/case) for bid evaluation purposes	\$32.40 x 360 cases = \$11,664	\$33 x 360 cases = \$11,880	\$33.50 x 360 cases = \$12,060
Actual cost of the apples	\$32.50 x 360 cases = \$11,700	\$11,880	\$12,060

- Deducting ten cents from the case price for the vendor who met the geographic preference only applies to determining the winning bidder and would not affect the actual price paid to a bidder.
- Perfect Procurement will award a one-year contract to Owen's Orchard for Gala apples.

Small Procurement Method

Geographical preference may be applied to purchases using the small procurement method by:

- Including language in product specifications that target specific varieties or harvesting techniques.
- Sending solicitations only to vendors who are known to have local product.
- SFA should ensure that there are at least three vendors that may respond.
- If the SFA does not receive two or more quotes, the SFA must document why it was unable to do so and make a note of any efforts taken, such as broadening the specifications in order to get three quotes.

Tip:

List your estimated usage (quantity) based on historical records, so vendors can see the quantity needed. When evaluating for lowest price bid or quote, calculate with price multiplied by quantity to make sure you are considering prices for items you use in large quantities rather than an average price for all items.

Photo credit: Waukee Community School District

U.S. Grades and Standards

National Standards for agricultural commodities are developed by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in support of America's food industry supply chain. These standards are used by the industry in resolving disputes of product quality. The standards provide the foundation for domestic trade, promote efficiency in marketing and procurement and determine levels of quality and value as a basis for sales quotes, damage claims and market reporting. The standards provide a common language for trading where the commodity cannot be readily displayed or examined by the prospective buyer. It is used on labels for official USDA marks for quality. The U.S. Grade Standards for fruits, vegetables and other commodities can be found at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards>



Specifications

To target local foods, the following could be used for product specifications or a technical requirement: identifying particular varieties unique to the region, requiring products to be delivered within a certain number of hours of harvest, identifying certain harvesting techniques, allowing products with some cosmetic damages, origin labeling, farm visits and classroom visits. It is imperative that competition is not restricted.

Developing a Solicitation Document – Here are some examples of solicitation prototypes.

- [Maryland Department of Agriculture Pecks to Pounds](#)

Evaluating Responses and Awarding a Contract
How much should I pay?

- [Iowa Farm to School Local Purchase Report](#)
- [Agricultural Marketing Services Market News](#)

Contract Management

Contract management is a multi-part process. Contract management requires that a trained staff person is familiar with the specifications listed in the contract and can check in orders to ensure that all food items are received and meet specifications. The SFA staff person must be trained on food safety standards including receiving and storing local foods. The SFA may also develop procedures to ensure the grower is meeting the specifications described in the contract including the time between harvest and delivery, temperature of food during transport, cleanliness of delivery vehicles and condition of food upon delivery. Contract management also requires that the SFA compare invoice prices to contract prices. This staff person is responsible for entering the invoice into the payment system. Finally, the SFA must maintain clear communication with the producer on quality, quantity and prices of the products received.

What You Can Source Locally

Meat/Poultry/Eggs

Food Inspections

- [Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce](#)
- Meat/Poultry/Eggs Inspection
 - [USDA Memo SP01 CACFP01 SFSP01-2016 Procuring Local Meat, Poultry, Game, and Eggs for Child Nutrition Programs](#)
 - Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code 2017 requirements, Code 3-201.11 Compliance with Food Law: All food provided in a licensed food establishment needs to come from a facility that complies with all state and federal laws. If the Iowa Meat and Poultry Bureau inspection determines that the locker meets their requirements, then it would meet the intent of the food code.
 - Locally raised meats and poultry can be a great addition to child nutrition programs, but purchasing local meat can be challenging. The key is knowing all the different options for how and where to buy it.

Local meat and poultry products can be purchased as retail cuts direct from a farmer, or as live animals processed at a local locker, [Cooperative Interstate Shipment \(CIS\)](#) facility or meat plant. CSI facilities are state-inspected plants that can operate as federally inspected facilities, under specific conditions and ship their product in interstate commerce and may have the opportunity to export them to foreign countries.

To sell meat to schools or child-care providers, the animals must be slaughtered and processed under inspection by the state or federal department of agriculture. Use the [ISU Extension Sourcing Local Meat for Farm to School and Early Child Care handout](#) to find local meat processing plants.

State and federal department of agriculture inspectors examine each animal both before and after slaughter to ensure it is healthy and free of diseases which might be harmful to humans. They also verify that the plant is clean and sanitary and keeps appropriate food-safety records. Meat from animals which pass inspection is branded or labeled with a mark of inspection and may be sold freely within the state (if Iowa-inspected) or the United States (if federally inspected).

Food service directors should look for the mark of inspection on meat packages from farmers.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Meat and Poultry Inspection Bureau maintains a [list of meat and poultry plants operating in Iowa](#). This list contains a wide range of sizes of facilities, from small lockers to large packing plants.

Eggs - Anyone engaged in the production, sale or handling of shell eggs or egg products in Iowa must register with Iowa Egg Quality Assurance Program (IEQAP). IEQAP performs inspections at production sites and egg safety rule inspections under contract with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and conducts outreach activities aimed at educating small flock egg producers and others about egg quality and food safety. Egg producers must have an egg handlers license to sell to schools. Shell eggs are not required to be pasteurized to be used in CNPs. FDA Food Code recommends that shell eggs meet at least grade B standards.

[Egg Quality Assurance Program](#)

Photo credit: DMACC
Child Development
Center

Hints for Success

- Ask questions - Be sure you have a clear understanding of everyone's role.
- Communicate - What the school can use and what the producer can provide might be two different things.
- Lay the groundwork - Build relationships. Identify producers and qualified lockers with the capacity to process the animals.
- Plan - A large lead time may be needed for maturing of the animal, processing and delivery. Consider space needed for storage.
- Know your menu - What type of meat or poultry products can food service use? Can the producer or plant provide those types of products?

Fruits & Vegetables

[Specifications and Seasonality](#)

Milk (Fluid Milk)

Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

[Dairy Product Control Bureau](#)

[Dairy Resources](#)

[Iowa Dairy Industry list](#)

Photo credit: Waverly Shell Rock Community School District





Grain

Grains such as wheat, oat, barley, rye and corn are grown in Iowa and may be sourced in the form of flours and meal to be used in your recipes.

[Practical Farmers of Iowa, Small Grains](#)

Who Can Help Me Get Started?

Photo credit: Decorah Community School District

[School Program Assigned Consultants](#)

Intermediaries

- [Iowa Food Hub Directory](#)
- [Farmers Market Finder](#)
- [Seasonal Guide to Locally Grown Produce](#)
- [Local Iowa State Extension and Outreach Offices](#)
- [Farm Food Enterprise Development](#)
- [Local Food Coaches](#)
- Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) councils work collaboratively with designated regions to lead communities in conservation, cultural and economic development initiatives. Many RC&Ds employ Local Food Coordinators to support farmers and grow markets.
 - Golden Hills (South West Iowa) <https://www.goldenhillsrcd.org/>
 - Iowa Valley (Eastern Iowa) <https://iowavalleyrcd.org/>
 - Northeast Iowa (North East Iowa) <https://northeastiowarcd.org/>
- [USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit](#)

The Farm to School Planning Toolkit guides you through questions to consider and helpful resources to reference when starting or growing a farm to school program. It is designed for use by schools, school districts and community partners. The toolkit is filled with tips and examples, insights from others and lists of resources for further research. Each school district is unique, so browse the topics to find the resources most relevant to you and your implementation team!

Resources

[Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs](#). United States Department of Agriculture. 2022.

[National Farm to School Network - Iowa Policies and Resources](#)

[Farm to School Census](#)

[Iowa Farm to School Local Purchase Report](#)

[USDA Farm to School Fact Sheets](#)

[USDA Food Buying Guide](#)

IowaCNP Download Forms resources:

NSLPROC006	Micro-Purchase log
NSLPROC008	Small Purchase (3 Bids and a Buy) Procurement Template
NSLPROC009	Request for Proposal (RFP) template
NSLPROC010	Attachment B - Official Pricing Spreadsheet
NSLPROC010b	Additional Items and Fixed Fees to Existing Contract
NSLPROC011	Invitation for Bid (IFB) template

[Sourcing-Local-Meats-for-F2SEC-2.pdf \(iastate.edu\)](#)

- Procurement prototypes including: small purchase solicitation doc and micro purchase log
- [Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program Training Videos](#)

[Iowa Dairy Processors and Plants](#)

The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit

Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Nutrition and Health Services Farm to School contacts

- Keerti Patel, Procurement (keerti.patel@iowa.gov)
- Brenda Windmuller, Farm to School (brenda.windmuller@iowa.gov)
- Meg Collins, Farm to School (meg.collins@iowa.gov)
- Christine Crow, Team Nutrition (christine.crow@iowa.gov)

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Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410; or
Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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