Finding, Buying and Serving Local Food
Finding Local Producers
February 13, 2014

Housekeeping

• To download handouts:

• To make a comment or ask a question:

  Type your question or comment using the Q&A tab.

  Ask your question or comment on the phone at the end of the webinar by pressing *1.

• Please turn off your computer microphone, all audio will be through the phone.

• The webinar will be recorded and available on the USDA Farm to School website: http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/webinars

Poll: Who is on the line?

Our Presenters

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Lutz Farms (Past)

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Overview

• Tools for Connecting
• Organizations that Can Help
• Finding Producers:
  » A State Perspective
  » The Role of the Farm to School Coordinator
  » A Farmer’s Perspective
• Questions and Sharing

Tell us! How do you connect with producers?
Tools for Connecting

Requests for Information
- Survey the market to understand:
  - Quantity available
  - Price point
  - Seasonal availability
  - Willingness to work with schools
  - If geographic preference is necessary
  - Who the producers are!
- Collaborate with surrounding districts
- Work with a community partner to issue

Online Tools
- Connect buyers and growers
- Great way to get a sense of the range of producers and products available

Organizations that Can Help

USDA Resources
- Farm Service Agency
  - County offices
  - Listserv of producers
- Cooperative Extension
  - State and County offices
- Farm to School Census

State Resources
- State Departments of Agriculture
- State Farm to School Coordinators
Other Resources

- Farmers’ Markets
- Food Hubs
- Producer Associations

Finding Producers: A State Perspective

MD Farm to School Legislation

- Jane Lawton Farm to School legislation passed April 2008
  - No designated funding
  - [www.marylandfarmtoschool.org](http://www.marylandfarmtoschool.org)

- Purposes:
  - Increase Maryland-grown products in school lunches
  - Educate students about where their food comes from, how it is produced, and the benefits of a healthy diet
  - Maryland Home Grown Lunch Week
  - Return Maryland dollars to the Maryland economy

MD Farm to School Coordinator

- Part of Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Marketing & Agribusiness Development office
- Work with producers for various markets (e.g. Farm to School, hospitals, prisons, restaurants, wholesale, etc.)
- Work with MDA’s state promotion program, Maryland’s Best
- Work with County Economic Development, Rural Regional Councils
- Demand for local is very high (78 % of Marylanders want MD-grown produce!)

Connections

- Cross promotion with other MDA programs,
  - Maryland’s Best, Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Governor’s Buy Local Cookout, Buy Local Challenge
  - Food Quality Assurance Program’s GAP & GHP Training programs

- Engage Ag Royalty to go into the classroom
  - Mar-Del Watermelon Association’s Watermelon Queen
  - Maryland Dairy Princesses
  - State or County Farm Bureau

Snapshot of Maryland Agriculture and LEAs

- Total # of Farms: 12,834
- Total # of Acres: 2,040,000
- Avg. Farm Size: 160 acres
- 24 LEA’s — 23 Self-Support; 1 FSMC
- Total # of Students: approx. 848,000

Top MD Agricultural Sectors*

- Poultry
- Greenhouse and Nursery
- Dairy
- (8th) Vegetable

Washington, DC

*2011 NASS Statistics

Baltimore City

Philadelphia — 128 miles from Baltimore City; NYC — 200 miles
Connections

- MD Farm to School signs “This Farm Feeds Our Schools”
  - FSD gives the signs to the producer if they buy direct from the farmers
  - Source of pride for some farmers to hang sign at retail farm stand
  - Farmers will call to request sign
  - Free of charge to date

The MD Buyer-Grower Expo

- Connecting Maryland producers with buyers from grocery retailers, schools, restaurants, and institutions
  - 350 Participants
  - 65 Farms Exhibited
  - 146 Buyers Attended
  - 98% of Exhibitors reported potential sales

Harford County Meeting

Harford County Public School Food and Nutrition Dept. hosts its own meeting with county producers on an annual basis:
- Meets in the spring to discuss upcoming season and what worked in the previous season including crop plans, delivery, timely payments, etc.
- Food and Nutrition Dept. received a grant for a central walk-in refrigerator
  - Take greater advantage of seasonal purchases, add the F2S products to current delivery infrastructure and provide farmers with a one stop delivery, saving them time and money.

Finding Producers: The Role of the Farm to School Coordinator

Michigan Farm to School Grantees

www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu
Finding Producers: A Producer’s Perspective

A History of Lutz Farms Sales to Schools

- 2008 – peach sales to Chicago Public Schools through broker
- 2009 – explored sales to local schools
- 2010 – sold to 2 local school districts
- 2011 – sold to 5 local school districts
- 2012 – added 2 new districts
- 2013 – added 3 new districts (19 schools)

Customers and Products

- Customers
  - food service directors, purchasing agents, superintendents, sports boosters, school fundraisers
- Products
  - asparagus, strawberries, sweet cherries, sweet peppers, tomatoes, pumpkins, summer & winter squash, broccoli, cauliflower, romanesco, apples and watermelon

Giving Schools What They Need

- Services
  - Handling, quality, packing, shipping, list of products, tiered pricing
- Assurances
  - GAP policy, traceability, liability insurance, quality assurance plan
- Opportunities
  - New business startup, branching out, extending your season
Everyone Wins!

- Benefits to farmers
  - Increased sales
  - Expanding markets
  - Employment opportunities
  - Contributing to local economy

- Benefits to schools
  - Healthy students learn better
  - Increased lunch sales
  - Employment opportunities
  - Education opportunities
  - Fundraising opportunities
  - Spending federal dollars locally

Farm to School Resources

- USDA Farm to School Website and E-Letter (at www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool)
- Farm to School Census
- Farm to School Regional Leads
- More procurement resources coming soon!

Questions?