

Farm to Kids: A Local Food Procurement System

City Harvest, Inc. of New York, NY, received \$56,572 to help create a network of local farmers who will sell produce to New York City childcare agencies that serve meals and snacks to low-income children; develop a Web site ordering and distribution system for State procurement officials; and educate State procurement officials, the respective children, and their families about local agriculture. Funds were used to design and support a website; purchase training and survey materials; pay travel expenses for farmers to attend training sessions; and buy supplies associated with the trainings.

Final Report



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June 22, 2010

Ms. Linda Browne
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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Washington, DC 20250-0269

RE: City Harvest FMPP Final Report / Project # NY-125-2008-G-0737

Ms. Browne:

Enclosed please find City Harvest's final report, both narrative and financial, as well as corresponding attachments, for Project # NY-125-2008-G-0737. We are grateful for the USDA's seed support of this exciting effort to connect institutional buyers at urban childcare agencies with local farmers.

Per your request, we have also sent an electronic copy of our report. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Duffy, our Senior Manager of Institutional Giving, at (917) 351-8754 or kduffy@cityharvest.org.

Thank you again for your commitment to our vital work.

Sincerely,

Jilly Stephens
Executive Director

cc: Ms. Carmen Humphrey
Mr. Karl Hacker



City Harvest
Farm to Kids: A Local Procurement System
Project # NY-125-2008-G-0737

I. Project Summary

Through the Farm to Kids pilot, City Harvest worked to increase the amount and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables eaten by school-age children while supporting and promoting local agriculture by connecting childcare agencies with local food sources. We partnered with GrowNYC, a New York City non-profit, who made deliveries of locally-grown produce to eight childcare centers operated by The Children's Aid Society, a New York City children's charity, in an effort to test a small-scale distribution system connecting local wholesale growers and institutional buyers. The pilot succeeded in introducing a new source of fresh local produce for childcare agencies in New York City.

II. Project Approach

The Farm to Kids pilot was born out of a desire to increase childcare agencies' access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables. To that end, City Harvest worked to develop and test a small-scale distribution system to connect local wholesale growers and institutional buyers.

Project Planning

During the initial phase of the pilot project, City Harvest focused on market research, planning and facilitating meetings with stakeholder groups to identify the best distribution model. City Harvest staff, supported by an intern, began working with Fruit Bowl agencies in the fall of 2008. City Harvest's Fruit Bowl program provides deliveries of fresh fruit combined with nutrition education for preschool and afterschool programs. We created a survey designed to identify both the capacity and interest agencies had in participating in a pilot project to procure food directly from New York State farmers.

With the support of our intern, more than twenty of our Fruit Bowl agencies completed the survey and we assessed the responses to determine eligibility. To be considered an appropriate match for this project, we determined that agencies must have a food purchasing budget, food preparation and storage facilities, and a commitment to sourcing a portion of their food locally. A handful of sites were identified which possessed the characteristics necessary to participate in this project. These agencies, primarily preschool and after-school providers, displayed an increasing interest in procuring healthy, local food after exposure to City Harvest's nutrition education programs. Furthermore, they expressed a willingness and interest in communicating directly with farmers. However, through the survey process, we determined these agencies do not have the means to pick-up produce from a local distribution site or farmer's market. A copy of the agency survey is attached (see Attachment A).

Using the data from the agency survey, staff identified and contacted 10 local farmers to gauge their interest and capacity to wholesale to agencies. Several of these farmers voiced an interest in working directly with agency sites, and they consistently expressed enthusiasm for gaining access to new, urban markets. Like our agency providers however, many farmers are limited by transportation. The primary barrier these farmers face, therefore, is a model for distribution. Many local and regional

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farmers currently make deliveries to New York City, but as a means of minimizing their distribution costs, they typically make only one stop. We learned that these farmers possess neither the capacity nor the desire to make deliveries to multiple sites, spread throughout New York City. A copy of the farmer survey is attached (see Attachment B).

City Harvest conducted a focus group in December with a variety of organizations working to make similar connections between farmers and New York City. Participants at this focus group included Just Food, Greenmarket, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Karp Resources, the Farm Bureau, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Responses from this focus group provided valuable information about preexisting efforts to directly connect farmers and urban institutional buyers. We learned that internet access and related technology is often a stumbling block for farmers, and that they would prefer to receive order information over the phone. We also learned that Market Maker, a well-known online tool developed by Cornell University to help farmers expand their markets, had been met with resistance from farmers. While farmers want to be connected to buyers, we determined that as an existing online tool was underutilized, a web-based system would not fit the needs and capacity of farmers.

Through our discussion with stakeholders and focus group participants, we determined that the best fit for this project were farmers who wholesale, or are looking to wholesale, to small or mid-sized accounts in the city. Childcare institutions need to pay through an invoice process and generally need to order specific quantities of specific foods, so CSA-only farmers were determined not to be a good fit. Similarly, farmers who are used to selling at retail venues, like farmer's markets, are not a good match because childcare institutions generally obtain food at wholesale rates, and cannot afford to pay retail prices.

We formally released a request for proposals (RFP), after providing a copy to USDA, seeking a subcontractor to assist us in developing and implementing a replicable order and distribution system to link institutional buyers with local farmers in April 2009. After careful consideration, we selected GrowNYC in June 2009.

GrowNYC was selected due to their organizational strength and deep relationships with local farmers and wholesalers. They operate all Greenmarkets throughout the city, and recently took over management of the Bronx Terminal Market, one of the largest wholesale farmers markets in the city. With forty years of experience managing farmers markets, GrowNYC demonstrated the ability to reach a wide network of farmers for participation in this Farm to Kids project. Through this expanded pool of farmers, we knew that participating childcare agencies would have access to a more diverse product selection at competitive pricing.

Building on information gathered from the agency survey during the planning process, we identified The Children's Aid Society (CAS) as an appropriate collaborator. CAS's multiple sites, capacity to order in bulk, experience working with raw product, and organizational sophistication made them an ideal partner for this effort. Further, their Director of Food and Nutrition demonstrated a pre-existing commitment to cooking from scratch with seasonally appropriate menus, and the cooks at CAS sites had already been trained to cook from scratch and were familiar with recipes that featured seasonal foods.

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In the summer of 2009, City Harvest worked in partnership with both GrowNYC and CAS to plan for fall pilot deliveries by developing ordering and invoicing systems, and providing educational materials to participating CAS sites.

Education & Training

In advance of the first orders and deliveries, City Harvest developed and held a training workshop for all cooks focused on incorporating the local produce available through the Farm to Kids into their menus. The training covered a range of topics, including why supporting local farmers is important and how to use local produce. We invited a farmer to speak specifically about his farm's practices and what to expect from local produce in terms of appearance and packaging. At the training, we also provided CAS agencies with a resource guide, detailing information about the seasonal availability of local products and recipes.

In addition to providing a training workshop, City Harvest developed and piloted educational materials for CAS staff to use at their sites. We created and tested a number of activities for agency staff to offer children, testing the activities on a small-scale at childcare programs. City Harvest interns conducted each activity, made notes on the successful aspects of each activity, and then updated and changed them as needed. These activities, which included learning games and fact sheets, enabled CAS staff to teach their young clients about healthy eating and local produce.

Additionally, recipes, information sheets, and take home activities were created to include parents in the learning process. These materials focus on the importance of fruits and vegetables with an emphasis on local and seasonal produce. We also provided Health Bucks, farmer's market coupons issued by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, to each agency for distribution to families, as a means of encouraging parents to use local produce at home. Alongside Health Bucks, agencies were provided with information about the locations of nearby farmers' markets that accept Food Stamps and the specifics of Health Bucks to share with parents. Sample educational materials are attached (see Attachment C).

Ordering and Invoicing Process

Menus at CAS are planned far in advance and, as a result, the Food and Nutrition Programs Director at CAS was able to provide the Farm to Kids Coordinator at City Harvest with weekly orders through the end of the produce season prior to the first delivery in September 2009.

Initial deliveries began in September 2009, during a difficult growing season in New York State, largely due to surfeit of rain in June and the early onset of cold weather in September. Because of this, a smaller variety of products were available than originally anticipated and many of the items requested for each week – such as red bell peppers, fresh basil, and tomatoes – were no longer available after the first or second week. Drawing upon their expertise working with farmers and farmers markets, the staff at GrowNYC worked with the Food & Nutrition Programs Director at CAS to determine which foods would be unavailable, so that they could source these items from another supplier, and worked to identify alternate options for each order, in the event that an item might be unavailable without notice.

Additionally, thanks to the advance order information City Harvest secured from CAS, GrowNYC was able to confirm prices for all products ahead of time. Prices did not change throughout the

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delivery period, and because pilot expenses were paid by the grant, there was no delivery or markup fee.

Delivery and Logistics

A driver from GrowNYC transported produce from market to the delivery sites in a cargo van, which provided more than ample space for the produce orders for all eight centers. The driver used a hand truck for transporting orders to and from the van, and small cardboard boxes or sturdy bags for packing individual orders or separating items within an order (e.g. two pounds of onions would be placed in a bag to prevent them from rolling around and damaging other items in a box, such as lettuce or fresh herbs). By packaging items ahead of time, the delivery process was made simple for both the driver and CAS staff.

In the initial weeks, produce was delivered to sites on Fridays, as that is when farmers were at market, and when GrowNYC staff was available to make deliveries. However, staff at delivery site kitchens preferred to receive their produce orders earlier in the week, so that it could be used immediately. GrowNYC was able to make cooler space available and, as a result, the driver was able to pick up produce from farmers on Fridays, store it in the cooler space over the weekend, and deliver it to sites on Mondays. Use of cooler space allowed for greater flexibility in the delivery schedule, and also provided a staging area where the driver could assemble orders comfortably and easily.

On delivery of produce, a receipt was provided to the kitchen staff at each agency. A diary and delivery record was kept by the driver, and GrowNYC created invoices based on these records. Invoices were sent in batches each month to the director of each CAS site, so they were able to keep a record of orders. A sample invoice is attached (see Attachment D).

III. Goals, Outputs, and Outcomes Achieved

With support from the USDA, City Harvest was able to:

- Open a new direct marketing opportunity for local farmers, generating an additional \$4,000 in revenue for six local farmers;
- Coordinate the delivery of approximately 10,000 pounds of local produce to eight preschool and after-school programs, who together serve more than 700 children, in upper Manhattan;
- Develop educational materials, including activities for children, handouts and information sheets for site staff and parents, and take-home activities for families, to reinforce the importance of incorporating seasonal fruits and vegetables; and
- Create a best practices manual outlining successes, lessons learned and recommendations for the development of similar efforts.

IV. Beneficiaries

We successfully connected six farmers with eight childcare centers located in the East Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood neighborhoods of Manhattan, reaching more than 700 children. Because of their small size, several of these agency sites had previously been unable to access fresh fruit and vegetables. Further with USDA support, Farm to Kids successfully opened a new market of institutional buyers to local farmers, who primarily sell at resale and wholesale farmers markets.

V. Lessons Learned

Building on our experience coordinating Farm to Kids, City Harvest worked with GrowNYC and the Children's Aid Society to develop a manual detailing our learnings from the pilot. Through Farm to Kids, we have proven that by addressing technological and delivery barriers, it is possible to connect local growers with institutional buyers. The attached "Best Practices Manual" details lessons learned, and building on the successes and challenges of Farm to Kids, provides two recommended strategies for large and small-scale institutional buyers to obtain regionally grown produce without the support of grant funding (see Attachment E).

VI. Additional Information

Project Partners:

The Children's Aid Society has been serving children in New York City for more than 150 years. Their mission is to provide comprehensive support for children in need, from birth to young adulthood, and for their families, to fill the gaps between what children have and what they need to thrive. Currently, Children's Aid serves more than 100,000 children and their families at more than 45 sites throughout New York City, providing services from prenatal counseling to college preparatory training programs.

GrowNYC, formerly the Council on the Environment of New York City, is a hands-on non-profit which improves New York City's quality of life through environmental programs that transform communities block by block and empower all New Yorkers to secure a clean and healthy environment for future generations. GrowNYC's Greenmarket program is the largest and most successful open-air farmer's market program in the country, with over 50 markets throughout New York City. By directly connecting farmers and producers to New Yorkers, Greenmarket supports family farms, preserves farm land, delivers fresh healthy produce to those who need it most, and reduces the environmental effects that result from food traveling across the country or world.

VII. Contact person

For more information about the Farm to Kids pilot, please contact Kevin Duffy, Senior Manager of Institutional Giving at City Harvest, at (917) 351-8754 or kduffy@cityharvest.org.

FARM TO KIDS
Best Practices Manual

Approaches to Linking
Regional Farmers with Institutional Buyers

FARM TO KIDS GRANT PARTNERS



City Harvest Now serving New York City for more than 25 years, City Harvest (www.CityHarvest.org) is the world's first food rescue organization, dedicated to feeding the city's hungry men, women, and children. This year, City Harvest will collect over 25 million pounds of excess food from all segments of the food industry, including restaurants, grocers, corporate cafeterias, manufacturers, and farms. This food is then delivered free of charge to nearly 600 community food programs throughout New York City using a fleet of trucks and bikes as well as volunteers on foot. Each week, City Harvest helps over 260,000 hungry New Yorkers find their next meal.

City Harvest also addresses hunger's underlying causes by educating individuals, families, and communities in the prevention of diet-related diseases, channeling a greater amount of local farm food into high-need areas, enhancing the ability of our agency partners to feed hungry men, women, and children, and supporting affordable access to nutritious food in low-income communities.



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GrowNYC (formerly the Council on the Environment of New York City) is a hands-on non-profit which improves New York City's quality of life through environmental programs that transform communities block by block and empower all New Yorkers to secure a clean and healthy environment for future generations. For nearly 40 years, GrowNYC has been rolling up its sleeves alongside NYC residents to provide access to healthy, fresh, local food for all New Yorkers, grow and maintain vibrant green spaces and community gardens, help New Yorkers recycle more and reduce waste, and create the next generation of environmental leaders through hands-on education programs.

ABOUT FARM TO KIDS

The Farm to Kids pilot was born out of a desire to increase the amount and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables eaten by preschool and school-age children while supporting local agriculture. Through a subgrant from City Harvest, GrowNYC made deliveries of locally-grown produce to eight childcare centers operated by The Children's Aid Society in an effort to test a small-scale distribution system between local wholesale growers and institutional buyers.

This manual will detail what went into the pilot effort and, based on the findings of the Farm to Kids pilot, outline two strategies for successfully supplying institutional buyers with regionally grown produce. The first strategy is a modified version of the Farm to Kids system as piloted, intended for smaller organizations with flexible kitchen guidelines and the capacity to cook from scratch. The second will be of the most help to larger organizations, and will provide information on getting locally grown food into an existing distribution network.

The first phases of the project focused on identifying partners. City Harvest staff surveyed childcare programs in the City Harvest network to select those programs that demonstrated the capacity, resources and willingness to source produce from local farms. The criteria used to identify partner organizations included functional kitchen space, cooking staff who were experienced in cooking from scratch, and a budget for purchasing food. These sites were further surveyed to determine the types and quantities of produce that were already being purchased and the amount of money that they had available for purchasing produce. Based upon the information gathered from these surveys, eight childcare programs operated by the Children's Aid Society were chosen as pilot sites. The Children's Aid Society had already implemented an overhaul of their food service, including more cooking from scratch and developing menus focusing on seasonal foods.

Once the childcare programs were identified, interviews and focus groups were conducted with farmers and other local organizations working with farmers. The farmers were interested in connecting with childcare institutions as a new and untapped market in New York City, but were limited in their capacity for delivering to these sites. Since the childcare organizations were unable to pick up produce from centralized drop locations, it soon became clear that the major obstacle to sourcing local produce was a distribution system that could reach small institutional buyers. City Harvest selected GrowNYC (then The Council on the Environment for New York City) as a sub-contractor to develop and implement a distribution model. GrowNYC works with a large network of farmers in the region through the Greenmarket and Wholesale Greenmarket and had experience with distributing produce through its Youthmarket program.

The distribution pilot ran from the end of September 2009 through mid-December 2009. The Farm to Kids pilot utilized GrowNYC's pre-established system of farmers markets to source local produce for the Children's Aid Society sites. Farmers involved in these programs sell their products at various market locations throughout the city on a regular weekly schedule. Because

of the system by which the Children's Aid Society planned their menus, produce orders were placed far in advance – the orders for the entire delivery period were provided at the onset of the pilot.

A GrowNYC staff member acted as the coordinator for the distribution pilot, sourcing produce from farmers participating in GrowNYC's Greenmarket program, processing orders from the delivery sites, and managing invoices. GrowNYC also hired a driver to pick up produce, aggregate orders, and make the weekly deliveries. The Farm to Kids Driver transported produce from market to the delivery sites in a Ford Econoline 250 cargo van. The total weekly orders for the eight childcare centers in the Farm to Kids pilot amounted to 10-20 boxes/crates, but a van of this size can accommodate 60-80 boxes/crates (or about \$800-\$1,000 worth) of produce. The van used for the Farm to Kids pilot was leased short-term by Youthmarket, another GrowNYC produce distribution program, and the Farm to Kids driver picked up produce and made deliveries on a day when the van was not in use by Youthmarket.

Another asset to the Farm to Kids pilot was the use of a walk-in cooler space, which became available after the first month of the pilot. In the initial weeks, produce was delivered on Fridays because that is when farmers were at market and trucks were available to make deliveries. This was problematic for the staff in delivery site kitchens, who preferred to receive their produce orders earlier in the week. After the cooler space became available, the Farm to Kids Driver was able to pick up produce from farmers on feasible days, and then store it in the cooler space until centers were ready for delivery on Mondays. The cooler was certainly not essential to the project, but it did allow for greater flexibility in the delivery schedule, and also provided a staging area where the driver could assemble orders comfortably and easily.

Because the Farm to Kids pilot was funded by a grant, the focus was less on making a profit than it was on testing the waters for a distribution system for childcare centers, which are small-scale institutional buyers with limited budgets. For this reason, there was no price markup on the produce and centers were not charged a delivery fee. Additionally, though the sites were all geographically near to each other to facilitate the delivery process and allow for smaller minimums, individual sites sometimes needed very small quantities of produce: some weekly orders were as small as 40 apples.

As can be expected with any pilot, challenges arose during the Farm to Kids pilot. Operationally, the biggest issue was with scalability and sustainability: operational expenses, such as staff time and transportation costs, were covered by grant money, so produce was not marked up to cover these costs and the childcare centers were not charged a delivery fee. This model would not be possible without outside financial assistance. Another big issue was fitting a sometimes unpredictable local agricultural system into a preplanned menu schedule. The 2009 agricultural season presented highly unfavorable weather conditions – such as record amounts of rain throughout the summer and an early frost in the autumn that disrupted planting and harvest schedules and in turn resulted in unavailability of certain items.

LEARNING FROM FARM TO KIDS

Much can be learned from this pilot. First, we have learned that it is possible to link local growers with institutional buyers. In spite of the challenges mentioned above, locally grown produce was delivered to eight childcare centers for more than two months and was well-received by cooks and children alike. An important first step! Second, the Farm to Kids pilot has shown which practices and procedures worked well, and which would need to change to better serve future projects with similar aims.

STRATEGY ONE

Strategy One is most appropriate for small institutions that have some capacity to adapt in meal-planning and both the facilities and appropriately trained staff for cooking from scratch. This strategy applies the basic structure of the Farm to Kids pilot – an organization or individual making deliveries to an institutional buyer and sourcing produce from an existing market infrastructure – with a few important changes. The most important of these changes will center on making the system better able to support itself financially. This strategy will outline:

- what needs to be in place at the institutional (buyer) level;
- when, how and where to source produce;
- how to determine the equipment logistics and costs of making deliveries;
- staffing required; and
- tracking, invoicing and record-keeping

Institutional Buyers

In order to be able to receive deliveries of local produce, an institutional partner must have certain standards or capabilities in place. The kitchen must be allowed to receive deliveries from an entity other than a single approved vendor. Many public institutions, such as public schools or city-run centers, will not have the flexibility needed to receive produce from a small vendor. Even for smaller institutions, group purchasing and other regulations may limit an organization's ability to order produce from outside sources. **Check with your local state and municipality to see if there are any regulations that apply.**

The proposed delivery site must be capable of receiving raw, unprocessed produce (e.g. whole, unpeeled carrots versus ready to eat carrot sticks). In an age when many institutions are equipped only to receive cleaned, chopped, or partially cooked food products, this is not always a given. Speak with directors and kitchen staff to ensure that kitchens are properly equipped and staff trained to process produce in-house and cook from scratch or prepare meals from whole, unprocessed produce. (See the Food Access Survey in the Resource section, page 17.) Start with smaller organizations, such as private childcare centers, schools, or assisted living facilities, where menu-planning will likely be on a less rigid schedule and kitchens are more likely to be fully outfitted for preparing whole foods.

In order to ensure that the local produce is well-received, it is important that your partners understand that a local agricultural system differs greatly from a larger conventional one. Speak to directors and kitchen staff about seasonality, give them a harvest calendar for your area, and encourage them to plan seasonal menus to take advantage of produce at the height of flavor and nutrition.

Lastly, determine each partner's specific delivery needs. Ask in advance which products are of particular interest to your partners so that you can let them know as soon as they become available and recommend other items that may be of interest to them. Establish a time of day that is convenient for the kitchen to receive deliveries, confirm the location of the service entrance, find out where you may park your vehicle while delivering, and ensure that you have the name and extension of both the front desk and the kitchen at each delivery site, so that you can alert them if you are delayed en route.

The Harvest Calendar

Learning the harvest calendar for your area is an essential part of working with regional produce. In New York City, the best time to begin distributing produce is in early July when a large variety of summer crops come into ready supply. The crops improve with the warm weather and are at their peak from mid-August through mid-September when the cooler temperatures and shorter days begin to favor the fall crops. (See the New York State Harvest Calendar in the Resources section, page 17.) Keep in mind that stock and prices will fluctuate throughout the course of the season as availabilities change. For example, the limited supplies of early tomatoes at the beginning of July are more expensive than those available later in the season.

Sourcing produce within one agricultural region is not without its challenges. The 2009 season presented lots of rain in June and an early onset of cold weather in September. As the Farm to Kids pilot progressed into October, fewer products were available, and many of the summer vegetables that were still coming in (such as red bell peppers and basil) were not of the same quality as produce harvested in the height of the season. As a result, the orders were cut back to fruit only after the first few weeks of the program.

Sourcing Produce

Working with an established infrastructure is the easiest way to source locally grown product for a small-scale distribution system. Many cities and towns have farmers market programs in place, but for those that don't, your local Department of Agriculture and Markets should be able to assist you in locating area farms. In making use of a market system already in place, staff time is optimized and transportation costs are minimized significantly.

Bear in mind that farmers are business people who must earn a living. Not all producers are willing to wholesale and, if they are bringing their products into your city for you, the space your product occupies in their truck is highly valuable. Speak to vendors at local farmers markets and trade associations to determine their interest in working with you. If you are willing to go to the farm yourself, farmers are sometimes more interested in working with you. Buying from the same farmers every week will help you develop a relationship and increase the farmer's willingness to assist. Always pay your farmers promptly—by the next pickup if possible—so as to maintain their goodwill.

In order to provide a variety of fruits and vegetables to delivery sites, it may be necessary to work with many producers. Coordinate pick up times that fit the farmers market schedule and your delivery schedule and place your order well in advance to ensure that you will be accommodated.

Equipment

Vehicle

As mentioned in the overview, the Farm to Kids Driver transported produce from market to the delivery sites in a Ford Econoline 250 cargo van which can accommodate 60-80 boxes/crates (or about \$800-\$1,000 worth) of produce. Programs distributing a greater amount of produce will need a larger vehicle such as a 10-foot box truck, which should accommodate between 110-150 boxes/crates.

Sharing a vehicle with another program is convenient and cost-effective, but there are also rental options available. Companies like UHaul, Budget, and Ryder all rent cargo vans and box trucks for reasonable daily rates. These rates will vary depending on the company and your locality, but sample budgets are included on page 11 in the section on Pricing and Scalability.

If you use a daily rental as your distribution vehicle, your schedule on a delivery day might look something like this¹:

1. 8:00 a.m. – Pick up vehicle when rental center opens
2. 9:00 a.m. – Pick up produce at farmers market
3. 10:00 a.m-12:00 p.m. – Make deliveries
4. 1:00 p.m. – Return vehicle before rental center closes.

It may happen, however, that the market where you will source your produce is only open during the late-night and early-morning hours, as is the case with many wholesale markets. If this is the case, the rental center will likely not be open early enough for you to rent your truck before setting out on the daily rounds. You may need to rent your vehicle for two days (the day before and the day of pick-up and delivery), but it certainly can't hurt to speak with the manager of the rental center or the corporate sales office; if they know that you will be renting from them consistently, they may allow you to pick up the vehicle just before closing on the previous day with no extra charge or at a discounted rate.

In most cases, if fresh produce is picked up and delivered in the same day, a refrigerated truck will not be necessary. However, the quality of many fruits and vegetables will begin to decline in

¹ Note: times will vary based on number and location of delivery sites and locations of rental center, farmers market, etc.

high temperatures. If you are distributing produce in a hot climate, or if a long delivery route demands that produce must stay in your vehicle for long periods of time in hot weather, you may need to use a refrigerated truck.

Packing/Transport

Though the distribution vehicle is the most important piece of equipment to a successful distribution system, there are a few other tools that will prove useful. A hand truck will make transporting produce to and from the van infinitely easier; though it is possible that farmers and delivery sites may have a hand truck that you could use, it is a good idea to have one of your own. If you would prefer not to buy one, many truck rental centers rent hand trucks, as well. It is also a good idea to have cardboard boxes or sturdy bags handy for orders of less than a full crate. Keep track of the boxes or crates that produce comes in – many delivery sites will hold on to them for you if you can pick them up the following week. You will want to give most of them back to the farmers so that they can reuse them, but keep a few each week if you feel they will be useful. Lastly, transporting produce can be a messy business and if you are renting a vehicle, you will need to clean its cargo area before returning it to avoid a fee. Having a hose and scrub brush would be ideal, but in most cases, a broom will suffice.

Storage

Having a storage and staging area can be a great asset in assembling orders and accommodating the needs of institutional buyers in terms of delivery days and times. A storage area will enable you to pick up produce from farmers in advance of your delivery day and maintain it in good condition until it is ready to be delivered. Almost all commercial kitchens and cafeterias have walk-in coolers. If you would like to use one for produce storage in your own distribution system, begin by asking your institutional partners if they themselves have extra cooler space that you might be able to use. If not, approach local schools, universities, or community centers, who may have cooler space that they can rent or lend to you.

Staff

The Farm to Kids pilot used two staff people, the coordinator and driver, but these could easily be combined into one position. Indeed, this would even be favorable because the driver had weekly contact with the kitchen staff who received the produce. Combining the coordinator and driver positions would allow for ease of communication between the distributor and end user, and would optimize staff time. See the Sample Budget on page 11 in the section on Pricing and Scalability for hours needed and pay, depending on the size of your distribution.

Ordering and Invoicing

The ordering procedure will vary depending on the abilities of your suppliers and the needs of your customers, but the most important thing is to be organized and consistent. Ask the farmers from whom you plan to buy how much notice they will need for a produce order, and keep this in

mind when setting an ordering routine with your customers. All of the orders from the childcare centers in the Farm to Kids pilot were submitted in advance at the onset of the program, but this is by no means the only or best way to receive orders. Weekly ordering, for example, would allow you to update customers regularly on produce availability and would reduce the likelihood of last-minute substitutions, should an item prove to be unavailable. If orders must be submitted in advance, it may be a good idea to ask for alternates for certain items, should the first choice be unavailable due to weather or other conditions.

Organization and consistency are also important when invoicing your customers. Upon delivery of produce, have a member of the kitchen staff sign a receipt or packing slip so that you have a written account of exactly what was delivered. Keep a diary to record notes from each delivery; in going over your notes later in the day, week or month, you may notice trends that you may otherwise have missed, such as a consistent problem with a certain type of package or a negative response to a certain variety of produce. Send your invoices promptly, either via email or in person at the following week's delivery, and make sure that your invoices look professional and are in a format acceptable to your customers, and clearly indicate when payment is expected. Record all invoices on a spreadsheet to keep track of payments. (See Sample Invoice and Accounts Receivable Log in the Resources section, page 17.)

Pricing and Scalability

One way to generate enough money to cover produce, van, and staff expenses, is to set a minimum order requirement and charge a delivery or service fee. A good place to start would be with a \$200 minimum order and 20% delivery fee. Many distribution companies mark up produce between 15-20%, so a 20% delivery fee is within industry standards.

The scale of a distribution system depends on what it is expected to accomplish: if the goal is simply to break even, the operation does not need to be very large, but the number of clients needs to increase if the goal is to create a business. Another thing to consider is whether or not to deliver units smaller than a case or crate. Again, if the goal of a distribution system is first and foremost to link local producers with institutional buyers, it may not be a problem to deliver a half-crate of carrots or five bunches of basil. However, it is important to keep in mind that dividing up crates is time-consuming and rarely cost-effective. It is for this reason that most larger distributors either do not deliver less than one full box or crate of any item or will charge the price of a full crate when delivering smaller measurements.

Below are some sample weekly budgets for distribution systems with five, ten, and fifteen customers with a minimum of \$200 per order. The vehicle rental costs are based on current rates at UHaul and Budget. The mileage and staff time calculations are based on data from the Farm to Kids project, but this will obviously vary depending on the location of the delivery sites relative to the truck rental facility, the farmers market, and each other.

Sample Budgets – Strategy One

	5 \$200 orders/wk; Cargo Van; 50 miles	10 \$200 orders/wk; 10' Box Truck; 60 miles	20 \$200 orders/wk; 16' Box Truck; 80 miles
Staff Hours @ \$15/hr	5	7	10
Daily Vehicle Rate	\$19.99*	16.99**	\$29.99**
Mileage Rate	\$0.99*	\$1.10**	\$1.10**

EXPENSES			
Vehicle Rental (including daily rate and mileage)	\$69	\$70	\$148
Gas	\$30	\$50	\$100
Staff	\$75	\$105	\$150
Fringe	\$11	\$16	\$23
Produce	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
TOTAL	\$1,186	\$2,241	\$4,420

INCOME			
Produce	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000
Service Charge	\$200	\$400	\$800
TOTAL	\$1,200	\$2,400	\$4,800

NET PROFIT			
TOTAL	\$14	\$159	\$380

*Based on UHaul rates effective in NYC as of March 2010 – may not be accurate for future cost estimates

** Based on Budget rates effective in NYC as of March 2010 – may not be accurate for future cost estimates

Keeping Records and Measuring Success

Good recordkeeping is a must for any new business venture, and will provide you with valuable information at the close of the season. Income and expense reports tracking will show whether you broke even, lost money, or made a profit, and this information will be crucial in determining how or if you will be able to create a self-sustaining system. If your goal is to increase market access for local farmers, a record of farmer bills will demonstrate how much additional income went to regional producers and how much local product was delivered to your institutional customers.

Also of great importance is your customers' satisfaction with your service. Your notes from the delivery route will give you a good idea of this, but also send out a survey at the end of the delivery period (or after a few months, if you are able to deliver produce year-round) asking your partners for their comments on produce quality, customer service, ordering, invoicing, etc. Asking for feedback from your customers shows that you want to provide a high quality of service, ensures that you are aware of their needs, and allows you to better tailor your distribution system to meet their expectations in upcoming seasons. (See Customer Questionnaire in Resources.)

STRATEGY TWO

Strategy Two will outline ways to incorporate local produce into existing large-scale distribution systems as an alternative to creating a separate distribution model.

The ultimate goal of the Farm to Kids pilot was to develop and test a means to get fresh, locally grown produce into childcare centers; creating a separate distribution system was the strategy. Though many large distributors have the capacity to source locally and some may already deliver a significant amount of locally grown produce, there is no distinction made between locally grown produce and produce that comes from elsewhere in the country or the world. But what if there were?

Unlike the smaller institutions in the Farm to Kids pilot, many institutions may not be equipped to clean or process whole foods or may be restricted to purchasing produce only through an approved vendor. Some may not be able to meet a \$200 minimum order for produce alone, or it may be that there are not enough appropriate sites in your area to support a separate distribution system. Also, the need for many institutions to plan their menus in advance can make it difficult for them to deal with last-minute substitutions, should an item suddenly become unavailable.

If commercial distributors were able to source produce from regional producers and offer them as local products to their customers, institutional buyers could seamlessly begin to receive locally grown produce, with no change in their current ordering and delivery routine. They could order local products whenever possible, but still have backup from the conventional pipeline, should a local item become unavailable. Sites lacking full kitchens could order local items that would be served whole, such as peaches, apples, or cherry tomatoes. Fitting a local food system into a commercial pipeline would make it easy for institutional buyers to purchase local product. Strategy Two will outline how this can be done.

Commercial Distributors

Commercial distributors deliver food to institutional buyers such as restaurants, schools, hospitals, and hotels. Many purchase from terminal and wholesale markets, manufacturers, and importers, aggregate orders in warehouses, and then make deliveries via a fleet of trucks.

Working with a distributor to link institutional buyers with regionally grown produce has many benefits: commercial distributors have sizeable customer bases, have relationships in place with their customers, benefit from economies of scale, have experience transporting produce, and, in most cases, know far more about running a distribution business than any newcomer to the field. Having a distributor deliver local produce is also attractive to the institutional buyer, who will not have to deviate from their established ordering and delivery schedule or pay a separate invoice for local produce. Again, using an established infrastructure saves a lot of energy and resources.

Fitting Local Produce into a Commercial Distribution System

In order for regional producers to supply a large-scale commercial distribution network, there must be enough produce to fulfill orders from customers. Because small- to medium-sized growers tend to divide their efforts among a few different crops, the best way to ensure that there will be enough produce to go around is to work with a handful of farmers. Once you know how much of which varieties of produce the farmers will be able to supply, you can begin to contact distributors. (Note: Many distributors and other wholesale buyers often use contract growing to ensure the supply of a given product. Contract buying is a practice wherein a grower agrees to sell his or her yield of a certain crop to large wholesale buyer for a unit price established in advance. If you approach a distributor early enough in the year, it may be possible for farmers to plan to plant certain crops specifically for that company.)

The best way to approach distributors is through their customers: as businesspeople, the distributors' interests lie in satisfying their clients. Get in contact with institutional buyers such as childcare centers, schools, or assisted living facilities, let them know that you are trying to get regional produce into their kitchens, and encourage them to express their interest in local food to their current distributor. If possible, ask the most interested and enthusiastic sites to host a meeting with you, your farmers, and the distributor. The more customers begin requesting locally grown produce, the more interested distributors will be in carrying it.

When you begin speaking with distributors, one of the first things to determine is how to get the produce to the distributor. If the farmers are already bringing their produce into your city to sell at a farmers market, the distributor may be able to pick up produce at the market. If the farmers are not currently bringing produce into the city, there may be many solutions. If the farms are near each other, the farmers may be able drop all of the produce off at one facility for the distributor to pick up. If the distributor is not able to pick up at the farm, the farmers may be able to take turns trucking produce to the distributor's warehouse. Different farmers/distributor partnerships will require different solutions, so the most important thing is to think creatively to develop a system that works for everyone.

Producers who want to supply to commercial distributors must meet certain packaging, certification, or delivery requirements. First, produce must be packaged according to standard commercial weights and packing methods. For example, bell peppers must be packaged in a one and one-ninth bushel corrugated cardboard box coated with wax. Distributors may also require producer logs showing when produce was planted and harvested, delivery of produce at a certain temperature via refrigerated truck, or may need to see copies of state licenses for packing houses and third party food safety certifications (such as USDA Good Agricultural Practices or G.A.P. certification). Requirements may differ from distributor to distributor, but chances are that if your farmer is already selling at a wholesale or farmers market, he or she will have no problem meeting these requirements.

Finally, work with the distributor to identify local foods on the order forms used by their customers. The line item could be as simple as “Apples, McIntosh (Local)” or could go so far as to list the location of the farm that grew the produce. This line item will allow the distributor to provide local produce not only to the institutions with whom you are working, but will also open up the local option to other institutional buyers.

Processing Local Produce

While identifying local foods in a commercial distribution system is an important first step, there is still more to be done to increase the amount of regional produce in institutional kitchens: namely, to make it accessible to kitchens not equipped to process whole foods. The sheer size of many large institutions such as schools and hospitals makes it impossible for them to process whole foods in house, and all produce must arrive cleaned, chopped, and sometimes fully cooked. Additionally, the union contracts of many food service workers only allow them to reheat food or assemble meals and prohibit them from processing. Another issue is that of availability: in an agricultural region such as New York, there is virtually no fresh produce available from late-fall to spring. Processing methods like freezing preserve fruits and vegetables at the peak of freshness, and allow people to eat local produce at any time of year. Last but certainly not least is the matter of food safety, a very important concern for large institutions. All processed foods bear bar codes or other informational labels which enable consumers to track a product back to its source, should there ever be an instance of food illness, in order to correct the problem.

Processing food requires a sanitary facility, trained workers, and a number of licenses and certifications which vary from state to state. Though this may seem daunting, small-scale local food processing operations have proven successful throughout the country. Two of these are the New North Florida Cooperative and the St. Louis University Healthy Eating with Local Produce (HELP) program.

The New North Florida Cooperative was started in 1995 by a group of farmers who wanted to combine their efforts in order to market their produce to regional schools. Today, the Cooperative grows three to four products – collard greens, field peas, muscadine grapes, and turnip greens – which the farmers harvest, process, package, label, and deliver to 15 school districts in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia. Though the Cooperative received some grant money for equipment purchases, 90% of their funding comes from direct marketing sales. (See New North Florida Cooperative in the Resources section, page 17.)

The St. Louis University HELP program uses the Salus Food Processing Center, a university cafeteria kitchen, to process locally grown foods. A St. Louis food retailer with relationships with local farmers distributes whole produce to the university, where graduate student interns process it. The interns slice potatoes into wedges, prepare marinara sauce, and create a wide

variety of other preparations; each item is processed on a different day in the same kitchen. After processing, the items are sealed in cryovac bags and labeled with the item name, ingredients, reheating instructions, date, and lot number for traceability. All produce that enters the processing center is entered in a receiving log, which records the date produce was received, how much was received, and the farm where the item was grown. There is also a production log, which records the product made, the date, and the lot identification number. Products are then stored in walk-in coolers and freezers and later consumed in the university cafeteria, and in public schools in the area. (See St. Louis University HELP Program in the Resources section, page 17.)

CONCLUSION

The model you choose for distributing local produce to institutional buyers depends on your distribution goals and the capabilities of the customers you wish to serve. Institutions that have flexible ordering systems, are equipped to prepare whole foods, and can meet a \$200 minimum order each week can support a distribution system like the one outlined in Strategy One. Those who can only purchase food from an approved vendor, or do not have a flexible ordering schedule will be best served by Strategy Two.

That being said, the models outlined in this manual are not the only means for linking small- to medium- sized regional producers with large wholesale buyers or institutions. This manual can serve as a step-by-step guide, or merely as an inspiration for another breed of distribution system.

For more information on the materials covered in this manual, contact:

GrowNYC
51 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007
(212) 788-7900
www.grownyc.org

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Food Access Survey

Site Name: _____

Funding for meals and snacks

1) Are you familiar with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)?

Yes No

2) Does your program receive reimbursements through CACFP?

Yes No (why not? _____)

3) Aside from CACFP funds, from what other sources does your program receive funds for food?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

4) How much does your program spend on food:

Per week: \$ _____

Per month: \$ _____

Per year: \$ _____

Per child: \$ _____

5) Does the amount spent on food vary over the course of the year or from year to year?

No Yes (by how much? _____)

Food Sourcing

6) Who is responsible for food ordering/purchasing and meal planning for your program?

Please give position/title and name.

Food ordering/purchasing: _____

Meal planning: _____

7) Where do you usually get the food that you serve to the children in your program? (please check all that apply)

- Supermarket/Grocery Store
- Vendor - ingredients (who is your vendor? _____)
- Vendor - prepared meals (who is your vendor? _____)
- Wholesale market
- Farmer's Market/CSA
- Donated food (from City Harvest or other sources)
- Other -- please explain:

8) Do you have any existing contracts with food vendors?

- No (skip to question #11)
- Yes (how long is the contract? _____)

9) Does your vendor deliver food to you?

- No
- Yes (how often? _____)

10) If you order food from a vendor, how do you order that food?

- Online
- By phone
- By Fax
- By mail
- Other -- please explain:

11) Is your organization capable of ordering food online (do you have a computer and internet connection)?

- No Yes

12) Do you/Does someone from your organization go out to do the shopping for food?

- No Yes (how often? _____)

13) Do you/Does your organization have a vehicle that is already or can be used to transport purchased food?

- No Yes

14) What resources does your program have for food preparation on-site? (please check one answer that most closely describes the situation for your program)

- Full kitchen and trained staff whose primary responsibility is food preparation
- Full kitchen with child care staff and/or volunteers who have time to prepare food
- Full kitchen, but no staff who have time for food preparation
- Limited kitchen access – kitchen on-site, but not always available for program
- No kitchen, but have access to a sink, refrigerator and food preparation area
- Other -- please explain:

Food choices

15) Please rank the following factors (1 being most important) in making decisions about what foods to serve to the children in your program

- ___ Children's preferences
- ___ Nutritional quality
- ___ Freshness
- ___ Price
- ___ Easy to get
- ___ Other (please explain: _____)

16) What foods does your organization purchase on a weekly/monthly basis?

	Weekly	Monthly	Other (please indicate how often you purchase these foods)
Fresh fruits			
Fresh vegetables			
Canned fruits/vegetables			
Frozen fruits/vegetables			
Dairy products			
100% juice			
Whole grains			

Food choices

17) Some schools and childcare centers are holding events to connect children to local farms, such as farm field trips or opportunities for children to plant or harvest food. Does your program already have or would you be interested in building a relationship with a local farmer, including field trips and opportunities for your children to plant and/or harvest food?

- Yes No

18) If your program has made these relationships already, what are some of the things that you've done?

19) Do you think parents would be interested in buying produce from a local farmer?

- Yes – Why?

No – Why?

20) Would you be willing/able to spend more on purchasing fresh produce from a local farmer?

- Yes, local food is a priority and we would find the necessary funding
- Yes, but it would be dependant on being able to raise extra funding
- No, I don't have any flexibility in my food budget

21) How much more would you be willing/able to spend on purchasing fresh produce from a local farmer?

- Up to 5% more
- Between 6-10% more
- Between 11-15% more
- More than 15% more

22) Are there particular times of the year/seasons that you are more likely to purchase fresh produce as opposed to canned or frozen?

- No Yes (when? _____)

New York State Harvest Calendar²

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
APPLES												
BLUEBERRIES												
MELONS												
CHEERRIES, SWEET												
CHEERRIES, SOUR												
GRAPES												
PEACHES												
PEARS												
PLUMS, PRUNES												
RASPBERRIES												
STRAWBERRIES												
ASPARAGUS												
BEANS												
BEETS												
BROCCOLI												
CABBAGE												
CARROTS												
CAULIFLOWER												
CELERY												
CORN												
CUCUMBER												
EGGPLANT												
LETTUCE												
ONIONS												
PEAS												
PEPPERS												
POTATOES												
PUMPKINS												
RADISHES												
RHUBARB												
SPINACH												
SQUASH, SUMMER												
SQUASH, WINTER												
TOMATOES												
TURNIPS												

Harvest Period 

Availability Period 

² New York State Dept. Agriculture & Markets, www.agmkt.state.ny.us/HarvestCalendar.html



Farm to Kids Local Produce Distribution Questionnaire

As we conclude our first year of local wholesale produce delivery, we ask for your help providing feedback on our service. Please complete the following short questionnaire about your experience with GrowNYC and City Harvest's Farm to Kids local produce distribution program. Please return the completed questionnaire in the included self addressed stamped envelope. Thank you again for your business and participation.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, please indicate the quality of the fruits and/or vegetables delivered to your site:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments: _____

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, please indicate the level of professionalism in your experiences with our staff, in both delivery and ordering:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments: _____

3. On a scale of 1 to 10, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the selection and availability of produce we offered for delivery:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments: _____

Please continue on reverse side →

4. Do you feel that you had adequate information about what produce would be available from week to week? How did this impact your menu planning?

5. Please provide any additional feedback you have as we prepare for next growing season. What were the advantages of the local produce deliveries for your site? What were the disadvantages? What would you recommend for future programming?

Thank you for your feedback. We look forward to working with you again next season.

New North Florida Cooperative - Case Study

Author: New North Florida Cooperative

Movers and Shakers

In 1995, a group of farmers formed the New North Florida Marketing Cooperative. The goal of the cooperative was to provide marketing services to the participating farmers, and provide training and education in marketing options such as farmers' markets, roadside stands, and selling to local school districts. The goal is to increase the amount of product being sold, thereby increasing the farmers' incomes.

Description

The New North Florida Cooperative began by selling farm fresh produce to 13 schools in Gadsden County, Florida. In six years, the marketing efforts have increased so that the Cooperative now sells to 15 school districts in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Through these districts, they are serving 300,000 students!

The farmers focus on producing three to four main items, on a seasonal basis, and sell to schools year-round. The items are incorporated into menu planning, generally as a side dish or as a fresh fruit dessert. The Cooperative has developed a good reputation by providing high-quality produce, prompt deliveries, fair prices and for their courteous professionalism. They refer to this as "relationship marketing". The positive word-of mouth has been very effective in opening the door to the program in other school districts.

Other Project Components

As part of its marketing and promotion, the Cooperative has developed posters showing the life cycle of a crop – from planting to harvesting. These posters are displayed in school cafeterias.

Funding

Approximately 90% of the funding for the Cooperative's marketing efforts come from the sales of their members and participants. These sales come from a variety of direct marketing alternatives, including farmers' markets, roadside stands, and through their sales to schools. When the initial farm to school program was ready to launch, the Cooperative did receive a \$4,000 grant from the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service. They also received a \$3,000 loan from the West Florida Resource Conservation and Development Council (WFRCDC). Most of the grant money received by the Cooperative has been used for infrastructure and equipment purchase, such as refrigerated trucks and cool and cold storage facilities.

Labor

Most of the labor for preparing the products, as well as growing, them comes from the Cooperative members and participants. During particularly busy times, day labor is also utilized. Since the farmers have the ability to wash, chop and bag the produce, there is no additional labor on the part of the school food service.

Farmers and Crops

The Cooperative provides marketing services and opportunities for over 100 members and participants in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Their primary crops are collards, field peas, muscadine grapes and a few turnip greens.

Product Delivery

Deliveries are made 2 ½ to 3 days per week depending on school menus. While much of the produce is delivered by the Cooperative, they do work with other produce vendors as well. The produce that is delivered is

packaged and has a label with a logo and a nutritional analysis. The Florida A & M University provided some technical assistance to develop the label.

A delivery trailer was purchased by the Cooperative, and a cooling system from a recreational camper was installed to keep the produce at a relatively low temperature while in transit. Styrofoam insulation was also installed to protect the produce from the outside heat. The logo is printed on the side of the trailer along with the name of the Cooperative and the phrase, “The Pinnacle of Quality”.

Price

The Cooperative has developed a niche market as there is little competition in providing fresh, washed, chopped, bagged, and delivered greens. Consequently, the Cooperative is able to negotiate a price that is both fair to the school district and profitable for the growers.

School Food Service

The Cooperative members gained the respect of the school food purchasers by initially *donating a sample of their product – 3,000 pounds of greens*. The greens and fruits have been met with an enthusiastic reaction from children, which has been a big factor in administrative acceptance of the product. All members of the Cooperative go out of their way to be helpful and courteous when delivering the product, and they unload the boxes and stack them neatly in cold storage facilities. After each delivery, the cafeteria manager is notified that the order was delivered. The Cooperative demonstrates courtesy, provides convenience, and protects the high quality of its products by taking this extra step.

Kitchen Facilities

Since schools are not processing the product, facilities become more of an issue for the Cooperative members, who must have storage, refrigeration, and a covered area for washing, cutting, and bagging equipment. Originally, all of the washing was done in large steel tubs, and chopping was done by hand. There was no refrigeration system and therefore no storage capacity. As a result, harvesting and processing had to be done in one day – one very long day. To continue in business, the Cooperative purchased a packing/processing shed, a cutting and chopping machine, wash sinks, and a refrigeration and storage system. Funds for purchasing equipment came from grant funding and bank loans.

Sustainability

The New North Florida Cooperative has been sustainable since it began, as 90% of its funding comes from direct marketing sales. The few loans and grants they have received have helped it to build infrastructure with equipment purchases.

Contacts:

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Email: nfc@digitalexp.com
Website: <http://newnorthfloridacoop.com>

HEALTHY EATING WITH LOCAL PRODUCE (H.E.L.P.)



The Healthy Side of Processing

Healthy Eating with Local Produce (HELP) is a Farm to School program dedicated to bringing fresh local foods into schools and supporting local agriculture. We have developed relationships with area farmers to provide whole fresh foods to Maplewood Richmond Heights School District through the Salus Processing Center. HELP uses the processing center to turn food into items that can be stored for year-round use in the cafeteria. In Year 1, there were four primary foods used for processing: apples, tomatoes, potatoes, and sweet potatoes. Some of our favorite processed items are tomatoes into marinara, sweet potatoes into sweet potato fries, and apples into applesauce. HELP works closely with school foodservice staff to create delicious healthy foods for students while educating them about the benefits of a more healthful diet. The HELP grant is designed to test if food processing and distribution can be fiscally sustainable for school districts.



HELP activates community involvement through participation in local events and creative programming, and hires local students to help with food processing.



High school student working at MRH elementary

Saint Louis University
Salus Processing Center
3545 Lafayette Ave
St. Louis, MO 63104-1111
(314) 977-8523
helpgrant@gmail.com



Follow HELP @
healthyeatingwithlocalproduce.blogspot.com

HELP Receiving log

Instructions: All incoming product must be properly temped and inspected for acceptability. If a Lot tracking number is available please record it. Otherwise follow instructions for assigning a lot number to incoming product.

Date	Product	Varietal	Quantity (lbs)	Farmer	Local	Farmer Designation	Received by	Reviewed by
7/19/2009	Potatoes	Yukon Gold	100	Sunny Creek Farms	MO	SC		
7/20/2009	Tomatoes	Roma	65	Floating Farms	MO	FF		
	Tomatoes	Better Boy	85	Floating Farms	MO	FF		
7/30/2009	Potatoes		500	Walt Gregory	MO	WG		
7/30/2009	Tomatoes	Roma	180	Floating Farms	MO	FF		
	Tomatoes	Better Boy	145	Floating Farms	MO	FF		
8/11/2009	Cabbage		32	Floating Farms	MO	FF		
	Carrots		5	Floating Farms	MO	FF		
	Potatoes	Desiree	25	John Wilkerson	MO	JW		
	Potatoes	Yukon Gold	75	John Wilkerson	MO	JW		
	Potatoes	Onaway	105	Nature's Bounty	MO	NB		
	Potatoes	Prairie Blush	60	Nature's Bounty	MO	NB		
	Potatoes	Caribe	55	Nature's Bounty	MO	NB		
	Potatoes	Bintje	45	Nature's Bounty	MO	NB		
	Potatoes	Cranberry Red	45	Nature's Bounty	MO	NB		

HELP Production Log

Date	Product	Bags	Lbs per Bag	Total Lbs	Lot #	Initials
8/28/2009	Marinara	6	5	30	PF/TF-T-082809-004-081809	
9/1/2009	Citrus Salad	24	5	120		
9/3/2009	Marinara	12	5	60	PF/TF-T-090309-005-081809	
9/3/2009	Baked Apples	24	5	120	IL-A-090309-001-081809	
9/4/2009	Marinara				PF/TF-T-090409-006-081809	
9/4/2009	Baked Apples				IL-A-090409-002-081809	
9/7/2009	Marinara	11	11-5, 1-6	56	PF/TF-T-090109-010-081809	
9/9/2009	Marinara	12	5, 1-6	66	PF/TF-T-090909-011-081809	
9/10/2009	Marinara				PF/TF-T-091009-012-081809	
9/11/2009	Beets	3	2-5, 1-4	14	MI-B-091109-001-091009	
9/14/2009	Marinara	11	5	55	FSF-T-091409-012-090409	
9/15/2009	Sweet Potato Casserole				SP-SP-091509-001-090409	
9/15/2009	Waldorf Salad	24	5	120	IL-A-091509-001-081809	
9/15/2009	Diced Tomatoes	4	5	20	FSF-T-091509-001-090409	
9/15/2009	Sliced Tomatoes	4	5	20	FSF-T-091509-002-090409	
9/17/2009	Marinara	22	21-5, 1-4	109	FSF-T-091709-013-090409	
9/18/2009	Stewed Tomatoes w/ Green Pepper	8	7-5, 1-6.5	41.5	FSF-T-091809-001-090409	

Label – Potato Wedges

Healthy Eating with Local Produce

Healthy Eating with Local Produce

Name of Product – Potato Wedges

Name of Product – Potato Wedges

Ingredients if more than 2 items

Ingredients if more than 2 items

Potatoes, olive oil, salt, black pepper, garlic powder, paprika, cayenne pepper.

Potatoes, olive oil, salt, black pepper, garlic powder, paprika, cayenne pepper.

Potato Varietal Russet

Potato Varietal Russet

Volume 5 lbs

Volume 5 lbs

Lot Number SP-P-102209-004-093009

Lot Number SP-P-102209-004-093009

