



GEORGIA LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT GUIDE

for Child Nutrition Programs



Authors

Emily Rose is the Farm to School Coordinator at Georgia Organics and has been working in the world of food and agriculture education since 2009. She loves growing, cooking, and eating fresh food!

Erin Croom is the Farm to School Director at Georgia Organics. She established the state's first farm to school program in 2007 and serves as the National Farm to School Network state lead for Georgia.

Designer **Brooke Hatfield** is the Communications Coordinator at Georgia Organics.

Acknowledgements

Very special thanks to those school nutrition directors and other school leaders across the state who make farm to school happen in their districts every day. The guide was especially helped by the work of:

Cleta Long, Bibb County School District
Kathy Peavy, Bleckley County School District
Donna Martin, Burke County Public School System
Paula Farmer, Clarke County School District
Cynthia Downs, Cobb County School District
Debbie Purcell, Decatur County Schools
Valerie Bowers, Forsyth County Schools
Alyssia Wright, Fulton County Schools
Ken Yant, Gwinnett County Public Schools
Andrea Thomas, Habersham County Schools
Debra Morris, Jackson County School System
TiSharkie Allen, Peach County Schools
Lydia Martin, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System

This guide was made possible in part by the work of the USDA Farm to School Program. Special thank you's to Deborah Kane, Christina Connell, and Samantha Benjamin-Kirk for their support of its writing.

We also thank this guide's supporters at Georgia's state agencies:

From the Georgia Department of Education

Janett Adams
Paige Holland
Nancy Rice
Laura Tanase

From the Georgia Department of Agriculture

Misty Friedman

From the Georgia Department of Public Health

Donna DeCaille
Jean O'Connor
Emily Anne Vall

Last but not least, this guide would not have been possible without the work of Teri Hamlin in northeast Georgia.

This publication was supported by the Cooperative Agreement Number 1U58DP004801-01 from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the Georgia Department of Public Health. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Prepared by Georgia Organics for the Georgia Department of Public Health on June 30, 2014.



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WELCOME!

This guide provides an introduction and best practices on how to procure local foods for child nutrition programs and uses examples from farm to school programs across Georgia. It will cover:

- Finding and working with farms in your area
- Determining local product availability
- Working with distributors
- Farm visits and food safety
- Using the informal and formal procurement methods
- Targeting local food in solicitations
- Contracting with local farms
- Using geographic preference
- Tracking local purchases
- Promoting local items
- Establishing district-wide support for farm to school

Farm to school programs across Georgia have been expanding rapidly in recent years and there are many great programs that focus on local food procurement. This guide includes examples from districts across the state, but draws most heavily from the experience of Habersham County Schools and their relationship with ten local food producers within 50 miles of the county.

There are many benefits associated with farm to school programs. Perhaps the biggest benefit is that students participating in farm to school meals consume one additional serving of fruits and vegetables a day when local food is served at school, and consume fewer unhealthy foods and sodas overall¹. The most successful farm to school programs are also the most comprehensive. When students are served fresh, local food, and given the opportunity to engage with that food through classroom or school garden lessons, they are more willing to try—and love—it! Connecting hands-on food education to core standards is vitally important, and children enjoy exploring math, science, and literature through hands on experiences with food and gardening. Additionally, farm to school also presents important market opportunities for our state's growers. School cafeterias are often the biggest restaurant in town and school districts can direct their huge buying power in a way that bolsters the local economy.

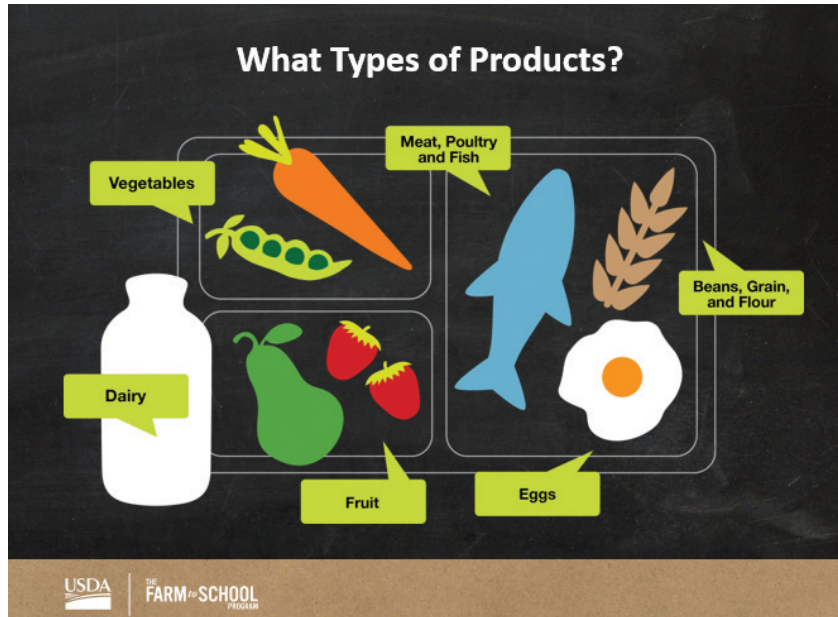
All suggestions and materials included in this guide are in compliance with USDA regulations and Georgia state policies as of July 1, 2014.

Let's go procure some local food!

¹ "Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Evaluation Resources and Recommendations," National Farm to School Program and Center for Food & Justice, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College

WHAT IS LOCAL FOOD?

Local food is anything that is grown or raised within the geographic area you consider “local.” (See page 6 for more on defining “local.”) When procuring local food for school meals, the options span the meal tray. Most school districts start by procuring local fruits and vegetables, but districts are allowed and encouraged to procure local grains, proteins, dairy products, and any other products served normally. Georgia is fortunate to have a twelve month growing season and to produce food from every food group.



This graphic from USDA's Farm to School Program illustrates how local products can span the meal tray.

WHY BUY FROM LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS?

Purchasing local food has a wide variety of benefits. Local food is usually much fresher and is typically harvested at the peak of its season for optimal taste. Buying local food can help you connect with farmers and turn them into supporters for other initiatives of the school district. Farms are located all over Georgia and buying food locally ensures that more money goes directly to the farmer to continue producing delicious crops.

Outside of the economic and health benefits of farm to school, kids learn something very important when they grow a tomato, or they eat one for lunch that was grown by a farmer they've met: They learn where food comes from. In our current out-of-sight food system, it's easy to believe that food comes from the store. While caring for a plant for weeks, waiting to eat the literal fruits of their labors, students learn that producing food is hard work. And a field trip to a farm or a taste test served by a farmer shows students there is a face behind their food, and there is land in their community that helps sustain them.

Five Reasons to Buy Local

1. Supporting local farmers creates and saves jobs in Georgia. For every dollar you spend on local food for school meals, up to \$3 goes back into the local economy.

2. Fresher and seasonal taste better. Local food stays fresh because it doesn't have far to travel. Eating locally also means eating in season, which means tastier produce!

3. Longer shelf life. A product like lettuce has a much longer shelf life if it arrives at the school soon after it is harvested. Investing in local produce can help cut down on waste.

4. Increase school lunch participation. Fresh, flavorful foods can drive up student and teacher participation in school meals (up to 16% in some cases).²

5. Kids will eat it! Featuring local items introduces students to delicious food that's good for them and tasty, so they are more likely to choose these items.

² "Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Evaluation Resources and Recommendations," National Farm to School Program and Center for Food & Justice, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College

DECIDING WHAT “LOCAL” MEANS TO YOU

For school districts just getting started with local food procurement, one of the first steps is deciding how to define “local.” Neither the USDA nor the state of Georgia has a prescriptive definition for “local,” so it is up to individual school districts to define local in a way that best fits their needs and goals.

“Local” can be defined in several ways. For example, “local” can be:

- A specified mile radius (i.e. 50 miles, 100 miles, etc.)
- Specified counties
- The state of Georgia
- Specified region (i.e. Georgia and all states touching Georgia)

School districts can also have a definition of local with multiple tiers, with tier one products being most preferred. For example:

- **Tier One** Products grown or raised within 100 miles of the school district
- **Tier Two** Products grown or raised in Georgia
- **Tier Three** Products grown or raised in a state touching Georgia

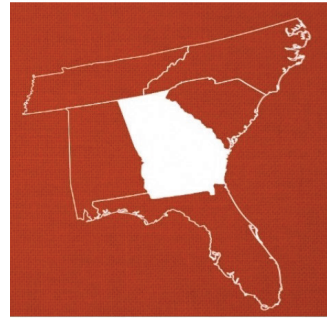
Some things to remember when defining what local means to your district:

- The definition can vary for different products and by season.
- The definition must not be so restrictive as to limit competition.
- The definition should be documented and can be used when giving geographic preference to items.
- The definition CANNOT be used as a bid specification outside of using geographic preference (see page 14 for more on bid specifications and page 17 for more on geographic preference).
- The definition can change from year to year based on what works for your district.

Understanding the market and what products are available in the area can really help a district define “local” and decide what products to buy locally. School districts can even have specific farms in mind when crafting their definition of “local,” as long as that definition applies to a number of farms that could supply the district.

DETERMINING WHAT PURCHASES COULD BE LOCAL

Find out what local items you’re already buying and serving before seeking out new local foods to procure. Review your own records and ask your distributor whether they purchase local products. After establishing the baseline of your current local purchases, take a look at your menus and think of non-local items you are serving that could be replaced with local ones. See Appendix page 30 for a Georgia Harvest Calendar to determine what’s in season when.



A three-tiered definition of “local.” Habersham County Schools knew ten farms with a diversity of products the district was interested in buying. These farms all happened to be within 50 miles of the school district, and their first tier definition of local was written accordingly.

How some districts in Georgia define “local”

Clarke County School District
Items grown or produced in Georgia

Savannah-Chatham County Public School System
Food grown in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, & South Carolina

Habersham County Schools
Food grown or raised:
Tier One In or within 50 miles of Habersham County
Tier Two In Georgia
Tier Three In a state touching Georgia

Forsyth County Schools
Food grown or raised:
Tier One Within Forsyth County
Tier Two Within 150 miles
Tier Three In Georgia

FINDING FARMS

In addition to being the fourth largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the nation, Georgia farms grow and raise grains, meat, legumes, and dairy products. Often, distributors already work with local producers, so ask your distributor what local products they carry.

Looking through the following databases can help you find food producers, and give you an idea of what kinds of products are available in your area:

- **Georgia Organics' Good Food Guide** lists all of the Georgia Organics member farms, plus farmers markets, restaurants, and businesses that support sustainably produced food. goodfoodguide.georgiaorganics.org
- **Georgia Department of Agriculture's Market Maker** includes farms, ranches, fisheries, and other producers in Georgia. ga.marketmaker.uiuc.edu
- **Georgia Grown** lists farms and food producers across the state. georgiagrown.com
- **Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association** lets you search by product. gfvga.org/category/retail-food-service
- **Local Harvest** is a national database of farms across the county. www.localharvest.org
- **Atlanta Locally Grown** lists farms in and around Atlanta. atlanta.locallygrown.net/growers/list
- **Athens Locally Grown** lists farms in and around Athens. athens.locallygrown.net/growers/list
- **Augusta Locally Grown** lists farms in and around Augusta. augusta.locallygrown.net/growers/list
- **Cumming Locally Grown** lists farms in and around Cumming. cumming.locallygrown.net/growers/list
- **Northeast Georgia Locally Grown** lists farms in Northeast Georgia. northeastgeorgia.locallygrown.net/growers/list

In addition to searching those databases for farms, you can find food producers in your community by connecting with people who work with farmers every day. Talk with a local representative from:

- **University of Georgia Cooperative Extension** extension.uga.edu
- **Fort Valley State University Cooperative Extension** www.fvsu.edu/external_affairs/cooperative-extension-program
- **USDA Farm Service Agency** www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/
- **Georgia Farm Bureau** www.gfb.org
- **Producer Associations**, which represent a specific industry and support a specific product. Talking to a producer association is especially useful when looking for a specific product (i.e. The Georgia Blueberry Commission www.georgiablueberries.org).

You can also connect with food producers by:

- **Visiting a farmers market.** Farmers markets are great places to find a lot of growers all in one place and start conversations with them. They may be growing on a larger scale than is immediately obvious at the market and can support a school district. mygafarmersmarket.com
- **Talking to nearby School Nutrition Directors** who are procuring local food to find out who they buy from. Connect especially to those who have won the Golden Radish Award or participated in Feed My School for a Week. (See Appendix page 31 for a list of some districts currently procuring locally. There may be others not on this list.) farmtoschoolmap.georgiaorganics.org
- **Talking to restaurant owners in your community** who source local food to find out who supplies them. goodfoodguide.georgiaorganics.org
- **Contacting a Food Hub in your area, if there is one.** As aggregators of local foods, they will know of many farms.



A school meal in Bibb County highlighting Georgia-grown items included local chicken, fruits, and vegetables.

HOSTING A FARMERS' FORUM AND GATHERING PRODUCT AVAILABILITY

Once districts have some idea of the farms they're interested in working with, the next steps are to meet with the farmers and find out what products they have available.

A Farmers' Forum meeting is a time for farmers and school nutrition staff to meet and start discussing what is possible for local procurement in the district. It is a chance for school nutrition staff to articulate their goals for the farm to school program and express why the district is interested in sourcing from local food producers. It is also a time for farmers to communicate why they are interested in selling to schools. The meeting should be a discussion between the farmers and nutrition staff about what products the farmers are growing (or could be growing) that the district is interested in purchasing. The meeting can also allocate time for discussing how the farmers want to be involved in educational opportunities, such as hosting farm field trips or visiting classes to speak to students.

When scheduling a meeting with farmers, remember that they tend to be less busy during the winter months and in the evening. Talk to a local Cooperative Extension agent or Farm Bureau representative to find out when farmers in your area will be most available. Advertise the Farmers' Forum through local Extension agents, Farm Bureau representatives, Georgia Young Farmers, Georgia Organics, and farmers market leaders. You can also send press releases to the local paper and radio, advertise through a Locally Grown Network (if there is one in your area), and through the schools themselves. Some parents may also be farmers! See Appendix page 32 for a sample advertisement for a Farmers' Forum.

A district's first Farmers' Forum will be an introduction to school food buying for most of the farmers in attendance. The school nutrition director or other school nutrition staff should cover:

- How the district currently procures food in general, including a general timeline (i.e. when contracts are written, etc.)
- District's definition of "local"
- Current local purchases
- Basic food procurement guidelines the district must follow, including the bid process
- Basic food safety requirements
- Liability requirements
- Post-harvest handling and processing preferences (i.e. all produce already washed)
- The best way to package and deliver products
- Items popular with students and items the district would like to buy more of

See Appendix page 33 for a sample Farmers' Forum agenda.



How Habersham County Does It

Habersham County Schools holds Farmers' Forum meetings each February. At the meetings, the school nutrition director communicates any updates about the farm to school program, farmers voice any concerns they have, and the group addresses challenges from the previous year. The group also discusses products available to the school for the upcoming school year, and spends a small amount of time discussing how the farmers will be involved in taste tests and farm field trips for students. Habersham County also holds a second farmer meeting each year, usually in the fall, with topics varying based on the current needs of the program.

Cafeteria Manager Nicole Trunk of Habersham County examining kale with farmer Ronnie Mathis of Mountain Earth Farm in Clarkesville, GA.

FARM TO SCHOOL—GROWER’S PRODUCT AVAILABILITY

Farm Name: _____ Farmer’s Name: _____
 Contact Address: _____ Contact Phone: _____
 Contact Email: _____

Products Available for Farm to School Program

MONTH	PRODUCT	QUANTITY	PRICE	PROCESS/PACKING
<i>ex: February</i>	<i>Kale</i>	<i>150 Bundles (30 leaves per bundle)</i>	<i>\$20/box</i>	<i>Washed/Box of 50</i>

Farmers’ Forums should be held every year. After the first year of the program, Farmers’ Forums can focus on increasing local purchases, and any aspect of the program that isn’t working or needs to be improved.

The Farmers’ Forum meeting should conclude with specific next steps for everyone. The farmers should fill out a product availability sheet, like the one above, used by Habersham County, so the district has, in writing, what is available from which farm and when.

See Appendix page 34 for a full product availability sheet.

Districts can also determine potential farm product availability and willingness to work with the farm to school program BEFORE meeting with farmers. To do so, send out the product availability sheet as a Request for Information (RFI). An RFI is not a solicitation; districts won’t be making purchases from it, but it will give a sense of what is available, who is willing to work with schools, prices, etc. Nearby districts can collaborate to issue the RFI in order to find out what’s available together. Use the responses from the RFI as a starting point for the Farmers’ Forum meeting.

PRICE CONSIDERATIONS

In order for a farm to school program to be sustainable, the purchases must be economically feasible for both the seller and the buyer. Local food can sometimes be more expensive to procure, but its superior freshness can often lead to a decrease in waste and can encourage an increase in participation in school meals.

How Habersham County Does It

In the first year of their program, Habersham County Schools paid the farm’s retail price for a small amount of one product from several farms. The district bought enough of one thing to serve it as a taste test and as part of one meal, usually served the week after the taste test. After trying out several different products, the district knew which were the most popular with students and the easiest for cafeteria staff to prepare and serve. The farms also understood the district’s commitment for local purchases and now offer schools a wholesale price.

FARM VISITS AND FOOD SAFETY

Once a school district has become acquainted with a farm and has an idea of what it has to offer, it's a good idea to visit the farm and see the operation in person. Visiting the farm serves to:

- Let the school nutrition director make a more informed purchasing decision after seeing the conditions in which the food is grown or raised, including food safety practices.
- Let the farmer showcase their farm and products
- Continue to develop the working relationship between the buyer and grower.
- Continue the conversation begun at the Farmers' Forum about volume needed, post-harvest processing and packing, etc.
- Let the farmers and nutrition director speak one-on-one, openly and honestly about doing business together.



Former Habersham County School Nutrition Director Paige Holland visiting Chattooga Belle Farm in Long Creek, SC, talking with farmer Ed Land about buying apples for the district.

When visiting a farm, bring along a checklist of considerations and questions that should be answered before leaving. These considerations should include details about the farm's:

- Growing and production practices
- Post-harvest handling practices (i.e. washing, packing, etc.)
- Facilities
- Worker health and hygiene
- Transportation and delivery capabilities

See Appendix page 35 for a sample checklist to take on a farm visit. If the growers express an interest in visiting a school cafeteria, return their invitation and let them see how the school plans to handle and prepare their food.

How Habersham County Does It

Habersham County's school nutrition director visited all potential local farm vendors before making any purchases. These visits were valuable opportunities for the buyer and seller to privately discuss any concerns they had, and gave the school nutrition director an appreciation for the process involved in growing the food.

WORKING WITH DISTRIBUTORS

Many school districts in Georgia rely on their distributors to source products that meet the district's preference for local items. It is important to remember that "local" should refer to the place where the product originates, and not the place out of which the distributor operates. For instance, the Atlanta Farmers Market, from which many distributors procure foods, carries products from all over the world.

Involve a distributor in the farm to school program through:

- Including specific language in the distributor contract detailing the school district's preference for local items and the goals of the farm to school program. (See Appendix page 39 for sample language.)
- Inviting them to the Farmers' Forum and encouraging everyone to speak openly and honestly to show that everyone in the room wants to work toward the same goal of getting local foods into schools, and to make sure everyone has the same expectations about the process.
- Developing a culture of the distributor and the farmers working in partnership with the district.
- Working one-on-one with the distributor to troubleshoot issues particular to local purchases.
- Involving the distributor in a farmer workshop so the distributor can get to know the farmers better and help them develop solutions to issues collaboratively.

The most important thing to remember when establishing and developing a good, working relationship between the school nutrition director, distributor, and farmers is that everyone involved feels able to communicate and work together toward the common goal of feeding students fresh, local food. Districts should consider growing their local procurement practices slowly over the first two years as relationships are established and developed. Even if you currently have a contract in place, start growing these relationships by connecting with your distributor to see if they are willing to work with local farmers, or if they already do. If your distributor is not interested in procuring local food, include specific language in your next solicitation to target one who is. See page 15 for more information on targeting local food in your vendor solicitation.

How Habersham County Does It

Habersham County's produce distributor is a key component and a vital ally to the farm to school program. The district was the first to identify farmers and products, but it is up to the distributor to actually get those products to the schools. In addition to the examples listed above, Habersham County has also involved their distributor through:

- Developing collaborative pick-up sites for farms with roads that are difficult for large trucks to navigate. Multiple farms have their products picked up in the same location.
- Coordinating consistent crates and boxes that all farmers use to pack their products and that are easy for the distributor to handle.
- Farmer trainings led by the distributor on the best way to pack boxes and crates.
- Developing consistent prices for a product when it is in season, instead of relying on fluctuating market prices.



Habersham County School Nutrition Director Andrea Thomas receiving local greens from her distributor, Anthony Holland, of Holland's Produce.

How Decatur County Does It

The Decatur County School Nutrition Program works closely with their local produce distributor to identify seasonal foods that meet the program requirements for nutrition and ease of preparation. When items are in season, the produce distributor notifies the school nutrition managers at each school. The managers then replace the frozen or canned items on their cycle menus with items that meet the same nutritional benefits and category. For example, fresh greens are substituted for frozen greens and fresh carrots for canned carrots.

USING THE INFORMAL PROCUREMENT METHOD

Any time a school district purchases products, the procurement must be done either formally or informally. Under federal rules, the value of the product being procured determines whether a bid must be formal or informal. Georgia's small purchase threshold is \$25,000, therefore, any purchases valued at or under \$25,000 may be (but do not have to be) procured using an informal bid. Some Georgia counties or school districts set a lower small purchase threshold. The lowest (and therefore most restrictive) threshold that is applicable to a district should be used. Check local regulations to see if a more restrictive small purchase threshold exists for your district.

The processes for using the formal and informal procurement methods are similar. The steps for using each process are:

INFORMAL

1. Develop your product specifications in writing.
2. Identify and notify at least three sources eligible, able, and willing to provide the product and gather three price quotes.
3. Evaluate the bid responses to your specifications.
4. Award the contract to the vendor with the best value that is also deemed responsive and responsible.
5. Manage the contract.

FORMAL

1. Develop a formal, written solicitation.
2. Publicly announce the Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposals (via websites, newspapers, list serve, etc.) to make sure anyone and everyone eligible to bid knows about the solicitation.
3. Evaluate bidders based on the criteria laid out in the solicitation.
4. Award the contract to the vendor with the best value that is also deemed responsive and responsible.
5. Manage the contract.

The informal procurement method is more flexible than the formal, but is still a competitive procurement process. The biggest difference between formal and informal procurement is that **an informal purchase does not have to be publicly advertised**. This makes the informal procurement method a great tool for sourcing small amounts of local food products. Through the informal method, a district can communicate directly with local farmers, and so ensure that all options for a product are local from the beginning.

When using the informal method, a district must get bids from **at least three** potential vendors. When writing specifications for the product, make sure that at least three vendors can reasonably meet them. Getting bids informally can be as simple as calling or e-mailing vendors that are considered local and requesting price quotes for a specific product. A district may need to notify more than three vendors to secure three quotes. If a district is truly unable to get quotes from three vendors, they must be able to document their efforts to get three quotes.

Ensuring Three Quotes

If fewer than three vendors bid to supply a product, do one or more of the following:

1. Broaden the product specifications to include other varieties, product sizes, grades, pack sizes, etc.

2. Broaden the definition of "local" for this product to include more potential vendors.

3. Accept bids from non-local vendors to gauge whether the bid from a local vendor is a competitive price. Before contacting vendors, districts can plan to use **geographic preference** to make the local bid more competitive. (See page 17 for more on using geographic preference.)

Documentation in informal procurement is important in the event a purchase must be justified. It is especially important to record:

1. **Product specifications;** write them down before talking to vendors to be sure they are all getting exactly the same information.
2. **Bid responses received,** including when and how the vendor was contacted, their price, and whether they meet the product and vendor requirements. If they cannot meet the requirements, include why. In this example, Vendor A is awarded the bid because they have the best value of the vendors deemed responsive and responsible. (See page 15 for more on determining if a vendor is responsive and responsible.)

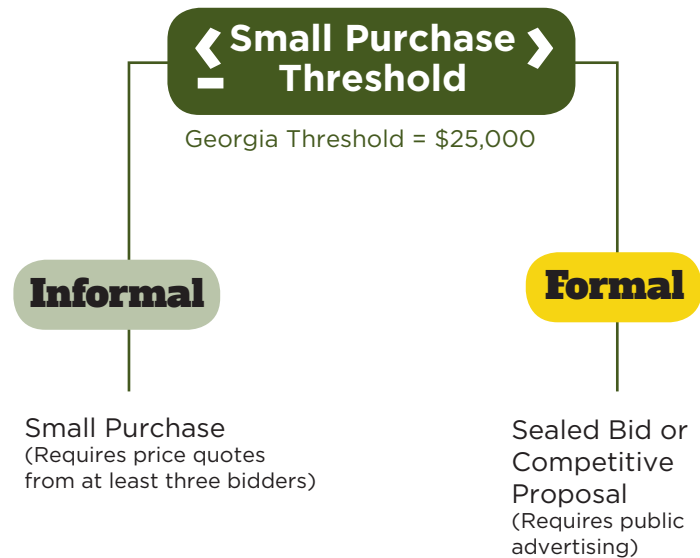
	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Date and Method Vendor was Contacted	March 21, via email	March 21, via email	March 21, via email
Date Bid Received	April 2	March 30	April 8
Responsive and Responsible?	Yes	No; can only deliver product for two months instead of six	Yes
Price	\$1.75/lb	\$1.70/lb	\$1.89/lb

How Jackson County Does It

Jackson County School System has procured several items using the informal method, including apples. The district wanted to showcase local apples over the course of one month, so School Nutrition Director Dr. Debra Morris drafted these general specifications for the apples:

- 125 count
- Mature but not overripe
- Clean
- Well-formed
- No broken skins
- Free from decay, bruises, brown surface discoloration, sunburn, insects, and disease

She contacted three Georgia apple vendors, described her specifications, and collected their price quotes, then awarded the bid to the vendor with the lowest price. After awarding the bid, the vendor informed the school district of the varieties of apples available and Dr. Morris selected a different apple variety to highlight each week during the month.



“One of the best things that has come out of the program for Bibb County is the increased awareness of Georgia Grown items and their availability within our own community. Our students are eating and enjoying these items and learning the connection between what they are eating and the importance of agriculture and their environment.”

Dr. Clea Long
Bibb County School Nutrition Director

USING THE FORMAL PROCUREMENT METHOD

The formal procurement method must be used for purchases valued higher than the most restrictive small purchase threshold applicable to your district. For districts in Georgia, this means that products valued over \$25,000 must be procured through a formal solicitation. (Some local counties or municipalities may have a small purchases threshold more restrictive than \$25,000.) There are several ways to target local products in formal solicitations. When doing so, remember that you may be working with vendors who have not worked with schools or other large buyers before, and may have never seen a formal solicitation. Be flexible, and don't include any unnecessary requirements. Also consider what a vendor who is new to the school food market might not know. Be clear in your requests, and don't use jargon.

Targeting Local in Product Specifications

A district's definition of "local" CANNOT be used as a product specification or requirement; however, a district CAN include specifications that target local products. Your specifications can also change throughout the year. Consider requesting:

- A variety (or varieties) unique to your region. List as many local varieties as possible to encourage more vendors to bids.
- A product produced in abundance in Georgia.
- That the products must be delivered within a certain number of hours since harvest. (Be sure to request this when the product is in season, but not when it is not. Also, be cautious when using this as a product specification. While the assumption is that foods from local farms can be delivered more quickly, non-local products could be flown or driven to the school overnight as well.)

The following example shows several ways to change a product specification to target local. The example loosens some specifications to allow more vendors to bid and to encourage competition, but is still specific about what is needed. You may not need to include all of this language.

General Specification

- Seedless Watermelon
- US Fancy
- Two 35-count boxes per week
- August-December

Specification Targeting Local

- Allsweet, Crimson Sweet, or Jubilee Watermelon
- US Fancy or No. 1
- Prefer two 35-count boxes per week, but willing to consider other pack sizes
- August-September
- Delivered within 48 hours of harvest

Allowable Labels

Although the word "local" or a district's definition of "local" are not allowable product specifications, the following labels ARE allowable and can help procure local products. While these labels cannot guarantee a local product, a district can use them to narrow product specifications to target items particular to their area. Only include narrow specifications like these as long as multiple vendors can meet them and so not limit competition.

- GAP Certified
- Certified Organic
- Certified Naturally Grown
- No-Till
- Pesticide-Free
- Grass-Fed
- Cage-Free
- Grown on a farm of a certain size (i.e. 50 acres or less)
- Grown on a farm with certain growing techniques (i.e. a farm that utilizes a majority of hand harvesting, hand packing, or human labor power in growing, harvesting, or packing of food)

Targeting Local through Requirements to Determine Vendor Responsiveness

A school district must deem all vendors “responsive and responsible” before agreeing to do business with them. “All vendors” includes large product distributors and individual farms selling directly to the district. Often, requirements to be considered responsive and responsible include product quality, delivery requirements, etc. Since districts decide what these requirements are, they can add criteria that target local products. Vendors must be able to meet these requirements before even being deemed eligible to bid. Example vendor requirements include:

- Meet product specifications
- Meet delivery requirements
- Meet packaging and labeling requirements
- Able to provide state, county, or farm of origin on all products
- Able to deliver products delivered within 24 hours of harvest
- Able to provide three references showing a track record of working with local producers (and/or a list of all local producers the vendor works with on a regular basis)
- Able to offer two farm field trips to elementary school students in October, or visit the school two times to give a presentation to students

Districts cannot include requirements that they know only one vendor can meet. To keep competition open, very specific requirements are only acceptable to include if there are multiple vendors in the area that can meet them.

Some vendor requirements will be more applicable to solicitations for products from individual farm vendors (i.e. the ability to accommodate field trips), but not applicable in a solicitation to general product distributors. Remember to include only what makes sense for your intended audience.

Targeting Local By Using Criteria to Evaluate Vendor Proposals

In a Request for Proposals (RFP) that school districts use to advertise for potential vendors, districts can include the criteria through which they’ll determine whether a vendor is responsive and responsible. This criteria is the same as the requirements for vendor responsiveness included in a solicitation, but only applies to an RFP.

Each requirement gets a weight based on its importance. The way points are awarded should be clearly outlined in the RFP. For example:

General Criteria Price 60 POINTS Product Quality 15 POINTS Delivery 10 POINTS Packaging and Labeling 5 POINTS Three References 10 POINTS TOTAL: 100 points	Criteria Targeting Local Price 40 POINTS Product Quality 15 POINTS Delivery 10 POINTS Packaging and Labeling 5 POINTS Three References 10 POINTS Provide State, County, or Farm of Origin on Products 5 POINTS Delivery within 24 Hours of Harvest 10 POINTS Provide Farm Field Trips 5 POINTS TOTAL: 100 points
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Remember to be specific about how points will be awarded, and document the points given to each potential vendor.

FORWARD CONTRACTS WITH LOCAL FARMERS

A forward contract is any contract established in advance of when a product is delivered, and establishes the product's price and delivery date. Many of the contracts schools already have with vendors are forward contracts. This type of contract as it relates to local food procurement usually refers to a contract or agreement between a school/school district and a farmer in advance of the growing season. These contracts are almost no different than any other solicitation and all rules and regulations for any contract still apply. They also must be competitively procured just like any other formal or informal contract.

When contracting to buy food products in advance, there is a possible risk of supply issues; it's always possible that the harvest won't be what was expected. While this is inconvenient for the school, it is a risk for the farm. A forward contract can therefore include flexibility in case circumstances change, and money should not change hands until the product is delivered.

There are two types of forward contracts as they relate to local food procurement in schools:

- 1. A contract between a school district, a distributor, and a farm** in which case the distributor was already competitively procured by the district.
- 2. A contract between a school district and a farm directly** which is procured through an informal or formal bid.

A forward contract generally includes the items listed below.

- Parties entering into the contract
- Intention of party members to buy, sell, or deliver a particular item
- Product name
- Total estimated quantity to be delivered
- Estimated time the product will be ripe
- Time the product will be delivered (depending on the item, the delivery time could be similar to the estimated time of ripeness, but not necessarily)
- Packing requirements (box, grade, loose pack, bulk, etc.)
- Post-harvest handling practices (washed, chopped, etc. prior to delivery)
- Any other product specifications
- Cost per unit paid to farm
- Cost per unit paid by school district (these costs are the same if the contract is directly between a district and a farm, but will be different if the district is also paying a distributor for delivery)
- Payment terms and processes
- Timeline of tasks to be completed by whom and when (best to be as specific as possible)



A school meal in Jackson County featuring items from Georgia including pork, carrots, collards, and beans.

Forward contracts are best entered into by parties with strong working relationships. They help to build positive business relationships between school districts and farms, guaranteeing the grower a market and the district a product it knows it wants. They allow farms and schools to both plan ahead, and can help a farm to school program grow.

How Habersham County Does It

Habersham County Schools has three three-party forward contracts with its produce distributor and three local farms. (The distributor was previously competitively procured through a formal solicitation.) These contracts are for the farms to supply specific fresh produce items for a particular length of time, and for the distributor to deliver those products. For example, one farm has a contract to supply 38 boxes of slicing tomatoes each week in August through October, which the distributor will pick up and deliver to the schools. See Appendix page 41 for a full contract.

USING GEOGRAPHIC PREFERENCE

While product specifications cannot require that a product be “local,” local products can be given “geographic preference.” Geographic preference gives vendors offering local products a defined advantage in the contract bid, but does not preclude vendors that do not offer local products.

Geographic preference can only be applied to UNPROCESSED agricultural products, meaning the inherent nature of the product is unchanged. Some food handling and preservation techniques are allowed (i.e. cutting, grinding, drying, etc.), but any sort of cooking is not. For example, dried beans ARE allowed, but canned beans ARE NOT, since the canned beans were cooked prior to canning. See more examples of allowable techniques on page 18.



Students in the Burke County Public School System visit a local farm twice each year: to help with planting in the spring and to harvest in the fall.

To use geographic preference, follow these steps:

1. Define “local.”

It is up to individual school districts to define “local” in a way that best fits their needs. See page 6 for more information on and examples of defining “local.”

2. Determine whether to use an informal or formal bid.

Geographic preference may be applied in either type of product solicitation.

3. Determine how much preference to give local products.

Remember that the preference given to local products is for the purposes of evaluation only. A bid price gets reduced by a certain amount, giving that vendor an edge to win the contract, but the school district still pays the full bid price from the vendor. Remember that even with a preference given to local products, a non-local product could still win the bid.

It may take some trial and error to determine the best amount of preference to give local products. Try out different scenarios with realistic prices to make sure the preference make sense. Remember to not apply so much preference that it limits competition. If a district’s definition of “local” is tiered, different tiers can get different preference, but applying so much preference that a Tier One local vendor will always win limits competition too much. Preference can be given as a dollar amount or as a percentage. For example, you can give a 5 cent or 5% price preference to products that meet the definition of local. The two following examples show these two ways to use geographic preference.

Example #1

Solicitation for a product in a district with a single (un-tiered) definition of “local.” Vendors meeting the definition of local receive a five cent preference when the district evaluates their bid, while vendors that do not meet this definition get no preference. In this case, the preference does not make the local product a better value than a non-local one.

	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Contract Price	\$2.03	\$1.97	\$2.00
Geographic Preference	5 cent preference	None	None
Price for Comparison when Evaluating Bid	\$1.98	\$1.97	\$2.00

Example #2

Solicitation for a product in a district with a tiered definition of “local.” Vendors meeting the Tier One definition get a 10% preference, vendors meeting the Tier Two definition get a 7% preference, vendors meeting the Tier Three definition get a 5% preference, and vendors meeting no definition of local get no preference. In this case, the preference given to a Tier One vendor helped them win the bid against a Tier Two and a non-local vendor.

	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
Contract Price	\$23,000	\$26,000	\$24,500
Geographic Preference	None	7% preference	10% preference
Price for Comparison when Evaluating Bid	\$23,000	\$24,180	\$22,050

There are also more complex ways school districts can apply geographic preference. For instance, schools can use a sliding scale to give vendors with at least 70% local products a 10 point preference, vendors with 50-69% local products a 7 point preference, and vendors with 25-49% local products a 5 point preference. Additionally, districts can use geographic preference in a Request for Proposals (RFP), giving preference not just for locally sourced products, but also for a vendor’s ability to provide farm field trips, to provide the product for three months straight, or to provide a farm of origin on all products. (See page 15 for more on including vendor requirements in an RFP.)

4. Make sure the solicitation makes perfectly clear how the preference will be applied.

Since school districts have the flexibility to determine what defines “local” and how much preference will be applied, it is very important to clearly and explicitly state your definitions and processes. Document every step of the process so it is clear to everyone how the geographic preference is being applied.

See Appendix page 42 for a list of resources that go more in depth about using geographic preference.

What Does Unprocessed Mean?

Geographic preference may only be applied to food products that are unprocessed. Certain food handling techniques are not considered to change the inherent nature of a product, thereby maintaining the product’s status as “unprocessed.”

Geographic Preference

CANNOT be applied to

products to which the following have been done:

- Cooking
- Heating
- Canning
- Pickling

Geographic Preference CAN be applied to products to which the following have been done:

- Cooling
- Refrigerating
- Freezing
- Size adjustment made by peeling, slicing, dicing, chopping, or grinding
- Forming ground products into patties without any additives or fillers
- Drying/Dehydration
- Washing
- Packaging (such as placing eggs in cartons), vacuum packing and bagging (such as placing vegetables in bags or combining two or more types of vegetables or fruits in a single package)
- Addition of ascorbic acid or other preservatives to prevent oxidation of produce
- Butchering livestock and poultry
- Cleaning of fish
- Pasteurization of milk

How Bibb County Does It

Bibb County School District's School Nutrition Director Dr. Cleeta Long has used geographic preference to source items for the district's Feed My School for a Week program. In order to level the playing field for Feed My School produce items, Bibb County included the following in their Request for Proposals:

These items are to be used specifically during the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Feed My School for a Week Project at Skyview Elementary School, Fulton Mill Road, Lizella, GA. Items are preferably a Georgia Grown Product, grown, raised or produced in Georgia.

Items listed below are estimates for products needed. Suggestions or substitutions are welcomed and any product grown in Georgia will be preferred. (Price = 75 pts, GA Grown = 25 pts, when evaluating items.)

For example, in a bid for one 12-pint flat of strawberries:

		Price	Source	Total
		0-75 points	0-25 points	0-100 points
Local	\$16.00	65*	25	90
Nonlocal	\$14.00	75*	0	75

**Price point values are determined by dividing the lowest price by any higher prices, to get a percentage of their value. For example, $\$14/16 = 0.875$, and 87.5% of 75 possible points is 65 points.*

Bibb County School District has also used points out of 4 when evaluating bids, as in this example:

This item is to be used specifically during the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Feed My School for a Week Project. The item is preferably a Georgia Grown Product, grown, raised or produced in Georgia. (Price = 1-3 pts, GA Grown = 1 pt, when evaluating items)

For example, in a bid for 15 pounds of raw, frozen chicken drumsticks:

		Price	Source	Total
		0-3 points	0-1 points	0-4 points
Local	\$0.94/lb	2.28*	1	3.28
Nonlocal	\$0.71/lb	3*	0	3

**Price point values are determined by dividing the lowest price by any higher prices, to get a percentage of their value. For example, $\$0.71/0.94 = 0.76$, and 76% of 3 possible points is 2.28 points.*

In both examples, the school district still pays the bid price (i.e. \$16.00 for the flat of strawberries, and \$0.94/lb for chicken) but the preference afforded through geographic preference allowed the local items to win the bid despite their higher prices. See Appendix pages 43-44 for Bibb County's full quotation sheet for weekly produce and RFP for roast beef, including their use of geographic preference.

TRACKING LOCAL PURCHASES

It is important to track purchases no matter which method(s) a district uses to procure local foods, and whether the district is just beginning to purchase local foods, or has been for several years. Doing so helps establish a district's current local procurement rate and set future goals. The information gleaned from tracking these purchases will be invaluable for making future purchasing decisions.

Knowing how much local food a district has procured over time is also very important when seeking further support for the program, in the form of grant funding, establishing buy-in from district leadership, creating a staff position to manage the program, etc. Tracking local purchases also will help a district apply for Georgia's Golden Radish Award for farm to school.

Districts can track local items themselves, or enlist the help of their distributor and farm vendors. Tips for tracking:

- Engage your vendors and make them partners in the tracking process. You can even specify in your contract that they indicate which products are local, provide you with a monthly report of which items were and were not local, or even include the farm of origin on the invoice.
- Start at the beginning of a year.
- Be consistent and diligent in recording. Record at least once or twice a month.
- Determine the scope of products to be tracked. It may only be worth it to a district to track products bought in bulk, and let small, specialty purchases go unrecorded (i.e. a small amount bought for a taste test).
- Share recording duties among school nutrition staff (by type of product, etc.) to divide and conquer the tracking work.



Habersham County School Nutrition Director Andrea Thomas investigates the turnips growing at Mill Gap Farm in Tiger, GA.

“We are proud to be one of the farm to school farmers. It’s important to give our children good, healthy produce with the knowledge of where what they are eating came from.”

Phillip Franklin

*Farmer of Wide Bottom Farm
Cornelia, GA*

PROMOTING LOCAL ITEMS

Help ensure that students eat (and love!) the good, local food being served in the cafeteria by promoting it and encouraging student engagement with food outside of the cafeteria. Some good places and ways to promote local food are:

- On the menu
- In school newsletters
- In the morning announcements
- School sign or marquee
- Posters or on bulletin boards
- Map of the local area with farms notated
- Taste tests
- Clings or stickers on sneeze guard
- Trivia game or fun facts about the food
- Giving the food a fun name (possibly through a naming contest)
- Sending the recipe home
- Poster or video contest for students to promote the food
- Educational activities involving the food for teachers to lead in their classrooms
- Food is served by a special guest (i.e. farmer or chef)

See Appendix page 45 for an example menu from Clarke County School District highlighting local items and where they are from.



Above: This graphic from Gwinnett County Public Schools highlights all the local items the district bought during the 2013-2014 school year. Below: This bulletin board outside a cafeteria in Habersham County shows students where all the farms supplying their school are located.



How Habersham County Does It

Habersham County Schools promotes its local items and the farms that supplies them throughout the school environment, and in the greater community. In addition to identifying local items in the cafeteria, the district has produced a farm to school calendar, highlighting one farm each month. One farm provides products for a taste test each month, and an article about that farm runs in the local newspaper. The district also highlights local items and student activities with food through a blog and monthly e-newsletter dedicated to farm to school. See Appendix page 46 for an example “Farmer of the Month” article.



Taste Tests

One great way to promote new, local foods is through taste tests. Taste tests are small samples of a new food, served separately from the meal, which introduce the food's flavor, texture, and smell. Students try a small bite of something, then vote on whether they liked it and would try it again.

Taste tests are important because being wary of new foods is a normal part of a child's development. Young children are naturally risk averse and distrust new things. New foods need to be introduced to children between seven and 15 times before they can decide whether or not they like it. Taste tests are a low-pressure way to expose students to new foods, create adventurous eaters, and encourage a culture of trying new foods.

Students are further engaged with the food through being surveyed about their opinions. When surveying students, record how many tried the item, how many liked it, and how many would try it again. Knowing what students thought of the item provides insight for the cafeteria staff, and also makes the students feel empowered about what they are eating. They get an opinion about what they are served, which is a powerful way to engage them in school food. Recorded data of students' opinions is also very useful when enlisting the support of school district leadership. See Appendix page 47 for a sample taste test survey.



Students in Habersham County Schools try a taste test of carrots from Leah Lake Farm in Otto, NC.

How Habersham County Does It

Regular taste tests are invaluable to the farm to school program in Habersham County. During the summer, the school nutrition staff plan one local item to taste test each month, based on the product availability from the farmers, and what is involved in the item's preparation. The taste test is served in the cafeteria by volunteers, including the farmer who grew the product. Being able to interact with the farmers through taste tests has helped the students in this district put a face to their food and remember where it came from when they see it served in a meal the following week. The students and farmers all look forward to taste test days. Habersham County's School Superintendent even recalls watching 8th grade students running down the hall in anticipation of a turnip taste test.

Hands-On Experiential Education

Students are more likely to try and like a new food when they have had an opportunity to experience it in many places, including at home, in the classroom, and in a garden. Children, like adults, learn best by doing. Students need time and experiences to create a relationship with food and where it comes from.

There are countless ways to do this, but the following are the most tried and true:

- **School Gardens:** When students plant, tend, and harvest the same types of foods being served in the cafeteria, they are more likely to try those foods. Activities in the garden can be tied to curriculum standards in any subject and are a wonderful complement to local sourcing in school meals.
- **Hands-On Cooking:** As with growing foods in school gardens, when students get the chance to prepare a dish, it connects them to the food and the recipe and makes an item more familiar when it is served in the cafeteria.
- **Farm Field Trips:** Being able to see the place where food grows and meet the people who grow it is a powerful way to engage kids with their food.
- **Classroom Lessons Involving Food and Agriculture:** Lessons in every subject can be taught through food or agriculture. Lessons can be directly related, as in learning about Native Americans through planting corn, beans, and squash in a Three Sisters garden, or indirectly related, as in practicing counting using beans.

When students experience food throughout the school environment, not only in the cafeteria, the message of food's value is reinforced over and over again. Students are more likely to choose fresh, healthy foods the more often they are exposed to it by different people and in different places. See Appendix page 48 for a list of where to find more resources on hands-on experiential education with food.

“Edible gardens are great ways to teach children about how food grows, and make excellent learning labs. Our students are experiencing firsthand where foods come from and how to grow it. A school garden is a powerful environmental education tool.”

Paula Farmer
Clarke County
School Nutrition Director



School nutrition staff in Peach County are excited about the pumpkins and radishes from the Little Farm in Gray, GA.

Engaging School Nutrition Staff

School nutrition staff are very important marketers of their food, especially new, local items. Districts should engage the staff in efforts to buy local food and get them excited about it. The more excited the cafeteria staff are about the food they are serving, the more excited students will be to eat it. Consider taking staff members on a field trip to a farm so they, too, can meet the people and see the places producing their food. Host hands-on cooking trainings with them so they also feel they understand the ins and outs of preparing the new food products. Cafeteria staff trainings are also a great way to get local chefs and restaurant owners involved in your farm to school program. See Appendix page 48 for a list of where to find more resources on cafeteria staff training and engagement.

ESTABLISHING DISTRICT SUPPORT FOR LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT

It is important for school district leadership to support the sourcing of local foods.

Support from district leaders can lead to the establishment of infrastructure to support the program into the future. For example, school boards can include farm to school language in a district policy or procedure or create a position within the school nutrition department just to handle local purchases and administer the program. This support also encourages teachers and school administrators to be role models for trying new and healthy foods and encourages teachers to use food and agriculture to teach core subjects (see page 23 for more on experiential education). See Appendix page 49-52 for examples of policies and procedures used by Bleckley, Cobb, and Clarke County School Districts to help solidify their farm to school programs.

“There is now much excitement about food among our students. In particular, our students have enjoyed the opportunity to grow their own food, meet the farmers, and taste test products from local farms. This is a wonderful program that supports both the nutrition and education of our students and the economic prosperity of our local farmers.”

Matthew Cooper
Habersham County
School Superintendent

How Habersham County Does It

The superintendent's support in Habersham County has led to presentations about the program to the Board of Education and the county commissioners, and visits from state legislators and community government representatives. The program keeps growing as more and more people in the community understand and believe in the program. Some of the ways Habersham County's farm to school program garnered support from district leaders are:

- Positive press for the program. The district highlights individual teachers, farmers, students, and school administrators in monthly newsletters, blogs, and local newspaper articles. (See Appendix page 46 for an example.)
- Inviting the superintendent to eat school meals on days they are highlighting local food or hosting a taste test.
- Having students present short introductions of each farm to the Board of Education.
- Hosting a Harvest Celebration in October which includes a local dinner, exhibits from farms, a chorus and band concert, and contests judged by Board of Education members.
- Inviting district leaders to Georgia's Golden Radish Award ceremony to be recognized by the State School Superintendent, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Commissioner of Public Health, and Georgia Organics' Board Chair.



Wilbanks Middle School Principal Mary Beth Thomas participating in a taste test of onions from Leah Lake Farm in Otto, NC.



CONCLUSION

It takes time and effort to establish local purchasing relationships, introduce new foods to students, and create a culture of excitement around farm to school meals. But it can be done!

While your farm to school program is still young, start small with local purchases to find out what works best for your district and build the program over time. Try ordering just one local item a month at first. You can also focus your local purchases on just one school, or one group of schools (i.e. all elementary schools).

Dabble with small amounts of many different products to see what works for your schools. When Habersham County Schools began its program, the district ordered one item each month for only one school, but tried a wide range of products. Through doing so, they identified a few items that the students liked, the cafeteria staff could prepare and serve easily, the farms could grow in bulk, and for which the price was feasible for the farms and the district. These products—apples, cabbage, cucumbers, yellow squash, and slicing and cherry tomatoes—are now being procured in bulk in Habersham County Schools. Small amounts of other items are still being featured in taste tests and those products may become bulk purchases in the future as the program grows.

Georgia farms produce food year-round. While there are rules and regulations that guide how to procure local foods, our state has many school district nutrition directors who have paved the way and demonstrated the many ways to buy and serve local food. Your district can, too!

“As the farm to school initiative has grown, finding suppliers has gotten so much easier! The first year I struggled to find vendors, but now it’s much easier to find a product. Students are enjoying fresh, local produce and five years ago that was not even a concept for many school districts!”

Kathy Peavy
*Bleckley County
School Nutrition Director*



Just a few of the people who support the farm to school program in Habersham County! They include school nutrition staff, farmers, teachers, school administrators, students, chefs, volunteers, state agencies, community partners, and a distributor!

THE STORY OF FARM TO SCHOOL IN **Habersham County**

The farm to school program in Habersham County is all about community. The program began with just a few committed leaders and has grown to involve dozens of stakeholders across the local community, including school nutrition staff, farmers, chefs and restaurant owners, teachers, school administrators, district leaders, students, and leaders of the Habersham County Farm Bureau, Cooperative Extension, and local farmers markets.

The program started in late 2012 as a collaboration between Habersham County School Nutrition Director Paige Holland (now with the Georgia Dept. of Education), the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, and Georgia Organics. To find other supporters for the program, the district hosted a community meeting in January 2013 at which more than 80 parents, teachers, farmers, chefs, students, and community leaders attended to find out more about farm to school and see how they could be involved.

During the course of the spring, school nutrition staff met with the farmers interested in supplying the schools, and began working out their procurement processes. The district involved their current produce vendor in meetings and trainings to garner his support for local purchases. The farmers, nutrition staff, and distributor worked together to identify good local products to start with.

Also during the spring of 2013, one school installed a school garden and a fruit tree orchard, teachers began to learn



Students at Wilbanks Middle School connect experiences in the garden to what they learn in the classroom.

how to incorporate food and agriculture into their lessons, and cafeteria staff were trained by local chefs on how to process and prepare whole, fresh foods. The district also hosted classes for the community on how to grow and cook food at home, and began hosting taste tests for students. The district also began a partnership with the local newspaper to highlight one farm to school farm each month, and started a blog and monthly e-newsletter about the program.

During the summer of 2013, farm to school leaders spent time planning the next year and deepening relationships with program partners. Part of the planning process was to identify and train volunteers to lead taste tests. When school began again in the fall, regular taste tests were already set for each month. Each month the taste test features a different

farm's product, and the farmer who grew it is on hand to help serve. Volunteers also serve and survey students' opinions about the taste tested item. That item is then served in a school meal within a week of the taste test.

In October 2013, the district held a Community Harvest Celebration at Wilbanks Middle School to show parents and others what strides had been made since the January community meeting. The cafeteria was packed with parents meeting farmers and sampling their products, with teachers demonstrating lessons taught with food, and with cafeteria staff serving a dinner of local food.

By the end of 2013, Habersham County Schools had partnered with ten farms within a 50 mile radius of the county. The district purchased \$16,000 worth of Georgia-grown produce in the 2012-2013 school year, including nearly \$2,000 worth of produce grown on those ten farms.

In the winter and spring of 2014, the district looked over all the local products that had been procured, taste tested, and served over the past year. Based on what was popular with students, easy for cafeteria staff to prepare, and economically feasible for the district to buy and the farms to sell, they selected five local products to buy in bulk. The district has contracts with local farms to supply apples, cabbage, cucumbers, yellow squash, and slicing and cherry tomatoes, and plans to grow their bulk purchases as the program grows!

THE STORY OF FARM TO SCHOOL IN **Bleckley County**

Bleckley County School District has been participating in the Feed My School for a Week program since the inception of the program in the 2011-2012 school year. The program, from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, involves serving 75-100% Georgia Grown food in a school's cafeteria for one week. Students and staff at Bleckley County Middle School were treated to a complete menu line of 100% Georgia Grown items during a week in May 2014.

Local food procurement in Bleckley County has moved beyond just that one week. Each month a Georgia Grown item is highlighted on the menu and served in at least four of the district's five schools. The menu highlights the product that was grown or produced in Georgia, as well as the grower/farmer/producer. The district hopes that students will communicate the delicious taste of these items at home and increase the number of families purchasing local products as well.



The district purchases Bleckley County-grown whole wheat flour and used it to make yeast rolls and pumpkin muffins!



The Bleckley County School Nutrition Program utilizes fresh grown wheat flour from a community based business. The wheat is grown three miles from one school, and a sign in the field advertises that the food is being grown for the district. As students travel by the fields on the bus they are made aware of the concept of growing food locally for consumption. Ginger Butts from Back to Basics 101, the miller of the flour, has trained the cafeteria staff in using whole wheat flour for baking yeast rolls, cookies, and muffins, and visits the schools to interact with students.

Agriculture education classes in the middle and high school grow gardens. Students at Bleckley County High School

also have a tilapia fish farm and are investigating how to incorporate the fish into the local economy. In 2014, middle school students visited the John Deere facility in Grovetown, Georgia—an education experience enjoyed by all!

Bleckley County School District will continue to grow its farm to school program by increasing the number of school gardens and by continuing to pursue methods to incorporate local products in the daily menu. The Bleckley County School Nutrition Program strives to educate not only students but other stakeholders as well about the purchase of local products. Nutrition and agriculture are perfect partners for the program's educational goals!

THE STORY OF FARM TO SCHOOL IN **Fulton County**

The Fulton County School Nutrition Program began its farm to school initiative during the 2010-2011 school year and has continued to increase the number of local foods sold each year. The district began emphasizing these local purchases as a way to raise awareness around the nutritious options offered to students and has stayed committed to farm to school because the School Nutrition Program takes pride in offering its students the best.

Currently, the School Nutrition Program works closely with the contracted produce distributor to identify a locally grown produce item to feature each month in all of the district's 94 schools. School nutrition managers post a farmer's biography and nutrition facts corresponding with the



Fulton County students making a locally-grown Kale and Apple Salad with SNP Area Supervisor and chef Tiffany Lawrence.

featured item and include information in school newsletters and student announcements. During the 2013-2014 school year, locally grown food was highlighted on 52 different days!

Fulton County Schools has also hosted district-wide taste tests. Most recently,

students sampled locally grown zucchini chips, and a locally grown kale and apple salad. Feedback from students and from staff is collected from the taste tests to determine acceptance. About one third of Fulton County's schools have a school garden, varying in type from raised beds to greenhouses, orchards, and pots of herbs. Students from the district have visited farms on field trips, participated in a cow milking demonstration, and learned about growing blueberries from blueberry farm representatives.

In the coming school year, Fulton County Schools plans to grow the farm to school program by highlighting even more local items on a regular basis. The School Nutrition Program will continue to offer local fruit and vegetable sides, but will also create entrees that include locally grown items as part of its participation in the Georgia Department of Agriculture's Georgia Grown Test Kitchen program.



RESOURCES

These people and resources are here to help! For more resources and to dive more deeply into local food procurement, check out the following:

GEORGIA ORGANICS

Erin Croom, Farm to School Director: erin@georgiaorganics.org

Emily Rose, Farm to School Coordinator: emily@georgiaorganics.org

For resources related to farm to school in the cafeteria, the classroom, and the community, as well as school garden resources and the current state of farm to school in Georgia, check out: georgiaorganics.org/for-schools/

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Samantha Benjamin-Kirk, USDA's Southeast Regional Lead for farm to school: samantha.benjamin-kirk@fns.usda.gov

For national resources related to procurement, menu planning, food safety, promotion and more, check out: www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-resources/

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Janett Adams, Purchasing Compliance Officer, School Nutrition Program: jadams@doe.k12.ga.us

Kathy Benton, M Ed., RD, LD, Program Manager, School Nutrition Program: kbenton@doe.k12.ga.us

Paige Holland, MBA, SNS, Grants Program Consultant, School Nutrition Program: pholland@doe.k12.ga.us

Jeanne Starr, MS, RD, LD, SNS, Program Manager, School Nutrition Program: jstarr@doe.k12.ga.us

Laura Tanase, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Education and Wellness Specialist: ltanase@doe.k12.ga.us

For more information about the Georgia Dept. of Education's School Nutrition Program, check out: www.gadoe.org/Finance-and-Business-Operations/School-Nutrition/Pages/default.aspx/

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Misty Friedman, Nutritional Educator and Outreach Specialist: misty.friedman@agr.georgia.gov

For more information on the Feed My School for a Week program, check out: www.agr.georgia.gov/feed-my-school-for-a-week.aspx/

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Donna DeCaille, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Advisor: donna.decaille@dph.ga.gov

Jean O'Connor, JD, DrPH, Chronic Disease Prevention Director: jean.o'connor@dph.ga.gov

Emily Anne Vall, PhD, Obesity Project Manager (Georgia SHAPE): emilyanne.vall@dph.ga.gov

For more information about the Georgia SHAPE program, check out: www.georgiashape.org



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Annual Harvest Calendar

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
APPLES												
ARUGULA												
ASPARAGUS												
BASIL												
BEANS												
BEETS												
BLUEBERRIES												
BOK CHOY												
BROCCOLI												
BRUSSEL SPROUTS												
CABBAGE												
CANTALOUPE												
CARROTS												
COLLARDS												
CORN-SWEET												
CUCUMBERS												
CUT FLOWERS												
EGGPLANT												
FIGS												
GARLIC-CURED												
GARLIC-GREEN												
GRAPES-MUSCADINE												
KALE & OTHER GREENS												
LETTUCE												
MUSHROOMS												
OKRA												
PEACHES												
PEAS-ENGLISH												
PEAS-FIELD												
PECANS												
PEPPERS												
PERSIMMONS												
PLUMS												
POTATOES-IRISH												
POTATOES-SWEET												
RADISH												
SEEDLINGS												
SOYBEAN- EDAMAME												
SPINACH												
SQUASH-SUMMER												
SQUASH-WINTER												
STRAWBERRIES												
TOMATOES												
TURNIPS												
VIDALIA ONIONS												
WATERMELON												

SOME GEORGIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT PROCURED LOCAL FOOD IN 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR*

Atlanta Public Schools
Barrow County School System
Bibb County School District
Bleckley County School District
Burke County Public School System
Carrollton City Schools
City Schools of Decatur
Clarke County School District
Cobb County School District
Colquitt County Schools
Commerce City Schools
Crisp County School System
Decatur County Schools
DeKalb County School District
Dougherty County School System
Forsyth County Schools
Fulton County Schools
Grady County Schools
Gwinnett County Schools
Habersham County Schools
Hall County Schools
Jackson County School System
Lauren County Schools
Madison County School District
Marietta City Schools
Peach County Schools
Rabun County Schools
Richmond County Schools
Savannah-Chatham County Public School System
Tift County Schools

**The districts on this list won the 2014 Golden Radish Award for farm to school and/or have participated in the Feed My School for a Week program. There may be other districts purchasing local not on this list.*



The Farm to School movement connects schools and local farms in an effort to serve healthy meals in school cafeterias, improve student nutrition, increase farm and gardening educational opportunities while enhancing the local farm income.

**Help Grow the Northeast Georgia
Farm to School Program**

FARMERS WE NEED YOU

**Meet with Habersham County
School Nutrition Director to discuss
selling YOUR products to the district.**

**Farmers Forum Meeting
February 28th, 2013
Hilliard A. Wilbanks Middle School
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.**



Northeast Georgia Farm to School Farmers' Forum
February 28, 2013
6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

6:00 **Introductions**—*Teri Hamlin, Farm to School Regional Coordinator*

6:15 **Introduction to Farm to School**—*Teri Hamlin, Farm to School Regional Coordinator*

6:30 **Overview of Habersham County School Nutrition Program**—*Paige Holland, Habersham County School Nutrition Director*

- How the district procures food in general
- Current local food purchases
- Other fresh produce considerations
- Procurement guidelines

6:45 **Group Discussion**

- What products can be grown locally?
- What is the best way to deliver to schools?
- Food safety and processing preferences?
- What are critical dates when decisions are made?
- What is the bid process?

7:15 **Wrap-Up and Next Steps**—*Teri Hamlin, Farm to School Regional Coordinator*

Farmers, please review the Product Survey below. The deadline to return these surveys is March 15. Holland will review and contact farmers for specific bids.

**Farm to School
 Growers Product Availability**

Farmer's Name:				
Farm Name:				
Address of Farm:				
Contact Phone Number:				
Contact Email Address:				
Products Available For Farm to School				
Month	Product	Price	Quantity	Process / Packing
<i>Ex: Feb</i>	<i>Kale</i>	<i>\$20/box</i>	<i>150 bundles, (30 leaves per bundle)</i>	<i>Washed / Box of 50</i>

Farm to School Growers Product Availability

Farmer's Name:				
Farm Name:				
Address of Farm:				
Contact Phone Number:				
Contact Email Address:				
Products Available For Farm to School				
Month	Product	Price	Quantity	Process / Packing
<i>Ex: Feb</i>	<i>Kale</i>	<i>\$20/box</i>	<i>150 bundles, (30 leaves per bundle)</i>	<i>Washed / Box of 50</i>

Checklist for Local Farm Produce Purchasing

Farm/Producer Name _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Total acres under cultivation _____

Availability of promotional materials YES NO

Availability of farm field trips YES NO

Product(s) to be purchased

Is any insurance liability required? YES NO
(If "YES," dollar amount _____)

Was the produce grown without addition of chemical pesticides and fertilizers? YES NO

Farm certifications: Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
 Certified Naturally Grown (CNG)
 Certified Organic
 Other certification (_____)

Is the facility licensed and inspected to process products? YES NO

Production Practices	Yes	No	N/A
Are wells protected from contamination?			
If irrigation is used, what is its source?			
Is manure used? If so, what type: Raw manure Composted Aged			
Is raw manure incorporated at least two weeks prior to planting and/or 120 days prior to harvest?			
Is the manure application schedule documented with a copy submitted to the retail operation?			

Production Practices (continued)	Yes	No	N/A
Is the land use history available to determine risk of product contamination (e.g.: runoff from upstream, flooding, chemical spills, or excessive agricultural crop application)?			
Is the field exposed to runoff from animal confinement or grazing areas?			
Is land that is frequently flooded used to grow food crops?			
Are coliform tests conducted on soil in frequently flooded land?			
Are farm livestock and wild animals restricted from growing areas?			
Are portable toilets used in a way that prevents field contamination from waste water?			
List chemicals used in the production and management practices:			

Product Handling	Yes	No	N/A
Are storage and packaging facilities located away from growing area?			
Is there risk of contamination with manure?			
Are harvesting baskets, totes, or other containers kept covered and cleaned (with potable water) and sanitized before use?			
Is harvesting equipment/machinery that comes into contact with the products kept as clean as possible?			
Are product and non-product containers available and clearly marked?			
Is dirt, mud, or other debris removed from product before packing?			
Are food-grade packaging materials clean and stored in areas protected from pets, livestock, wild animals, and other contaminants?			

Facilities	Yes	No	N/A
Is potable water/well tested at least once per year and results kept on file?			
Is product protected as it travels from field to packing facility?			
Is a product packing area in use with space for culling and storage?			
Are packing areas kept enclosed?			
Are food contact surfaces regularly washed and rinsed with potable water and then sanitized?			
Are food-grade packaging materials used?			
Do workers have access to toilets and hand washing stations with proper supplies?			
Are toilets and hand washing stations clean and regularly serviced?			
Is a pest control program in place?			

Worker Health and Hygiene	Yes	No	N/A
Is a worker food safety training program in place?			
Are workers trained about hygiene practices and sanitation with signs posted to reinforce messages?			
Are workers and visitors following good hygiene and sanitation practices?			
Are smoking and eating confined to designated areas separate from product handling?			
Are workers instructed not to work if they exhibit signs of infection (e.g.: fever, diarrhea, etc.)?			
Do workers practice good hygiene by:			
Wearing clean clothing and shoes?			
Keeping hair covered or restrained?			
Washing hands as required?			
Limiting bare hand contact with fresh products?			
Covering open wounds with clean bandages?			

Transportation (if delivering to school)	Yes	No	N/A
Is product loaded and stored to minimize physical damage and risk of contamination?			
Is transportation vehicle well maintained and clean?			
Are there designated areas in transport vehicle for food products and non-food items?			
Are products kept cool during transit?			

I confirm that the information provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Farmer/Producer _____

Date _____

Locally Grown Produce

Habersham County school system is participating in “Farm to School” initiatives and requests the contractor to work diligently to procure locally grown produce. **Habersham County will give priority to a vendor that will agree to work with local farmers.** For the purposes of this produce bid, locally grown is defined as the following: Produce that is grown in Habersham County or within 50 miles of Clarkesville, Georgia should be the first source. Produce that is grown in the State of Georgia as the second source and produce that is grown in states whose borders touch the State of Georgia as the third source. To further clarify “grown in the State of Georgia” means that it is grown on a Georgia farm. Locally grown produce should be the “produce of choice” for the school district when it is available.

In addition, Habersham County will require short biographical information about the farm along with a safety practices check sheet that will be kept on file at the board of education office.

From time to time Habersham County may have a limited opportunity to purchase a limited amount of local fresh produce that they reserve the right to do.

Any awarded vendor will be required to provide an invoice or evidence of purchasing from “locally grown” farms, as defined above, on demand or during annual audits.

Attached is a list of farms and available produce that have meet the above standards. Distributor is not limited to farms on given list.

Attachment G—Declaration to Work with Local Farmers

By signing this delaration the awarded vendor is further attesting that the distributor will give priority and work with the farmers on the given availability list along with farms in Habersham County or within 50 miles of Clarkesville, Georgia. All of these farmers products will meet the definition of “locally grown” as stated in this contract. The awarded vendor will work with these farmers on product, price, pack and delivery and will communicate all problems or issues to the School Nutrition Director.

Signature _____

Signatory’s Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Good Morning!

Habersham County School Nutrition is currently soliciting bids for yellow squash for next school year for two of our middle schools. The yellow squash will need to be boxed by the pound. The district prefers yellow squash that meets our definition of local, which you will find below.

Projected Quantities:

30# per week, as in season or available

Quantities are projected only and could be slightly more or less.

Please reply with per pound price by January 31, 2014. Make sure to copy all replies to pholland@habershamschools.com and ntrunk@habershamschools.com.

Locally Grown Definition:

For the purposes of this bid, locally grown is defined as the following: Produce/product that is grown in Habersham County or within 50 miles of Habersham County, Georgia will be given first preference. Next preference will be given to products grown/raised in the state of Georgia and finally those states touching Georgia. Anything outside of this tiered definition will not be considered local.*

If you have questions, please email me.

Paige Holland

*NOTE: Habersham County Schools did NOT use geographic preference for this item. To do so, the specific preference would need to be defined in this request for bids.



It is the intention of Habersham County School Nutrition Department to purchase the following products from XXXX Farm through Holland's Produce.

It is the intention of XXXX Farm to grow and sell the following product(s) to Habersham County School Nutrition Department through Holland's Produce.

Product name: Yellow Squash, Slicing Tomatoes & Cherry Tomatoes

The total estimated quantity to be delivered:

Local Produce	Months in Season	Quantity	Packed	Cost Per Unit Paid to Farm	School
Yellow Squash	Aug -Sept	13# /wk	40 lbs / box	\$15 /box = .375 /lb	North (520)
Yellow Squash	Aug -Sept	13# /wk	40 lbs / box	\$15 /box = .375 /lb	South (500)
Yellow Squash	Aug -Sept	15# /wk	40 lbs / box	\$15 /box = .375 /lb	Wilbanks (600)
Slicing Tomatoes	Aug-Oct	12# /wk	25 lbs / box	\$18 / box = .72 lb	North (520)
Slicing Tomatoes	Aug-Oct	12# /wk	25 lbs / box	\$18 / box = .72 lb	South (500)
Slicing Tomatoes	Aug-Oct	14# /wk	25 lbs / box	\$18 / box = .72 lb	Wilbanks (600)
Cherry Tomatoes	Aug -Oct	9 pts/wk	8, 8oz pts / flat	\$14 / flat = .57 per 8oz	North (520)
Cherry Tomatoes	Aug -Oct	9 pts/wk	8, 8oz pts / flat	\$14 / flat = .57 per 8oz	South (500)
Cherry Tomatoes	Aug -Oct	10 pts/wk	8, 8oz pts / flat	\$14 / flat = .57 per 8oz	Wilbanks (600)

Payment terms & payment process: Farm will invoice and be paid through Holland's Produce.

Other notes: _____

Agreed by:

Farm representative : _____
(printed name, signature and date)

School district representative: _____
(printed name, signature and date)

Distributor representative: _____
(printed name, signature and date)

This is not a legally binding document. It serves to document our intentions and agreement.

GEOGRAPHIC PREFERENCE RESOURCES

There are many resources available that give more information about using Geographic Preference. To dive into the topic more deeply, check out the following:

Final Rule: Geographic Preference Option

This is the Geographic Preference rule itself, laid out by USDA's Food and Nutrition Services.

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/regulations/2011-04-22.pdf

Geographic Preference: What It Is and How to Use It

This fact sheet from the USDA gives an overview of geographic preference.

www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/F2S_GeographicPreference_March2014.pdf

Geographic Preference Q&A, Part I

These questions and answers from USDA's Food and Nutrition Services were created in February 2011 to address questions relating to using geographic preference.

www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP18-2011_os.pdf

Geographic Preference Q&A, Part II

These questions and answers from USDA's Food and Nutrition Services were created in October 2012 to address questions relating to using geographic preference.

www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SPO3-2013os.pdf

Geographic Preference: A Primer on Purchasing Fresh Local Food for Schools

This guide from School Food FOCUS and the Harrison Institute for Public Law at Georgetown Law provides an overview and examples of using geographic preference.

www.schoolfoodfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/

Bibb County School Nutrition - Quotation Sheet for Weekly Produce

These items are to be used specifically during the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Feed My School for a Week Project at Skyview Elementary School, Fulton Mill Road, Lizella, GA. Items are preferably a Georgia Grown Product, grown, raised or produced in Georgia.

Items listed below are estimates for products needed. Suggestions or substitution are welcomed and any product grown in Georgia will be preferred.
(Price = 75 pts, GA Grown = 25 pts, when evaluating items)

Delivery:

Vendor

Signature

Item #	Description	Pack	Price
40135	Blueberries, Fresh Flat	12/6 oz	
40139	Blackberries	12 Pint	
40301	Broccoli	per bunch	
40599	Apples, Rome	88 ct	
40600	Apples, Gala	100 ct	
40601	Apples, Golden Delicious	100 ct	
40602	Apples, Red Delicious	125 ct	
40610	Bananas, 40 #	90-100 ct	
40611	Bananas	per pound	
40615	Bananas, Petite	150 Singles	
40616	Bananas, Baby 3-4 "	15 #	
40617	Bananas, Ind Pak	100	
40619	Scuppernongs	30 lbs	
40620	Grapes, Red Seedless	18 #	
40621	Grapes, White Seedless	18 #	
40622	Grapes, Black	19 #	
40623	Grapes, Red Globe	19 #	
40626	Grapes, Red Ind Pak	36/3 oz	
40630	Cantelope	15 ct	
40632	Honeydew	8 ct	
40632	Watermelon	ea	
40635	Oranges	125 ct	
40637	Oranges, Temple	125 ct	
40638	Orange Slices, Ind	36 3 oz	
40639	Oranges, Navel	80 ct	
40640	Tangelos	150 ct	
40641	Tangerines	150 ct	
40644	Cherries, Fresh Bing	18 #	
40645	Grapefruit, Pink	40 ct	

Revised 9/20/11

Bibb County School Nutrition
Request for Quote
GEORGIA GROWN MENU ITEM

Date: 4-30-2014

Item: Chicken Drumsticks, Raw, Frozen **Stock#:** GG 02

Specification:

This item is to be used specifically during the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Feed My School for a Week Project. The item is preferably a Georgia Grown Product, grown, raised, or produced in Georgia. (GA Grown = 1 pts., Price = 1-3 pts., when evaluating items)

Chicken Drumsticks, produced from ready-to-cook broiler/fryer chickens, frozen, for roasting. State price per pound. Quantity needed is adequate product to provide a 1.5 oz. serving for 150 servings. (Approximately 15 # cooked.)

****Return by ASAP**

Via email to ccrane@bibb.k12.ga.us and clong@bibb.k12.ga.us or fax to 478-779-2613

Vendor Information:

Item #: _____

Vendor/Company Name: _____

Vendor Address: _____

Email _____ Phone/Fax: _____

Cost: _____ Pack: _____

Brand/Origin: _____

Availability _____

Can you deliver? _____ When? _____

Total Price: _____

Signature: _____

Please attach if available:



Manufacturer's product detail sheet



Nutritional information

Office use only:

Bid awarded _____ Yes _____ No Date _____

Data entered _____ By _____

Clarke County Elementary School Menu

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
27 Cheese Pizza* Vegetable Lasagna* with Breadstick* Green Beans Garden Salad Apple Wedges Mandarin Oranges Breakfast Mini Cinnis* Cereal* & Crackers*	28 Sloppy Joe Sandwich* Grilled Cheese* Tomato Soup GA Steamed Broccoli Ruby Red Grapefruit Pineapple SMART Cookie* Breakfast Sausage Biscuit* Yogurt & Granola*	29 Fish Nuggets Chicken Pot Pie* Steamed Kernel Corn Coleslaw Fresh Banana Pears & Cherries Breakfast Cinnamon Oatmeal* Cereal* & Super Star*	30 Chicken Sandwich* Pork Roast & Gravy with Cornbread Muffin* GA Collard Greens Pinto Beans Fresh Orange Wedges Tropical Fruit Salad Breakfast Chicken Biscuit* Assorted Cereal Bar*	31 Ham & Cheese Sand.* Grilled Chicken Sand.* Potato Smiles Fresh Veggies & Dip Seasonal Fresh Fruit Fruit-flavored Raisins Happy Birthday Cup! Breakfast Mini Pancakes* Fortified Donut & Gogurt

BLUEBERRIES ARE...

LOW IN FAT.
A one-cup serving contains only 80 calories and virtually no fat.

FULL OF DIETARY FIBER.
A handful of blueberries helps satisfy recommended daily fiber intake.¹
Fiber helps keep the body regular, the heart healthy, and cholesterol in check.¹

FULL OF PHYTONUTRIENTS.
Research suggests that the phytonutrients in blueberries, called polyphenols, have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that may help lessen the inflammatory process associated with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other age-related diseases.^{2,3,7}

PACKED WITH VITAMIN C.
One serving delivers almost 25% of one's daily requirement of vitamin C.²
Vitamin C aids collagen formation and helps maintain healthy gums and capillaries and a healthy immune system.²

AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF MANGANESE.
Manganese plays an important role in bone development and in converting proteins, carbohydrates, and fats into energy.⁴

REGENERATE YOUR MIND

Blueberries are a powerful fruit. After the holidays, it is always good to kick start the new year by making a positive change. Let us help you regenerate for the second half of the school year with REGENERATE Blueberry Juice.

Did you know? UGA Sports Nutritionist have convinced athletes at the University of Georgia to drink REGENERATE. The football, volleyball, soccer, and track teams all drink REGENERATE. Maybe an athlete will visit your school on Friday, January 17th!

LOCALLY-GROWN GEORGIA ITEMS

This month, we are spotlighting...

- Broccoli from Clayton Raw Farms in Augusta, GA.
- Cabbage, Collard Greens, & Butternut Squash from Hearndon Farms in Lyons, GA
- Collard Green Seasoning from Fitzgerald, GA
- Carrots from Verman Farms in Claxton, GA
- Blueberry Juice from Blackshear, GA.
- Red Mule Grits from Mills Farm in Athens, GA
- SMART Cookies from Alma, GA.

WELLNESS UPDATE

Our school wellness champions will gather together for their second wellness training workshop on January 16th, 2014. During this workshop, we will focus on action steps for the remaining part of the school year. As a result you and your children should see positive changes pertaining to the school's environment and its support of health and wellness. By now, each school should have convened a wellness council that is made up of students, parents, school administrators, teachers, and community members, and they should have hosted at least one wellness meeting this fall. If you are interested, you can reach out to your school's wellness champion. The list is posted on our website.



Farmer of the Month

Farmer of the Month is a Farm to School platform that applauds the local farmers who are growing fresh, nutritious produce for Habersham County students. Wide Bottom Farm, with land in the North and South ends of Habersham County, is the Farmer of the Month for September.

Wide Bottom Farm derives its name from the flat, bottomlands where Habersham County creeks often overflow creating an influx of rich, dark, sandy soil perfect for crop production. Bottomlands have been sought-out by generations of farmers as the perfect areas for growing the best variety of produce. Two families and three generations work together to plant, harvest and process a variety of vegetables and fruits for Wide Bottom Farm. They use traditional farming techniques such as small tractors, walk behind tillers, hand held hoes and sweat to plant, weed and pick the produce.

Though not totally organic, the farmers of Wide Bottom Farm use best practices to be as earth-friendly as possible. James and Phillip Franklin, lead farmers, take pride in the quality and taste of their produce. “What we don’t sell we can and put-up for enjoying ourselves during the winter months” said James. “One of our goals is to add more heritage seeds to keep the old varieties alive and be able to save seeds after harvest for replanting future gardens.” Carey Madigan, a member of the Kollock family justifies their techniques by saying, “Being a farmer is not easy, laboring in the fields is hard, hot work, but once you have the first bite of a summer tomato or enjoy the sweetness of a fresh ear of corn, it makes it all worthwhile.”

The duo farm families, the Franklins and the Kollocks, farm 15 acres of land producing 3 to 4 varieties of corn, half-runner beans, field peas, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, okra, strawberries, melons and pumpkins. Their typical farming day includes planting, hoeing and picking. “We like to start early and break once the heat of the day sets in,” explains James. Wide Bottom Farm’s produce can be found at local farmers markets, and it is sold directly to individuals by contacting James Franklin at appal@myemc.net.

TASTE TEST SURVEY

DIRECTIONS: Use this form to collect information about your recipe!

1. Visit either each class in the school or the cafeteria during lunch times.
2. Highlight the whole grain, local fruit, or vegetable that is in your product.
(For example: if you are making zucchini bread, bring a zucchini)
3. Column One: Record the number of participants who you are surveying
(give them time to taste the new food).
4. Column Two: Record the number of participants who tried the food.
5. Column Three and Four: Record the number of participants who liked the food and then will eat it again (at lunch or breakfast).

Product _____

Number of Participants (at testing table)	"I tried it"	"I liked it"	"I'll eat it again"

HANDS-ON EDUCATION RESOURCES

For more information about engaging students in hands-on education using food and agriculture, check out the following:

Georgia Organics' Farm to School Website

This website provides resources for connecting food to the curriculum, cooking with kids, farm field trips, building and using school gardens, hosting taste tests, and more.

www.georgiaorganics.org/for-schools

National Farm to School Network

Search for resources by type and see what programs in other states are doing.

www.farmtoschool.org

University of Georgia's School Garden Resources

Information from UGA's College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences' school garden initiative.

www.extension.uga.edu/k12/school-gardens

Captain Planet Foundation's Learning Gardens Program

This website includes curriculum for teaching in the garden.

www.captainplanetfoundation.org/learning-garden

Edible Schoolyard Network

This website shares curriculum from educators around the world.

www.edibleschoolyard.org

NUTRITION STAFF ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

For more information about engaging and training cafeteria staff, check out these resources.

Farm to School in the Cafeteria

This webpage from Georgia Organics describes several areas in which cafeteria staff can be engaged.

www.georgiaorganics.org/for-schools/farm-to-school-in-the-cafeteria

Georgia Farm to School Summit

This annual conference is a chance for school nutrition staff, teachers, farmers, and others from across the state to gather, learn from one another, and get re-energized about their farm to school program.

www.georgiaorganics.org/summit/f2s-summit/

To schedule a chef-led training for cafeteria staff on fresh food preparation, presentation, promotion, kid-friendly flavor profiles, leading taste tests, and more, contact Georgia Organics Farm to School Director Erin Croom at erin@georgiaorganics.org or 678-702-0400.

Bleckley County Board of Education

Office of School Nutrition

242 East Dykes Street
Cochran, GA 31014
478-934-2821

Dr. Charlotte Pipkin
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Kathy Peavy
Director of School Nutrition

Bleckley County School Nutrition Program Procedures for Operation

Farm To School/Local Grown/Georgia Grown

The Bleckley County School Nutrition Program will participate in the Farm to School/Local Grown/Georgia Grown activities and utilize all resources available for the incorporation of these programs in to the activities of the district. Under the direction of the School Nutrition Director, the SNP meal service will serve as a “learning lab” for students to try/taste/evaluate products. All school nutrition staff members will be trained in the verbiage of the Farm to School/Local Grown/Georgia Grown program so that they can also serve as teachers in informal settings with students and community members.

Monthly F2S items will be incorporated and featured in the monthly menu.

Agriculture or any classes will be encouraged to grown a garden.

The Bleckley County School Nutrition Program will participate in the *Feed My School for a Week Program* as long as allowable with the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

Upon the future updating of the local Wellness Policy, verbiage for Farm to School will be incorporated into the plan. Since this requires participation from the local board of education, changes/additions to the official policy are reserved for specific times to ensure that the policy is as up-to-date as possible with all USDA guidelines and is not presented each month to the local board of education.

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”
July 2013

Section 6-1c-2: *Customer Service, Marketing & Feedback*

Locally Grown and Try-day Guidelines

A Daily Function

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Food Marketing-Locally Grown and Try-days

SERVING A VARIETY OF HIGH QUALITY FOOD IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO MARKET SCHOOL NUTRITION AND ENSURE THAT OUR CUSTOMERS WANT TO EAT IN THE CAFETERIA EVERY DAY.

Positions Responsible for Policy, Regulation or Procedure:

Systems Supervisor

Cafeteria Manager

All Food Service Assistants

Procedure, Regulation or Policy:

We must ensure that quality and taste standards are met at all times, so that our customers can depend on getting the best possible meal each time they dine in the school cafeteria.

Marketing the Food

By serving a variety of quality food items, our students (and other people we serve) will become satisfied, repeat customers. Giving attention to the following factors will help to ensure high food quality and variety:

1. Georgia Grown and Locally Grown Offerings

Marketing:

- **Systems Supervisor will post information on the FNS website for each Georgia Grown and Locally Grown item.**
- **At a minimum, schools must display the sign(s) provided by FNS central office.** Schools can use additional visuals and announcements.
- **Utilize announcements provided by FNS central office.** Messages can be shared via school wide announcements, on bulletin boards, serving lines, etc.
- **When possible, display a raw, whole version of the item for customers to see.**

Ordering/Serving:

- **Unless otherwise specified, must serve the item in addition to the menu'd items.** Serving the Georgia Grown or locally grown item is not optional.
- **If needed, samples can be provided to encourage customers to try the item.** This should be done on an infrequent basis and does not replace serving the full portion of the item.
- **If item is being ordered by the manager, the manager must order the item in the time frame specified.**

Section 6-1c-2: ***Customer Service, Marketing & Feedback***

Locally Grown and Try-day Guidelines

A Daily Function

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2. **Try-day Offerings**

Marketing:

- **Systems Supervisor will post information about the Try-day offerings, including ingredients and serving dates, on the FNS website.**
- **At a minimum, schools must display the sign(s) provided by FNS central office.** Schools can use additional visuals and announcements.

Ordering/Serving:

- **FNS central office will designate when the Try-day item will be menu'd.** Serving the Try-day item is not optional.
- **Item must be served on the FNS designated date(s).** Try-day items will come with specific instructions such as menu in addition to or in place of menu'd items.
- **If needed, samples can be provided to encourage customers to try the item.** This should be done on an infrequent basis and does not replace serving the full portion of the item.

Feedback

- **Feedback regarding the item should be provided using: Help Us Serve You Better Cards (6-4b-1x) or Student Surveys (6-4a-1x or 6-4a-1x).** The information collected will be used to determine if the item will be offered on the menu in the future.



**ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION
WELLNESS PROGRAM**

**DESCRIPTIVE CODE:EEE-R
DATE: AUGUST 2014**

This regulation implements the District goals and objectives for wellness as outlined in Policy EEE-Wellness Program. School personnel shall comply with the requirements contained herein.

I. NUTRITION STANDARDS AND GOALS

A. Nutrition Education and Promotion.

The Clarke County School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating through nutrition promotions and incorporating comprehensive nutrition education in accordance with the State of Georgia's (health) curriculum.

Students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, cafeterias, and school media:

- Teachers will integrate nutrition education into core curricula;
- Nutrition promotion will include participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, farm visits, and experience working in school gardens;
- The nutrition education program will be linked to school meal programs, school gardens, cafeteria nutrition promotion, after school care programs, and farm-to-school programs;
- Nutrition education will be offered in the cafeteria as well as the classroom;
- Nutrition education will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and accurate portion sizes;
- Students will have opportunities to taste new foods to increase their acceptance of healthy foods they may not be familiar with;
- Nutrition information and nutrition promotions designed to promote life-long health and wellness as well as reduce childhood obesity will be included in the District's Strategic Plan.