

FEBRUARY 12, 1999

SUBJECT: Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Policy Memorandum # 19-99: Small Resource Farmers and Gleaning

TO: Regional Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

Over the past two years, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been encouraging program administrators and partners to better utilize small resource farmers and gleaning efforts as means to enhance feeding operations. We are providing the information in this memorandum because we believe these two resources have potential for adding nutrition, value and variety to Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) meals.

Small Resource Farms

A small resource farm is typically a small to medium sized farm that grows and then sells fruits and/or vegetables to local markets. These local markets are typically local grocery stores, local fresh produce distributors, farmers markets and road-side stands. There are a number of benefits that may be realized by purchasing fruits and/or vegetables from small farmers: an assurance that the produce is of high quality and freshness; a somewhat lower purchase price due to the exclusion of added shipping and handling charges; availability of wider variety of produce for meals; and, a potential savings in cost through contractual arrangement with the farmer(s).

There are farmers markets listed on a comprehensive website for every State (except Hawaii or Nevada.) The website address is: www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/markets/states.htm.

Gleaning

There are four types of gleaning: (1) field gleaning .the collection of crops from farmers' fields that have already been mechanically harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest; (2) perishable food rescue or salvage .the collection of perishable produce from wholesale and retail sources; (3) food rescue .the collection of prepared foods from the food service industry, and; (4) nonperishable food collection .the collection of processed foods with long shelf life. Of the four methods, we believe field gleaning, perishable food rescue or salvage, and nonperishable food collection are best suited to SFSP. We do not recommend the food rescue method primarily due to food safety concerns.

The Food and Nutrition Service website has some very good information and resources on gleaning and food recovery. The information may be accessed at: www.usda.gov/fcs/fcs.htm, then click on Gleaning and Food Recovery, then click on A Citizen's Guide to Food Recovery. Furthermore, USDA has established a gleaning hotline which is available to answer general questions and provide model program information

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about gleaning and food recovery activities. The hotline telephone number is: 1-800-GLEAN IT, or 1-800-453-2648.

Please share this information with your State agencies. If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Rothstein or Ron Ulibarri.

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