

**DEVELOP EFFICIENCIES IN FOOD PROCESSING FOR  
RURAL FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS THROUGH  
SCHOOL FOOD NUTRITION SERVICE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS  
FY 2012**

The overall goal of the project was to expand opportunities for Montana's farmers by determining the best methods for processing and preparing fruits and vegetables for the state's largest public institutional market segment--K-12 schools. The project was a collaborative effort of Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) division of Lake County Community Development Corporation, the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC), six local schools and one institution. Key barriers were identified that prevent schools from using more local produce: 1) The height of the growing season occurs when schools are typically not in session; 2) Schools are limited in the equipment and labor to process produce; and 3) The cost of processing can make procurement of locally grown and processed produce unattainable for school districts.

The initial goal was to implement a cooperative purchasing and processing farm to school program to effectively and safely aggregate supply to meet the needs of local schools. A Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperative Purchasing was introduced to Food Service Directors to lower costs for each school and to streamline aggregation. To ready producers and processors to meet the food safety demands of the farm-to-school marketplace and scale production to competitively enter the farm-to-school marketplace, a Wholesale Success workshop was held. A cost analysis tool was developed to enable producers to evaluate and determine competitive pricing that met the budgetary requirements of partner food service directors. Partners supported the project by launching a regional farm-to-school campaign to promote program initiatives and launch MMFEC's farm to school product, the Montana Lentil Patty.

According to Western Montana Growers Cooperative records, 30,450 pounds of produce went to local schools in 2012 with a value of \$21,406. In 2013, that amount grew to 54,797 pounds of produce, worth \$50,445, an 80% increase in pounds of produce between 2012 and 2013. An overall project evaluation was conducted toward the end of the project to ensure long term sustainability for the farm-to-school program. A multi-stakeholder evaluation committee of project partners was established to continue the work into the future.

**FINAL REPORT  
CASE STUDY**

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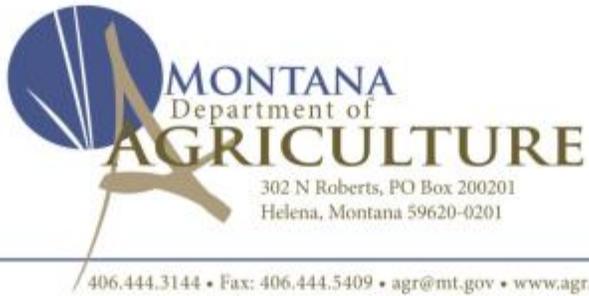
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**Agreement # 12-25-G-1507**

**Federal State Marketing Improvement Program**

**(FSMIP)**

**Final Performance Report**

**December 28, 2014**

**REVISED January 30, 2015**



## Develop Efficiencies in Food Processing for Rural Farm to School Programs through School Food Nutrition Service Cooperative Agreements

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**Grant Period:** October 2012 to September 2014

### Contact

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### The Problem

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The Montana Department of Agriculture received a \$ 39,115 FSMIP grant to expand the market opportunities for Montana's farmers by determining the best methods for processing and preparing fruits and vegetables for the state's largest public institutional market segment – K-12 schools.

The Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) division of Lake County Community Development Corporation launched the project, **Develop Efficiencies in Food Processing for Rural Farm to School Programs through School Food Nutrition Service Cooperative Agreements** in collaboration with the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC), six local schools and one institution in October 2012. To determine the project need MMFEC evaluated its farm to institution program. Initial results reveal that fresh produce for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) poses low price spread barriers between Montana producers and schools when efficient processing equipment and sufficient skilled labor is available either at the schools or a central processor. But, a significant price spread exists for schools to source frozen fruits and vegetables even when efficient processing equipment is available. The simplest reason for the disparity between the FFVP and School Meals Program is that FFVP is a separate program of the school meals and operates on a separate budget. FFVP's budget allows for purchasing of processing equipment and hiring of additional staff. Food Service Directors have the added option of purchasing pre-cut fresh produce in ready to eat packages. The pre-cut fruits and vegetables cost more but fit within the overall budget of the program when processing labor and raw ingredients are included. Montana's lack of processing infrastructure almost guarantees that the pre-cut fruits and vegetables are grown and processed outside of Montana. Another barrier to providing produce to the FFVP from Montana farms is that the height of Montana's growing season does not align with the school calendar. Storage crops are an option for supplying schools but the FFVP is an education program as much as a nutrition program. School Food Service directors work to expose children to a wide range of fruits

and vegetables. Frozen fruits and vegetables prepared in the summer for an extended harvest in the winter are the next step in expanding farm to school markets.

Hence, this project identified the key primary barriers that prevent schools from using more local produce and explored ways to overcome them.

**The identified barriers were:**

- 1) The height of the growing season occurs when schools are typically not in session.
- 2) Schools are limited in the equipment and labor to process produce.
- 3) The cost of processing can ultimately make the procurement of locally grown and processed produce unattainable for school districts.

**The Approach**

The project sought to attain 3 set goals as outlined below:

**Program Goal 1: Implement a cooperative purchasing and processing farm to school program that will effectively and safely aggregate supply to meet the needs of local schools**

**Objective 1: To increase efficiencies in purchasing, aggregation, and processing, an initial planning meeting was held with stakeholders on January 31st, 2013. The goal of developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Cooperative Purchasing was introduced to Food Service Directors (FSD)s to lower costs for each school and to stream-line aggregation**

**Key Collaborators:**

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>School District/Position</b>	<b>Meals Served</b>	<b>Goals &amp; Reason for Attending Meeting</b>
Lindsay Howard Coordinator	MMFEC Farm to School	N/A	“To collaborate and create efficiency in local procurement efforts”
Jennifer Montague	Food Service Director (FSD), Kalispell School District	3,500	“To get kids to understand the food system we’re up against and make them want to fix it.”
Jim Steiner	FSD, Polson School District	1,200	“To offer a variety of fruits and vegetables and utilize local produce.”

Steffen Brown	Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) Assistant Manager	N/A	“To learn about institutional procurement.”
Jay Stagg	FSD, Whitefish School District	800	“For kids to eat food that tastes like it’s supposed to.”
Marsha Wartick	FSD, Ronan School District	1,100	“To get kids to eat healthier and fresher, to give kids what they can’t get at home.”
Karen Belluomini	FSD, St. Ignatius School District	400	“To teach kids about what they’re eating and what real food tastes like; local is the best way to do that.”
Peter Kerns	FoodCorps Service Member representing Missoula County Public Schools	6,000 meals	“To develop local products that are sustainable and within budget.”
Lea Howe	FoodCorps Fellow	N/A	“To get local beef into schools.”
Shay Farmer	MTCC AmeriCorps VISTA, representing Salish Kootenai College	N/A	N/A
Nicki Jimenez	FoodCorps Service Member at MMFEC	N/A	“To come away from today’s meeting with a plan of action.”
Dave Prather	WMGC General Manager	N/A	
Yvette Rodriguez	MMFEC Food Safety Coordinator	N/A	“To discuss what is and isn’t safe and realistic on a processing floor.”

One area of collaboration, cooperative labor, was broached as a way to lower processing costs for schools to better meet their budgetary needs. It was envisioned that school district food service staff, during the summer, would help process local vegetables and fruits at MMFEC’s food processing facility in Ronan, MT. Polson, Ronan, and Kalispell schools signed letters of support committing to sharing of labor costs of processing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Upon individual follow-up meetings with Ronan and Polson FSDs and their Superintendents between June 10, 2013 and July 16, 2013, cooperative labor for processing of fruits and vegetables was ruled out as a viable option due to issues such as Workman's Compensation for non-MMFEC staff. Qualitative data collected indicated that the farm-to-school program was viewed positively by FSD staff. The quality of the product from WMGC and the processing and packaging from MMFEC has been viewed favorably. FSDs identified that prices are higher than through their normal distributors, Sysco and FSA, but they like to buy local. Both Food Service Directors expressed interest in buying more local products if more were available and/or could be paired with lower-cost commodity items. Both districts were happy with their one snack per week purchase and would be interested in adding another to the week, depending on budgetary allowances.

Product feedback offered by FSDs:

- Apples, peppers, carrots and plums were all well received.
- Products that could have been better processed included: cucumbers that were too thinly sliced, apples that were sometimes too big, cabbage that could be shredded finer, and cantaloupe that could be more thickly cut.
- Spinach, radishes, peaches and pears - schools identified they would like to see more of these items.

In February 2014, MMFEC met with 6 FSDs from Bigfork, Evergreen, Whitefish, Kalispell, Charlo, and St. Ignatius to discuss price points that needed to be met for future development of local products outside the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, such as beef or other value-added products that the schools may be interested in purchasing for breakfasts and lunches. Product ideas were further developed such as the beef-lentil crumble, frozen soups, and pizza sauce. Specific price point thresholds were discussed for protein servings and vegetable/fruit servings, giving MMFEC a better idea of what items needed to be priced at in order for schools to be able to afford local, value-added products. For the future of farm-to-school, discussions were held about the ability for schools to plan a year in advance for producers of the WMGC. Most FSDs indicated that they were able to plan their needs a year in advance.

Kalispell, Ronan, and Polson school district committed to purchase one processed and one un-processed snack per week for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program through the WMGC. As of May 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed between Kalispell School District, WMGC, and MMFEC. The MOU outlines the frequency of fresh, processed snacks (once a week), how the product will be delivered and the process to follow for opting out of a snack for the week. No other informal or formal MOUs have been developed with school districts. The MOUs are included in this report as Appendix A.

**Priorities:**

- To prioritize the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for cooperative buying and to set up a system of communication and an ordering system for school districts to be on the same weekly procurement schedule.
- To push a strategy based upon availability.
- To source surplus products to schools.
- Potential value-added items outside of fresh fruits and vegetables:
- Beef/lentil crumble (one part beef crumble, one part lentil crumble) that would utilize Montana beef and lentils to use as a taco or plain crumble, to lower the cost of local beef and to fulfill FSDs new higher bean/legume requirements. The materials that were developed as farm-to-school promotional materials could be used by FoodCorps Service Members throughout the state to promote product.
- A frozen soup product utilizing local veggies, as the non-local product was identified as already being expensive.

WMGC and MMFEC work under a co-packing agreement and have identified the keys to processing local produce efficiently. No formal cooperative purchasing agreements were entered into by the school districts but WMGC pools the needs of each school into an amount that makes processing cost effective for everyone. The minimum poundage needed for an efficient process was identified at 600 pounds. This is an amount that MMFEC can process during a normal day and do it at a cost that is affordable to schools. The cost of production is spread over the raw or beginning weight poundage and is reflected as a cost of processing per pound. WMGC combines the cost of the raw product with the processing cost to come up with the amount that a school will pay for a processed product per pound.

**Objective 2: To ready producers and processors for meeting the food safety demands of the farm-to-school marketplace and scaling production to competitively enter the farm-to-school marketplace, a Wholesale Success workshop was held for WMGC producers to discuss Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Feedback from producers was collected from this workshop as well.**

FamilyFarmed.org developed the course “Wholesale Success: Managing Wholesale Production, Marketing, Financial, and Human Risks for Montana Specialty Crop Farmers” in conjunction with the Risk Management Agency and MMFEC. A six hour Wholesale Success workshop was held on March 6, 2013 in Missoula, MT, and a 312 page manual entitled “Wholesale Success: A Farmers Guide to Food Safety, Postharvest Handling, and Packing and Selling Produce” was distributed. Of the 62 producers that attended the workshop, 16 were WMGC producers and two were WMGC management. This represents 42% of WMGC producers. An important segment of the workshop focused on “Creating an On Farm Food Safety Plan” which utilized the manual’s food safety section. An online tool from Cornell University Extension is available for producers to create a food safety risk management plan that was specific to their farm. One-on-one technical assistance was also offered to producers.

An outcome of the training was the commitment of Western Montana Growers Cooperative and its members to pursue a Group GAP-GHP Quality Management System (Group GAP QMS). LCCDC and the cooperative partnered with one another as part of the Wallace Center Group GAP pilot project. The USDA AMS's GAP program has been an important program for many small and mid-scale producers. It is a partnership between the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and The Wallace Center and together they have developed a Group GAP certification option. The cooperative approach to farm product safety offers a more cost effective means of meeting supply chain demands, for small- and mid-sized farms, than individual certification. Using this approach, a group of farms develop a shared Quality Management System (QMS) whereby the individual farm/member's good agricultural practices, and related procedures and documentation, are developed and implemented. Every farm is internally audited (by qualified individuals under contract to or employed by the group) and the farms are collectively accountable for continuous improvement. They are externally audited as one entity. Recently, the USDA AMS successfully piloted the Group GAP approach with Good Natured Family Farms, a food hub in Kansas City, MO. Findings from the Wallace Center's study of this initial pilot indicated that the Group GAP approach can both meet buyer demands and offer significant saving to farmers. A recent (unpublished) USDA RMA estimate determined that for a group of 50 farmers, certification costs are reduced by, approximately, 1/3 and costs for the following year are less than 50% when certification is obtained through group GAP.

**Objective 3: To increase production of local food for area school districts by 30% has been met and surpassed**

According to Western Montana Growers Cooperative records, 30,450 pounds of produce went to local schools in 2012 with a value of \$21,406. In 2013, that amount became 54,797 pounds of produce, worth \$50,445. This represents an 80% increase in pounds of produce between 2012 and 2013.

**Local Produce to Schools January-December 2012 &2013:**

School District	Pounds of Produce Purchased 2012	Pounds of Produce Purchased 2013	% Change
Boulder Elementary School	1, 016	1,572	55
Butte City Schools Warehouse	1,008	1,545	53
Kalispell Public Schools	22,766	38,700	70
Evergreen School District	0	355	355
Missoula County Public Schools	3,708	2,976	-20
Polson School District	540	4,468	727
Ronan/Pablo School District	921	3,816	314
Somers School District	341	1,144	236
St. Ignatius School	80	220	175

District			
<b>Total:</b>	30,380	54,79	80

**Objective 4: Implement cost analysis tool to develop competitive pricing that meets the budgetary requirements of partner food service directors**

Through the Montana Manufacturing Center, a cost analysis tool was developed. The tool enables the center to develop competitive pricing that meets budgetary requirements of food service directors and is currently used when considering any new processed or value-added product. The tool takes into account the cost of packaging materials, floor space, equipment and staff needed. Through efficient processing and competitive pricing additional school partnerships developed, with nine western Montana school districts participating in 2013. Every processing run at MMFEC is analyzed with the tool and key efficiencies have been developed as a result of the analysis.

**Program Goal 2: Launch a regional farm-to-school campaign through networks and events that will promote program initiatives and will highlight the Montana Lentil patty**

**Objective 1: Leverage existing specialty crop promotional materials into a farm-to school campaign**

A set of 13 Harvest of the Month promotional posters, that highlight Montana fruits and vegetables, were supplied to partner FSDs and FoodCorps sites throughout the state. The posters have been distributed throughout western Montana to 11 schools in three districts, reaching 4,885 students. In 2013, the posters were distributed during 12 major Montana conferences to an audience that included community leaders, school nutrition professionals, afterschool educators, and parents. There are four conferences scheduled in 2014 where the posters will be distributed. A coloring book based off the posters was also created with added content and recipes. Currently, 350 coloring books have been distributed. All farm-to-school materials developed have been published on the MMFEC’s website- [www.mmfec.org](http://www.mmfec.org)

**Objective 2: Launch MMFEC’s farm to school product, the Montana Lentil Patty**

The Montana Lentil Patty was developed to meet the increasing needs of food service operations to provide alternative protein items and to enable them to support local food systems and farm-to-institution values.

From 2012-2014, the lentil patty was served at two schools, mainly as a vegetarian option rather than the main course. Work is currently being done to encourage more K-12 schools to try the lentil patty as a center of the plate option, but to date, the patty appears better geared to an older audience.

In response to hesitations by food service directors to offer purely vegetarian protein options as the main course and suggestions from a stakeholder meeting in January 2013; the concept of a Beef-Lentil crumble, a product that lowers the cost of Montana beef, has been the new focus for K-12 schools. Both plain and taco flavored crumbles were created. In February 2014, samples of the crumble were tested in four schools under the guidance of FoodCorps service members, and two schools without FoodCorps association also took part. So far, 537 K-8 students have tried the product, of which, 497 provided positive feedback. Three schools have since purchased additional

product, over 1,000 pounds since April 2014. The product will be featured at the Montana Nutrition Association's meal convention in June 2014, where the crumble and patty will be available for food service directors across the state of Montana.

### **Program Goal 3- Conduct project evaluation through a participatory process that will ensure long-term sustainability for farm-to-school program**

#### **Objective 1- Establish multi-stakeholder evaluation committee of project partners**

An evaluation committee was developed and meetings were held throughout the span of the project with representatives from MMFEC, WMGC (management and producers), and local FSDs.

Information sharing between parties was key to the success of developing communication and processing efficiencies; discussions between parties occurred in person and via conference calls, due to Montana's rural nature, to discuss short and long term impacts of the farm-to-school project.

Short term discussions included whether a particular processed product met the needs of all parties involved in regards to quality, quantity, packaging and cost. Value-added products have been researched and tested for future use in school markets on MMFEC's end and are continuously being developed.

Schools have offered feedback on products to help improve their quality. WMGC and MMFEC have used this feedback to refine processing steps, make appropriate packaging decisions, and decide if a product is worth purchasing a second time. Most all of the products offered as "fresh" have met the needs and price points that schools are looking for and are generally served to students as a snack through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). From a processing standpoint fresh products require the least amount of labor, thereby keeping the cost of production at an affordable level.

Fresh products offered are: coiled carrots, sliced cucumbers, wedged apples, shredded cabbage, diced melon, sliced beets, sliced bell peppers, cauliflower florets, and broccoli florets. Products that are offered as blanched and frozen or simply frozen are: zucchini, green beans, cauliflower, broccoli, cherries, butternut squash, onions, peas, tomatoes, and beets.

More work is being done to develop products that meet the needs of schools and utilize locally grown items. A key lesson learned was speaking the "language" of the schools. They operate in costs per serving and food is grown and processed at a cost per pound. Taking the time to break costs into the serving sizes, that schools use, saves time when conveying costs and it identifies if a product is cost effective or not. The evaluation summary is included in this report as Appendix B.

### **Lessons Learned**

The evaluation conducted for the Mission Valley Farm to School project revealed aspects that will assist us in implementing best practices to ensure the sustainability of the project. Three key findings were:

- 1) Specific coordination is demanded to meet the minimum purchasing requirements for cooperative purchasing and processing of local produce with various school districts that will fit into school budgets
- 2) In order to expand the farm to school market, there needs to be a coordinated planning process between producers, distributors and schools at least one year in advance.
- 3) The trial and planning of new products in schools often requires at least one dedicated staff member on both ends of development and at the school.

In order for schools to purchase locally produced and processed items, a tight price point must be met. In the past, a FoodCorps Service member at LCCDC has acted as a broker between the WMGC and the processing facility to establish cost for schools. To make a processing run affordable, at least 600 pounds of raw product must be processed. This means that orders from multiple school districts must be collected in order to bring the price point down. By purchasing cooperatively, school districts can make a local item affordable that, if purchased individually, would not meet their budgetary constraints.

To continue to expand farm to school in Montana, a coordinated planning process must take place between producers, distributors and schools at least one year in advance. The farm to school market began, in western Montana, as an outlet for second standard produce. As a result, the planning for an unguaranteed product, a year in advance, proved to be quite challenging for schools. Instead of the farm to school market being seen as an outlet for various seconds, a coordinated plan needs to be implemented to continue to expand the program and to encourage producers to grow specifically for the farm to school market.

The planning and serving of new local and healthy products in schools requires a dedicated individual to seek out local items, implement staff training, and carry out taste testing to familiarize kids with new menu items. LCCDC has seen a stark difference between districts employing such an individual and those having only the Food Service Director to shoulder this new challenge.

While these findings have certainly presented a challenge to Farm to School Procurement, they have also been seen as a viable opportunity to expand farm to school procurement in western Montana and throughout the entire state.

## **Project Deliverables**

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The project completed the deliverable of conducting a Farm to School Case Study (Appendix C) which will be sent to numerous outlets such as the USDA Rural Cooperative Development magazine and other publications. Project outcomes were presented at several national and statewide conferences.

1) 2013 Montana Famers Union Convention- Jan Tusick participated on a Farm to School Panel with national Food Corp Volunteers.

2) 2014 Farm to Cafeteria Conference- Jan Tusick and Shay Farmer presented the outcomes of the project on a panel with other Food HUBs.

3) 2014 Wallace Center Food HUB conference- As a participant of the “frozen” panel, Jan Tusick presented on the number of frozen Farm to School products and the methodology used in production.

4) Shay Farmer attended the April 2014 Entering the Institutional Food Market workshop-Butte, MT

5) Shay Farmer and Connie Surber attended the June 2014 Montana School Nutrition Association Meal Convention-Great Falls, MT

6) Shay Farmer attended the September 2014 FoodCorps Statewide Training on Local Procurement Practices-Butte, MT

## **Additional Information**

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### **Appendix A- Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).**

- 1) Western Montana Growers Cooperative
- 2) Kalispell School District
- 3) Polson School District
- 4) Ronan School District

### **Appendix B- Project Evaluation**

### **Appendix C- Farm to School Case Study**

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## Memorandum of Understanding

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### Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Lake County Community Development Corporation (LCCDC)/Mission Mountain Food  
Enterprise Center (MMFEC)

and

Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between LCCDC/MMFEC and WMGC to establish a co-packing and processing agreement for value-added fruit and vegetable products for school and institutional distribution.

#### **Background**

LCCDC/MMFEC and WMGC have a long relationship working together to produce value-added food products for school and institutional use. Together both have benefited through the retention of jobs and increased sales as the farm to institution market has expanded.

#### **Purpose**

This MOU will establish protocol for the safe receiving, processing, and storage of fresh fruits and vegetables provided by WMGC to LCCDC/MMFEC for processing through the following goals:

- Produce received will be free of rot, mold, and/or other quality decreasing factors
- Storage produce, such as butternut squash, will be delivered in good cured condition and will be held for no longer than 2 weeks before processing
- Farm-to-school products will be priced at an acceptable rate to meet price points for schools
- Packaging will be consistent unless otherwise requested or necessitated by process
- Highly perishable produce, such as cherries, will be processed within 2 days of delivery
- At least one week's prior notification will be given concerning the arrival date, quantity, and type of produce to be delivered to MMFEC so that scheduling and/or staffing considerations may be made
- Communication of all types will be timely and open

The above goals will be accomplished by undertaking the following activities:

- WMGC staff will visually inspect produce to be delivered to MMFEC
- MMFEC will document and visually inspect incoming produce and reserves the right to turn away any produce that it deems “unfit” for processing and will immediately contact WMGC for further instruction
- MMFEC will set aside at least one day per week for fresh snack processing and will make every effort to process WMGC produce in a timely manner
- Notification of afterhours deliveries will be made no later than 4:30pm the day of delivery so that inspections may be made first thing on the next business day
- At least 600 pounds of product will be delivered so that efficient and cost effective processing may be met

This MOU also establishes a product list for co-packing of products and the ownership of certain processed products as stated below:

**Cherries:** WMGC will procure, deliver to MMFEC, market, sell, and distribute. MMFEC will receive, process, package, and place with WMGC’s stored frozen inventory to await distribution.

**Fresh processed produce for FFVP:** WMGC will procure, deliver to MMFEC, sell, and distribute. MMFEC will receive, process, package, and hold for distribution.

**Butternut Squash:** WMGC will procure, deliver to MMFEC, market, sell, and distribute. MMFEC will receive, store if necessary (no longer than two weeks), process, package, and place with WMGC’s stored frozen inventory to await distribution.

**Pumpkin:** MMFEC will purchase, receive, process, package, market, and hold for distribution while retaining the right to source markets and distributors outside of the reach of WMGC. WMGC will distribute finished product for a fee.

**Lentil Burger:** MMFEC will produce, package, hold for distribution, sell, and market while retaining the right to source markets and distributors outside of the reach of WMGC. WMGC will market, sell, and distribute.

**Beef-Lentil Crumble:** MMFEC will produce, package, market, and hold for distribution while retaining the right to source markets and distributors outside of the reach of WMGC. WMGC will market, sell, and distribute.

### **Reporting**

It is recognized that this is a “living” document—not a contract. Open, continual communication will be key to the success of this MOU. Both MMFEC and WMGC will hold each other to the terms and conditions of this MOU and any modifications will only be made with both party’s consent.

### **Funding/Billing Schedule**

MMFEC and WMGC agree to a 30 day net billing cycle unless it is on a large volume of processing such as cherries and squash. Under that situation MMFEC agrees to a 60 day net based on higher volume processing. Freezer Pallet Storage: MMFEC agrees to a \$30 per pallet charge versus a \$45 per pallet charge if WMGC is storing more than 8 pallets in the MMFEC freezer.

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from WMGC and MMFEC. This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the authorized officials from WMGC and MMFEC and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials from WMGC and MMFEC this MOU shall end on May 31, 2015.

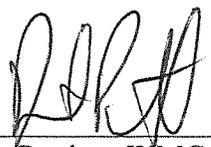
**Termination of Agreement**

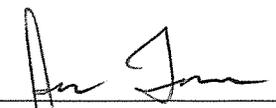
Except as otherwise provided in this section, either party may terminate this agreement for failure of the other party to perform any services, duties, or conditions contained in this agreement after giving 30 days written notice by certified or return receipt required mail or personal delivery to the other party. In the event of termination, all parties shall fulfill financial commitments for the work performed and expenses incurred pursuant to this agreement through the date of termination.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: 8/26/14  
Dave Prather, WMGC, General Manager

  
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Date: 8/15/14  
Jan Tusick, LCCDC/MMFEC, Food and Ag Center Director

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**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**  
**Memorandum of Understanding 2014-2015**

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**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

Lake County Community Development Corporation/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center  
(LCCDC/MMFEC)

and

Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC)

And

Kalispell School District (Kalispell)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Kalispell to establish parameters for the purchase, processing, and delivery of products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (FFVP).

**Background**

In recent years, WMGC and Kalispell have worked closely to negotiate prices for local fruits and vegetables used in the FFVP that meet school budgetary requirements. LCCDC/MMFEC plays a role in this partnership when processing of purchased fruits and vegetables is necessary.

**Purpose**

This MOU will set forth a schedule of products to be provided by WMGC, processed by MMFEC (if necessary), and delivered to Kalispell. The process for ordering, payment, and delivery will be set forth as follows:

- 1) WMGC will provide a product list of products with approximate dates of delivery at the beginning of each year or as deemed necessary for price and product updates
- 2) MMFEC will dedicate at least one day per week to process for the FFVP
- 3) Kalispell will commit to delivery of one product (fresh or fresh processed) per week (on Wednesday) and will be able to "opt out" with one week prior notice
- 4) Food service director/buyer will contact WMGC directly for orders and cancellations and will not use an intermediary unless otherwise indicated or arranged
- 5) Payments will be made per invoice instructions and terms
- 6) All parties will agree on set prices for products that will be beneficial to all

**Reporting**

All parties will operate with open lines of communication to determine the effectiveness of this agreement and to make any changes deemed necessary. This is a "living" document and can be changed or modified, but only if all parties are in agreement.

**Funding**

All parties understand that this is not a commitment of funds, but that any goods or services rendered in association with this agreement will be paid per the terms set forth between the buyer and seller.

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Kalispell and shall become effective upon signature of authorized officials and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials this MOU shall end on May 31, 2015.

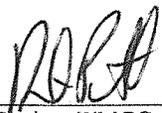
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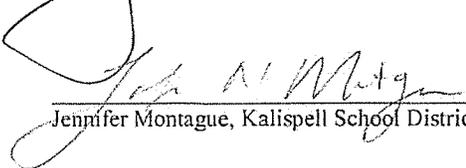
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Field Code Changed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: 9-30-14  
Dave Prather, WMGC

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: 9/16/14  
Jan Tusick, LCCDC/MMFEC

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: 9/10/14  
Jennifer Montague, Kalispell School District

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**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**  
**Memorandum of Understanding 2014-2015**

---

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

Lake County Community Development Corporation/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center  
(LCCDC/MMFEC)

and

Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC)

and

Polson School District (Polson)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Polson to establish parameters for the purchase, processing, and delivery of products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (FFVP).

**Background**

In recent years, WMGC and Polson have worked closely to negotiate prices for local fruits and vegetables used in the FFVP that meet school budgetary requirements. LCCDC/MMFEC plays a role in this partnership when processing of purchased fruits and vegetables is necessary.



**COPY**

**Purpose**

This MOU will set forth a schedule of products to be provided by WMGC, processed by MMFEC (if necessary), and delivered to Polson. The process for ordering, payment, and delivery will be set forth as follows:

- 1) WMGC will provide a product list of products with approximate dates of delivery at the beginning of each year or as deemed necessary for price and product updates
- 2) MMFEC will dedicate at least one day per week to process for the FFVP
- 3) Polson will commit to delivery of one product (fresh or fresh processed) per week (on Wednesday) and will be able to "opt out" with one week prior notice
- 4) Food service director/buyer will contact WMGC directly for orders and cancellations and will not use an intermediary unless otherwise indicated or arranged
- 5) Payments will be made per invoice instructions and terms
- 6) All parties will agree on set prices for products that will be beneficial to all

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 COPY

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Dave Prather, WMGC

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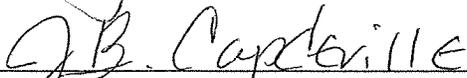
9-30-14



Jan Tusick, LCCDC/MMFEC

Date:

9-25-14



J.B. Capdeville, Polson School District

Date:

9-25-14



**COPY**

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**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**  
**Memorandum of Understanding 2014-2015**

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**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

Lake County Community Development Corporation/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center  
(LCCDC/MMFEC)

and

Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC)

and

Ronan School District (Ronan)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Ronan to establish parameters for the purchase, processing, and delivery of products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (FFVP).

**Background**

In recent years, WMGC and Ronan have worked closely to negotiate prices for local fruits and vegetables used in the FFVP that meet school budgetary requirements. LCCDC/MMFEC plays a role in this partnership when processing of purchased fruits and vegetables is necessary.

 **COPY**

**Purpose**

This MOU will set forth a schedule of products to be provided by WMGC, processed by MMFEC (if necessary), and delivered to Ronan. The process for ordering, payment, and delivery will be set forth as follows:

- 1) WMGC will provide a product list of products with approximate dates of delivery at the beginning of each year or as deemed necessary for price and product updates
- 2) MMFEC will dedicate at least one day per week to process for the FFVP
- 3) Ronan will commit to delivery of one product (fresh or fresh processed) per week (on Wednesday) and will be able to "opt out" with one week prior notice
- 4) Food service director/buyer will contact WMGC directly for orders and cancellations and will not use an intermediary unless otherwise indicated or arranged
- 5) Payments will be made per invoice instructions and terms
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**Contact Information**

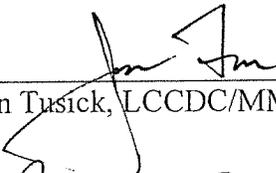
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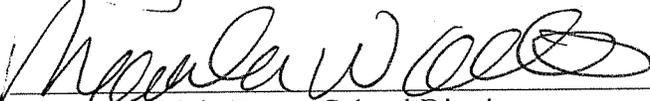
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Date: 9/18/14  
Jan Tusick, LCCDC/MMFEC

  
Date: 9-12-2014  
Marsha Wartick, Ronan School District

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Appendix B- Project Evaluation

LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
MISSION MOUNTAIN FOOD ENTERPRISE CENTER

# Mission Valley Farm-to-School Project

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## Evaluation Report

Shay Farmer, MMFEC Food & Ag Coordinator

6/30/2014

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## Executive Summary:

The Mission Valley Farm-to-School Project, which aligned with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, looked to include regional products in cafeteria offerings through promotion and education, strengthening community partnerships, and evaluation. The project spanned one year and enabled MMFEC to: 1) implement an innovative procurement program through cooperative purchasing and processing strategies; 2) launch a promotional campaign through networks and events that promoted farm-to-school program initiatives; and, 3) conduct project evaluation through a participatory process to ensure long term sustainability of the program. By implementing innovative procurement strategies, the project improved access to locally sourced food in area school districts. The project provided complementary promotional materials that enhanced student knowledge of food, nutrition, and agriculture by encouraging healthy eating behaviors.

The project expanded market opportunities for Montana's farmers by determining the best methods of processing and preparing fruits and vegetables for the state's largest public institutional market, K-12 schools. The project addressed primary barriers that prevented schools from using more local produce: 1) The height of the growing season occurs when schools are typically not in session 2) schools are limited in the equipment and labor to process produce and, 3) the cost of processing can ultimately make procurement of locally grown and processed produce unattainable for school districts.

By partnering with the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC), Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) was able to aggregate supply to more effectively meet the needs of area school districts. By forming a cluster of food service directors (FSDs), the project was able to expand procurement activities to increase each FSD's purchasing power resulting in economies of scale. The project expanded MMFEC's frozen products in order to address seasonality barriers and made local food products available on school menus throughout the entire school year.

## Scope of Work

This report highlights the evaluation process of the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center's Farm-to-School Program. Stakeholders and project partners have worked to facilitate the evaluation process.

### Tasks included:

- Reviewing project background materials including project proposal, initial evaluation plan, and data collected from project partners.
- Convening a pre, mid-term, and end evaluation committee to evaluate short and long term impacts of the farm to school project.
- Developing and conducting pre and post surveys of elementary students to measure student opinions, behaviors, and knowledge level changes as a result of the project.
- Developing and conducting Food Service Director Surveys.

- Developing and conducting Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) Producer and Management Survey.

## Approach of Methodology

Methods and tools used in the evaluation process included:

- Food service director (FSD) survey (post program)
- School food service participation records
- Youth surveys
- Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) sales and distribution records
- WMGC management interview survey
- WMGC producer survey
- Review of WMGC Group Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) progress reports
- Review of Wholesale Success workshop attendee records for producers
- Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) processing records, including records of efficiencies obtained from equipment upgrades and records of raw materials standards
- Review of MMFEC food safety program training records
- Production planning meeting minutes
- FoodCorps Farm-to-School classroom participation records and promotional materials distribution records

## Data Collection and Analysis

In November 2013, three Food Service Directors in the Mission Valley were voluntarily surveyed about their personal experiences with farm-to-school products processed by MMFEC and distributed by WMGC. FSDs were asked about quality, ease of use, and packaging for their Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and school lunch program. Furthermore in February 2014, six FSDs within an hour radius of the Mission Valley were asked about their specific needs in terms of price and quantity for local produce and beef. School food service records were also collected from Polson and Ronan School districts from 2012-2014 through MMFEC's FoodCorps Service Member.

MMFEC reviewed meeting minutes from-to-face to face meeting of the stakeholders in January 2013 and a phone conference in March 2013 along with individual follow-up conversations.

A total number of 24 youth surveys were collected from K-12 students who directly received farm-to-school education by the MMFEC FoodCorps Service Member. The member conducted surveys pre-education, then conducted follow-up surveys after ten hours of farm-to-school curriculum had been taught. Surveys were collected from October 2012-May 2013 and from October 2013-May 2014 from students. Promotional farm-to-school materials such as set of 13 posters featuring Montana produce and a coloring book with healthy recipes and activities was

developed, distributed, and used in farm-to-school curriculum with schools.

The Western Montana Growers Cooperative’s General Manager completed a survey about current co-op member production for the farm to school program, current planning, outreach for the program and possible ways to expand the program in the future. Distribution records of farm to school product were also collected.

In November of 2013 a WMGC farm-to-school producer survey was sent out to 38 producers, in which 26 completed to assess possible areas of growth in products for schools. The survey touched heavily on excess crop production and seconds that could be leveraged for the farm-to-school program and how to increase scale to meet the needs of schools.

To evaluate the readiness of producers and processors for meeting food safety demands of the farm to school marketplace, and scaling up production to competitively enter the farm-to-school marketplace, WMGC’s Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) progress reports were reviewed. Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center’s processing records, and a review of their food safety program’s training records were reviewed as well.

## Findings

### *Progress towards program goals*

**Program Goal 1: Implement a cooperative purchasing and processing farm to school program that will effectively and safely aggregate supply to meet the needs of local schools.**

**Objective 1:** To increase efficiencies in purchasing, aggregation, and processing, an initial planning meeting was held with stakeholders on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The goal of putting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Cooperative Purchasing was introduced to FSD’s to lower costs for each school and to stream-line aggregation.

Stakeholders included:

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>School District/Position</b>	<b>Meals Served</b>	<b>Goals &amp; Reason for Attending Meeting</b>
Lindsay Howard	MMFEC Farm to School Coordinator	N/A	“To collaborate and create efficiency in local procurement efforts.”
Jennifer Montague	Food Service Direct (FSD), Kalispell School District	3,500	“To get kids to understand the food system we’re up against and make them want to fix it.”

Jim Steiner	FSD, Polson School District	1,200	“To offer a variety of fruits and vegetables and utilize local produce.”
Steffen Brown	Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) Assistance Manager	N/A	“To learn about institutional procurement.”
Jay Stagg	FSD, Whitefish School District	800	“For kids to eat food that tastes like it’s supposed to.”
Marsha Wartick	FSD, Ronan School District	1,100	“To get kids to eat healthier and fresher, to give kids what they can’t get at home.”
Karen Belluomini	FSD, St. Ignatius School District	400	“To teach kids about what they’re eating and what real food tastes like; local is the best way to do that.”
Peter Kerns	FoodCorps Service Member representing Missoula County Public Schools	6,000 meals 4,000 lunches	“To develop local products that are sustainable and within budget.”
Lea Howe	FoodCorps Fellow	N/A	“To get local beef into schools.”
Shay Farmer	MTCC AmeriCorps VISTA, representing Salish Kootenai College	N/A	N/A
Nicki Jimenez	FoodCorps Service Member at MMFEC	N/A	“To come away from today’s meeting with a plan of action.”
Dave Prather	WMGC General Manager	N/A	
Yvette Rodriguez	MMFEC Food Safety Coordinator	N/A	“To discuss what is and isn’t safe and realistic on a processing floor.”
Ian Finch	University of Montana	3,000	“To set up cooperative purchasing.”

Stakeholders were brought together to discuss cooperative purchasing opportunities that would increase each school’s individual purchasing power. If schools could decide together on certain products that all would purchase, the cost would ultimately come down and allow more opportunities for schools to purchase regional products over non-regional products. The initial meeting of stakeholders included a variety of suggestions on how to make farm-to-school procurement viable and affordable. *See Appendix A, Page 1 for Meeting Notes.*

Threads for future discussions and planning included:

- To prioritize the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for cooperative buying and to set up a system of communication and an ordering system for school districts to be on the same weekly procurement schedule.
- To push a strategy based upon availability.
- To source surplus products to schools.
- To pursue the concept of cooperative labor (utilize school staff in summer months to help process at MMFEC, also lowering costs).

Potential value-added items were discussed outside of fresh fruits and vegetables:

- Beef/lentil crumble that would utilize Montana beef and lentils to use as a taco or plain crumble, to lower the cost of local beef and to fulfill FSDs new higher bean/legume requirements. The materials that were developed as farm-to-school promotional materials could be used by FoodCorps Service Members throughout the state to promote product.
- A frozen soup product utilizing local veggies, as the non-local product was identified as already being expensive.

A second planning meeting was held via conference call on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and focused on evaluating projected production to determine viable products and efficient volumes for the school year. The concept was to help growers plan their crops in advance with the planning of FSDs. *See Appendix A, Page 2 for meeting notes.*

In attendance:

<b>Attendee</b>	<b>School District/Position</b>
Karen Belluomini	FSD, St. Ignatius School District
Steffen Brown	WMGC Assistant Manager
Ian Finch	University of Montana
Lindsay Howard	MMFEC Farm to School Coordinator
Nicki Jimenez	MMFEC FoodCorps Service Member
Peter Kerns	Missoula County Food Corps Service Member, on behalf of Ed
Dave Prather	WMGC General Manager
Yvette Rodriguez	MMFEC Food Safety Coordinator
Katie Wheeler	Kalispell Public Schools FoodCorps Service Member, on behalf of Jenny Montague

The idea of cooperative labor was again broached as a way to lower processing costs for schools to better meet their budgetary needs. It was envisioned that school district food service staff, during the summer, would help process local vegetables and fruits at MMFEC's food processing facility in Ronan, MT. Polson, Ronan, and Kalispell schools signed letters of support committing to sharing of labor costs of processing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Upon individual follow-up meetings with Ronan and Polson FSDs and their Superintendents between June 10, 2013 and July 16, 2013, cooperative labor for processing of fruits and vegetables was ruled out as a viable option due to issues such as Workman's Compensation for non-MMFEC staff.

In November of 2013, MMFEC met with three Food Service Directors and staff in the immediate Mission Valley to begin evaluating the farm-to-school program. Jim Steiner-Food Service Director for Polson School District, JB Capdeville-Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coordinator for Polson School District, and Marsha Wartick-Food Service Director for Ronan School District were interviewed. *Please see Appendix B, Page 1 for FSD survey and summary.*

Qualitative data indicated that the farm-to-school program was viewed positively by staff. The quality of the product from WMGC and the processing and packaging from MMFEC has been seen as good. FSDs identified that prices are higher than through their normal distributors, Sysco and FSA, but they like to buy local. Both Food Service Directors expressed interest in buying more local products if more were available and/or could be paired with lower-cost commodity items. Both districts were happy with their one snack per week purchase and would be interested in adding another to the week, depending on budgetary allowances.

Some feedback about products were offered by FSDs. Apples, peppers, carrots and plums were all well received. Products that could have been better processed included: cucumbers that were too thinly sliced, apples that were sometimes too big, cabbage that could be shredded finer, and cantaloupe that could be more thickly cut. Spinach, radishes, peaches and pears were all identified as items schools would like to see more of.

The food service staff also gave suggestions for how to improve the marketing and sales relationship between WMGC and the schools. The biggest dissatisfaction expressed in the interviews was the need for better communication from WMGC about what is available for purchase each week. Regular communication was identified as a need from schools to increase sales of local purchases. It was suggested that a weekly email from WMGC could list the upcoming FFVP snacks and other local produce available, and ask for an opt-in or out for the snacks and a response if the school were interested in ordering anything else.

In February 2014, MMFEC met with 6 FSDs from Bigfork, Evergreen, Whitefish, Kalispell, Charlo, and St. Ignatius to discuss price points that needed to be met for future development of local products outside the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, such as beef or other value-added products that the schools may be interested in purchasing for breakfasts and lunches. Product ideas were further developed such as the beef-lentil crumble, frozen soups, and pizza sauce.

Specific price point thresholds were discussed for protein servings and vegetable/fruit servings, giving MMFEC a better idea of what items needed to cost in order for schools to be able to afford local, value-added products. For the future of farm-to-school, discussions were held about the ability for schools to plan a year in advance for producers of the WMGC. Most FSDs indicated that they were able to plan their needs a year in advance.

Kalispell, Ronan, and Polson school district committed to purchase one processed and one unprocessed snack per week for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program through the WMGC. As of May 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed between Kalispell School District, WMGC, and MMFEC. The MOU outlines the frequency of fresh, *processed* snacks (once a week), how the product will be delivered and the process to follow for opting out of a snack for the week. No other informal or formal MOUs have been developed with school districts. *Please see Appendix B, Page 5 for MOU template.*

MMFEC's equipment needs for processing items such as the frozen pie pumpkin puree and Montana Lentil Patty were fulfilled with the purchase of convection oven. A flash freezer was purchased for the productions of many other season-extended items as well.

**Objective 2:** *To ready producers and processors for meeting the food safety demands of the farm-to-school marketplace and scaling production to competitively enter the farm-to-school marketplace, a Wholesale Success workshop was held for WMGC producers that spoke to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Feedback from producers was collected from this workshop as well.*

FamilyFarmed.org developed the course "Wholesale Success: Managing Wholesale Production, Marketing, Financial, and Human Risks for Montana Specialty Crop Farmers" in conjunction with the Risk Management Agency and MMFEC. A six hour Wholesale Success workshop was held on March 6, 2013 in Missoula, MT, and a 312 page manual entitled "Wholesale Success: A Farmers Guide to Food Safety, Postharvest Handling, and Packing and Selling Produce" was distributed. Of the 62 producers that attended the workshop, 16 were WMGC producers and two were WMGC management. This represents 42% of WMGC producers. An important segment of the workshop focused on "Creating an On Farm Food Safety Plan" which utilized the manual's food safety section. An online tool was available for producers to create a food safety risk management plan that was specific to their farm. One-on-one technical assistance was also offered to producers.

After the session, feedback via questionnaires<sup>1</sup> was collected to gauge whether or not the 62 attendees found the workshop to be useful. FamilyFarmed.org had goals for each milestone which are included below:

- Q1: Did you learn something new from the Wholesale Success training or manual? Goal = 75% Actual = 100%
- Q2: Are there areas in your operation where you can apply what you learned? Goal = 70% Actual = 96.92%

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<sup>1</sup> Wholesale Success Evaluation Report, FamilyFarmed.org, 2014

- The strong positive response for questions 1 & 2 indicate the strength of the Wholesale Success training program, especially from those respondents that attended a workshop. For our in-person workshop attendees, 100% responded “Yes” to both of these questions.
- Q3: Have you decided to make any changes to your operation? Goal = 70%, Actual: 100%
- Q4: Have you begun making changes, or are you preparing to make changes when the time/season is right? Goal = 50%, Actual: 100%

To ready MMFEC food processing staff for the food safety demands of processing for institutions, all three processors that are regularly on the floor have been certified with ServeSafe. Two of the three have received HACCP training.

**Objective 3:** *To increase production of local food for area school districts by 30% has been met and surpassed.*

According to Western Montana Growers Cooperative records<sup>2</sup>, 30,450.14 pounds of produce went to local schools worth \$21,406 in 2012. In 2013, that amount became 54,796.94 pounds of produce, worth \$50,445, which represents an 80% increase in pounds of produce between 2012 and 2013.

Local Produce to Schools January-December 2012 & 2013:

School District	LBS of Produce Purchased 2012	LBS of Produce Purchased 2013	% Change
Boulder Elementary School	1,016.40	1,572.23	54.7
Butte City Schools Warehouse	1,007.70	1,545.30	53.3
Kalispell Public Schools	22,766.37	38,699.76	70
Evergreen School District	0	355.2	355.2
Missoula County Public Schools	3,707.93	2,976.34	-19.7
Polson School District	540.04	4,468.39	727.4
Ronan/Pablo School District	921.19	3,816.08	314
Somers School District	340.51	1,144.49	236.11
St. Ignatius School District	80	219.94	175
<b>Total:</b>	30,450	54,796.94	79.96

<sup>2</sup> 2012-2013 Western Montana Growers Cooperative Sales Records for K-12 institutions

**Objective 4:** *Implement cost analysis tool to develop competitive pricing that meets the budgetary requirements of partner food service directors.*

Through the Montana Manufacturing Center, a cost analysis tool was developed. The tool enables the center to develop competitive pricing that meets budgetary requirements of food service directors and is currently used when considering any new processed or value-added product. The tool takes into account the cost of packaging materials, floor space, equipment and staff needed. Efficient processing and competitive pricing allowed additional school partnerships to develop, with nine western Montana school districts participating in 2013.

Production Control			
Client			
Product			
Farm Source			

Product ID #	Batch #	ClassID	Product	Lot

Ingredients from INVENTORY	Qty	Price	Total
Raw Product (lb)	600.00		\$0.00
Labour (hr)			\$250.00
Accessory Cost (HW (hr))		\$20.00	\$0.00
Accessory Cost (SPR (hr))		\$25.00	\$0.00
Accessory Cost (LPH (hr))	0.00	\$35.00	\$0.00
Bulk Bags (unit)	0.00	\$0.13	\$0.00
30 bags (unit)	0.00	\$0.05	\$0.00
50 bags (unit)	0.00	\$0.14	\$0.00
Box, 10lb (unit)	0.00	\$0.50	\$0.00
Box, 20lb (unit)	0.00	\$0.75	\$0.00
Labels - range, rectangular		\$0.13	\$0.00
Labels - oval, B&W (unit)	0.00	\$0.05	\$0.00
Cost (Energy)	0.00	\$2.40	\$0.00
Cost (Wtr)	0.00	\$1.43	\$0.00
Tray Splice			\$0.00
Processing Cost			\$200.00
Processing cost per lb			0.33

Labour Cost				
Labourer	Hours	Rate	Cost/Perch	Tot
Assistant Processor	2	\$0	\$12	\$
Processor	1	\$0	\$12	\$
Assistant Processor			\$12	\$
Lead Processor			\$12	\$
Processing Manager			\$12	\$
<b>Total Labor</b>			\$12	\$

Finished Product			
Total lbs (yields)			
	10	10	10
Number of bags	100	100	100
Number of cases			20

Key			
Times			
Grain/Day			
Days/Week			
Substrate (lb/case)			

This part doesn't exactly follow the cost scheme			
Projected Gross Profit Margin	COGS (12 Gross Margin %)	Total Gross Profit	
20%	0.48	168	168.00
30%	0.36	252	252.00
40%	0.24	336	336.00
50%	0.12	420	420.00
60%	0.00	504	504.00
70%	-0.12	588	588.00
80%	-0.24	672	672.00
90%	-0.36	756	756.00
100%	-0.48	840	840.00

**Program Goal 2:** *Launch a regional farm-to-school campaign through networks and events that will promote program initiatives and will highlight Montana Lentil patty.*

**Objective 1:** *Leverage existing specialty crop promotional materials into a farm-to school campaign.*

A set of 13 Harvest of the Month promotional posters that highlight Montana fruits and vegetables were supplied to partner FSDs and FoodCorps sites throughout the state. The posters have been distributed throughout western Montana to 11 schools in three districts, reaching 4,885 students. In 2013, the posters were distributed during 12 major Montana conferences for an audience that included community leaders, school nutrition professionals, afterschool educators, and parents. There are four scheduled conferences in 2014 in which the posters will be distributed. A coloring book based off the posters was also created with added content and recipes. Currently, 350 coloring books have been distributed. All farm-to-school materials

developed have been published on MMFEC's website. *See Appendix C, Page 1 for coloring books and posters.*

### **Coloring Books**

Through the Montana Specialty Crop Grant, a kids coloring book called "Who Grows Here?" was developed. The posters were adapted, content was added, and a cover page was designed to make it complete. 750 copies of the coloring books were printed. The coloring books have primarily been distributed through FoodCorps service members serving in various schools around Montana. Some service members took coloring books to directly use with kids and incorporate into their classes. Other service members took just enough coloring books for each teacher to have one so the teachers could make copies for their classes—thus reaching many more kids than our initial resources allowed.

### **Montana Made Meals**

In celebration of national Farm-to-School month, MMFEC's FoodCorps Service member helped to source local ingredients for Montana Made meal events that were held in the Mission Valley with Polson and Ronan School District in October of 2012 and 2013.

In 2012, Ronan School district served apples and carrots that were sourced from the WMGC and processed at MMFEC's facility and a taco soup made with local beef. Montana menu boards were created marking the local products and where they were grown, and displayed at the entrance of the cafeteria. MMFEC's MTCC AmeriCorps VISTA and FoodCorps Service member organized an all school "win lunch with a farmer" event. Each teacher had their students enter a random drawing. Five students from each grade were selected and ate lunch with a guest Farmer while they ate their local lunch and discussed how farmers and ranchers worked and the process of how food got to their plates. The event was covered in the local newspaper, the Valley Journal. *See Appendix D, Page 1 for article and Page 4 for blog.*

Polson School District prepared beef stroganoff made with local beef, pasta from Country pasta—a pasta maker in the Mission Valley—and local onions from the WMGC that were processed at MMFEC's facility.

In 2013, Ronan School District served Sloppy Joe's prepared with local beef on homemade Wheat Montana buns. Apples and carrots were again sourced through WMGC and processed at MMFEC. The event was covered in the Leader Advertiser. *See Appendix D, Page 5 for article.*

Polson School District served a Hearty Beef Stew for the Montana Made Meal, made with local beef. MMFEC's FoodCorps Service member made announcements during each lunch period that the beef came from local ranchers. The member then enjoyed lunch with the students and had conversations with students about the source of the lunch and how food made it to their plates at every meal.

**Objective 2:** *Launch MMFEC's farm to school product, the Montana Lentil Patty.*

The Montana Lentil Patty was developed to meet the increasing needs of food service operations to provide alternative protein items and to enable them to support local food systems and farm-to-institution values.

From 2012-2014, the lentil patty was served at two schools, mainly as a vegetarian option rather than the main course. Work is currently being done to encourage more K-12 schools to try the lentil patty as a center of the plate option, but to date, the patty appears better geared to an older audience. The University of Montana and Montana University consistently purchases the lentil patty monthly.

In response to hesitations by food service directors to offer purely vegetarian protein options as the main course and suggestions from a stakeholder meeting in January 2013, the concept of a Beef-Lentil crumble, a product that lowers the cost of Montana beef, has been the new focus for K-12 schools. A plain crumble and a taco flavored crumble were created. In February 2014, samples of the crumble were tested in four schools under the guidance of FoodCorps service members, and two schools without FoodCorps association also took part. So far, 537 K-8 students have tried the product and 497 students had positive feedback about the taste of the beef-lentil crumble. Three schools have since purchased additional product, purchasing over 1,000 pounds since April 2014. The product will be featured at the Montana Nutrition Association meal convention in June 2014 where the crumble and the patty will be available for food service directors across the state of Montana to try. *Please see appendix B, Page 8 for survey results.*

MMFEC is in the process of applying for the Office of Public Instructions cooperative bid program for the crumble. As of May 2014, the Cooperative Purchasing Coordinator from the School Nutrition Programs of the Office of Public Instruction has sampled the taco flavored beef lentil-crumble and had similar positive results with kids sampling and liking the product. She will discuss the product with the OPI ABC Committee (advisory group for the bid) in June 2014 at their annual conference in Great Falls.

**Program Goal 3- Conduct project evaluation through a participatory process that will ensure long-term sustainability for farm-to-school program.**

**Objective 1- Establish multi-stakeholder evaluation committee of project partners.**

An evaluation committee was developed and meetings were held throughout the span of the project with representatives from MMFEC, WMGC (management and producers), and local FSDs. Information sharing between parties was key to the success of developing communication and processing efficiencies; discussions between parties occurred in person and via conference call due to Montana's rural nature to discuss short and long term impacts of the farm-to-school project..

Short term discussions included whether a particular processed product met the needs of all parties involved with quality, quantity, packaging and cost. Value-added products have been researched and tested for future use in school markets on MMFEC's end and are continuously being developed. *See Appendix B, Page 10 for updated FSD informational meeting.*

Long term and continuing discussions have included having schools sign informal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the WMGC and MMFEC to make local procurement as straight forward as possible and to allow producers to plan ahead. Stakeholders are working towards strategies to grow the farm-to-school market.

WMGC producers were asked to complete a survey entitled *Growth, Sales, and Equipment* for internal evaluation purposes in which 26 of 38 co-op members completed. Data collected from the survey indicated that producers still had a significant amount of product available for the farm-to-school market. When asked about their desire to increase sales through the co-op, 56% indicated they wished to expand in the next year, 40% indicated in the next 2-3 years, and 12% indicated in 4-5 years. With that time frame in mind, 68% said that they were interested in increasing their current co-op commitments and in growing new crops. The survey asked producers if during the 2013 production year if they had excess produce they were unable to sell; 82% indicated that they did indeed have excess and that it either ended up in the compost pile, fed to animals, or donated to local food banks. When asked specifically how much excess that had not been sold, answers ranged from several hundred pounds to several thousand pounds of #1 and #2 quality produce that potentially could have been sold to schools. Producers were also asked they'd be interested in serving on a farm-to-school committee, with 5 producers indicating that they would be interested in participating. *See Appendix B, Page: 12 for survey and summary.*

According to the WMGC Management Survey, the school market is seen only as a way to sell 2<sup>nd</sup> standard fruits and vegetables and excess. This makes planning with schools challenging. As school budgets are tight, schools are not seen as a priority and so regular communication has not been established for planning for school meals opportunities, but rather only the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. *See Appendix B, Page: 14 for survey and summary.*

A small sample of students were surveyed about their preference toward healthy, and local fruits and vegetables at Ronan elementary who had participated in over ten hours of FoodCorps curriculum, been a part of Montana Made Meals/National Farm-to-School month, and participated in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. A 5<sup>th</sup> grade science class was surveyed, with 24 kids taking the pre-survey and 21 students completing the post-survey. MMFEC's FoodCorps Service Member's lessons focused on cooking with local, healthy foods and giving kids positive experiences trying new foods. The member did 13 lessons: three were on fruits (plums, apples, and cherries), six were on veggies (kale, butternut squash, beets/carrots, lentils, spinach, and potatoes), and two were on whole grains. Two were agriculture or food systems lessons where food was not tasted. The take-away from the small sample of students exposed to these lessons are: kids surveyed were somewhat more likely to try a new fruit, kids tried more new fruits after the classes, kids liked vegetables less after the classes but were still more likely to taste a new vegetable that they have never had, kids are more likely to try a strange looking vegetable, and that overall they had tasted more new vegetables after the class and that over the course of the year, they had tried one new vegetable on their own. *See Appendix B, Page: 17 for survey and summaries.*

## Project Evaluation Conclusion

The evaluation conducted for the Mission Valley Farm to School project revealed learnings that will assist us in implementing best practices that will insure the sustainability of the project. We found three key findings: 1) Specific coordination is demanded to meet purchasing minimum requirements for cooperative purchasing and processing of local produce with various school districts that will fit into school budgets; 2) In order to expand the farm to school market, there needs to be a coordinated planning process between producers, distributors and schools at least a year in advance and 3) The trial and planning of new products in schools often requires at least one dedicated staff member on both ends of development and on the school end.

In order for schools to purchase locally produced and processed items, a tight price point must be met. In the past, a FoodCorps Service member at LCCDC has acted as a broker between the WMGC and the processing facility to establish cost for schools. To make a processing production run affordable, at least 600 pounds of raw product must be processed. This means that orders from multiple school districts must be collected in order to bring the price point down. By cooperatively purchasing, school districts can make a local item affordable that individually would not meet their budgetary constraints.

To continue to expand farm to school in Montana, a coordinated planning process must take place between producers, distributors and schools at least one year in advance. The farm to school market began in western Montana as an outlet for second standard produce, thus making planning for a guaranteed product a year in advance for schools challenging. Instead of the farm to school market being seen as an outlet for various seconds, a coordinated plan needs to be implemented to continue to expand the program and to encourage producers to grow specifically for the farm to school market.

The trial and planning of new local and healthy products in schools requires a specific champion that has time to seek out local items, implement staff training, and carry out taste testing to familiarize kids with new menu items. LCCDC has seen a stark difference between districts that have a key person to try out new products and those that have only the Food Service Director to shoulder this new challenge.

While the before mentioned findings have certainly been challenging to farm to school procurement, they are also seen as workable opportunities to expand farm to school procurement in western Montana and throughout the entire state.

## Appendix A- Meeting Notes

**Western Montana Farm to Institution Network**  
*Collaborating to create synergy and efficiency in our local procurement efforts*  
Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup>  
2-4pm at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center

In attendance: Karen Belluomini, Steffen Brown, Shay Farmer, Ian Finch, Lindsay Howard, Lea Howe, Nicki Jimenez, Peter Kerns, Jenny Montague (by phone), Dave Prather, Yvette Rodriguez, Jay Stagg, Jim Steiner, Marsha Wartick.

### Highlights

- Coordinating Purchasing
  - The group thought a more streamlined ordering system should be developed—possibly a Google Doc or a webpage where they could place their orders for produce.
  - FFVP, NSLP and NSBP all draw out of different funds so the ordering system needs to indicate how much of the product ordered will be invoiced to which fund.
- In-Season Produce
  - Group wanted MMFEC and WMGC to recommend what to buy based on what's in season and what there is supply of
  - Ideas to buy second-grade and surplus produce
- Value-Added Products
  - New ideas for products to develop: pizza sauce using commodity ingredients, veggie patty with black beans.
    - Also samples of MMFEC's lentil patty to MCPS, St. Ignatius, Ronan Schools, Polson Schools, Whitefish Schools, taste test size for Lea
  - Also local beef lentil crumble pilot with MCPS
    - Will experiment with beef/lentil ratios and seasonings (plain/taco)
    - Product should work towards bean requirement (1/2 per week, at least 1/8 cup in a serving to count toward weekly total), must be identified in menu
  - Also working on developing soup project with KPS
- The group wants to meet bi-monthly to continue planning!

### Parking Lot

- Smoothie program

### Threads

- Packaging in buckets
- Prioritize FFVP for cooperative buying. Google Docs communication/ordering system for school districts on same weekly procurement schedule.
  - Future planning about a month ahead (at least 1 week for FFVP)
- Second grade surplus program. Sourcing surplus products in Montana to schools.
- Push strategy based on availability (serve what you get)

Homework: send a form

- Volume estimates for the year: FFVP, NSLP, NSBP
- Frequency
- Price threshold
- Daily volume

Brainstorming Value-Added

- 1) Pizza sauce—base
    - a. Pete's idea, MCPS has a recipe
    - b. Looking for \$5/gal
  - 2) Veggie Patty
    - a. Samples to: MCPS, St. Ignatius, Ronan Schools, Polson Schools, Whitefish Schools, taste test size for Lea
    - b. Idea to add black beans from Yellowstone bean
  - 3) Beef crumble with lentils as filler—french green or crimson
    - a. Plain or taco seasoning
    - b. Bean requirement (1/2 per week, at least 1/8 cup in a serving to count toward weekly total), must be identified in menu
      - i. Marsha mentioned online calculator for servings
    - c. Promotion/education-Lea/FoodCorps
    - d. Laminated goofy signs to put out with lentil products
  - 4) Lentil Hummus
  - 5) Soup project
    - a. Frozen soup
    - b. Soup kit
  - 6) Other notes
    - a. Jay offered Whitefish's kitchen to do test batches
    - b. Robin has lentil recipes
- 

**Western Montana Farm to Institution Network**

*Collaborating to create synergy and efficiency in our local procurement efforts*

Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2013

3pm at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center or via conference call

In attendance: Karen Belluomini, Steffen Brown, Ian Finch (first 10 min), Lindsay Howard, Nicki Jimenez, Peter Kerns, Dave Prather, Yvette Rodriguez, Katie Wheeler

Highlights

- We have two important next steps in developing our Western Montana Farm to Institution Network:
  - Nail down specifics for cooperative sourcing of fresh produce for the FFVP and season extended products.
  - Address the labor barrier to processing and preserving large volumes of produce in-season while they are most abundant and cheap.
- The goal is to write cooperative agreements for sourcing. These will be MOUs that detail on paper how we will work together.
- FFVP: write an MOU for frequency of local snack and MMFEC/WMGC will source products for that frequency based on what's in season (greens, then melons, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, then storage vegetables and fruits).
- We discussed season extended products. We asked the schools to consider what products they want to prioritize and what volume of those products they use. We learned that schools are able to pay for products processed during the summer and we discussed other possible products that schools might be interested in.
- We discussed possibilities for addressing the labor barrier to increased season extended production: pooling labor by having food service staff work at MMFEC, and financially helping to pay for more labor.

### Detailed Notes

- Overview of cooperative agreements
  - Cooperative agreements are MOUs where we put on paper how we all agree to work together. This provides security on both ends.
- Vision for cooperative FFVP sourcing
  - An MOU that includes: frequency of local snack for each district, quantity of snack needed based on serving size and number of snacks
  - Maximum possible frequency for MMFEC processing is once a week. Districts could buy more frequently from WMGC and process themselves. Keeping it to this minimum will leave room for processing other local fruits and vegetables (e.g. cole slaw and root vegetable mix).
  - Flow from beginning to end of school year: green veggies, melons, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, then storage vegetables and fruits.
- Season extended products commitments
  - In order to plan a pilot of cooperative sourcing of season-extended products, we have to select 3-4 products to focus on for this season.
  - Lindsay asked school districts to consider this list and prioritize which products to work on. (Key: **Bold** = abundant in summer, *Italic* = MMFEC already processes in large quantities, Normal = abundant during school year)
    - **Frozen broccoli florets**
    - **Frozen green beans**
    - **Frozen sugar/snap peas**
    - **Frozen diced peppers**
    - **Frozen shredded zucchini** (tie to FFVP)
    - **Frozen roasted tomatoes**
    - Frozen apple slices

- Frozen pie pumpkin puree
  - Frozen shredded carrots (tie to FFVP)
  - Frozen diced onions
  - *Frozen butternut squash cubes*
  - ***Frozen cherries***
- We need to know total quantities for the whole year of the products FSDs select as priorities.
  - At the end of the meeting, Pete suggested that we plan a year in advance (e.g. plan for September 2014 in September 2013) because then we can match up seasonality with volume projections.
  - Idea that we should remind people each month to track what they're using
- Discussion of the pros and cons of processing season-extended products at schools vs. at MMFEC:
  - At schools: if it is a simple process and there is summer staff that has extra time, it might make sense to do it at the school, especially for a smaller district like Mission.
  - At MMFEC: MMFEC has a great facility with trained staff, food safety procedures, and specialized equipment that make it easier to process large quantities of produce, especially if it is a more labor-intensive process. The new blast freezer will make it a lot easier for MMFEC to blanch and freeze produce than for school kitchens to do so. All these assets of MMFEC means that we can create economies of scale which could help smaller school districts.
- Planning processing of season-extended products will allow MMFEC to kick off its processing earlier in the summer as produce starts to come into season.
- Storage of frozen products at MMFEC: \$40 per month per pallet. But if we process a lot, we could incorporate this cost into the cost of a product.
- Discussion of ability of school districts to pay for product during the summer months
  - Kalispell and Missoula can definitely pay for product processed during the summer. Mission maybe not.
- Other possible products for season extension
  - Garlic
    - Karen suggested Garlic. Lindsay said it's an expensive crop but we can look into it second grade.
  - Berries—currently there's a limited supply
    - Katie suggested, Pete also possibly interested
    - Dave and Steffen said that the berry supply will be increasing. In a couple years we'll have a lot of blueberries.
    - According to Dave and Steffen, strawberries will probably be cheapest and prices don't fluctuate much.
    - Karen can check on if Mission blueberry grower is still in business
  - Cauliflower—cauliflower puree
    - Pete suggested for use in mac 'n cheese and tater tots.

- Butternut squash puree (similar to pumpkin)
      - Pete suggested
      - Lindsay said we could do a custom order. In the past people wanted the cubed product.
- Addressing the labor barrier: pooling food service staff resources, financially or in-person
  - Labor is most significant cost. We need to think creatively and come up with interesting solutions. Polson, Ronan and Kalispell signed letters of support committing to sharing labor cost.
  - We need more people here at MMFEC to process frozen things in the cheapest way possible.
  - We either need:
    - Food service staff to come to our facility to process (they are already skilled and trained in food safety). The only requirement for working in MMFEC's facility is Serve Safe 4 or 8 hours.
    - Or school food service to help pay for the labor needed to process efficiently.
    - We would have to find a way to pay additional processors one way or the other.
    - Depending on how pooling labor resources work out, we will have to work out how this will factor into price of product, etc.
  - MMFEC will have 2 assistant processors and Yvette. Ideally 2 more people would make it efficient. Max number of processors on the floor is 6.
    - Pete asked if he could bring 4 people. Lindsay and Yvette said that wasn't too many—it would just make it more efficient and faster.
    - We don't yet know if the addition of trained processors would increase the output for the day. Yvette said they can get 800 pounds done one day with 4 people.
    - We're going to be figuring out what kind of quantities we can do with different numbers of processors as this project continues. (Pete had asked what doing 1,000 pounds of broccoli would take?)
- Schedule next call for middle to end of April

## Appendix B- Surveys, Summaries & Documents

### 2013 Mission Valley Farm to School Food Service Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey about farm to school purchasing. We are collecting information that will be used to measure successes of the program and to make improvements as well. All information will be kept confidential; at no time will your responses be associated with you or your school. Please feel free to express your honest opinion. With your permission, we may use specific quotes for reporting purposes. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask during or after the survey.

Did your institution purchase local produce, which was processed at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center and marketed / delivered by Western Montana Growers Cooperative in spring and fall 2013?	Yes				No
If yes, in which program did you utilize the product?	School Meals Program Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program Both				
If yes, please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that the product is "Unfavorable" and 5 indicating the product is "Favorable."  (If no please continue to the next section)	<b>WMGC's Farm-to-Institution Product is</b>				
	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
What was your overall satisfaction with the Farm to School program?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
<b>School Meals Program</b>					
Overall, how did WMGC's processed product compare to similar products you have bought/used in the past?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
Were you able to order the selection of products that you needed?	Yes			No	
Were you able to order the quantity of products that you needed?	Yes			No	
What type of packaging do you prefer?	Bulk bags			Vacuum-sealed	
Did the packaging protect the product from damage?	Yes			No	
How convenient was the packaging for your staff?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
How convenient was the packaging for your storage space?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
How convenient was the packaging for your transport equipment?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
How satisfied were you with the processed product (size, cut, etc.)?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
How satisfied were you with the taste of the product?	Unfavorable		Favorable		
	1	2	3	4	
Did the cost fit within your budget?	Yes			No	
How flexible is your budget to expand local procurement?	Not Flexible		Flexible		
	1	2	3	4	
Was the delivery process smooth?	Unfavorable			Favorable	

	1	2	3	4	
Did food safety meet your school's standards?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How satisfied were you with the traceability of the product?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
What product(s) worked well for your program?					
What product(s) would you like to see more of?					
What products didn't work well and why?					
How many days per week would you be interested in using local farm to school products from WMGC?					
<b>Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program</b>					
Overall, how did WMGC's processed product compare to similar products you have had in the past?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How did WMGC's fresh, unprocessed products compare to similar products you have had in the past?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
Were you able to order the selection of products that you needed?	Yes			No	
We you able to order the quantity of products that you needed?	Yes			No	
What type of packaging do you prefer?	Bulk bags			Vacuum-sealed	
Did the packaging protect the product from damage?	Yes			No	
How convenient was the packaging for your staff?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How convenient was the packaging for your storage space?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How convenient was the packaging for your transport equipment?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How satisfied were you with the processed product (size, cut, etc.)?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How satisfied were you with the taste of the product?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
Did the cost fit within your budget?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
How flexible is your Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack budget to expand local procurement?	Not flexible			Flexible	
	1	2	3	4	5
Was the delivery process smooth?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
Did food safety meet your school standards?	Yes			No	
How satisfied were you with the traceability of the product?	Unfavorable			Favorable	
	1	2	3	4	
What product(s) work well for your snack program?					
What products didn't work well with your program and why?					
What products would you like to see in the future?					

How many days per week would you be interested in using local products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack program?	
How far in advance do you need to plan for the snack program?	
Would you be willing to plan with WMGC in the spring for fall snacks?	
How flexible is your program to planning snacks week to week?	
<b>Marketing and Sales</b>	
How do you currently order the product from WMGC?	Called WMGC WMGC staff called you Through FoodCorps Service Member Online ordering
How would you improve the marketing / sales relationship with WMGC in order to make the process easier for you?	
Would you be willing to form a commitment for products in January 2014 so that WMGC can ready producers for farm to school production?	

Would you like to pursue a cooperative agreement amongst other school directors, WMGC and MMFEC?

If yes, when would be a good time for you to meet? Where?

Are we missing anything you feel is important to add to the program as we move forward?

## 2013 Mission Valley Farm to School Food Service Survey Responses

### Jim

- “I love the farm to school program. I think it’s great.”
- Prices are not competitive with FSA or Sysco but able to purchase local. If more were available, would buy more.
- Would like to see more of everything. Especially interested in potatoes—uniform whole, cubes
  - Other products he uses a lot of: lettuce cut and bagged, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, snap peas, peppers, tomatoes (cherry or sliced)
- Cucumbers didn’t work so well.
- Thinks the marketing/sales relationship with WMGC is good the way it is
- Business office—would be important to have them at the table when doing long-range planning/commitments to figure out what would work in the budget
- Jim was disappointed when he ordered frozen product but didn’t receive it. Needs better communication about what veggies he has available in the freezer.

## JB

- “I think it’s great for the kids”
- Really likes WMGC’s product
- Consistent favorable ratings
- Satisfied with processed product except thinly sliced cucumbers
- Cost—still figuring it out. Whole apples seemed expensive.
- Not sure how flexible FFVP budget is to expand local procurement
- Worked well: apples, peppers
- Didn’t work well: butternut squash (but that was a packaging challenge—served in gallon plastic bags)
- Would like to see in the future: spinach, radishes
- Would like to use local more frequently—depends on accessibility and labor
- Plans 3 weeks ahead for snacks.
- JB willing to plan in advance for fall snacks
- Suggestion: email or person to person Google Drive training

## Marsha

- Favorable ratings
- Packaging—vacuum sealed is great because the extra keeps well
- Costs are higher, but that’s expected. Budget is a balancing act—if use lots of commodity in the meal can use more expensive ingredients.
- No same day process/delivery.
- Worked well: carrots, plums.
- Didn’t work well: beets.
- Would like to see more: peaches and pears
- Other feedback: apples sometimes too big, cabbage could have been shredded finer, cantaloupe too thinly cut
- Wants to use local for FFVP 1-2 times per week
- Google Drive technology is an issue
  - Might work if it were easily editable!
- Possible system: Reminder email to opt in or out Monday or Wednesday before each snack
  - Add to email or do a sales call also offering extra product and other availability.
  - Rationale: Marsha regularly hears from her other distributors and needs regular reminders that WMGC is there and has product to offer!

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program  
Memorandum of Understanding 2014-2015

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between

Lake County Community Development Corporation/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center  
(LCCDC/MMFEC)

and

Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC)

and

Kalispell School District

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Kalispell School District to establish parameters for the purchase, processing, and delivery of products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (FFVP).

**Background**

In recent years, WMGC and Kalispell School District have worked closely to negotiate prices for local fruits and vegetables used in the FFVP that meet school budgetary requirements. LCCDC/MMFEC plays a role in this partnership when processing of purchased fruits and vegetables is necessary.

**Purpose**

This MOU will set forth a schedule of products to be provided by WMGC, processed by MMFEC (if necessary), and delivered to Kalispell. The process for ordering, payment, and delivery will be set forth as follows:

- 1) WMGC will provide a product list of products with approximate dates of delivery at the beginning of each year or as deemed necessary for price and product updates
- 2) MMFEC will dedicate at least one day per week to process for the FFVP
- 3) Kalispell will commit to delivery of one product (fresh or fresh processed) per week (on Wednesday's) and will be able to "opt out" with one week's prior notice
- 4) Food service director/buyer will contact WMGC directly for orders and cancellations and will not use an intermediary
- 5) Payments will be made per invoice instructions and terms
- 6) All parties will agree on set prices for products that will be beneficial to all

Product	Expected delivery of date	Processed (Y or N)	Price per pound
Green Beans		Y	
Peas		Y	
Cherries		Y	
Cucumbers		Y	
Melon		Y	
Cucumbers		Y	
Cherry Tomatoes		N	
Bell Peppers		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Squash		Y	
Cabbage		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Apples (whole)		N	
Apples (wedged)		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Cabbage		Y	

**Reporting**

All parties will operate with open lines of communication to determine the effectiveness of this agreement and to make any changes deemed necessary. This is a "living" document and can be changed or modified, but only if all parties are in agreement.

**Funding**

All parties understand that this is not a commitment of funds, but that any goods or services rendered in association with this agreement will be paid per the terms set forth between the buyer and seller.

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Kalispell School District and shall become effective upon signature of authorized officials and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any

one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials this MOU shall end on May 31, 2015.

**Contact Information**

Western Montana Growers Cooperative  
Dave Prather  
General Manager  
PO Box 292  
Arlee, MT 59821  
(406) 726-4769  
dave@wmgcoop.com

Lake County Community Development Corporation/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center  
Jan Tusick  
Food and Ag Center Director  
407 Main Street SW  
Ronan, MT 59864  
(406) 676-0676  
[jan.tusick@lakecountycdc.org](mailto:jan.tusick@lakecountycdc.org)

Jennifer Montague, MS RDN  
Food Service Director  
Kalispell Public Schools  
106 Northwest Lane  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 751-3646  
[montaguej@sd5.k12.mt.us](mailto:montaguej@sd5.k12.mt.us)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Prather, WMGC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jan Tusick, LCCDC/MMFEC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Montague, Kalispell School District

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Beef-Lentil Crumble Taste Test Results

**Results provided by Kalispell School District FoodCorps Service Member:**

<b>Lentil Beef Crumble, Taco Seasoning</b>	
Taste Tested 2/21/14	
<b>Anderson 2nd Grade, Hedges (16 Students)</b>	
Dislike-	1
OK-	0
Love-	15
<b>Campbell 2nd Grade, Hedges (16 students)</b>	
Dislike-	2
OK-	3
Love-	11
Comments:	
"That was the best thing you ever made!"	
"I loved it!"	
<b>Holmquist 2nd Grade, Hedges</b>	
Dislike-	0
OK-	0
Love-	17
<b>Peterson Cooking Class</b>	
Dislike-	0
OK-	0
Love-	11

**Results (email excerpt) provided by Boulder School District FoodCorps Service Member:**

I just wanted to let you both know that my beef-lentil taste test activity with K-4th grade was a HUGE success! We taste tested the taco flavored crumble-I gave them 1 chip with the crumble and a sprinkle of cheese (sort of like nachos).

The taste test votes showed;

78 "Love it"

5 "Like it" and

5 "tried it"

Success! Thanks for all of your work on the crumble- the kids really liked it, even with the lentil heavy recipe. A few kids even said, "The lentils make the beef taste better."

**Results (email excerpt) provided by Bigfork Food Service Director:**

I wanted to let you know about our taste-test. It went wonderful. Out of 213 students Grades 1-8, 26 "liked it" and 187 "loved it. My staff and I also thought it was yummy.

**Results provided by MMFEC FoodCorps Service Member:**

Class Name	Grade	"Dislike"	"Ok"	"Loved it"	Comment 1
Ayers	4	0	6	15	
Burghardt	3	2	2	13	"I didn't like it—I loved it!"
Laud	2	1	0	15	"This was the best thing I've ever eat
Ellis	4	0	4	14	
Gallatin	4	1	4	15	
Brookman	4	1	4	16	
Simonich	4	1	0	20	
Gustafson	2				
<b>Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>108</b>	

Food Service Director Meeting  
February 2014

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions**

**Are you familiar with the farm to school program (participated, WMGC contact)?**

**Do you use local foods in any of your programs (snack, breakfast, lunch)? If yes, where do you get them?**

**How flexible is your budget?**

**Could you commit to buying products one year in advance?**

**How do you plan menus?**

**Do you have trouble meeting any of your nutritional requirements?**

**What are the target costs per serving for protein, legumes, veggies, fruits?**

**Would you be willing to tell us what you pay for certain items so that we can see how we compare?**

Summaries of Meetings

**Kalispell--Jenny Montague office: 751-3443 cell: 471-5403 email: montaguej@sd5.k12.mt.us**

- Works with a \$100K commodity dollars
- Could commit to buying products one year in advance
- Plans menus monthly
- No problem meeting nutritional standards
- Has control over her food dollars
- Already purchases from WMGC
- 2oz protein serving not to exceed \$0.60/serving
- Buys commodity beef crumble (pre-cooked)
- Orders 160-40lbs cases of beef
- Uses local beef patties (Lower Valley)
- Has snack program
- Has a summer program
- Currently using: lentils with beef; some form of taco Tuesday
- Products of interest: frozen, lower sodium soups; lentil/beef crumble; cooked beef crumble, berries

**Big Fork—Ginny Kirby office: 837-7409**

- Has purchased from WMGC
- No snack program (does not qualify)
- Business manager dictates how much money is spent
- \$500-\$1000/wk spent on FSA
- Could commit to buying one year in advance
- Monthly, rotating menu

- No problems meeting nutritional requirements
- Is trying local beef patties (Lower Valley)
- Interested in frozen soups
- Orders ground from commodity
- Currently using: zucchini, asparagus, frozen vegetables (no canned), canned fruit, green beans, smoothies for breakfast
- Products of interest: frozen soup (tomato and chicken noodle), berries

**Whitefish—Jay Stagg office: 862-8620 cell: 261-3705 email: staggj@wfps.k12.mt.us**

- \$20K commodity dollars
- ½ cup Vegetable serving \$0.30/serving or less
- \$.50/serving of protein
- Has a summer program that is expanding
- Has control of budget
- No snack program (does not qualify)
- Menus on a 4 week rotation
- No problems meeting nutritional requirements
- Currently using: makes pizza sauce (tomato, basil, garlic) from scratch, pumpkin pudding, processes carrots, potato/delicata squash mash, “Montana Chili” (beef and lentils), has salad bar
- Products of interest: patties for burger, lettuce year round
- Could commit to purchasing one year in advance

**Evergreen—Joan office: 751-1111**

- No snack program (staffing issues)
- District superintendent sets budget
- Had enough money left over to remodel freezer space
- Could commit to purchasing one year in advance
- Monthly rotation of menus—uses Nutrikids menu program
- No problem meeting requirements except legumes
- Does soup 2 days
- Can use raw beef 100-120pounds per meal
- Currently using: potato medley, frozen baked potatoes, has salad bar, hash brown patties, green peppers, cucumbers
- Interested in: carrot coins, broccoli/cauliflower, POTATO products

**Charlo—Stacy Nelson office:644-2206 x218 email: snelson@charloschools.com**

- This is the second year she has been in this position. Has food service background in catering.
- Is not very familiar with WMGC (has never been contacted) or F2S but is interested
- Does not qualify for free and reduced but does qualify for snack DOD funds (\$15000). Her school board will not allow her to use these funds due to the need for an additional staff person.
- The board dictates the budget but is somewhat flexible—depending on the product

- Could commit to buying at least one year in advance because she know what she goes through
- Aims for \$0.60-\$0.80 per meal not per serving
- Makes own menus and tries not to replicate offerings month to month except for pizza and chicken nuggets
- Has a salad bar
- Does a lot of scratch cooking...makes own bread, biscuits, and soup
- No one has tried to sell her local produce but some has been given to her and she gladly used it
- Has no problem meeting requirements and follows set serving size standards
- Could not think of any products she would be interested in

**Saint Ignatius—Karen Belloumini office: 745-3811 x216**

- Has NOT been contacted by WMGC or anyone else for snack program (\$14K) but she is interested
- Has snack every day except for Friday (254 students) but some teachers don't give it out
- Administrators dictate the budget
- Could commit to buying in advance but would have to convince board and meet price points
- Menus are on a 6 week rotation
- Already uses lentils and beans to extend beef supply but ours would save her time
- Purchases most everything through FSA because of price...sometimes better than what can be bought through OPI cooperative purchasing
- Interested in things that will save time and money (soups, pre-cut produce)

WMGC Farmer Survey summary as it relates to F2S

**Number of respondents:** 26

**Length of membership:** 0-3yrs (8 @ 30.77%); 4-6yrs (8 @ 30.77%); 7+yrs (10 @ 38.46%)

**Number willing to serve on F2S committee:** 5: Paradise, Fourth Wave, Lifeline, Shady Grove, Timeless

**Excess crops:** cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, melon, zucchini, yellow squash, fennel, scallions, red beets, cilantro, lettuce, potatoes (damaged), hot peppers, watermelon, eggplant, winter squash, cherry tomatoes, green beans, pablanos, shallots, garlic, cabbage, peppers, basil, bell peppers, summer squash, arugula, barley, lentils, sungold tomatoes

**Number who reported having excess:** 17 (out of the 19 who responded)

**Total pounds of excess:** 64,380 (40,000 were Dixon melons)

**Percent of excess that was #1 quality:**

Answer Choices	Responses
0% - 10%	15.79% 3

Answer Choices	Responses
11% - 25%	10.53% 2
26% - 50%	10.53% 2
51% - 75%	21.05% 4
76% - 100%	42.11% 8
Total	19

**Percent of excess that was #2 quality:**

Answer Choices	Responses
0% - 10%	22.22% 4
11% - 25%	61.11% 11
26% - 50%	11.11% 2
51% - 75%	5.56% 1
76% - 100%	0% 0
Total	18

**Willingness to increase sales through the coop:** 20 were willing to increase sales either through current commitments, new crops, or both

**Interested in structuring F2S commitments like CSA:** 16 (out of 21 who responded) were interested but all commented that it would depend on the crop and the price. \*\*\* Two commented that they may be too small.

**What crops are growers willing to expand for institutional markets:** carrots, beets, zucchini, peppers, green beans, sweet potatoes, watermelons, cherry tomatoes, blueberries, cabbage, squash, basil, tomatoes, greens, garlic, peas, and pumpkins. \*Tomatoes (various kinds) were #1

2013 Mission Valley Farm to School WMGC Management Survey

**Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey about the Mission Valley Farm to School (F2S) program. We are collecting information that will be used to measure successes of the program and to make improvements as well. All information will be kept confidential; at no time will your responses be associated directly with you. Please feel free to express your honest opinion. With your permission, we may use specific quotes for reporting purposes. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask during or after the survey.**

**\*\*\*\*Please answer the following questions as they pertain to RONAN and POLSON. No other school data is needed at this time.**

<p><b>How do you decide what produce will be processed?</b></p>	<p>a. It is excess that the grower cannot get rid of  b. It is poundage that the grower committed to grow but was not sold through wholesale  c. It was grown specifically for F2S processing  d. All of the above  e. Other: _____</p>
<p><b>Please estimate the percentage of #1 and #2 produce used for the F2S program.</b></p>	<p>#1% for snack: _____ #2% for snack: _____  #1% for meal: _____ #2% for meal: _____</p>
<p><b>Typically, how far ahead do producers let you know what they will have in excess?</b></p>	<p>a. One day  b. One week  c. One month  d. Other _____</p>
<p><b>Do you have grower commitments specifically for the fresh fruit and vegetable snack program or the school meal program? Or are all of your planning projections lumped together?</b></p>	<p>a. Snack only  b. Meal only  c. Snack and meal  d. No commitments</p>
<p><b>Did you make a projected crop plan for farm to school snacks and processing?</b></p>	<p>Yes _____ No _____</p>
<p><b>If yes, please explain the planning process: Did you stick to the plan?</b></p>	
<p><b>What would make it easier for you and your growers to get more products into the schools?</b></p>	
<p><b>Would it be helpful to do winter planning with schools and pre-book crops through a memorandum of understanding (MOU)?</b></p>	<p>Yes _____ No _____</p>
<p><b>If yes, what would this look like for you?</b></p>	
<p><b>Do you think grower commitments for school and institutional markets could be structured like CSA commitments thereby making it easier to schedule harvest and processing times?</b></p>	<p>Yes _____ No _____</p>

<b>What has worked? What hasn't?</b>	
<b>In what ways would you like to expand the F2S program?</b>	
<b>Are there new products that you would like to try for either program?</b>	Meal: Snack:
<b>What has been the reaction to the prices at which you sell products to schools?</b>	
<b>Is there room to negotiate?</b>	Yes <span style="float: right;">No</span>
<b>Do you know how your prices compare to competitors?</b>	
<b>What is your overall satisfaction level for the items processed at MMFEC?</b>	1 <span style="margin-left: 100px;">2</span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;">3</span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;">4</span> Unfavorable Favorable
<b>How would you like to improve the relationship between MMFEC and WMGC?</b>	

**Other comments or feedback pertaining to F2S or MMFEC:**

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#### WMGC Management Survey Summary

- F2S is seen as a way to get rid of excess produce. It is not seen as a “first” market
- 75% of produce sent to F2S is of #1 quality. The other 25% is #2 quality.
- Farmers communicate the presence of excess crop 1 week to 1 month ahead of time
- There are currently NO grower commitments specifically for F2S. Grower commitments are totals for each item that a grower produces (not based on destination/market). Crop projections are made based on historical sales data for each crop.
- There was a projected plan for F2S snack and processing based on historical sales. “Sort of stuck to a plan but tried to use what was in excess to fulfill FFVP needs. Not “plannable.”
- Schools are not looked at as a regular outlet for many items. F2S is a “special” project but could be improved by talking with directors more regularly and having them commit to purchasing more on a regular basis. Pre-booking or MOU would be helpful.
- Structuring F2S commitments like CSA would NOT be easier
- FFVP is seen as a “magic carpet” that can be pulled out at any time. Tries to use seconds but growers don’t plan on growing second grade crops. The type of produce (organic and homegrown) is priced out of range for most schools. Processing costs seem too high to have schools commit to much more than snack. Kalispell is the exception.
- Would like to expand the program through more sales of unprocessed vegetables throughout the year or fresher, processed item for regular food service.

- New products: Cole slaw mix
- School reactions to prices are that “they are too high.” There might be some room to negotiate prices.
- For items that we have a history on- we think there should be set processing costs- which would help us with planning. Some of the processing still seems inefficient to me- but I am not there doing it and can’t really speak much to it. Generally speaking, it seems that the costs are high relative to the cost of actually growing and delivering the food- which seems out of balance.
- We have very much appreciated the processing services and the support from MMFEC as we have ventured into this realm. We need to do a better job scheduling on our end and working directly with the schools. Because we have viewed this as more of a special project the schools haven’t received as much direct attention from us, and we have relied heavily on the support of Food Corps Members.

School	Total Poundage	Products
Ronan	1931 @ \$3817.82	Apples, carrots, beets, potatoes, melon, plums, cucumber, bell pepper, lentils, butternut squash, cabbage
Polson	2151 @ \$4042.79	Apples, beets, carrots, tarragon, romaine, cucumber, plums, cherries, bell peppers, apples, butternut squash, pumpkin, cabbage

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### FoodCorps Student Survey Results

Will you taste a fruit if it looks strange?		Will you taste a fruit if you have never tasted it before?	
Definitely	3	Definitely	3
Probably	2	Probably	2
Probably	1	Probably	1
Definitely	0	Definitely	0
Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	1	2	3
3	2	3	3
3	3	1	3
3	2	3	2
2	2	2	3
1	3	3	3
1	1	3	1
3	1	3	3
3	1	3	2
1	3	1	3
2	3	2	3
2	2	3	3
0	2	2	3
0	1	3	3
1	2	0	3
1	3	2	1
3	2	2	2
1	3	2	2
3	1	3	3
3	3	2	1
3	1	3	
2		2	
2		3	
2		3	
1.916667	2 Mean	2.333333	2.5 Mean
0.383827	T-Test	0.245377	T-Test
1-tailed		1-tailed	

When you are at a friend's house, will you try a new fruit?			When you are at school, will you try a new fruit?		
Definitely	3		Definitely	3	
Probably	2		Probably	2	
Probably	1		Probably	1	
Definitely	0		Definitely	0	
Pre-Test	Post-Test		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
3	3		2	3	
2	3		3	3	
3	3		2	3	
3	3		3	3	
2	3		2	3	
2	3		3	3	
3	2		2	0	
3	2		3	3	
3	2		3	2	
2	3		3	2	
3	2		1	3	
3	3		2	3	
0	3		0	3	
2	2		0	3	
2	3		3	3	
2	2		2	2	
3	2		3	1	
2	2		1	3	
2	3		3	3	
3	3		2	3	
2	1		3	2	
3			3		
3			3		
3			2		
2.458333	2.52381	Mean	2.25	2.571429	Mean
0.372268		T-Test	0.115284		T-Test
1-tailed			1-tailed		

When you are at home, will you try a new fruit?		How many times have you tried a new fruit since the school year started this year?	
Definitely	3	Never	0
Probably	2	1 time	1
Probably	1	2 times	2
Definitely	0	3 times	3
		at least 4	4
Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
2	3	4	2
3	3	4	4
3	3	3	4
3	3	4	4
3	3	0	1
3	3	0	4
3	2	4	2
3	2	4	4
3	2	4	4
1	3	1	3
2	3	2	4
3	3	4	4
3	3	0	4
2	3	0	4
3	3	4	4
2	1	4	4
3	3	2	3
2	3	0	1
3	3	4	0
2	3	2	2
3	1	1	1
3		4	
3		4	
3		1	
2.666667	2.666667	Mean	2.5
0.5		T-Test	0.141665
1-tailed			1-tailed
		3 Mean	T-Test

Will you taste a vegetable if it looks strange?			Will you taste a vegetable if you have never tasted it before?		
Definitely	3		Definitely	3	
Probably	2		Probably	2	
Probably	1		Probably	1	
Definitely	0		Definitely	0	
<b>Pre-Test</b>	<b>Post-Test</b>		<b>Pre-Test</b>	<b>Post-Test</b>	
0	1		3	0	
2	2		2	3	
2	2		2	2	
3	2		3	2	
2	1		2	3	
0	2		1	2	
1	2		2	1	
1	2		2	3	
3	2		3	2	
1	3		1	2	
1	2		2	3	
2	2		3	3	
0	2		3	2	
0	0		2	0	
0	1		1	3	
0	2		1	1	
0	3		0	1	
1	3		1	2	
2	0		2	0	
2	2		3	2	
3	1		3	1	
1			2		
2			3		
2			3		
1.291667	1.761905	Mean	2.083333	1.809524	Mean
0.05236		T-Test	0.170886		T-Test
1-tailed			1-tailed		

When you are at a friend's house, will you try a new vegetable?

Definitely 3  
Probably 2  
Probably 1  
Definitely 0

When you are at school, will you try a new vegetable?

Definitely 3  
Probably 2  
Probably 1  
Definitely 0

Pre-Test Post-Test

3 2  
3 3  
1 2  
2 2  
2 3  
1 1  
3 2  
2 2  
3 2  
1 1  
3 2  
2 3  
1 3  
1 0  
2 3  
0 2  
1 1  
0 3  
3 0  
2 3  
2 1  
1  
3  
2

Pre-Test Post-Test

2 3  
3 3  
2 3  
3 3  
3 2  
1 1  
2 0  
2 3  
3 2  
3 3  
0 3  
2 3  
3 3  
1 0  
3 3  
0 2  
1 0  
1 3  
3 0  
1 3  
3 0  
3  
3  
2

1.833333 1.952381 Mean  
0.341334 T-Test  
1-tailed

2.083333 2.047619 Mean  
0.458823 T-Test  
1-tailed

When you are at home, will you try a new vegetable?			How many times have you tried a new vegetable since the school year started this year?		
Definitely	3		Never	0	
Probably	2		1 time	1	
Probably	1		2 times	2	
Definitely	0		3 times	3	
			at least 4	4	
Pre-Test	Post-Test		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
0	1		0	4	
2	3		3	4	
1	3		2	4	
3	3		3	3	
3	3		0	0	
2	1		0	2	
3	1		2	1	
2	2		2	2	
3	2		4	4	
1	3		1	4	
3	3		0	4	
3	3		3	4	
3	3		2	4	
3	0		0	0	
3	3		4	4	
0	1		0	4	
0	3		0	2	
2	2		1	1	
2	2		3	0	
2	2		1	3	
3	1		3	0	
2			1		
3			2		
3			1		
2.166667	2.142857	Mean	1.583333	2.571429	Mean
0.468756		T-Test	0.015689		T-Test
1-tailed			1-tailed		

- When you are at school, will you try a new fruit? Barely statistically significant increase from 2.25 to 2.57 ( $p = 0.12$ ). **Takeaway: kids surveyed are somewhat more likely to try a new fruit after FoodCorps classes.**
- How many times have you tried a new fruit since the school year started this year? Barely statistically significant increase from 2.5 times to 3 times ( $p = 0.14$ ). **Takeaway: kids tried more new fruits after FoodCorps classes.**

- How much do you like vegetables? Statistically significant decrease from 2.17 to 1.76 ( $p = 0.04$ ). **Takeaway: kids surveyed like vegetables less after my FoodCorps classes.**
- Will you taste a new vegetable if you don't know what it is? Statistically significant increase from 1.17 to 1.52 ( $p = 0.09$ ). **Takeaway: kids are more likely to taste a new vegetable if they don't know what it is after FoodCorps classes.**
- Will you taste a new vegetable if it looks strange? Statistically significant increase from 1.29 to 1.76 ( $p = 0.05$ ). **Takeaway: Kids are more likely to taste a vegetable if it looks strange after FoodCorps classes.**
- How many times have you tried a new vegetable since the school year started this year? Statistically significant increase from 1.58 to 2.57 ( $p = 0.02$ ). **Takeaway: Kids tried more new vegetables after FoodCorps classes. Students surveyed reported that they tried 1 new vegetable over the course of the year.**

# Appendix C-Posters and Coloring Book

## APPLES

APPLES are a good SOURCE of Fiber which keeps your digestive system healthy.

APPLE trees can LIVE to be 100 years old.

The first APPLE tree in MONTANA was planted in the BELLEFROST VALLEY in 1836.

PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. DESIGN PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. ART BY LARRY SCOTT, 2007.

## BEETS

Beets do DOUBLE duty when it comes to eating HEALTHY.

You can eat both the root and the leaves!

Beets contain the mineral Manganese. Manganese keeps your brain and nervous system healthy.

Historically, Beets have been used for more than food; they can be used as a natural dye too!

PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. DESIGN PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. ART BY LARRY SCOTT, 2007.

## BROCCOLI

Broccoli is FULL of calcium. Calcium makes bones and teeth strong.

We eat the STEMS and HEADS of Broccoli. Broccoli HEADS are MADE up of tiny little FLOWERS.

Broccoli contains as much CALCIUM as per ounce of MILK.

Broccoli is in the SAME FAMILY as CABBAGE- THEY like to GROW in COOL weather.

PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. DESIGN PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. ART BY LARRY SCOTT, 2007.

## CABBAGES

There are many different colors of CABBAGES: RED, PURPLE, WHITE and YELLOW.

Most Fresh water CABBAGE or a handful of boiled CABBAGE counts as one full serving of VEGETABLES!

CABBAGE leaves beta-carotene which makes them orange.

Dark COBBERS are really healthy for your eyes!

PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. DESIGN PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. ART BY LARRY SCOTT, 2007.

## CHEERRIES

Cheerries have ANTIOXIDANTS which make them RED. ANTIOXIDANTS are helpful for you and make your TASTE buds strong.

There are 5 types of Cherries: SWEET, SOUR.

Cheerries are GROWN in MONTANA along the flats of FLOWER FLATS.

PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. DESIGN PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. ART BY LARRY SCOTT, 2007.

## DARK GREENS

There are many types of DARK GREENS like spinach, romaine, lettuce, kale, Swiss chard and more!

Dark Greens are RICH in vitamins. Dark Greens are a great source of the mineral iron, which ALL parts of our body need to function HEALTHY.

Dark Greens like to GROW in cool weather. They can be eaten LOCALLY in Spring and Fall.

PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. DESIGN PROVIDED BY THE CLARK COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE. ART BY LARRY SCOTT, 2007.

Farm-to-School Poster Distribution

Original Printing

**Number of sets printed: 12**

**Number of school districts: 3**

**Number of schools: 11**

School	District	Number of Students	Free and Reduced Rate
Edgerton Elementary	Kalispell #5	591	41.7%
Russell School	Kalispell #5	300	70.7%
Elrod School	Kalispell #5	309	63.8%
Cornelius Hedges	Kalispell #5	386	64.8%
Lilian Peterson	Kalispell #5	408	58.3%
Kalispell Middle School	Kalispell #5	1,054	47.6%
Cherry Valley Elementary	Polson #23	281	61.2%
Linderman Elementary	Polson #23	368	57.3%
Polson Middle School	Polson #23		
Grades 5-6		269	55.8%
Grades 7-8		250	66.8%
K. William Harvey Elementary	Ronan/Pablo #30	396	76.4%
Pablo Elementary	Ronan/Pablo #30	273	89.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,885</b>	

School data from OPI Reporting Center for the 2013-2014 school year.

Secondary Printing

Montana Team nutrition printed 1,000 more sets of posters. As of April 23, 2014, they estimate they have distributed 500 sets. They have distributed many to teachers upon request at various trainings and meetings. They have also distributed the posters at the following conferences

Distributed 2013-April 2014

Conference Name	Date	Location	Audience/Notes
Gallatin Valley Farm to School Showcase	April 2014	Bozeman, MT	Community members

Growing the Common Core Teacher Workshop	February 2014	Bozeman, MT	Teachers
Montana FoodCorps Mid-Year Training	January 2014	Montana	FoodCorps Members
Montana State University Food Day Celebration	November 2013	Bozeman, MT	
Montana Educators Association Conference	October 2013	Belgrade, MT	Educators from across the state. Distributed at vendor show.
Montana End Childhood Hunger Summit	September 2013	Bozeman, MT	Community leaders from across the state
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Conference	August 2013	Missoula, MT	Afterschool educators
Montana School Nutrition Association Conference	June 2013		School nutrition professionals

#### Planned Distribution for 2014

Conference Name	Date	Location	Audience/Notes
Summer Food Service Program Summit	April 2014	Helena, MT	School nutrition professionals
Montana School Nutrition Association Conference	June 2014	Great Falls, MT	School nutrition professionals
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Conference	August 2014	Missoula, MT	Afterschool educators
Montana Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Professional Trainings	Fall 2014		School nutrition professionals

#### Coloring Book Distribution Records

School	Location	# Books	# Classes	# Students
On Our Way Montessori Preschool	Polson	20	1	20
Hyalite Elementary	Bozeman	90		90
Butte School District #1	Butte	3	3	60
Boulder Elementary School District #7	Boulder	12	12	140

Lockwood School & Boys and Girls Club	Billings	7	7	140
Ennis Elementary	Ennis	100		100
Mountain View Elementary	Red Lodge	12	12	240
Missoula County Public Schools	Missoula	90		90
			<b>Total</b>	<b>880</b>

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## Appendix D-Media, Photos & Blogs

From Valley Journal, Ronan Montana

Farm-to-School initiatives inspire health, excitement



Issue Date: 10/24/2012

Last Updated: 10/24/2012 3:10:46 PM | By [Daniel Martynowicz](#)

RONAN — Farm-to-school initiatives are programs and efforts designed to connect schools with local food producers. In addition to boosting the local economy, these programs help to educate students and teachers on the importance of healthy food choices, the process of agriculture and ranching and, very simply, knowing where their food comes from.

Mission Mountain Food Enterprises Center is a division of Lake County Community Development in Ronan. Recently, MMFE began its own farm-to-school initiatives in an effort to bring farmers, children, parents and educators together under one roof.

For the past two years, the focus has been on getting more local foods into school cafeterias. MMFE is an ideal place to begin this process, as it has a food-processing center in-house.

“Often, the barrier for schools using local foods is that using whole foods takes more time to prepare it,” said FoodCorps Service Member Nicki Jimenez. “MMFEC can remove that barrier because they can process them and send them to the school chopped up and ready to use.”

Jimenez said there are a lot of people throughout the state with the same job as her, but they don’t have the processing step in between producers and the schools.

“You can always get local foods, but it usually takes an extra step, which is hard,” she said.

Utilizing this in between step, the Western Montana Growers Co-op is able to aggregate and distribute locally grown, fresh food. This allows MMFE to source to schools on the scale necessary to make the entire process a success.

As October is Farm to School month, MMFE is celebrating with a wide array of events at local schools.

Last week, both Ronan and Polson schools had Montana-made meals served in all the K-12 schools. Ronan alone used 100 pounds of local beef, 120 pounds of local apples and 60 pounds of carrots. Each student was served a cup of locally produced taco soup with apples and carrots for lunch.

Polson also had Montana-made meals consisting of locally grown and produced beef, onions, egg noodles, carrots and apples resulting in a beef stroganoff.

To further solidify the connection between farmers and the food we eat, K. William Harvey Elementary school in Ronan held a drawing where kids got the opportunity to eat lunch with a farmer. The event was so successful that some people were actually sneaking into the cafeteria.

“People were really excited the farmer was the special guest in the cafeteria,” Jimenez said. “It was pretty exciting.”

Driving home the reason for the event, Jimenez asked one of the children what his favorite vegetable was. The child responded, “A fruit.” Many didn’t know that beef came from cows.

“This was a great way to generate excitement about local foods and farmers,” Jimenez said.

The long-term goal, according to AmeriCorps VISTA member Shay Boudreau, is to sustain farm to school efforts throughout the year and to work as a community to continue to get fresh fruits and vegetables onto student’s plates while educating them about their food.

At K. William Harvey Elementary, art teacher Barnaby Smith is working with MMFE on a Farm-to-School art project creating pictures with beet juice. MMFE is also working with teachers to add in-classroom demonstrations designed to teach kids why eating local and eating vegetables is healthy both for their bodies and for the local economy.

“It’s really important to know where your food comes from, because that helps make the connection that food doesn’t come from the grocery store or a package,” Boudreau said. “Real food is grown on a farm.”

Boudreau is currently working with Salish Kootenai College to garner support from students and the extension office to involve the newly constructed greenhouse on SKC’s campus in food sovereignty initiatives. Boudreau cited the lack of healthy food options surrounding SKC’s campus as a powerful motivator for promoting healthy, affordable and sustainable foods on-campus.

Boudreau will host an event Oct. 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Camas Room at SKC to educate students, begin a discussion and generate interest. Boudreau cited three major reasons why people should care about their food and where it comes from.

**Economic impact:** Buying local foods and supporting local farmers helps the local community and economy.

**Environmental impact:** Most of the food consumers buy at a grocery store travels an average of 1,500 miles. The environmental savings from halting the need to transport food over such distances would be immense.

Health impact: Locally sourced foods travel less than 50 miles. This allows fruits and vegetables to stay on the vine longer and increases the amount of nutrients in the food.

“I think one of the biggest topics in the news is obesity and how much it’s going to cost in the future,” Boudreau said. “Preventing childhood obesity is one of our biggest goals in these grassroots organizations. If we can put them on a healthy track now, then we’ll have them there for the rest of their lives.”

“I think the huge thing is also economic development,” Jimenez added. “There’s all this talk about everything in the economy and the elections, but we’re really doing stuff down here to help local farmers and local businesses.”

Both women expressed the need to involve the community in continuing efforts to forward farm-to-school initiatives.

“We can’t do it all by ourselves,” Jimenez said. “It’s definitely a true community effort, and that’s one of the reasons these organizations put us here.”

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From National FoodCorps Blog

Local Farmer Visits Cafeteria Decorated with “Unbeetable” Art

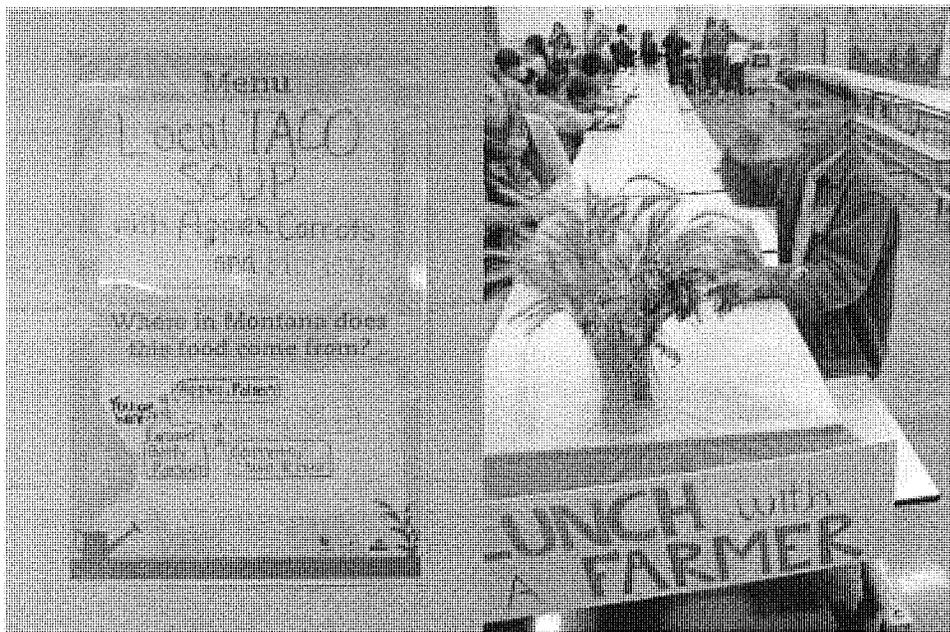
Tuesday, October 30, 2012

*Nicki Jimenez is a FoodCorps Service Member in Ronan, MT.*

“Are you the farmer?!” inquired curious elementary schoolers as I greeted them at the entrance to the cafeteria.

“I’m the farmer’s helper,” I laughed, “You can see Farmer Will inside!”

Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> was a very special day at K. William Harvey Elementary School in Ronan, MT. Students loaded their trays with a cup of taco soup featuring local beef from White’s Wholesale Meats in Ronan, slices of farm-fresh apples from Dupuis Orchards in nearby Polson, and crinkle-cut carrot coins sourced from the Western Montana Grower’s Cooperative and processed at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC), a program of Lake County Community Development Corporation and my service site.



**Image 1: Montana Team Nutrition posters helped tell kids where local ingredients come from.**

**Farmer Will Tusick waves goodbye to students who sat with him during lunch.**

While all the students ate their Montana Made Meal, lucky students got to dine with local farmer, Will Tusick. With the help of all the Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, all the students entered a drawing to win a spot at that table. Five students from each grade talked with Farmer Will and MMFEC’s MTCC AmeriCorps Vista Shay Boudreau about farming and eating local, healthy food. The conversation with the farmer, as well as the general excitement generated by the contest helped to strengthen the lesson of the Montana Made Meal: that real, delicious, and

healthy food comes from the farm and is grown by farmers near to home in Ronan, and all around Montana.

---

From Leader Advertiser, Polson, MT

Ronan schools serve up local cuisine



Marsha Wartick serves carrots grown in Montana to students

Posted: Friday, October 25, 2013 8:00 am

By Jessica Stugelmayer | [0 comments](#)

RONAN — Homemade whole-wheat buns, Montana ground beef and locally grown carrots and apples are items you would find on a high-priced menu, but in honor of Farm to School month local food was the highlight of lunch trays Monday in the Ronan cafeteria.

"Local and scratch-made food is better for the kids," Marsha Wartick said.

It's hard to get kids to eat their vegetables and Wartick is on the front line of the battle. As the food service supervisor for the Ronan School District, she struggles to get students healthy, nutritious food they will eat.

Wartick said she began incorporating whole grains, fruits and vegetables long before there were requirements to do so. While most of it has been an experiment she said, she has found some items student really like, such as a salsa with corn and black beans.

On top of that tall order, Wartick and other Lake County school districts have been working in conjunction with Nicki Jimenez, a Food Corps service member with Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, a program of Lake County Community Development Corporation (LCCDC), to incorporate locally grown food into school menus.

Jimenez said her role is to facilitate relationships between school food service and local farmers.

By doing that, she said the goal is to build the economy by creating new markets for Montana farmers to sell their crops.

Jimenez said the close partnership with the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC), a collective of 38 growers from the region, makes it feasible to acquire the amount of food schools require.

"Without them it would be hard to get [food] at the volume and scale that schools need," Jimenez said.

The carrots and apples that graced the trays on Monday were sourced from WMGC, the beef came from White's Wholesale Meats in Ronan and the wheat came from Wheat Montana in Three Forks.

The struggle comes down to the matter of cost, which both Wartick and Jimenez can attest to. Wartick said while she weighs options for local fruits and veggies for the better price, she always buys flour made from wheat grown in the Treasure State.

Jimenez said part of her work is to make local food affordable for schools.

"A lot of times they're forced to buy whatever they are able," she said.

Jimenez said the way to begin getting local food into schools is to utilize programs that have more budget flexibility, such as snack programs, and leveraging those dollars to go toward local food.

Jimenez said this year she was impressed when Wartick initiated the conversation about Montana Food Day. She said it shows growth for food service facilitators to make local foods part of their everyday operation.

Wartick said she couldn't do it all without the help of her excellent staff.

Wartick said she likes to feature local foods in the elementary classrooms of Pablo and Ronan, such as fresh fruit or veggies as the student's daily snack.

Currently, she said the program includes one local food item each weekly.

Appendix C- Farm to School Case Study

# Developing Efficiencies in Food Processing for Rural Farm to School Programs

## A Case Study



### Executive Summary

The project *Developing Efficiencies in Food Processing for Rural Farm to School Programs* began expanding market opportunities for Montana's farmers by determining cost effective methods of processing and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables for the K-12 school market. A priority of the project was to organize stakeholders to utilize regional cooperative producer groups, such as the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) and community food processing infrastructure, such as Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC), to store and freeze local produce for distribution during the academic year. MMFEC held planning meetings with stakeholders to begin developing cooperative opportunities to pool labor and food processing

resources in order to help eliminate cost barriers that often prevent schools from procuring regionally grown and processed food. The meetings were a platform to introduce Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to food service directors (FSDs) as the foundation to cooperative purchasing. The project also sought to pool labor of three school district's food service employees during the summer months to process local produce, create jobs and lower processing costs for schools. This case study evaluates and will disseminate MMFEC's best practices that resulted in more efficient aggregation, processing, and distribution of regional food to schools.

LAKE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION;  
MISSION MOUNTAIN  
FOOD ENTERPRISE  
CENTER

Prepared by Shay  
Farmer, Food &  
Agriculture Coordinator

October 15, 2014

Funded by the USDA Federal  
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Improvement Program of the  
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Service, U.S. Department of  
Agriculture

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## Introduction

Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center and Lake County Community Development Corp. The Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC), a division of Lake County Community Development Corporation is located in rural Ronan, Montana on the Flathead Indian Reservation. MMFEC's mission is to enhance regional and state economic opportunities by providing client services for value-added agriculture and specialty food businesses through the management and operation of a viable community-based food processing center. It is a fully functioning food processing, research and development facility that is inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Montana Department of Agriculture Organic Program.

MMFEC is a response to a community based food system assessment, the Montana Food System Initiative, which was conducted in 1998. The assessment involved a diverse group of community leaders and organizations that looked at the local food system and identified community based actions that could increase local food production, add value to area agriculture, and create new resources to increase local food consumption. In 1999 MMFEC was established as a USDA Rural Development Cooperative Development Center. The plan revealed that western Montana farmers, ranchers, and food producers require marketing, food processing, and distribution infrastructure development in order to enhance their quality of life and economic well-being. By 2000, MMFEC's food processing facility was built and began providing a venue for the incubation of specialty food entrepreneurs and value-added agricultural producers.

Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center's Farm to Institution Program is a result of a 2008 Flathead Indian Reservation Food and Fitness

Project. The goal of the project was to make food and fitness a norm on the Flathead Indian Reservation. A recommendation that emerged from the initial two-year community assessment was that increasing health education and access to nutritious fresh foods in schools was an important and necessary next-step to improve the health of community members and increase economic opportunities for area farmers and ranchers.



Western Montana Growers Cooperative "The Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) is a coalition of growers in the Flathead, Jocko, Mission, and Bitterroot Valleys whose goal is to provide the market in western Montana with fresh, quality products. In 2002, through a Community Food Systems Grant, MMFEC started working to find ways to get local food to local people. The funding made it so one person could take a lead in actively forming WMGC. A small group of farmers then became involved and it was determined that a cooperatively owned marketing and delivery service would be a good tool. WMGC grew out of this process and is entirely independent of MMFEC." This aggregating, marketing, and distribution service allows farmer members to focus on growing healthy food while making it readily available to consumers."<sup>1</sup>

The Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) is the major marketer and distributor of local produce in western Montana. MMFEC and WMGC have a long working history sourcing, processing, and pricing out products for the farm to institutional marketplace. The two currently operate under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) which outlines their respective roles in a co-packing relationship for the snack program. MMFEC provides processing expenses and the

*MMFEC is a response to a community based food system assessment...The plan revealed that western Montana farmers, ranchers, and food producers require marketing, food processing, and distribution infrastructure development in order to enhance their quality of life and economic well-being*

<sup>1</sup> Western Montana Growers Cooperative website, retrieved 10/3/14: <http://wmgcoop.com/about>

WMGC provides raw ingredient expenses. This is a model of shared investment and risk between the two organizations and has alleviated capital barriers.

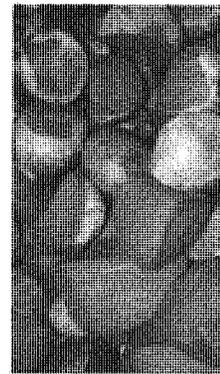
WMGC has 40+ member/producers who supply the region's restaurants and grocery outlets with meat, grains, fresh and frozen produce, and a small number of other locally produced items. Currently there are no contracts or agreements in place for producers to grow specifically for the farm to institution market. Excess and "number 2" produce is directed to this market.

#### The Project's School District Market Profile

The project's collaborating school districts include Ronan, Polson, and Kalispell which are located in Lake and Flathead counties of western Montana. Ronan School District is situated within three blocks of MMFEC, Polson is approximately 11 miles from

the center, and Kalispell is 65 miles away. The three districts serve a combined 7,500 breakfasts and lunches per day.

In all three school districts, more than 50% of their students qualify for Free or Reduced lunches (Ronan at 73%, Kalispell at 60% and Polson at 58%). Due to the high Free or Reduced lunch rates, the three schools qualify for the USDA Food Nutrition Service funded Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). FFVP is a school based strategy to increase elementary children's consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, improve their health, and reduce their risk of obesity. FFVP is a separate program from the daily school breakfast and lunch meal program. Participating schools receive federal funds to provide a fresh fruit or vegetable snack to all elementary age students for free at school.



## Montana Grown Value Chain

The opportunities for Montana's farmers, ranchers and small food entrepreneurs to produce and market food for local and regional markets has been limited in the past by the lack of in-state food supply chain infrastructure. A study by the Economic Affairs Interim Committee of the Montana Legislature included a stakeholder survey of challenges to developing a Montana food industry that could add value to an otherwise raw, bulk commodity dependent economy. The results of that study confirmed the conclusions reached in 2007 by the Governor's Food and Agriculture Summit who was charged with identifying ways to redevelop Montana's capacity to produce Montana Food for Montanans. The conclusion was that Montana lacked sufficient infrastructure needed by agricultural producers to grow, process, and distribute the food products increasingly demanded by Montana's markets.<sup>2</sup>

Recently there has been a rise in the number of farms growing fruits and vegetables and selling directly to western Montana consumers. This correlates to the concerted efforts to educate consumers on the economic value of local food and to the establishment of distribution and processing

infrastructure. Since 2012, MMFEC has worked extensively on an educational *Choose Local* campaign funded through USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant that is displayed in 14 independently owned western Montana grocery stores.<sup>3</sup> The campaign identifies local products with imagery and has educational materials that highlight the economic, health, and environmental benefits of purchasing locally produced fruits and vegetables.

Farm to Institution is a rapidly growing market sector. Montana's public institutions represent only about 2% of the food consumed in Montana, yet they have the potential to offer medium sized farms, processors and distributors secondary markets for products that are difficult to market (i.e., slightly blemished or irregular sized and shaped fruits and vegetables). Institutional markets such as schools offer tremendous buying power and can help drive product levels so economies of scale can be achieved, which allows producers to enter additional wholesale and retail markets.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>2007 Montana State Legislature. Senate Joint Resolution 13, an interim study to evaluate methods and recommend ways to add value to Montana agricultural products through redevelopment of a food processing industry.

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.lakecountycdc.org/Choose\\_Local](http://www.lakecountycdc.org/Choose_Local)

<sup>4</sup>McLeay, Fraser and Niccola Barron (2006). Unlocking the Food Buying Potential of Montana's Public Institutions.

The project *Develop Efficiencies in Food Processing for Rural Farm to School Programs* which was funded through the USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program and the Montana Department of Agriculture, looked to expand market opportunities for Montana's farmers by determining the best methods of processing and preparing fruits and vegetables for the state's largest public institutional market, K-12 schools. The project addressed primary barriers that prevented schools from using more local produce: 1) The height of the growing season occurs when schools are typically not in session; 2) schools are limited in the equipment and labor to

process produce; and 3) the cost of processing individually as one school can ultimately make procurement of locally grown and processed produce unattainable for individual school districts. The project looked to develop cooperative opportunities to pool labor and food processing resources in order to eliminate barriers to procuring Montana grown food. Working with schools and producers helped determine best practices that resulted in efficiencies to reduce the price spread between producers and schools.

## Background and 2011 Pilot Project

MMFEC spent 2010 purchasing equipment to peel, dice, slice and package fruits and vegetables which enabled them to pilot fresh and frozen vegetables in schools. In 2011- 2012, MMFEC began developing the farm to school program. MMFEC worked with the Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) and Kalispell, Ronan, St. Ignatius, and Polson School Districts on the pre-planning, production and processing of five fruit and vegetable products. The project focused on purchasing second standard fruits and vegetables. MMFEC cut carrots and wedged apples for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (FFVP), pitted and froze sweet cherries, wedged and froze apples, and blanched and froze squash cubes for the school breakfast and lunch programs.

From 2011-2014, MMFEC was a host organization for AmeriCorps farm to institution VISTAs (Volunteer in Service to America) and service members through FoodCorps. The VISTA and FoodCorps volunteers focused on local food access and nutrition education with area schools and

successfully delivered 7,000 pounds of processed fruits and vegetables for Ronan, Polson, and Kalispell School Districts' Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program in 2011. MMFEC also froze approximately 13,000 pounds of sweet cherries, butternut squash, and pumpkin puree for schools throughout the remainder of the 2011-2012 school year via WMGC's distribution network. MMFEC worked to coordinate the movement of products to the school and began developing a more streamlined approach for schools to source products directly from WMGC. These relationships resulted in MMFEC processing nearly 25,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables produced by WMGC member-growers for use in school menus during 2011. MMFEC's pro-

cessing infrastructure created new markets for the WMGC resulting in an additional \$20,000 in sales for second quality fruits and vegetables. The 2011 farm to school pilot project resulted in solidifying relationships between WMGC, MMFEC, and area schools, which readied partners for the full implementation of the farm to school program in 2012.

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*These relationships resulted in MMFEC processing nearly 25,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables produced by WMGC member-growers for use in school menus during 2011.*



## Crop Supply, Pricing, Availability, and Quantity

The following table lists the products that have been processed for WMGC by MMFEC from January 2012 to September 2014.

	2012	2013	2014	Total Pounds
Cherries	7624	17000	10453	35077
Butternut Squash	0	8911	0*	8911
Carrots	3903	1485	1028	6416
Cabbage	800	605	0*	1405
Cucumbers	500	1659	363	2522
Apples	550	3220	476	4246
Beets	910	607	1817	3334
Zucchini	250	1461	0*	1711
Pumpkin	806	2151	0*	2957
Peas	0	270	395	665
Melon	2607	387	0*	2994
Green Beans	205	957	502	1664
Bell Pepper	300	517	647	1464
Cauliflower	0	0	209	209
Broccoli	0	336	60	396
Tomatoes	0	1161	0*	1161
Beef-Lentil Crumble	0	675	0*	675
Basil	0	131	0*	131
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18455</b>	<b>40858</b>	<b>16625</b>	<b>75938</b>

\*Poundage for year not yet available.

## Crop Supply, Pricing, Availability, and Quantity, continued

Currently, MMFEC processes only fruits and vegetables supplied by WMGC for schools, as they are able to provide the quantities necessary for efficient and cost effective processing. WMGC management works with growers to identify crops that are in excess and gathers the amount necessary to make a processing run cost effective. Schools are then contacted to see if they are interested in serving that particular excess item. At least 600lbs of raw product is ideal for processing at MMFEC because smaller amounts are inefficient and costly. By processing this amount, MMFEC is able to keep the cost of production at a level that is affordable for schools. MMFEC staff and WMGC management work closely to keep the costs to schools at a minimum while still covering operational costs.

MMFEC uses a cost calculator that was developed by the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center to determine production prices. Factors weighed in this calculation include: labor and associated costs such as Workman's Comp; packaging and labeling; a "footprint cost," which includes the estimated utility consumption for a particular process (slicing, dicing, etc.) and its associated machinery operation, and a slight margin to cover overhead. Production cost is spread over the "raw poundage" or starting weight which determines the price per pound of production. WMGC determines the final costs to schools by adding MMFEC's production fees to their own product baseline for procuring, aggregating, and distributing a product.

Cost Calculator:

Production Control				Product ID #	Batch #	Client ID	Preorder	Lot
Client								
Product								
Farm Source								

Ingredient from unit of (raw lb)	Qty	Price	Total
Raw Product (lb) 60'	600.00		\$0.00
Labor (total)			\$293.00
Accessory Center HM (total)		\$20.00	\$0.00
Accessory Center SPR (total)		\$25.00	\$0.00
Accessory Center LPR (total)	0.00	\$35.00	\$0.00
Bulk Bags (total)	0.00	\$0.75	\$0.00
5lb bags (total)	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
5lb bags (total)	0.00	\$0.34	\$0.00
Box, 18lb (total)	0.00	\$3.50	\$0.00
Box, 25lb (total)	0.00	\$0.75	\$0.00
Labels - large, color (total)	0.00	\$0.13	\$0.00
Labels - small, B&W (total)	0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Box (gross)	0.00	\$2.40	\$0.00
Label (dry)	0.00	\$1.43	\$0.00
Tape - Splice			\$0.00
Processing Cost		\$4.84	\$293.00
Processing cost per lb			0.49

Labor Cost				
Laborer	Number	Time	Cost/Perks	T.
Assistant Processor	2	8	\$12	0
Assistant Processor	1	4	\$12	0
Assistant Processor			\$12	0
Lead Processor			\$12	0
Processing Manager			\$12	0
<b>Total Labor</b>		<b>17</b>		

Finished Product			
Total lbs (total)	5lb	5lb	5lb
Number of bags	120	120	
Number of cases	100	210	
Number of cases			30

Key		
Color	Value	Label
Green	0.50	0.50
Orange	0.50	0.50
Yellow	0.50	0.50
White	0.50	0.50

This part doesn't exactly follow the color scheme		
Projected Gross Profit Margin	1000lb (Gross Margin %)	
Gross Margin %	Selling price at Gross Profit Margin	Total Gross Profits
20%	0.48	\$288.00
25%	0.50	\$300.00
20%	0.52	\$312.00
25%	0.54	\$324.00
20%	0.56	\$336.00
25%	0.58	\$348.00
20%	0.60	\$360.00
25%	0.62	\$372.00
20%	0.64	\$384.00
25%	0.66	\$396.00

### Crop Supply, Pricing, Availability, and Quantity, continued

The growing season in Montana is short and most produce is harvested during the summer when school is not in session. Freezing is the best option to extend the availability of products into the school year.

The following table shows the availability/seasonality of products as outlined by WMGC:

Fruit and Vegetable Availability for Western Montana												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
<b>Fruit</b>												
Apples												
Cherries, fresh*												
Melon												
Peaches												
Pears												
Plums												
Raspberries												
Strawberries												
Blueberries*												
<b>Vegetables</b>												
Asparagus												
Green Beans*												
Beets**												
Broccoli**												
Cabbage												
Carrots**												
Cauliflower**												
Braising Greens												
Corn												
Cucumber												
Eggplant												
Garlic												
Leeks												
Lettuce												
Salad Mix												
Onions*												
Peas**												
Parsnips												
Winter Squash**												
Summer Squash*												

\*Extended availability through freezing    \*\*Extended availability through blanching and freezing

## Crop Supply, Pricing, Availability, and Quantity, continued

The following shows the cost of production, thus far, for crops that have proven successful in the K-12 market:

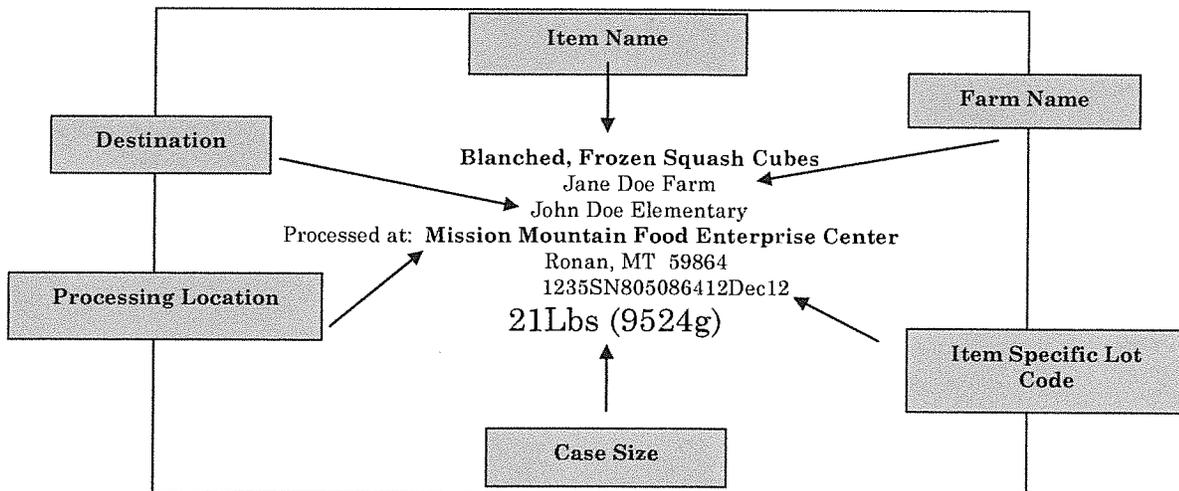
	Fresh	Blanched and Frozen	Roasted
Butternut Squash	\$0.86/lb	\$1.07/lb	NA
Carrots	\$0.88/lb	\$1.00/lb	NA
Beets	\$0.95/lb	NA	\$2.50/lb
Cucumbers	\$0.77/lb	NA	NA
Bell Peppers	\$1.10/lb	NA	NA
Apples	\$0.85/lb	NA	NA
Green Beans	NA	\$1.60/lb	NA
Peas	NA	\$1.50/lb	NA
Cauliflower	\$1.40/lb	\$3.06/lb	NA
Broccoli	\$1.40/lb	\$3.05/lb	NA
Zucchini	\$0.84/lb	\$0.84/lb	NA
Onions	\$1.50/lb	NA	NA
Cabbage	\$0.86/lb	NA	NA
Pumpkin	NA	NA	\$1.25/lb
Average	\$1.04/lb	\$1.73/lb	\$1.88/lb

# Food Safety

Food Safety is a significant concern especially when serving vulnerable populations. With new requirements under the USDA Food Modernization Act, every producer and processor is charged with ensuring a product is safe and traceable. In 2012, through the support of the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant, Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center adopted a comprehensive facility wide Food Safety Program. Whether it be fresh or frozen, each product is processed following a strict Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) plan that has been scrutinized and accepted by either the FDA or USDA.

Fresh produce delivered to the facility is visually inspected for quality and is turned away if deemed unacceptable. Once on the processing floor the product is once again inspected, washed, and

prepped for production. Each step in the process is monitored by some measure (pH, ppm chlorine, time, temperature, and quality) to ensure a safe end product for the consumer. Traceability is key to the success of any food safety plan so each product is given a unique lot number that identifies the farm where the food was grown, the location it was processed, the product specific code (how it was cut, whether it is fresh or frozen, etc.), and the date on which it was processed. This number accompanies other identifying information on a label that is placed on each case of product (see below). Additional labels containing nutritional information may also be applied to a case of product depending on what it is and how it should be handled (see below).



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 205 g (20%)	
Servings per Container 3	
Amount per Serving	
Calories 70	Calories from Fat 0
Calories from Saturated Fat 0	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	0%
Polysaturated Fat 0g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 16g	6%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Soluble Fiber 0g	
Sugars 5g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 15%	Vitamin C 45%
Calcium 6%	Iron 6%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Calories 2,000 2,500	
Total Fat	Less than 65g 85g
Salt Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrates 4 • Protein 4	

**Safe Handling Instructions**  
Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions:

- Keep refrigerated or frozen.
- Thaw in refrigerator.
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards), utensils, and hands after touching raw meat or poultry.
- Cook thoroughly. ⇒ 165°
- Keep hot foods hot. Refrigerate leftovers immediately or discard.

**Squash Cubes**

**Safe Handling Instructions**  
Some food products may contain bacteria that could cause illness if the product is mishandled or cooked improperly. For your protection, follow these safe handling instructions.

- Keep refrigerated or frozen.
- Thaw in refrigerator or microwave
- Keep raw meat or poultry separate from other foods.
- Wash working surfaces (including cutting boards, utensils, and hands) after touching raw meat or poultry.
- Cook thoroughly
- Keep hot foods hot.
- Refrigerate leftovers or discard

## Distribution

WMGC is the main distributor for farm to school products in western Montana. Their immediate reach is from Missoula north to Whitefish and points in between. Clients outside of this range are serviced by a third party carrier that WMGC contracts with. Third party carriers are able to service Helena, Great Falls, Bozeman, and a few smaller areas surrounding these more populated cities. Distribution is a challenge to smaller school districts in outlying areas. Some have the capacity to drive to bigger cities to pick up products, but this is not seen as sustainable. Food Services of America and Sysco deliver to schools but do not carry products that are not listed on their contract with the Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

## Storage

MMFEC has three operating walk-in freezers and one “flash” freezer for storage. The total capacity for storage is about 48 pallets; freezer storage is not an issue at the present time. MMFEC also has a large and underutilized walk-in-cooler.

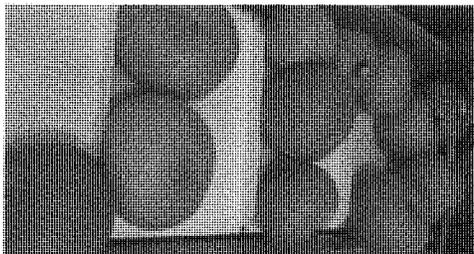
## The Project: Developing Efficiencies in Food Processing Through Cooperative Agreements (2012-2014)

To increase efficiencies in purchasing, aggregating, and processing, an initial planning meeting was held with stakeholders on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The goal of putting a MOU for cooperative purchasing was introduced to Food Service Directors (FSD) as a way to lower costs for each school and to stream-line aggregation.

Stakeholders were brought together to discuss cooperative purchasing opportunities that would increase each school's individual purchasing power. If schools could decide together on certain products that all would purchase, the cost would ultimately come down and allow more opportunities for smaller schools to purchase regional products over non-regional products while staying within their strict budgets. The initial meeting of stakeholders included a variety of suggestions on how to make farm to school procurement viable and affordable. *See Appendix, Page 16 for Meeting Notes.*

Threads for future discussions and planning included:

- Prioritize the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) for cooperative purchasing and to set up a system of communication via an ordering system for school districts to be on the same weekly procurement schedule.
- Push a strategy based upon availability.
- Source surplus products to schools.
- Pursue the concept of cooperative labor that would utilize school staff in summer months to help process at MMFEC which would ultimately lower costs for all schools and provide jobs for fur-loughed food service staff in the summer.



Stakeholders included:

Attendee	School District/Position	Meals Served	Goals & Reason for Attending Meeting
Lindsay Howard	MMFEC Farm to School Coordinator	N/A	"To collaborate and create efficiency in local procurement efforts."
Jennifer Montague	Food Service Direct (FSD), Kalispell School District	3,500	"To get kids to understand the food system we're up against and make them want to fix it."
Jim Steiner	FSD, Polson School District	1,200	"To offer a variety of fruits and vegetables and utilize local produce."
Steffen Brown	Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) Assistance Manager	N/A	"To learn about institutional procurement."
Jay Stagg	FSD, Whitefish School District	800	"For kids to eat food that tastes like it's supposed to."
Marsha Wartick	FSD, Ronan School District	1,100	"To get kids to eat healthier and fresher, to give kids what they can't get at home."
Karen Belluomini	FSD, St. Ignatius School District	400	"To teach kids about what they're eating and what real food tastes like; local is the best way to do that."
Peter Kerns	FoodCorps Service Member representing Missoula County Public Schools	6,000 meals 4,000 lunches	"To develop local products that are sustainable and within budget."
Lea Howe	FoodCorps Fellow	N/A	"To get local beef into schools."
Shay Farmer	MTCC AmeriCorps VISTA, representing Salish Kootenai College	N/A	N/A
Nicki Jimenez	FoodCorps Service Member at MMFEC	N/A	"To come away from today's meeting with a plan of action."
Dave Prather	WMGC General Manager	N/A	
Yvette Rodriguez	MMFEC Food Safety Coordinator	N/A	"To discuss what is and isn't safe and realistic on a processing floor."
Ian Finch	University of Montana	3,000	"To set up cooperative purchasing."

A second planning meeting was held via conference call on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and focused on evaluating projected production to determine viable products and efficient volumes for the school year. The concept was to help growers plan their crops in advance with the planning of FSDs. *See Appendix, Page 17 for meeting notes.*

The idea of cooperative labor from school staff was again broached as a way to lower processing costs for schools to better meet their budgetary needs. It was envisioned that school district food service staff, during the summer, would help process local vegetables and fruits at MMFEC's food processing facility in Ronan. Polson, Ronan, and Kalispell schools signed letters of support committing to share labor costs of processing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Upon individual follow-up meetings with Ronan and Polson FSDs and their Superintendents between June 10, 2013 and July 16, 2013, cooperative labor for processing of fruits and vegetables was ruled out as a viable option due to liability issues such as Workman's Compensation for non-MMFEC staff.

In November of 2013, MMFEC met with three Food Service Directors and staff in the immediate vicinity of Ronan and Polson to begin evaluating the project. Jim Steiner-Food Service Director for Polson School District, JB Capdeville- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Coordinator for Polson School District, and Marsha Wartick-Food Service Director for Ronan School District were interviewed. *Please see Appendix Page 20 for FSD survey and summary.*

Qualitative data indicated that the farm to school program was viewed positively by staff at the schools. The quality of the product from WMGC and the processing and packaging from MMFEC has been seen as good. FSDs identified that prices are higher than through their normal distributors, Sysco and FSA, but they like to buy local. Both Food Service Directors expressed interest in buying more local products if more were available and/or could be paired with lower-cost commodity items. Both districts were happy with their one snack per week purchase and would be interested

In attendance at the second planning meeting:

Attendee	School District/Position
Karen Belluomini	FSD, St. Ignatius School District
Steffen Brown	WMGC Assistant Manager
Ian Finch	University of Montana
Lindsay Howard	MMFEC Farm to School Coordinator
Nicki Jimenez	MMFEC FoodCorps Service Member
Peter Kerns	Missoula County Food Corps Service Member, on behalf of Ed
Dave Prather	WMGC General Manager
Yvette Rodriguez	MMFEC Food Safety Coordinator
Katie Wheeler	Kalispell Public Schools FoodCorps Service Member, on behalf of Jenny Montague

in adding another to the week, depending on budgetary allowances.

Some feedback about products was offered by FSDs. Apples, peppers, carrots and plums were all well received. Products that could have been better processed included: cucumbers that were too thinly sliced, apples that were sometimes too big, cabbage that could be shredded finer, and cantaloupe that could be more thickly cut. Spinach, radishes, peaches and pears were all identified as items schools would like to see more of.

The food service staff also gave suggestions for how to improve the marketing and sales relationship between WMGC and the schools. The biggest dissatisfaction expressed in the interviews was the need for better communication from WMGC about what is available for purchase each week. Regular communication was identified as a need from schools to increase sales of local purchases. It was suggested that a weekly email from WMGC could list the upcoming FFVP snacks and other local produce available, and ask for an opt-in or out for the snacks if the school was interested in ordering anything else.

In February 2014, MMFEC met with six FSDs from Bigfork, Evergreen, Whitefish, Kalispell, Charlo, and St. Ignatius to discuss price points

that needed to be met for future development of local products outside the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, such as beef or other value-added products that the schools may be interested in purchasing for breakfasts and lunches. Product ideas were further developed such as a beef-lentil crumble, frozen soups, and pizza sauce. Specific price point thresholds were discussed for protein servings and vegetable/fruit servings, giving MMFEC a better idea of what items needed

to cost in order for schools to be able to afford local, value-added products, which included processed fruit and vegetables (i.e., blanched and frozen carrots). For example, based on these conversations, price is determined not just by per pound, but also by serving size (2 oz. or 4 oz.). For the future of farm to school, and outside of the FFVP, discussions were held about the ability for schools to plan a year in advance for producers of the WMGC. Most FSDs indicated that they were able to plan their needs a year in advance.

*30,450.14 pounds of produce went to local schools worth \$21,406 in 2012. In 2013, that amount became 54,796.94 pounds of produce, worth \$50,445, which represents an 80% increase in pounds of produce between 2012 and 2013.*

Kalispell, Ronan, and Polson school districts committed to purchase one processed and one un-processed snack per week for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program through the WMGC. As of September 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed between all school districts identified by this project, WMGC, and MMFEC. The MOU outlines the frequency of fresh, processed snacks (once a week), how the product will be delivered and the process to follow for opting out of a snack for the week. No other informal or formal MOUs have been developed with school districts. *Please see Appendix, Page 27 for MOU template.*

According to Western Montana Growers Cooperative records, 30,450.14 pounds of produce went to local schools worth \$21,406 in 2012. In 2013, that amount became 54,796.94 pounds of produce, worth \$50,445, which represents an 80% increase in pounds of produce between 2012 and 2013.<sup>5</sup> Many smaller schools in Montana were able

Local Produce to Schools January-December 2012 & 2013:

School District	LBS of Produce Purchased 2012	LBS of Produce Purchased 2013	% Change
Boulder Elementary School	1,016.40	1,572.23	54.7
Butte City Schools Warehouse	1,007.70	1,545.30	53.3
Kalispell Public Schools	22,766.37	38,699.76	70
Evergreen School District	0	355.2	355.2
Missoula County Public Schools	3,707.93	2,976.34	-19.7
Polson School District	540.04	4,468.39	727.4
Ronan/Pablo School District	921.19	3,816.08	314
Somers School District	340.51	1,144.49	236.11
St. Ignatius School District	80	219.94	175
<b>Total:</b>	<b>30,450</b>	<b>54,796.94</b>	<b>79.96</b>

<sup>5</sup> 2012-2013 Western Montana Growers Cooperative Sales Records for K-12 institutions

## Analysis and Recommendations

Methods and tools used in the evaluation process included:

- Food service director (FSD) survey (post program)
- Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) sales and distribution records
- WMGC management interview survey
- WMGC producer survey
- Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) processing records, including records of efficiencies obtained from equipment upgrades and records of raw materials standards
- Production planning meeting minutes

MMFEC organized an evaluation committee and meetings were held throughout the span of the project with representatives from MMFEC, WMGC (management and producers), and local FSDs. Information sharing between parties was key to the success of developing communication and processing efficiencies; discussions between parties occurred in person and via conference call due to Montana's rural nature to discuss short and long term impacts of the farm to school project..

Short term discussions included whether a particular processed product met the needs of all parties involved with quality, quantity, packaging and cost. Value-added products have been researched and tested for future use in school markets on MMFEC's end and are continuously being developed. *See Appendix, Page 24 for updated FSD informational meeting.*

Long term and continuing discussions have included having schools sign informal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the WMGC and MMFEC to make local procurement as straight forward as possible and to allow producers to plan ahead. Stakeholders are

working towards strategies to grow the farm to school market.

WMGC producers were asked to complete a survey entitled *Growth, Sales, and Equipment* for internal evaluation purposes which 26 of 38 co-op members completed. Data collected from the survey indicated that producers still had a significant amount of product available for the farm to school market. When asked about their desire to increase sales through the co-op, 56% indicated they wished to expand in the next year, 40% indicated in the next 2-3 years, and 12% indicated in 4-5 years. With that time frame in mind, 68% said that they were interested in increasing their current co-op commitments and in growing new crops. The survey asked producers if during the 2013 production year if they had excess produce they were unable to sell; 82% indicated that they did indeed have excess and that it either ended up in the compost pile, fed to animals, or donated to local food banks. When asked specifically how much excess that had not been sold, answers ranged from several hundred pounds to several thousand pounds of #1 and #2 quality produce that potentially could have been sold to schools or other institutional markets. Producers were also asked if they would be interested in serving on a farm to school committee, with five producers indicating that they would be interested in participating. *See Appendix, Page 29 for survey and summary.*

According to the WMGC Management Survey, the school market is seen only as a way to sell 2<sup>nd</sup> standard fruits and vegetables and excess. This makes planning with schools challenging. As school budgets are tight, schools are not seen as a priority and so regular communication has not been established for planning for school meals opportunities, but rather only the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. *See Appendix, Page 30 for summary.*

The evaluation conducted for the project revealed results that will assist MMFEC in implementing best practices that will insure the sustainability of the project. MMFEC found three key findings:

1) Specific coordination is demanded to meet minimum requirements for cooperative purchasing and processing of local produce with various school districts that will fit into school budgets; 2) In order to expand the farm to school market beyond the FFVP, there needs to be a coordinated planning process between producers, distributors and schools at least a year in advance and 3) The trial and planning of new products in schools often requires at least one dedicated staff member on both ends of development.

*1. Specific Coordination is demanded to meet minimum requirements for cooperative purchasing and processing of local produce.*

In order for schools to purchase locally produced and processed items, a tight price point must be met. To make a processing production run affordable, at least 600 pounds of raw product must be processed. This means that orders from multiple school districts must be collected in order to bring the price point down. By cooperatively purchasing, school districts can make a local item affordable that individually, would not meet their budgetary constraints.

*2. In order to expand the farm to school market beyond FFVP, a coordinated planning process must continue. A coordinated planning process must take place between producers, distributors and schools at least one year in advance. The farm to school market began in western Montana as an outlet for second standard produce, thus making planning for a guaranteed product a year in advance for schools challenging. Instead of the farm to school market being seen only as an outlet for various seconds, a plan needs to be implemented to continue to expand the program and to encourage producers to grow specifically for the farm to school market. Forward contracting between schools and producers is seen as the next step.*

*3. The trial and planning of new products in schools often requires at least one dedicated staff member on both ends of development. Connecting with the state-wide FoodCorps network will help growers and MMFEC as they continue to develop new healthy, value-added, local products. By reaching out to other distributors in the state, MMFEC will continue to work with regional producers to grow and meet the needs of the K-12 institutional market.*

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**Lake County Community  
Development Corporation**

**Mission Mountain Food  
Enterprise Center**

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PO Box 128  
Ronan, MT 59864

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# Appendix

January 2013 Meeting

**Western Montana Farm to Institution Network Notes**  
*Collaborating to create synergy and efficiency in our local procurement efforts*  
 Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup>  
 2-4pm at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center

In attendance: Karen Belluomini, Steffen Brown, Shay Farmer, Ian Finch, Lindsay Howard, Lea Howe, Nicki Jimenez, Peter Kerns, Jenny Montague (by phone), Dave Prather, Yvette Rodriguez, Jay Stagg, Jim Steiner, Marsha Wartick.

## Highlights

- Coordinating Purchasing
  - The group thought a more streamlined ordering system should be developed—possibly a Google Doc or a webpage where they could place their orders for produce.
  - FFVP, NSLP and NSBP all draw out of different funds so the ordering system needs to indicate how much of the product ordered will be invoiced to which fund.
- In-Season Produce
  - Group wanted MMFEC and WMGC to recommend what to buy based on what's in season and what there is supply of
  - Ideas to buy second-grade and surplus produce
- Value-Added Products
  - New ideas for products to develop: pizza sauce using commodity ingredients, veggie patty with black beans.
  - ⇒ Also samples of MMFEC's lentil patty to MCPS, St. Ignatius, Ronan Schools, Polson Schools, Whitefish Schools, taste test size for Lea
  - Also local beef lentil crumble pilot with MCPS
  - ⇒ Will experiment with beef/lentil ratios and seasonings (plain/taco)
  - ⇒ Product should work towards bean requirement (1/2 per week, at least 1/8 cup in a serving to count toward weekly total), must be identified in menu
  - ⇒ Also working on developing soup project with KPS

The group wants to meet bi-monthly to continue planning!

## Parking Lot

Smoothie program

## Threads

- Packaging in buckets
- Prioritize FFVP for cooperative buying. Google Docs communication/ordering system for school districts on same weekly procurement schedule.
  - Future planning about a month ahead (at least 1 week for FFVP)
- Second grade surplus program. Sourcing surplus products in Montana to schools.
- Push strategy based on availability (serve what you get)

## Homework: send a form

Volume estimates for the year: FFVP, NSLP, NSBP  
 Frequency  
 Price threshold  
 Daily volume

Brainstorming Value-Added

1. Pizza sauce—base
  - Pete's idea, MCPS has a recipe
  - Looking for \$5/gal
2. Veggie Patty
  - Samples to: MCPS, St. Ignatius, Ronan Schools, Polson Schools, Whitefish Schools, taste test size for Lea
  - Idea to add black beans from Yellowstone bean
3. Beef crumble with lentils as filler—french green or crimson
  - Plain or taco seasoning
  - Bean requirement (1/2 per week, at least 1/8 cup in a serving to count toward weekly total), must be identified in menu
    - Marsha mentioned online calculator for servings
  - Promotion/education-Lea/FoodCorps
  - Laminated goofy signs to put out with lentil products
4. Lentil Hummus
5. Soup project
  - Frozen soup
  - Soup kit
6. Other notes
  - Jay offered Whitefish's kitchen to do test batches
  - Robin has lentil recipes

## March 2013 Meeting

**Western Montana Farm to Institution Network Notes**  
*Collaborating to create synergy and efficiency in our local procurement efforts*  
 Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup> 2013  
 3pm at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center or via conference call

In attendance: Karen Belluomini, Steffen Brown, Ian Finch (first 10 min), Lindsay Howard, Nicki Jimenez, Peter Kerns, Dave Prather, Yvette Rodriguez, Katie Wheeler

Highlights

- We have two important next steps in developing our Western Montana Farm to Institution Network:
  - Nail down specifics for cooperative sourcing of fresh produce for the FFVP and season extended products.
  - Address the labor barrier to processing and preserving large volumes of produce in-season while they are most abundant and cheap.
- The goal is to write cooperative agreements for sourcing. These will be MOUs that detail on paper how we will work together.
- FFVP: write an MOU for frequency of local snack and MMFEC/WMGC will source products for that frequency based on what's in season (greens, then melons, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, then storage vegetables and fruits).
- We discussed season extended products. We asked the schools to consider what products they want to prioritize and what volume of those products they use. We learned that schools are able to pay for products processed during the summer and we discussed other possible products that schools might be interested in.

- We discussed possibilities for addressing the labor barrier to increased season extended production: pooling labor by having food service staff work at MMFEC, and financially helping to pay for more labor.

#### Detailed Notes

- Overview of cooperative agreements
  - Cooperative agreements are MOUs where we put on paper how we all agree to work together. This provides security on both ends.
- Vision for cooperative FFVP sourcing
  - An MOU that includes: frequency of local snack for each district, quantity of snack needed based on serving size and number of snacks
  - Maximum possible frequency for MMFEC processing is once a week. Districts could buy more frequently from WMGC and process themselves. Keeping it to this minimum will leave room for processing other local fruits and vegetables (e.g. cole slaw and root vegetable mix).
  - Flow from beginning to end of school year: green veggies, melons, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, then storage vegetables and fruits.
- Season extended products commitments
  - In order to plan a pilot of cooperative sourcing of season-extended products, we have to select 3-4 products to focus on for this season.
  - Lindsay asked school districts to consider this list and prioritize which products to work on. (Key: **Bold** = abundant in summer, *Italic* = MMFEC already processes in large quantities, Normal = abundant during school year)
    - Frozen broccoli florets**
    - Frozen green beans**
    - Frozen sugar/snap peas**
    - Frozen diced peppers**
    - Frozen shredded zucchini** (tie to FFVP)
    - Frozen roasted tomatoes**
    - Frozen apple slices
    - Frozen pie pumpkin puree
    - Frozen shredded carrots (tie to FFVP)
    - Frozen diced onions
    - Frozen butternut squash cubes*
    - Frozen cherries*
  - We need to know total quantities for the whole year of the products FSDs select as priorities.
    - At the end of the meeting, Pete suggested that we plan a year in advance (e.g. plan for September 2014 in September 2013) because then we can match up seasonality with volume projections.
    - Idea that we should remind people each month to track what they're using
  - Discussion of the pros and cons of processing season-extended products at schools vs. at MMFEC:
    - At schools: if it is a simple process and there is summer staff that has extra time, it might make sense to do it at the school, especially for a smaller district like Mission.
    - At MMFEC: MMFEC has a great facility with trained staff, food safety procedures, and specialized equipment that make it easier to process large quantities of produce, especially if it is a more labor-intensive process. The

new blast freezer will make it a lot easier for MMFEC to blanch and freeze produce than for school kitchens to do so. All these assets of MMFEC means that we can create economies of scale which could help smaller school districts.

- Planning processing of season-extended products will allow MMFEC to kick off its processing earlier in the summer as produce starts to come into season.
- Storage of frozen products at MMFEC: \$40 per month per pallet. But if we process a lot, we could incorporate this cost into the cost of a product.
- Discussion of ability of school districts to pay for product during the summer months
  - Kalispell and Missoula can definitely pay for product processed during the summer. Mission maybe not.
- Other possible products for season extension
  - Garlic:
    - Karen suggested Garlic. Lindsay said it's an expensive crop but we can look into it second grade.
  - Berries—currently there's a limited supply:
    - Katie suggested, Pete also possibly interested
    - Dave and Steffen said that the berry supply will be increasing. In a couple years we'll have a lot of blueberries.
    - According to Dave and Steffen, strawberries will probably be cheapest and prices don't fluctuate much.
    - Karen can check on if Mission blueberry grower is still in business
  - Cauliflower—cauliflower puree:
    - Pete suggested for use in mac 'n cheese and tater tots.
  - Butternut squash puree (similar to pumpkin):
    - Pete suggested
    - Lindsay said we could do a custom order. In the past people wanted the cubed product.
- Addressing the labor barrier: pooling food service staff resources, financially or in-person
  - Labor is most significant cost. We need to think creatively and come up with interesting solutions. Polson, Ronan and Kalispell signed letters of support committing to sharing labor cost.
  - We need more people here at MMFEC to process frozen things in the cheapest way possible.
  - We either need:
    - Food service staff to come to our facility to process (they are already skilled and trained in food safety). The only requirement for working in MMFEC's facility is Serve Safe 4 or 8 hours.
    - Or school food service to help pay for the labor needed to process efficiently.
    - We would have to find a way to pay additional processors one way or the other.
    - Depending on how pooling labor resources work out, we will have to work out how this will factor into price of product, etc.
  - MMFEC will have 2 assistant processors and Yvette. Ideally 2 more people would make it efficient. Max number of processors on the floor is 6.
    - Pete asked if he could bring 4 people. Lindsay and Yvette said that wasn't too many—it would just make it more efficient and faster.
    - We don't yet know if the addition of trained processors would increase the output for the day. Yvette said they can get 800 pounds done one day with 4 people.

-We're going to be figuring out what kind of quantities we can do with different numbers of processors as this project continues. (Pete had asked what doing 1,000 pounds of broccoli would take?)

- Schedule next call for middle to end of April

### 2013 Mission Valley Farm to School Food Service Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey about farm to school purchasing. We are collecting information that will be used to measure successes of the program and to make improvements as well. All information will be kept confidential; at no time will your responses be associated with you or your school. Please feel free to express your honest opinion. With your permission, we may use specific quotes for reporting purposes. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask during or after the survey.

Did your institution purchase local produce, which was processed at Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center and marketed / delivered by Western Montana Growers Cooperative in spring and fall 2013?	Yes	No
If yes, in which program did you utilize the product?	School Meals Program Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program Both	
If yes, please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that the product is "Unfavorable" and 5 indicating the product is "Favorable."  (If no please continue to the next section)	WMGC's Farm-to-Institution Product is  Unfavorable                      Favorable 1                      2                      3                      4	
What was your overall satisfaction with the Farm to School program?	Unfavorable 1                      2                      3                      4	Favorable 3                      4
<b>School Meals Program</b>		
Overall, how did WMGC's processed product compare to similar products you have bought/used in the past?	Unfavorable 1                      2                      3                      4	Favorable 3                      4
Were you able to order the selection of products that you needed?	Yes	No
Were you able to order the quantity of products that you needed?	Yes	No
What type of packaging do you prefer?	Bulk	Vacuum-sealed bags
Did the packaging protect the product from damage?	Yes	No

How convenient was the packaging for your staff?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
How convenient was the packaging for your storage space?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
How convenient was the packaging for your transport equipment?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
How satisfied were you with the processed product (size, cut, etc.)?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
How satisfied were you with the taste of the product?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
Did the cost fit within your budget?	Yes	No
How flexible is your budget to expand local procurement?	Not Flexible 1      2      3      4	Flexible
Was the delivery process smooth?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
Did food safety meet your school's standards?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
How satisfied were you with the traceability of the	Unfavorable	Favorable
What product(s) worked well for your program?		
What product(s) would you like to see more of?		
What products didn't work well and why?		
How many days per week would you be interested in using local farm to school products from WMGC?		
<b>Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program</b>		
Overall, how did WMGC's processed product com-	Unfavorable	Favorable
How did WMGC's fresh, unprocessed products	Unfavorable	Favorable
Were you able to order the selection of products	Yes	No
We you able to order the quantity of products that	Yes	No
What type of packaging do you prefer?	Bulk	Vacuum-sealed bags
Did the packaging protect the product from dam-	Yes	No
How convenient was the packaging for your staff?	Unfavorable	Favorable
How convenient was the packaging for your stor-	Unfavorable	Favorable
How convenient was the packaging for your	Unfavorable	Favorable
How satisfied were you with the processed product (size, cut, etc.)?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4	Favorable
How satisfied were you with the taste of the prod-	Unfavorable	Favorable

Did the cost fit within your budget?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4 Favorable
How flexible is your Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack budget to expand local procurement?	Not flexible 1      2      3      4      5 Flexible
Was the delivery process smooth?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4 Favorable
Did food safety meet your school standards?	Yes      No
How satisfied were you with the traceability of the product?	Unfavorable 1      2      3      4 Favorable
What product(s) work well for your snack program?	
What products didn't work well with your program and why?	
What products would you like to see in the future?	
How many days per week would you be interested in using local products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack program?	
How far in advance do you need to plan for the snack program?	
Would you be willing to plan with WMGC in the spring for fall snacks?	
How flexible is your program to planning snacks week to week?	
<b>Marketing and Sales</b>	
How do you currently order the product from WMGC?	Called WMGC WMGC staff called you Through FoodCorps Service Member Online ordering
How would you improve the marketing / sales relationship with WMGC in order to make the process easier for you?	
Would you be willing to form a commitment for products in January 2014 so that WMGC can ready producers for farm to school production?	

Would you like to pursue a cooperative agreement amongst other school directors, WMGC and MMFEC?

If yes, when would be a good time for you to meet? Where?

Are we missing anything you feel is important to add to the program as we move forward?

## 2013 Mission Valley Farm to School Food Service Survey Responses

Jim

- “I love the farm to school program. I think it’s great.”
- Prices are not competitive with FSA or Sysco but able to purchase local. If more were available, would buy more.
- Would like to see more of everything. Especially interested in potatoes—uniform whole, cubes  
Other products he uses a lot of: lettuce cut and bagged, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, snap peas, peppers, tomatoes (cherry or sliced)
- Cucumbers didn’t work so well.
- Thinks the marketing/sales relationship with WMGC is good the way it is
- Business office—would be important to have them at the table when doing long-range planning/commitments to figure out what would work in the budget
- Jim was disappointed when he ordered frozen product but didn’t receive it. Needs better communication about what veggies he has available in the freezer.

JB

- “I think it’s great for the kids”
- Really likes WMGC’s product
- Consistent favorable ratings
- Satisfied with processed product except thinly sliced cucumbers
- Cost—still figuring it out. Whole apples seemed expensive.
- Not sure how flexible FFVP budget is to expand local procurement
- Worked well: apples, peppers
- Didn’t work well: butternut squash (but that was a packaging challenge—served in gallon plastic bags)
- Would like to see in the future: spinach, radishes
- Would like to use local more frequently—depends on accessibility and labor
- Plans 3 weeks ahead for snacks.
- JB willing to plan in advance for fall snacks
- Suggestion: email or person to person Google Drive training

Marsha

- Favorable ratings
- Packaging—vacuum sealed is great because the extra keeps well
- Costs are higher, but that’s expected. Budget is a balancing act—if use lots of commodity in the meal can use more expensive ingredients.
- No same day process/delivery.
- Worked well: carrots, plums.
- Didn’t work well: beets.
- Would like to see more: peaches and pears
- Other feedback: apples sometimes too big, cabbage could have been shredded finer, cantaloupe too thinly cut
- Wants to use local for FFVP 1-2 times per week
- Google Drive technology is an issue  
Might work if it were easily editable!
- Possible system: Reminder email to opt in or out Monday or Wednesday before each snack  
Add to email or do a sales call also offering extra product and other availability.  
Rationale: Marsha regularly hears from her other distributors and needs regular reminders that WMGC is there and has product to offer!

Food Service Director Meeting February 2013

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions

Are you familiar with the farm to school program (participated, WMGC contact)?

Do you use local foods in any of your programs (snack, breakfast, lunch)? If yes, where do you get them?

How flexible is your budget?

Could you commit to buying products one year in advance?

How do you plan menus?

Do you have trouble meeting any of your nutritional requirements?

What are the target costs per serving for protein, legumes, veggies, fruits?

Would you be willing to tell us what you pay for certain items so that we can see how we compare?

### Summaries of Meetings

**Kalispell--Jenny Montague office: 751-3443 cell: 471-5403 email: montaguej@sd5.k12.mt.us**

- Works with a \$100K commodity dollars
- Could commit to buying products one year in advance
- Plans menus monthly
- No problem meeting nutritional standards
- Has control over her food dollars
- Already purchases from WMGC
- 2oz protein serving not to exceed \$0.60/serving
- Buys commodity beef crumble (pre-cooked)
- Orders 160-40lbs cases of beef
- Uses local beef patties (Lower Valley)
- Has snack program
- Has a summer program
- Currently using: lentils with beef; some form of taco Tuesday
- Products of interest: frozen, lower sodium soups; lentil/beef crumble; cooked beef crumble, berries

**Big Fork—Ginny Kirby office: 837-7409**

- Has purchased from WMGC
- No snack program (does not qualify)
- Business manager dictates how much money is spent
- \$500-\$1000/wk spent on FSA
- Could commit to buying one year in advance
- Monthly, rotating menu
- No problems meeting nutritional requirements
- Is trying local beef patties (Lower Valley)
- Interested in frozen soups
- Orders ground from commodity
- Currently using: zucchini, asparagus, frozen vegetables (no canned), canned fruit, green beans, smoothies for breakfast
- Products of interest: frozen soup (tomato and chicken noodle), berries

**Whitefish—Jay Stagg office: 862-8620 cell: 261-3705 email: staggj@wfps.k12.mt.us**

- \$20K commodity dollars
- ½ cup Vegetable serving \$0.30/serving or less
- \$.50/serving of protein
- Has a summer program that is expanding
- Has control of budget
- No snack program (does not qualify)
- Menus on a 4 week rotation
- No problems meeting nutritional requirements
- Currently using: makes pizza sauce (tomato, basil, garlic) from scratch, pumpkin pudding, processed carrots, potato/delicata squash mash, “Montana Chili” (beef and lentils), has salad bar
- Products of interest: patties for burger, lettuce year round
- Could commit to purchasing one year in advance

**Evergreen—Joan office: 751-1111**

- No snack program (staffing issues)
- District superintendent sets budget
- Had enough money left over to remodel freezer space
- Could commit to purchasing one year in advance
- Monthly rotation of menus—uses Nutrikids menu program
- No problem meeting requirements except legumes
- Does soup 2 days
- Can use raw beef 100-120pounds per meal
- Currently using: potato medley, frozen baked potatoes, has salad bar, hash brown patties, green peppers, cucumbers
- Interested in: carrot coins, broccoli/cauliflower, POTATO products

**Charlo—Stacy Nelson office:644-2206 x218 email: snelson@charloschools.com**

- This is the second year she has been in this position. Has food service background in catering.
- Is not very familiar with WMGC (has never been contacted) or F2S but is interested
- Does not qualify for free and reduced but does qualify for snack DOD funds (\$15000). Her school board will not allow her to use these funds due to the need for an additional staff person.
- The board dictates the budget but is somewhat flexible—depending on the product
- Could commit to buying at least one year in advance because she know what she goes through
- Aims for \$0.60-\$0.80 per meal not per serving
- Makes own menus and tries not to replicate offerings month to month except for pizza and chicken nuggets
- Has a salad bar
- Does a lot of scratch cooking...makes own bread, biscuits, and soup
- No one has tried to sell her local produce but some has been given to her and she gladly used it
- Has no problem meeting requirements and follows set serving size standards
- Could not think of any products she would be interested in

**Saint Ignatius—Karen Belloumini office: 745-3811 x216**

- Has NOT been contacted by WMGC or anyone else for snack program (\$14K) but she is interested
- Has snack every day except for Friday (254 students) but some teachers don't give it out
- Administrators dictate the budget
- Could commit to buying in advance but would have to convince board and meet price points
- Menus are on a 6 week rotation
- Already uses lentils and beans to extend beef supply but ours would save her time
- Purchases most everything through FSA because of price...sometimes better than what can be bought through OPI cooperative purchasing
- Interested in things that will save time and money (soups, pre-cut produce)

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Between Lake County Community Development Corporation/Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (LCCDC/MMFEC) and Western Montana Growers Cooperative (WMGC) and Kalispell School District

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Kalispell School District to establish parameters for the purchase, processing, and delivery of products for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program (FFVP).

**Background**

In recent years, WMGC and Kalispell School District have worked closely to negotiate prices for local fruits and vegetables used in the FFVP that meet school budgetary requirements. LCCDC/MMFEC plays a role in this partnership when processing of purchased fruits and vegetables is necessary.

**Purpose**

This MOU will set forth a schedule of products to be provided by WMGC, processed by MMFEC (if necessary), and delivered to Kalispell. The process for ordering, payment, and delivery will be set forth as follows:

1. WMGC will provide a product list of products with approximate dates of delivery at the beginning of each year or as deemed necessary for price and product updates
2. MMFEC will dedicate at least one day per week to process for the FFVP
3. Kalispell will commit to delivery of one product (fresh or fresh processed) per week (on Wednesday's) and will be able to "opt out" with one week's prior notice
4. Food service director/buyer will contact WMGC directly for orders and cancellations and will not use an intermediary
5. Payments will be made per invoice instructions and terms
6. All parties will agree on set prices for products that will be beneficial to all

Product	Expected delivery of date	Processed (Y or N)	Price per pound
Green Beans		Y	
Peas		Y	
Cherries		Y	
Cucumbers		Y	
Melon		Y	
Cucumbers		Y	
Cherry Tomatoes		N	
Bell Peppers		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Squash		Y	
Cabbage		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Apples (whole)		N	
Apples (wedged)		Y	
Carrots		Y	
Cabbage		Y	

**Reporting**

All parties will operate with open lines of communication to determine the effectiveness of this agreement and to make any changes deemed necessary. This is a "living" document and can be changed or modified, but only if all parties are in agreement.

**Funding**

All parties understand that this is not a commitment of funds, but that any goods or services rendered in association with this agreement will be paid per the terms set forth between the buyer and seller.

**Duration**

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized officials from LCCDC/MMFEC, WMGC, and Kalispell School District and shall become effective upon signature of authorized officials and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the authorized officials this MOU shall end on May 31, 2015.

**Contact Information**

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[montaguej@sd5.k12.mt.us](mailto:montaguej@sd5.k12.mt.us)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dave Prather, WMGC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jan Tusick, LCCDC/MMFEC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Montague, Kalispell School District

WMGC Farmer Survey summary as it relates to F2S

**Number of respondents:** 26

**Length of membership:** 0-3yrs (8 @ 30.77%); 4-6yrs (8 @ 30.77%); 7+yrs (10 @ 38.46%)

**Number willing to serve on F2S committee:** 5: Paradise, Fourth Wave, Lifeline, Shady Grove, Timeless

**Excess crops:** cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, melon, zucchini, yellow squash, fennel, scallions, red beets, cilantro, lettuce, potatoes (damaged), hot peppers, watermelon, eggplant, winter squash, cherry tomatoes, green beans, pablanos, shallots, garlic, cabbage, peppers, basil, bell peppers, summer squash, arugula, barley, lentils, sungold tomatoes

**Number who reported having excess:** 17 (out of the 19 who responded)

**Total pounds of excess:** 64,380 (40,000 were Dixon melons)

**Percent of excess that was #1 quality:**

Answer Choices	Responses
0% - 10%	15.79%
11% - 25%	10.53%
26% - 50%	10.53%
51% - 75%	21.05%
76% - 100%	42.11%
Total	19

**Percent of excess that was #2 quality:**

Answer Choices	Responses
0% - 10%	22.22%
11% - 25%	61.11%
26% - 50%	11.11%
51% - 75%	5.56%
76% - 100%	0%
Total	18

**Willingness to increase sales through the coop:** 20 were willing to increase sales either through current commitments, new crops, or both

**Interested in structuring F2S commitments like CSA:** 16 (out of 21 who responded) were interested but all commented that it would depend on the crop and the price. \*\*\* Two commented that they may be too small.

**What crops are growers willing to expand for institutional markets:** carrots, beets, zucchini, peppers, green beans, sweet potatoes, watermelons, cherry tomatoes, blueberries, cabbage, squash, basil, tomatoes, greens, garlic, peas, and pumpkins. \*Tomatoes (various kinds) were #1

## WMGC Management Survey summary

- F2S is seen as a way to get rid of excess produce. It is not seen as a “first” market
- 75% of produce sent to F2S is of #1 quality. The other 25% is #2 quality.
- Farmers communicate the presence of excess crop 1 week to 1 month ahead of time
- There are currently NO grower commitments specifically for F2S. Grower commitments are totals for each item that a grower produces (not based on destination/market). Crop projections are made based on historical sales data for each crop.
- There was a projected plan for F2S snack and processing based on historical sales. “Sort of stuck to a plan but tried to use what was in excess to fulfill FFVP needs. Not “plannable.”
- Schools are not looked at as a regular outlet for many items. F2S is a “special” project but could be improved by talking with directors more regularly and having them commit to purchasing more on a regular basis. Pre-booking or MOU would be helpful.
- Structuring F2S commitments like CSA would NOT be easier
- FFVP is seen as a “magic carpet” that can be pulled out at any time. Tries to use seconds but growers don’t plan on growing second grade crops. The type of produce (organic and homegrown) is priced out of range for most schools. Processing costs seem too high to have schools commit to much more than snack. Kalispell is the exception.
- Would like to expand the program through more sales of unprocessed vegetables throughout the year or fresher, processed item for regular food service.
- New products: Cole slaw mix
- School reactions to prices are that “they are too high.” There might be some room to negotiate prices.
- For items that we have a history on- we think there should be set processing costs- which would help us with planning. Some of the processing still seems inefficient to me- but I am not there doing it and can’t really speak much to it. Generally speaking, it seems that the costs are high relative to the cost of actually growing and delivering the food- which seems out of balance.
- We have very much appreciated the processing services and the support from MMFEC as we have ventured into this realm. We need to do a better job scheduling on our end and working directly with the schools. Because we have viewed this as more of a special project the schools haven’t received as much direct attention from us, and we have relied heavily on the support of Food Corps Members.