Local foods are everywhere during the summer. So, how do you get them into your program?

There are many different options for sourcing local foods for Summer Eats. Finding the right fit for your meal program will depend on a number of characteristics including: the size and location of the program, your kitchen and staffing capacity, menu, purchasing policies, and existing vendor relationships. Read the tips below and contact staff at Massachusetts Farm to School for additional support.

**SOME WAYS TO PROCURE LOCAL FOODS INCLUDE:**

- Through your existing distributor, if they offer local products
- Direct delivery from a farm
- Through a produce distributor or aggregator, like a Food Hub
- Through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program
- From a farmers market
- From school or community gardens
Tips for Procuring Local Foods

Working with your existing vendor:

1. Ask what local products they currently provide. Make sure to be clear about your definition of local (e.g. Grown in Massachusetts? Produced in Massachusetts? Grown within 150 mi?, etc.)

2. Ask what farms they purchase from. Many distributors buy local when products are in-season. Ask your distributor to identify local items on product guides.

3. If the vendor does not provide many local items, request specific products that you want to serve. Mention that Farm to Summer is a growing movement and that other sponsors are likely to want to purchase local items as well.

Finding vendors for summer products:*

1. Determine which products you’re interested in purchasing, the volume you want to purchase, and any delivery requirements or food safety specifications.

2. Reach out to potential vendors (farms, food hubs, etc.) to request product availability, pricing, and delivery information. See the sidebar for potential vendors.

3. Unsure of how to contact farms? Check out the farm finder map listed in the side bar. You can also reach out to your local farmers market to find out which farms are vendors at the market. The market manager can give you a list of farms with contact information. They may be interested in selling to you when they learn about the meal program and the marketing opportunities it provides.

*If your purchase will be less than $10,000, it is categorized as a small purchase and does not need to follow a formal solicitation process. If you’re planning to purchase more than $50,000 worth of local foods, contact Massachusetts Farm to School or review the USDA’s Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Program guide for more information about how to comply with regulations.

www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/procuring-local-foods

Resources

Food Hubs
Food hubs aggregate and distribute products from local farmers and producers. They can help you source products from a variety of local producers with just one delivery and one invoice.

- **STATEWIDE**
  - Red Tomato • reddotomato.org
    508-316-3494 • info@reddotomato.org

- **EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS**
  - Farm Fresh Rhode Island • farmfreshri.org/programs/
    market-mobile • 401-312-4250
    marketmobile@farmfreshri.org
  - New Entry Food Hub • nesfp.org/foodhub • 978-656-1654
    FoodHub@nesfp.org

- **CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS**
  - Worcester Regional Food Hub • worcesterfoodhub.org
    info@worcesterfoodhub.org
    508-842-3663

Local Farms
There are local farms across the state.

- For a map of farms interested in selling to summer meal sites, visit: massfarmtoschool.org/
  food-source-map

- For a map of additional farms and farmers markets, visit: massnrc.org/farmlocator/map.aspx

For More Information & Resources:

info@massfarmtoschool.org
413-253-3844

Massachusetts Farm to School

For more information & resources:

www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/procuring-local-foods

www.meals4kids.org

www.usda.gov

www.mass.dei.edu