A Pilot Project to Study the Barriers to Establishing Linkages between Agricultural Producers and School Lunch Programs
FY 2011

The goal of the study was to explore barriers to the use of locally produced food in Louisiana school lunch programs. Producers, fishermen and food service personnel were surveyed to gain insight into the capacity of schools to utilize unprocessed food, and the capacity of producers to provide products in a form useable by schools. The study identified several next steps to advance the objective, including increased use of MarketMaker, an online database of buyers and sellers of agricultural products.

FINAL REPORT

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Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program
Final Report
A Pilot Project to Study the Barriers to Establishing Linkages between Agricultural Producers and School Lunch Programs

Background information on issue

The goal of the study was to use information from Louisiana agricultural and fishery producers and school food service directors to determine what barriers are keeping locally produced food from being served in Louisiana school lunch programs.

A. Economic benefits to farmers, cattlemen and fishermen

1. During the 2010 session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Louisiana Sustainable Local Food Policy Council was established to identify opportunities to build a sustainable food economy that can be applied to school systems, government assistance programs and other public services.

2. According the Southeast North Carolina Food Systems Project, institutions like schools, are the largest purchasers of food, especially in rural areas. In order for farmers to sell to institutions, planning and coordination is needed between farmers' and institutional buyers.

3. Louisiana school systems differ in purchasing and procurement procedures, distribution requirements, processing facilities and labor. Navigating these barriers is difficult for many farmers and fishermen who lack resources to engage in institutional purchasing.

4. In recent years Louisiana agriculture and fisheries have been seriously impacted by natural and man-made disasters like Hurricanes Katrina and Rita which resulted in more than $51,400,000 in damages to Louisiana agricultural and seafood. Deep-water Horizon Rig explosion and oil spill resulted in losses over $1.8 billion in revenue from seafood sales.

B. Louisiana agricultural and seafood products would significantly enhance school nutrition programs.

1 .Blue Print to End Hunger reports many poverty-level children rely on the USDA free-lunch programs.

2. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 is a nutrition program that contributes to healthy growth and development of young children. $5 million are provided annually for farm-to-school programs, which develop help school systems develop favorable relationships with local farmers.

Description of how the issue was approached via the project

To identify the barriers to establishing linkages between agricultural producers and school food service directors, three objectives were established which included:

Objective 1

A survey instrument was developed with guidance from Drs. John Dupre and Judy Strecher with the Office of Nutrition Assistance, Louisiana Department of Education and Dr. Debra Davis, Director LSU AgCenter Organization, Development and Evaluation. Boomerang electronic survey instruments were sent to 150 public and parochial school food service directors. LSU AgCenter faculty also met face-to-

face with school food service directors not sent the electronic survey; these surveys were returned via Business Reply Mail. School food service directors not responding to initial electronic surveys were contacted by phone and asked to participate in the study and if agreed, sent a survey. These completed surveys were returned via Business Reply Mail.

Objective 2

Louisiana farmers, cattlemen and fishermen were surveyed to determine the numbers who were currently selling to schools, interest in selling their products and collect data on perceived obstacles in marketing and selling their products. The survey information was obtained through meetings with commodity groups such as Louisiana Cattlemen Association, Louisiana Fruit and Vegetable Association and Southeast Shrimpers Association. Information for the study was also obtained from Crescent City Farmers Market vendors and distributed to participants following Louisiana MarketMaker presentations. Questionnaires were also mailed directly to Louisiana producers, once completed were returned via Business Reply Mail.

Objective 3

Information on the changes in the school lunch program as a result of the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was investigated through website quarries and informal interviews with selected school food service directors. The act:

* Gives USDA the authority to set new standards for food sold in lunches during the regular day

* Authorizes additional funds for the new standards for federal-subsidized school lunches

* Provides resources for schools and communities to utilize local farms and gardens

* Provides resources to increase nutritional quality of food provided by USDA

* Increases access

* Authorizes USDA to provide meals in more after-school programs in "high-risk" areas

* Increases access to drinking water in schools

Description of the contributions of public and private or private agency cooperators and partners and type of work performed

Drs. John Dupree and Judy Stretcher with the Office of Nutrition Assistance, Louisiana Department of Education, provided guidance and assistance in the development of the survey instrument sent to 150 school food service directors from public and parochial schools in Louisiana. Contact information on the school food service directors was also provided by the Louisiana Department of Education.

Letters of Support were provided by: Christopher Van Vliet Chef/Director of Food *Services FirstLine Schools* (Orleans Parish); Jeni J. Blum Manager School Food Services Department, St Bernard Parish Schools; Mary T. Jumonville, Child Nutrition Supervisor, Vermillion Parish School Board; Jo Lynne Correro Director Child Nutrition Services, Ouachita Parish School Board and Renee Sherville, Supervisor Child Nutrition Services, Lafayette Parish.

Richard McCarthy, Executive Director Crescent City Farmers Market, distributed surveys to their market vendors which included: farmers and cattlemen during vendor meetings.

Dr. Carrie Castille, Deputy Assistant commissioner, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) provided Letter of Support and encouraged farmers participating in LDAF meetings to participate in the project by completing surveys.

Louisiana Cattlemen Association, Louisiana Fruit & Vegetable Association and Southeast Shrimpers Association granted permission to explain project and distribute surveys at meetings of these commodity groups.

Drs. John Westra and Roger Hinson, LSU AgCenter Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness and LA MarketMaker coordinators granted permission to explain project and distribute surveys following LA MarketMaker presentations.

LSU AgCenter faculty who assisted in the distribution of the surveys to school food service directors, farmers, fishermen and cattlemen: Mandy Armentor (Vermillion Parish), Sharman Charles (East Baton Rouge Parish), Bertina McGhee (Orleans Parish), Rafash Brew (Lincoln Parish), Thu Bui (fisheries Vermillion and St Mary Parishes), Janet Franicevich (Plaquemines Parish) and Dr. Annrose Guarino (statewide).

Summary of Results and Conclusions

The goal of this study was to utilize information from Louisiana agricultural and seafood producers and school lunch directors to determine what barriers are keeping locally produced food from being served in school lunch programs across the state. Louisiana agricultural and seafood producers were surveyed about their production capacity and marketing practices as well as the barriers and challenges to supplying their products in local schools cafeterias. The objectives of this pilot project included:

1. Survey school lunch directors to determine interest and needs for locally produced agricultural and fishery products and identify purchasing policies of the school lunch programs.

2. Survey farmers and fishermen to determine capacity, barriers to direct marketing to local school lunch programs and knowledge of direct marketing and institutional buying.

3. Identify implications and opportunities to increase the sales of local agricultural and fishery products to school lunch programs to assist schools systems comply with the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010.

OBJECTIVE 1

A survey of public and parochial school food service K-12 food service directors was developed with guidance from Drs. John Dupre and Judy Strecher with the Office of Nutrition Assistance, Louisiana Department of Education and Dr. Debra Davis, Director LSU AgCenter Organization Development and Evaluation. During the 2011-2012 and fall of 2012 school years data was collected from 60 public and parochial school systems, providing information from school food service directors on food purchases, procurement practices, interest in using local products and perceived barriers to purchasing local agricultural and fishery products for their school lunch programs. Completed surveys from East Baton Rouge Parish (5), Orleans (5) and Ouachita (2) reflect the charter, recovery and independent public

school systems, made available through the efforts of LSU AgCenter faculty: Bertina McGhee, Sharman Charles and Cynthia Stephens.

Methodology

Boomerang electronic survey instruments were sent to 150 public and parochial school food service directors, based on a list provided by the Division of Nutrition Assistance, Louisiana department of Education. 47 completed surveys were returned, responses from one incomplete survey was not used. LSU AgCenter faculty met with 13 school food service directors in face-to-face meetings, these surveys were returned via Business Reply Mail.

Characteristics of School Systems Participating in the Study

A majority of the school food service directors (56) do participate in the USDA Fresh fruit and Vegetable Program. This program provides funds for the purchase of fresh fruit, based on the number of elementary schools with a high percentage of students certified for free or reduced price benefits. A majority of the school food service directors in this study indicated all food was prepared on the school site (Table 1).

Table 1. How Food is Prepared

All school food service directors (n=59)	Response Percent	Response Count
All food is prepared on the site	67.8%	40
Most food is prepared on the site	28.8%	17
Most food is prepared off site	1.6%	1
All food is prepared off site	1.6%	1

57 school food service directors responded to the question – how many of the sites serve breakfast, lunch and after school snack? (Table 2).

Table 2. Sites Serving Breakfast, Lunch and After School Snacks

All school food service directors (n=57)	All	More Than 75%	50%-75%	25%-50%	Less than 25%	None
Breakfast (n=57)	73.6% (42)	10.5% (6)	1.7% (1)	3.5% (2)	1.7% (1)	10.5% (6)
Lunch (n=56)	94.6% (53)	3.6% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.8% (1)
After school snack (n=49)	10.2% (5)	6.1% (3)	14.3% (7)	10.2% (5)	18.4% (9)	48.8% (20)

58 school food service directors ranked the meals served at their school sites by student popularity. 52 responses lunch was ranked as the most popular by meal served at their school sites, followed by 24 responses ranking breakfast and 10 responses ranked after school snacks as the least popular meal served at their school site. 56 school food service directors responded to the question on current food storage capacity at their school sites (Table 3).

Table 3. Current Food Storage Capacity

All school food service directors (n=56)	Response Percent	Response Count
Commercial freezer	91%	51
Household freezer	5.4%	3
Commercial refrigerator	78.6%	44
Walk-in cooler	87.5%	49
Pantry with no refrigerator	76.8%	43
Household refrigerator	5.4%	3

Menu Planning

Menu planning is diversified throughout all school systems responding to the study. Table 4 and additional responses that follow clearly illustrate these differences.

Table 4. When Menus are Planned for Sites

All school food service directors (n=56)	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily	3.38%	2
Weekly	1.69%	1
Monthly	63.8%	37
Other, see responses below	32.3%	19

1. Yearly
2. Yearly menus are sent to schools each month for the next school year in March
3. Yearly, then changed as needed
4. 5 week cycle-lunch, 2 week cycle breakfast
5. 4 week cycle
6. 5 week cycle for spring and fall
7. Annual Cycle Menus
8. Four week rotating schedule with holiday & seasonal adjustments
9. 4 week cycle is planned for the year. Special menus are created for NSLW and LSLW.
10. A 20 day cycle is planned, then as we see students not taking certain items we make changes to the cycle.
11. Twice a year
12. Twice a year
13. Annually, with updates as needed.
14. 3 week cycle menus, changes 3 times per year (summer/fall, winter, spring)
15. Two-week menu cycle in a six month bid period
16. 2 month
17. Annually, adjustments made during year as needed
18. 3 months at a time -cycle menus (20-25 days)
19. Menus are planned 6 months in advance.

Once the menu is set, 58 school food service directors responded to the question regarding flexibility to make adjustments (Table 5).

Table 5. Flexibility to Make Adjustments in the Menus Once Set

All school food service directors (n=58)	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily	3.4%	2
Weekly	50%	29
Monthly	15.5%	9
Other see responses below	31%	18

Purchasing

The frequency of when purchases are made did vary significantly as indicated by 58 school food service directors who responded to the study. Variation in when different products were purchased was also indicated by the respondents (Table 6).

Table 6. Purchasing Frequency

All school food service directors (n=58)	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily	3.4%	2
Weekly	50%	29
Monthly	15.5%	9
Other see responses below	31%	18

1. Produce-weekly,
2. Bids for produce, every other week, bids for milk, once a year bids for other food 2 times a year
3. Bi monthly
4. Bid for Aug-Dec 7 Jan-May, produce purchased monthly
5. Twice a Month
6. We contract with Bateman senior meals for our lunches.
7. Weekly for produce; biweekly for all other commodities
8. Bi weekly
9. Blank
10. Varies based on school site and products. Milk is 4 to 5 times a week. Most food is weekly, commodity deliveries are every 2 weeks, some paper products are monthly.
11. All of the above, depends on the product
12. Groceries twice a month; produce weekly; bread weekly; milk daily
13. Dry goods every 3 months, frozen/refrigerated every 2 wks., produce weekly, bread weekly; milk daily
14. Twice monthly
15. Daily, Bi-Weekly and Monthly
16. Every other week
17. Produce weekly; groceries monthly
18. Varies by produce, purchased foods, milk, bread, paper and janitorial. Don't know if you're referring to produce only.

When making food purchases, a majority (45%) of the school food service directors used a Food Service Management Company, (29%) purchased products to be served in school cafeteria directly from growers, producers or suppliers. Other responses:

1. All food is placed on bid
2. Through bids & distributors
3. Bids via bid laws
4. Suppliers only
5. Vendors
6. Sealed Bids
7. Distributors
8. Food service distributor through purchasing cooperative
9. Food distributors bid 6 months in advance of use

Of the foods available from food management companies or brokers, (70%) of the food service directors reported, Louisiana products were purchased. 84% (45) of the school food service directors are purchasing Louisiana food products, with fruit vegetables, bread and milk as the local items more frequently purchased (Table 7).

Table 7. Louisiana Products Purchased by School Food Service Directors

All school food service directors (n=45)	Response Percent	Response Count
Fruit	79.5%	39
Vegetables	73.4%	36
Meats	32.7%	16
Seafood	24.5%	12
Bread	67.3%	33
Milk	75.5%	37
Other see responses below	16.3%	8

1. Fruit when available through distributors
2. Rice
3. Pickled okra, pickles, jalapenos
4. It really depends on who gets the bid and also the growing season as to when we may actually purchase Louisiana products.
5. Unknown
6. Dry and canned items, eggs
7. Purchased thru food broker
8. I am not certain if milk and bread are produced in Louisiana but all of the distributors are from Louisiana

Barriers

From their perspective, 56 school food service directors identified barriers to using more foods in meals at their school sites (Table 8).

Table 8. Barriers to using more Louisiana foods in meals served at school sites

All school food service directors (n=56)	Response Percent	Response Count
Finding Farmers to purchase from directly	66.7%	37
Liability/farmer compliance with food safety and food handling standards	57.1%	32
Timing and frequency of backdoor deliveries	40%	22
Distributor doesn't offer local products	23.6%	13
Product quality	29.1%	16
Multiple orders and invoices	27.3%	15
Fitting local food into the budget	36.4%	20
Working seasonal produce into menus	25.5%	14
Other see responses below	16.4%	9

1. Producer who can deliver to 16 sites
2. Purchases need to be through distributor not farmer
3. The required amount of food needed to produce meals for 33,000 students
4. Purchasing according to LA bid law process
5. Parish has very small population, but very large size not many vendors want to deliver to us
6. Not known if broker carries Louisiana products
7. Bid laws
8. Weekly deliveries in refrigerated truck
9. Information of availability, stores, wholesalers

Resources available to find Louisiana products

Six of the 58 school food service directors were familiar with the Louisiana MarketMaker website and 2 of the 57 school food service directors were familiar with the Delcombe Direct website.

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective 2 of the Pilot Project to Study Barriers to Establishing Linkages between Agricultural Producers and School Lunch Programs was to survey Louisiana Farmers, cattlemen and fishermen to determine capacity, barriers to direct marketing to local schools, knowledge of direct marketing and institutional buying.

Methodology

Survey information was obtained through meetings with commodity groups such as Louisiana Cattlemen Association, Louisiana Fruit & Vegetable Association and Southeast Shrimpers Association. Survey information was also obtained from Crescent City Farmers Market vendors, Washington and Tangipahoa growers and distributed to participants following Louisiana MarketMaker presentations.

Louisiana producers were surveyed to determine the numbers who were currently selling to schools, interest in selling their products and collect data on perceived obstacles in marketing to local school systems. The questionnaire included a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Questionnaires mailed directly to Louisiana producers, once completed were returned via Business Reply Mail. Surveys from 37 Louisiana producers were collected; responses from 5 incomplete surveys were not used.

Characteristics of farmers, cattlemen and fishermen participating in the study

The survey indicated only 1.3% of the farmers, cattlemen and fishermen participating in the project were currently selling their products to local school systems. These products were only available during the growing seasons which did present limits to the amount that could be sold during the regular August thru May school year. The products that were sold to school systems were strawberries and tomatoes. One school system purchased small amounts of local shrimp for school lunches.

33% (n=9) of the Louisiana producers participating in the study were interested in selling their products to local school systems; these producers felt these products would be available during the regular August thru May school year. Various Louisiana products were listed as available (Table 9).

Table 9. Louisiana Products Available for Sale to Local School Systems

tomatoes
Bell peppers
Sweet corn
squash
cantaloupe
watermelons
poultry
shrimp
cheese
eggs

Only 22% (n=6) of the Louisiana producers participating in the study felt that had the capacity to sell their products listed in Table 1 to local school systems (Table 10).

Table 10. Capacity to Sell Their Products to Local School Systems

All Louisiana producers (n=27)	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57.1%	12
No	42.8%	9

Most school districts plan their menu's in April for the following year, 57.1% (n=21) Louisiana producers were interested in providing a school district with a prearranged quantity of product (Table 11).

Table 11. Louisiana Producers' Interest in Providing School Districts with Prearranged Quantities of Product

All Louisiana producers (n=21)	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57.1%	12
No	42.8%	9

Obstacles

19.3% (n=6) Louisiana producers had the infrastructure (trucks, drivers, cold storage) to deliver products to local school systems (Table 12).

Table 12. Infrastructure to Deliver Products to Local School Systems

All Louisiana producers (n=31)	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	19.3%	6
No	80.6%	25

Liability Insurance was ranked as the greatest perceived obstacle to marketing their products to schools by 31.5% (n=10) of the Louisiana producers participating in the study. Lack of transportation was ranked next by 25% (n=8) Louisiana producers (Table 13).

Table 13. Perceived Barriers to Marketing Products to Schools

All Louisiana producers (n=32)	Response Percent	Response Count
Liability insurance too high	31.2%	10
Lack of transportation to deliver products	25%	8
Food safety certifications	18.7%	6
Quantity school requires more product then I have	15.6%	5
Price offered me	6.2%	2
Other see responses below	3.1%	1

1. Limited processing facilities

If they were not selling their produce, meat or seafood to local schools, Louisiana producers participating in the study (n=37), listed other venues for their products which include (Table 14).

Table 14. Places Where Louisiana Producers Sell Their Products

Farmers Markets
Directly to grocery stores
Distributors/wholesalers
Dockside/shrimp sheds
Directly to customers from farm
Health food stores

OBJECTIVE 3

Information on the changes in the school lunch program as a result of the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was investigated through website quarries and informal interviews with selected school food service directors. The act:

* Gives USDA the authority to set new standards for food sold in lunches during the regular day, including vending machines

*Authorizes additional funds for the new standards for federal- subsidized school lunches

*Provides resources for schools and communities to utilize local farms and gardens

*Provides resources to increase nutritional quality of food provided by USDA

*Increases access

*Authorizes USDA to provide meals in more after-school programs in "high-risk" areas

*Increases access to drinking water in schools

Discussion

Louisiana public and private schools are a diverse group, varying from large school systems with centralized receiving and storage facilities feeding large numbers of students daily to small systems with minimal procurement needs for school meals. Regardless of the size school, food service directors identified finding farmers to purchase from directly was perceived as the greatest obstacle to purchasing from Louisiana producers. Other perceived obstacles include: liability/farmer compliance with food safety and food handling standards and timing and frequency of backdoor deliveries. Louisiana producers participating in the study also cited liability insurance as an obstacle to selling their products to school food service directors.

Implications for outreach efforts

This study points to the need for school food service directors to establish relationships with their local producers. Efforts should be made to provide school food service directors' information on what products are available and from whom, available through Louisiana MarketMaker as a web based outlet for locating Louisiana products. Louisiana producers should also take advantage of Louisiana MarketMaker a valuable web based resource for marketing their products not only to school food service directors but also to consumers, grocery stores, roadside stands and restaurants.

The role of the LSU AgCenter is to educate producers on strategies to sell to various types of food service operations and help producers organize into producer organizations. The Market Ready program developed by the University of Kentucky http://www.uky.edu/fsic/marketready/ is a comprehensive educational program preparing agricultural and fishery producers to enter into direct marketing channels by providing well-developed standards and protocols. The Market Ready program includes information on business-to-business "best practices" which include:

Invoicing
Pricing
Marketing
Packaging
Supply

Labeling
Delivery
Quality Assurance

Lessons learned

The influences of the "Buy Local" and "Farm to School" programs and the Healthy-Free Kids Act of 2010 have generated interest in buying Louisiana agricultural and fishery products for school cafeterias. Understanding school systems' purchasing policies and procedures as well as state bid laws can be confusing for many Louisiana producers and serves as barriers to the sales of local products to these school systems.

Louisiana agricultural and fishery producers lack basic knowledge to sell their products to even a small school system. The LSU AgCenter now offer Market Ready programs which provides producers with information on topics such as: marketing pricing, packaging, invoicing and food safety. It is recommended Louisiana producers interested in selling to any institutional buyer take advantage of the Market Ready program.

As learned from members of the Louisiana Cattlemen Association, Louisiana send over 90% of their cattle to feedlots, limiting the availability of local beef. Limited processing facilities also limit the availability of beef and pork for sale to institutions including school systems. Because of these factors survey completion was very limited although numerous attempts were made to meet with cattlemen groups.

Current and future benefits to be derived from the project

This project has resulted in discussions between school food service directors and local producers. It is though these discussions Louisiana producers can have a better understanding of how school systems purchase food for school cafeterias. School food service directors have information on local producers though Louisiana MarketMaker website, web-based resource providing information on local agricultural and fishery products. The LSU AgCenter is now providing information on the Retail Ready program a resource providing producers necessary information to operate a successful business. Economic benefits for Louisiana are derived when Louisiana agricultural and fishery producers can sell their products to school systems. This impact can be felt particularly in rural areas of the state. School children will benefit because they are served fresher products that are delivered from a local farmer or fisherman.

Recommendations for future research

* Follow-up study on the schools now serving local products to school children and what products being purchased.

* Study to determine how Louisiana producers have overcome perceived barriers and have been successful in selling products to school systems. Has the Retail Ready program made a difference in the increased sales to schools? Have value added products been developed as a result of increased sales of Louisiana agricultural and fishery product.

* Gains to Louisiana's economy have been derived from increased sales of Louisiana agricultural and fishery products. How has Louisiana MarketMaker increased sales of Louisiana agricultural and fishery products?

* Conduct webinars or other distance trainings for producers on meeting market requirements including GAP, how to use and maximize impact on MarketMaker, and engage Extension personnel to train producers on business planning, and mitigating risk, including liability issues.

* Conduct a pilot project involving one school system, a food distributor and a small group of producers focusing on one or two commodities or products to derive lessons learned and develop a plan for scaling up to other school systems. What strategies were used and which ones did not work?

* Enlist the state department of agriculture to hold buyer/seller meetings to bring producers, school food service directors and food distributors together for a facilitated discussion to address the barriers and identify solutions for establishing local food systems.

Project beneficiaries as a result of this project

School systems with limited cafeteria labor are now purchasing Louisiana products in a "ready to use" form from food distribution companies. Based on seasonal availability, food distribution companies, supplying food to school systems, are buying from local producers because their customers are requesting local products. Because of this demand for local products farmers are seeing increased sales. Based on the survey results, 44% of the school food service directors said food distribution companies provide a majority of the food purchased for school cafeterias.

Additional information generated by the project

Attached to the final report email are copies of: cover letters and school food service director, famer/cattleman and fisherman surveys; program and power point presentation made to participants of Louisiana Food Access Summit, November 7, 2012. Project report Included in this Final Report was sent electronically to project cooperators which included: Louisiana department of Education, Child Nutrition Services, Crescent City Farmers' Market, LSU AgCenter faculty, Louisiana Department of Agriculture, and selected commodity organizations.

Contact person for the project

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
225-578-2939

Dear Producer,

You are being asked to participate in a study conducted by the LSU AgCenter and funded through a USDA Agricultural Marketing Services grant. State funds for this project were matched with Federal Funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agricultural.

The goal of the study is to find ways to increase the use of local agricultural and seafood products in school cafeterias across the state. You are being asked to respond to questions regarding your interest and capacity to provide products to schools.

School Food Service Directors are also participating in this study to gauge their interest in purchasing local products and identify their schools' purchasing policies. Hopefully this information will provide the information needed to increase the consumption of fresh local Louisiana products in our schools.

As always with LSU AgCenter surveys, any information you provide is confidential and publication of results will be handled in a way that protects your privacy. Thank you for your time, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Once completed, please fold the survey side in with the Business Reply on top.

Sincerely,
Pam Hodson

Pamela B. Hodson, Professor
LSU AgCenter Communications
Room 121, Knapp Hall
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Survey for farmers and cattlemen

1. Do you currently sell produce or meat to school cafeterias?
____Yes ____No

2. If so, which schools?

_____

_____

3. What products do you sell to school cafeterias? For example, tomatoes, watermelons (monthly)

_____

_____

4. In what quantities do you sell to these schools? For example, 100 pounds of ground meat

_____

_____

5. If not selling to schools, are you interested in selling directly to school cafeterias?
____Yes ____No

6. What products could you sell to a school cafeteria?

_____

_____

7. Do you have the capacity to do additional processing to make your product acceptable for sale to a school cafeteria? For example washed chopped broccoli
____Yes ____No

8. Do you have the infrastructure (for example, refrigerated trucks, drivers, cold storage) to deliver your produce or meat to a school cafeteria or central processing location?
____Yes ____No

9. What do you perceive or know are the major barriers when selling direct to schools?
Check all that apply.
____Price offered to me ____Food safety certifications ___other
____Lack transportation to deliver ____Liability insurance is too high
____Quantity, school requires more produce or meat than I have.

10. If you have a food safety or other active certification program, which one is it? For example, Good Agricultural Products (GAP)

_____

11. Most school districts plan their menus in April for the following school year, would you be willing to provide a school district with a prearranged quantity of product in advance of the school year?
____Yes ____No

12. When will these products available? Please mark all months that apply.
__ January __ February __ March __ April __ May __June __July
__ August __September __ October __ November__ December

13. Are you familiar with the Louisiana MarketMaker Website, http://la.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/
____Yes ____No

Pamela B. Hodson, Ph.D.
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Sincerely,
Pam Hodson

Survey for fishermen

1. Do you currently sell seafood to school cafeterias?
____Yes ____No

2. If so, which schools?
_____ _____ _____

3. What products do you sell to school cafeterias? For example, peeled deveined shrimp
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

4. In what quantities do you sell to these schools? For example, peeled shrimp 1000 pounds
_____ _____ _____
_____ _____ _____

5. If not selling to schools, are you interested in selling directly to school cafeterias?
____Yes ____No

6. Do you have the capacity to do additional processing to make your product acceptable for sale to a school cafeteria?
____Yes ____No

7. Do you have the infrastructure (for example, trucks, drivers, cold storage) to deliver your seafood to a school cafeteria or central processing location?
____Yes ____No

8. What do you perceive or know are the major barriers when selling direct to schools?
Check all that apply.
____Price offered to me ____Food safety certifications
____Lack transportation to deliver ____Liability insurance is too high
____Quantity, school requires more seafood than I have.

9. If you have a food safety or other active certification program, which one is it? For example, HACCP
_____

10. Most school districts plan their menus in April for the following school year, would you be willing to providing a school district with a prearranged quantity of product in advance of the school year?
____Yes ____No

11. When are these products available? Please mark all months that apply.
__ January __ February __ March __ April __ May __June __July
__ August __September __ October __ November__ December

12. Where do you sell your seafood? For example, Farmers Markets, Distributors, Grocery Stores
_____ _____ _____ _____

13. Are you familiar with the Louisiana MarketMaker website, http://la.marketmaker.uiuc.edu
____Yes ____No

14. Are you familiar with the Delcambre Direct website, www.portofdelcambre.com
____Yes ____No

State funds for this project were matched with federal funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Pamela B. Hodson, Ph.D.
LSU AgCenter Communication
Room 121, Knapp Hal
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
225-578-2939

Dear School Food Service Manager,
You are being asked to participate in a study conducted by the LSU AgCenter and funded through a USDA Marketing Services grant. State funds for this project were matched with federal funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
The goal of this study is to find ways to increase the use of local agricultural and seafood products in school cafeterias across the state. You are being asked to respond to questions regarding your school's interest and need for locally available products and identify the challenges to purchasing these products from local farmers and fishermen. The survey should take only a few minutes to complete. Drs. John Dupre and Judy Stretcher are aware of the study and were instrumental in the development of the survey.

Hopefully this information will benefit your students by making fresh, Louisiana products part of your school lunch program and enable your school to take advantage of the USDA funds that will be available establish Farm to School Programs. Farmers and fishermen will also be surveyed about their current production capabilities and interest in participating in the School Food Lunch Program. As always with the LSU AgCenter surveys, any information you provide is confidential and any publication of results will be handled in a way that protects your privacy. Thank you for your time, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Once completed, please fold the survey side in, with the Business Reply on top.

1. Your parish. _____

2. Number of school food service sites in your parish _____

3. Number of sites participating in the USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program (FFVP)._____

4. How is food prepared for your sites?
_____ ALL is prepared on the school site
_____ MOST is prepared on the school site
_____ MOST is prepared off-site
_____ ALL is prepared off-site

5. For sites where food is prepared off-site, where is it most often prepared?
_____ At another school site
_____ Not at another school site

6. How many of your sites serve each of the following? Circle the answer that best fits your response

	All	More than 75%	50-75%	25-50%	Less than 25%	None
Breakfast	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lunch	1	2	3	4	5	6
After-school snack	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. At your school sites, which are the most popular meals?

_____ Breakfast
_____ Lunch
_____ After-school snack

8. How often are menus planned for your sites?

_____ Daily
_____ Weekly
_____ Monthly
_____ Other, please specify

9. Once the menu is set by the parish, how much flexibility do the sites have in making adjustments?

_____ A great deal of flexibility
_____ Some flexibility
_____ No flexibility

10. How often do you make purchases?

_____ Daily
_____ Weekly
_____ Monthly
_____ Other, please specify

11. What is your current food storage capacity? (Select all that apply)

_____ Commercial freezer
_____ Household freezer
_____ Commercial refrigerator
_____ Walk-in cooler
_____ Pantry with no refrigeration
_____ Household refrigerator

12. How does your school system purchase the majority of the food served at the sites?

_____ Directly from the grower, producer or supplier
_____ Through a Food Service Management Company or Broker
_____ Both of the above
_____ Other, please specify

13. Does your school system currently purchase any Louisiana food products?

_____ Yes _____No

14. If you do purchase Louisiana products, which of the following do you purchase? (Select all that apply)

_____ Fruits
_____ Vegetables
_____ Meats
_____ Seafood
_____ Bread
_____ Milk
_____ Other, please specify

15. If purchased from a food service management company or broker, are Louisiana produce and/or seafood offered?

_____ Yes _____No

16. What are the biggest barriers to using more Louisiana foods in meals in your schools? (Select all that apply)

_____ Finding farmers to purchase from directly
_____ Liability/ farmer compliance with food safety and food handling standards
_____ Timing and frequency of backdoor deliveries
_____ Extra time preparing and handling fresh products
_____ My distributor doesn't offer local products
_____ Product quality
_____ Fitting local food into your budget
_____ Multiple orders and invoices
_____ Working seasonal produce into your menus
_____ Other, please specify

17. Are you familiar with the free Louisiana MarketMaker website, http://la.marketmaker.uiuc.edu?

_____ Yes _____No

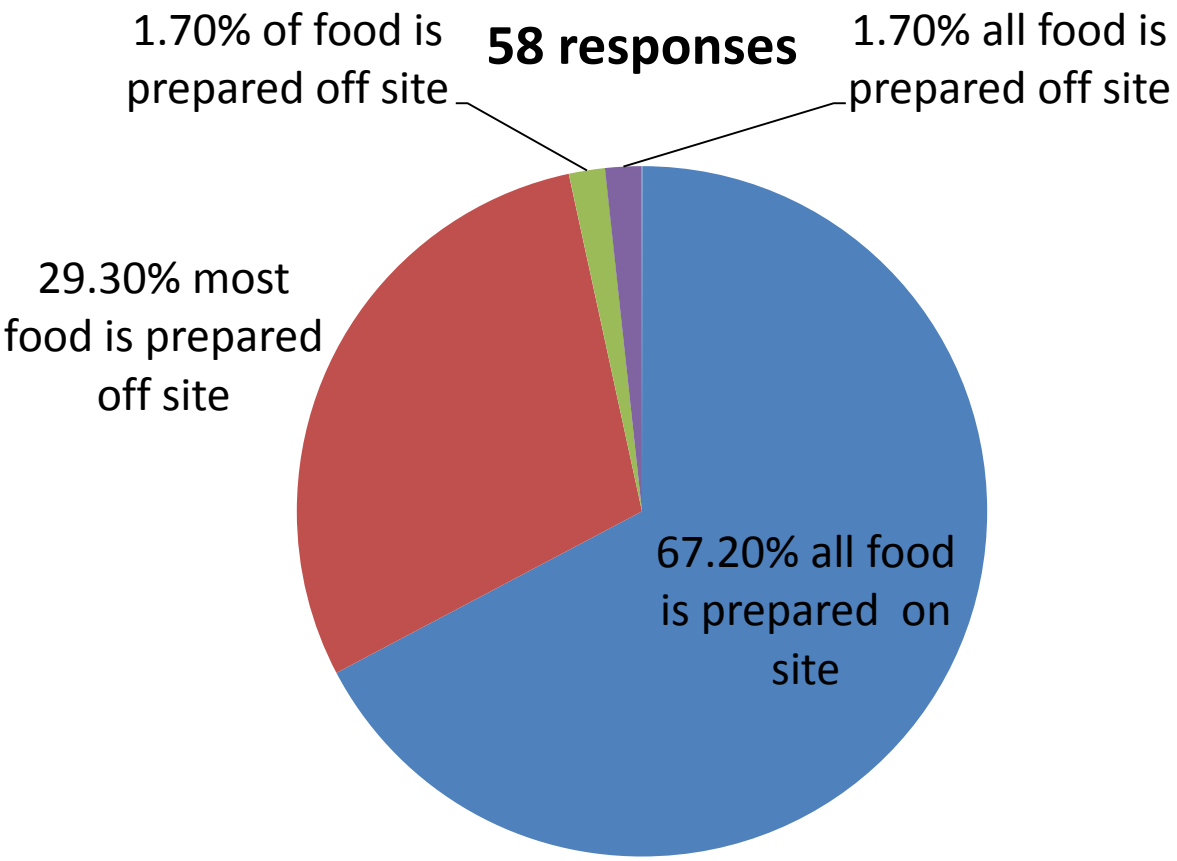
18. Are you familiar with the Delcambre Direct website, www.portofdelcambre.com

_____ Yes _____No

A Pilot Project to Study the Barriers to Establishing Linkages between Agricultural Producers and School Lunch Programs

Pamela B. Hodson, PhD
Professor/Public Relations Specialist
LSU AgCenter

How is food prepared at your site?

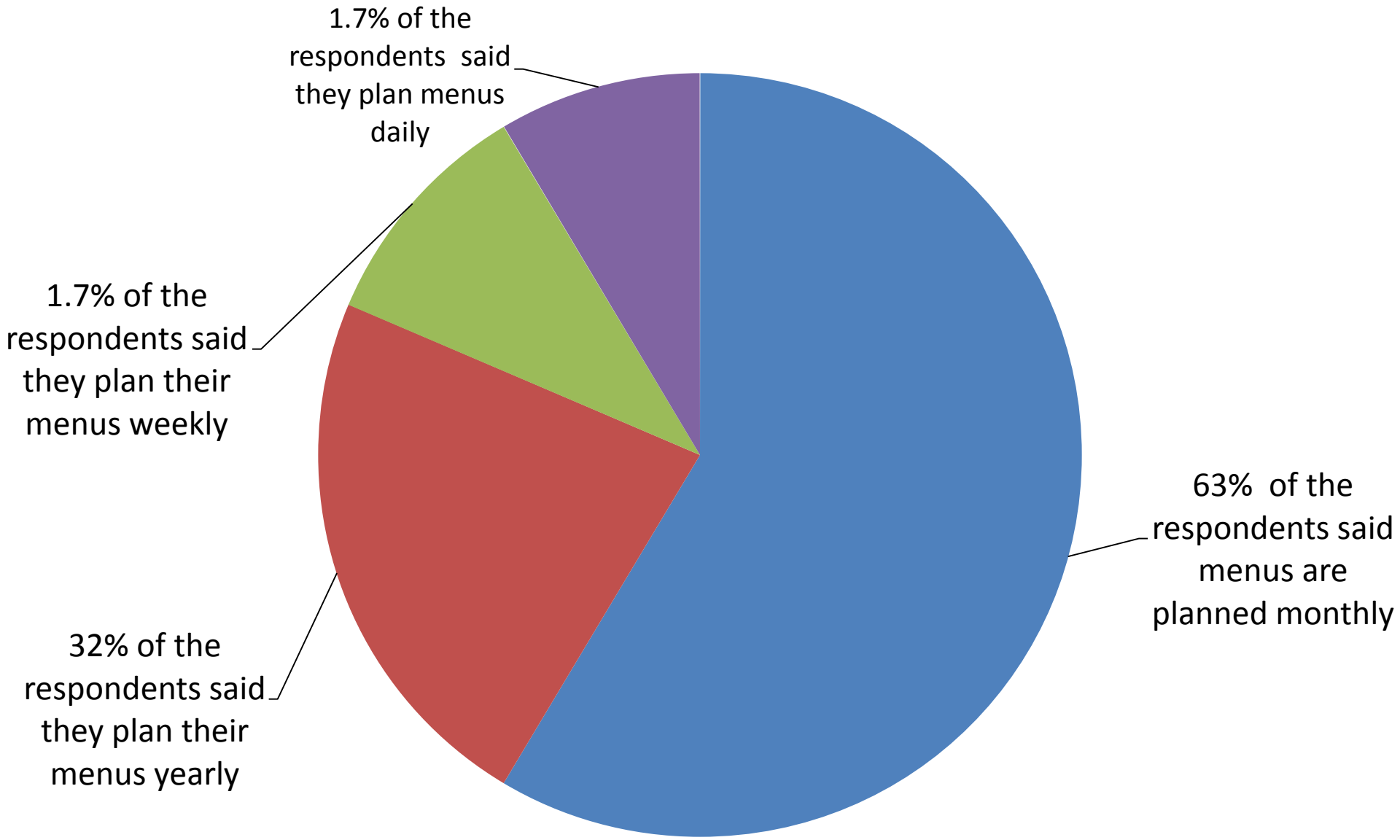


-72.4% of the 58 respondents said all their sites served breakfast

-97% of the 51 respondents said lunch was the most popular meal in their school system

-10.2% of the 58 respondents said ALL sites in their school system serve After School Snacks

How often are menus planned for your sites



Of the 32% of the respondents that plan menus yearly

- Menus that are planned yearly are sent to schools each month and can be changed as needed
- Menus are planned on a 5 week cycle
- Menus are planned on a 4 week rotating schedule with holiday and seasonal adjustments
- Menus are planned on a 20 day cycle

Storage capacity at your school sites

- Commercial freezer
- Commercial refrigerator
- Walk-in cooler
- Pantry

How does your school system purchase a majority of food served

- 43% through a Food Service Management Company
- 29.8% directly from growers and producers
- 10.5% combination of both
- Local suppliers

What Louisiana products do you buy

- Fruit
- Milk
- Vegetables
- Bread
- Meats
- Seafood
- Rice
- Eggs

Barriers to buying Louisiana products

- Finding farmers to purchase from directly
- Liability/ farmer compliance with food safety and food handling standards
- Timing and frequency of backdoor deliveries
- Extra time preparing and handling fresh products
- My distributor doesn’t offer local products
- Product quality
- Fitting local food into your budge
- Multiple orders and invoices
- Working seasonal produce into our menus

Funding for study

State funds for this project were matched with federal funds under the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program of the Agricultural Marketing Service, US Department of Agriculture

The Louisiana Food Access Summit was made possible by the generous support of our collaborators.

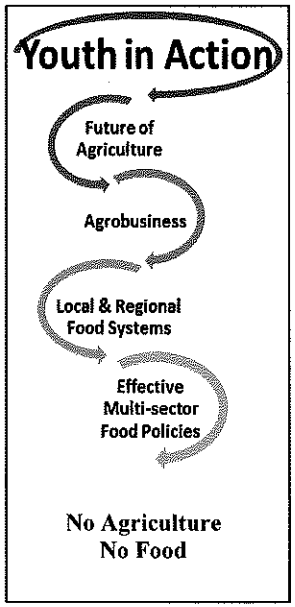
Printing courtesy of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana as a community service. Responsibility for editorial content is solely that of the Louisiana Food Access Summit.

Louisiana FOOD ACCESS Summit

Wednesday, November 7, 2012
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Pennington Biomedical Research Center
6400 Perkins Road
Baton Rouge, La.

Parallel Youth Summit



PROGRAM

8:30 a.m. Registration and Breakfast

9:30 a.m. Welcome from Honorary Summit Chair
Auditorium **The Many Faces of Louisiana Local Food Systems**
Mike Strain, *D.V.M., Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture*

9:55 a.m. Serving You: LSU Agricultural Center
Auditorium Paul Coreil, *Ph.D., Vice Chancellor and Director, LSU AgCenter/Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service*

10:10 a.m. Importance of Regional and Local Food Policy
Auditorium **Councils**
Rep. Scott M. Simon
Louisiana House of Representatives, District 74

10:25 a.m. Establishing Cross-Sector Collaborations for a
Auditorium **Hunger Free Louisiana**
William "Bill" Ludwig
Southwest Regional Administrator, USDA Food and Nutrition Service

10:50 a.m. Panel: Louisiana Food Policy News You Can Use
Auditorium Paul Coreil
William "Bill" Ludwig
Scott M. Simon

11:10 a.m. Break and Move to Concurrent Sessions

11:25 a.m. Concurrent Sessions on Food Access
Breakout Rooms Learn current status, goals and barriers for the following topics from experts. (Select One)

Linking Farms With Schools
Farm to school programs (farm food to the cafeteria table) support local and regional farm families. Louisiana is working to identify the barriers to using local foods in schools and the capacity of farmers

and fishermen to supply schools with agricultural and fishery products. Healthful options in school cafeterias can instill lifelong, healthful eating habits. As children learn by doing, introducing them to the process of growing food, meet-the-farmer days and other educational programs inspire interest in fresh fruits and vegetables.

- **Georganna Brogdon,** *R.D., L.D.N., Education Program Consultant 3, Division of Nutrition Support; Louisiana Department of Education*
- **Trandra Scott,** *R.D., L.D.N., Education Program Consultant 2, Division of Nutrition Support; Louisiana Department of Education*
- **Pamela Hodson,** *Ph.D., Professor, Public Relations and Information Specialist, Burden Center, LSU AgCenter*

Planning for Urban Agriculture
Urban agriculture plays an important role in robust local and regional food systems. Community gardens to full-scale commercial farms integrate food production into the urban environment in cities and towns. The benefits of urban agriculture include shortened supply chains, increased awareness of food production infrastructure, increased urban access to fresh produce, sustainable green waste disposal and creative strategies for combating urban blight. Cities actively promote food production by amending zoning ordinances and city plans to allow a full range of agricultural activities within city limits. This session discusses the urban planning process and how city governments, citizen groups and agricultural advocates can guide communities to become food-producing environments.

- **Kim Mitchell,** *Sutton Mitchell Beebe Babin Architects*
- **Jenga Mwendo,** *Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development*
- **Sanjay Kharod,** *New Orleans Food and Farm Network*

Hunger Free Louisiana
The Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 is a strategic statewide coalition framework with real potential to make Louisiana hunger free. A capacity-building project, the Hunger Free initiative establishes multidisciplinary and cross-sector collaborations to improve outreach, community organizing, advocacy and coordination in communities to more effectively serve children at risk of hunger. Food banks partner to establish grassroots efforts to increase participation in public and private resources in the regions. A Hunger Free Louisiana effort looks for ways to work together to address gaps in service, reduce duplication and conduct creative outreach efforts with programs across the