Farm to School
Connecting Schools with Local Food and Local Farmers

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Missouri Farm to Institution Project

• Provide tools to help Missouri institutions make connections with local farmers and local food.

• Project Partners
  – University of Missouri Extension
  – Missouri Council for Activity and Nutrition
  – Missouri Depts. of Ag, Education, and Health
Current and Proposed Project Activities

• Food service director survey
• Regional networking and training events
• Education/Marketing campaign
• Statewide policy development
• Technical assistance
• Farm to Institution resource guide

Activities guided by eight member Advisory Team
Project Funding

• Contract with the MO Dept. of Health and Senior Services
• Grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Missouri Livable Streets

• Helps communities work with their local governments and MODOT to plan, design, and build streets that encourage physical activity such as biking and walking.
What is Farm to School?

- Using locally and regionally grown and raised products in school meals and snacks.
- Farm to Cafeteria, Farm to College, and Farm to Institution are other names for Farm to School.
Farm to School can be much more...

• Also involves school gardening, cooking classes, farm tours, taste testing, farmer/chef visits, local food dinners, Harvest of the Season, and more.
What about Colleges and Universities?

- Student farms and campus community gardens
- Campus dining and special events
- Sustainability initiatives
- Student organizations
What about other Institutions?

• Worksite gardens, farmers’ markets, CSAs
• Farm to Hospital
• Farm to Nursing Homes, Childcare, Prisons, etc.
Why is Farm to School Important?

• Children and adults don’t consume enough fruits and vegetables.
  – Only 22% of youth in grades 9-12 and 24% of adults eat 5 servings on fruits and vegetables per day (CDC BRFSS and YRBSS, 2009)

• Local and regional economies are in flux.

• People are seeking greater connection to their food and farmers.
Farm to School Goals

Improve the health of children and adults

Foster new market opportunities for farmers

Help build stronger, more resilient communities
Farm to School Benefits

• Students consume more fruits and vegetables and have greater knowledge of agriculture and healthy eating.

Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Resources and Recommendations
http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/bearingfruit.htm
Farm to School Benefits

• School food services increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables served and revenues from increased adult and student participation.

Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Resources and Recommendations
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Farm to School Benefits

• Farmers diversify their markets, secure contracts for their products, and establish grower collaboratives and cooperatives.

Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Resources and Recommendations
http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/bearingfruit.htm
Top 3 Benefits
According to MO K-12 Food Service Directors

• Schools support the local economy, farmers, and community (67%)
• Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables among children and adults (46%)
• Help children and adults have healthier diets (43%)
Other Benefits
According to MO K-12 Food Service Directors

• Local, in-season produce can be cheaper
• Students like it
• Staff like it
• Less waste in the kitchen and lunch room
Challenges

• Lack of local food distribution and processing
• Lack of supply
• Assurance of food safety
• Kitchen facilities and staff skills
• Marketing
• Building support in the community
• Does farm to school fit within local / state / federal rules and regulations?
• Perceptions
Opportunities

• Demand for locally grown food is growing
• Interest among K-12 school food service directors in Missouri is high
  – 4% – Already using as much as they can
  – 89% – Would like to start using local or use more
  – 7% – No interest
Opportunities
According to MO K-12 food service directors

• Current demand in MO (2009-2010 school year)
  – 27% requested local from a vendor (98/374)
  – 15% requested local from a farmer (51/374)
  – 23% purchased local from a vendor (76/345)
  – 13% purchased local from a farmer (42/345)

• Participation among both self-managed/operated schools and schools contracted with a food service management company.
What was purchased?

Cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, apples, Asian pears, watermelon, cantaloupe, acorn squash, sweet corn, green peppers, summer squash, peaches, okra, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and lettuce
Primary Farm to School Distribution Methods

- Farmer → School
- Farmer → Distributor → School
Additional Farm to School Distribution Methods
(From MO and elsewhere)

- Farmer → **Produce Auction** → School
- Farmer → **Broker** → School
- Farmer → **Farmers’ Market** → School
- Farmer → **Grocery Store** → School
- Farmer → **Packing shed** → Distributor → School
- Farmer → **Grower Co-op** → School
Columbia Public Schools
Maplewood Richmond Heights
Seed to Table and Healthy Eating with Local Produce Programs
In Summary

• Interest in Farm to School/Farm to Institution is high.
• Demand is growing.
• Different models work for different schools and institutions.
• Sourcing and aggregating local foods remain a challenge.

• Where to begin?
  – Start by having conversations.
Places to Start for Food Service

• Talk with your current food vendor(s).

• Prepare some basic information about your food service operation.
  – What types of food are you looking for?
  – In what quantities?
  – Delivered to how many sites?

• Seek out farmers or non-farm vendors who can work with you.

• *More detailed info provided in packet.*
Places to Start for Farmers

• Assess your farm and farm business.
• Develop or revise your business plan.
• Build connections with schools or distributors.
• Develop a marketing packet.
• Visit with schools or distributors.
• More detailed info provided in packet.
To Learn More

• Missouri Farm to Institution Project
  – Contact me at McKelveyWA@umsystem.edu
  – Go to our website – http://mofarmtoschool.missouri.edu/

• Search for and “Like” Missouri Farm to School on Facebook
  – http://www.facebook.com/

• National Farm to School Network
  – http://www.farmtoschool.org/
  – Go to http://www.farmtoschool.org/MO/ to enter information about your program.
Thank You.

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