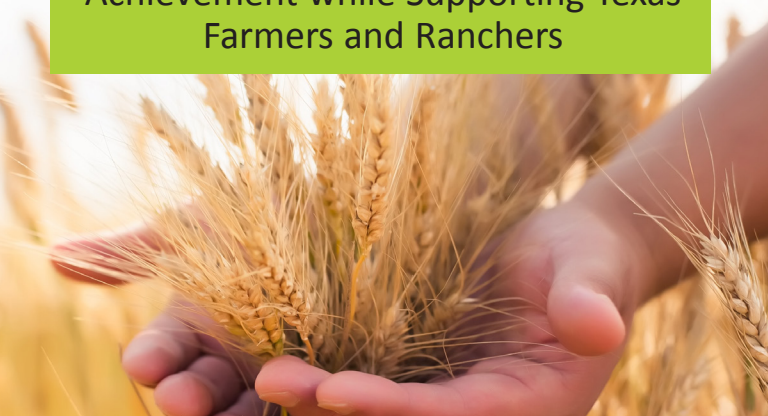


Tips for Schools to Successfully Purchase Local Foods from Distributors



Incorporating Local Products Into Existing Purchases

Planting the Seeds for Student Achievement while Supporting Texas Farmers and Ranchers





Add local flavor to menus and teach students about Texas agriculture with farm to school activities. This can be accomplished by using local products in school meals, including nutrition education in classroom lessons, garden-based learning and connecting students with local farmers and ranchers.



Distributors understand the importance of offering local products and are prepared to work with school nutrition professionals to identify and source local food items, including fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and proteins.



Answers to the questions below will help you incorporate local food items in menus and product orders, and help you plan activities around your locally sourced products, including farmer visits and outreach to students and parents.

- Are local products highlighted on the order lists? If not, is it possible to do so in the near future?
- Are update notations indicating a product is sourced locally sent out regularly?
- Can specific farm names for locally grown products be provided, or is the farm of origin information included on product labels?
- Can items from specific farms be requested?



Keys to working with a distributor to source local products:

An understanding of expectations

Tell the distributor what local means to you. Decide whether you always want local foods first or if you want to require that a certain percentage of foods come from local sources. Share these expectations with your representative.

A list of available local foods and report of local foods purchased

Ask your distributor for a list of available local foods and a report of current local foods you purchase. The report can show amounts purchased monthly, quarterly or annually, and include total product weights and dollar amounts. This information helps identify menus that work best for available local foods and set goals for the amount of local foods you purchase.

An open and ongoing dialog

Talk with your account representative on a regular basis. If you need ideas on what questions to ask, start with the ones we've supplied.





Texas schools should contact the Texas Department of Agriculture or their regional Education Service Center to obtain the support and resources they need to establish farm to school activities, such as incorporating local foods into school meals, educating students about local food and supporting garden-based learning.

**We are with you every
step of the way**





To Learn More: Visit Texas Farm Fresh

www.SquareMeals.org/TexasFarmFresh



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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