



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

**MEMO CODE :** SP 14-2008

**DATE :** March 7, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Farm to School Cafeteria Initiatives

**TO:** Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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The recently enacted Fiscal Year 2008 Agriculture Appropriations Act directed USDA to work with School Meal Program administrators and local food advocates to identify opportunities for growth in local procurement, and provide Congress a report on these efforts. In response to this request and our ongoing Farm to School efforts, we recently held a "*Farm to School*" session at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference sponsored by the Food Research and Action Center and America's Second Harvest. The session, which was held on March 2, 2008, was designed to gather information on best practices in farm to school initiatives and to identify barriers or difficulties in creating and/or maintaining such initiatives.

The session provided invaluable information on farm to school experiences, and we would like to offer others the opportunity to contribute as well. We encourage you to share the attached agenda with school food authorities and others involved in farm to school initiatives so that they may submit comments. The agenda outlines a number of specific topics, though this is by no means an exhaustive list. Both phone and email contact information are included at the bottom of the agenda. We will also be posting this information on the FNS Child Nutrition public web site.

We look forward to gathering feedback on this important issue.

**Original Signed**

CYNTHIA A. LONG  
Director  
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment



## **From the Farm to the Cafeteria Discussion Session**

Encouraging farm-to-school efforts remains a priority for FNS. Farm to school initiatives play an important role in improving the economic stability of small farmers and the nutritional health of school-aged children. In an effort to assist school meal program administrators and local food advocates to identify opportunities for growth in local procurements, FNS is seeking best practice information to share with program participants. In the context of current procurement requirements, the goal of this session is to obtain feedback on this important topic. Specific areas of interest and discussion are listed below.

### **Collaboration/Support**

- ✓ What are some ways states have identified local farmers and encouraged them to submit bids?
- ✓ What are some of the effective marketing materials and media campaigns used at the state, regional, and national levels to increase momentum for Farm to School Initiatives?
- ✓ How can local food advocates assist in this process?
- ✓ How can purchasing through co-ops improve this program?
- ✓ How can nutrition education add to the program's success?
- ✓ Are there specific networking systems you have used to learn more about these opportunities?

### **Barriers/Difficulties**

- ✓ Are there any concerns about buying local foods?
- ✓ What are the major distribution/transportation barriers to purchasing locally?
- ✓ What are some other perceived barriers to purchasing local fruits and vegetables?
- ✓ How does food safety factor into program planning?

If you have additional information you would like to share with FNS please contact Lynn Rodgers-Kuperman at (703) 605-4390 or [lynn.rodgers@fns.usda.gov](mailto:lynn.rodgers@fns.usda.gov).