

Farm-to-School Program



2008-2009 Report to the Legislature

*Including a report on the
Washington Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Grant*



by Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

January 2010



Washington State Department of Agriculture
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**A publication of the Washington State Department of Agriculture
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AGR PUB 200-285 (N/1/10)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the Washington State Legislature passed the Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act with a nearly unanimous vote, and the Governor signed the bill into state law. Provisions relating to farm-to-school efforts included creation of a farm-to-school program, a Washington-grown fresh fruits and vegetable grant program and procedural provisions to support the purchase of Washington-grown foods for schools. This report is an update on implementation of RCW 15.64.060, which creates a Farm-to-School Program within the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to facilitate procurement of Washington-grown food by schools. This document also includes a report on 2008-2009 school year implementation of RCW 28A.235.170, which created the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and for which the WSDA Farm-to-School Program provided extensive support.

WSDA's Farm-to-School Program works with food producers and school food purchasers to increase the sale of locally-produced, nutritious foods to schools. The Farm-to-School Program provides a range of services to assist school buyers and food producers in these relatively new institutional market relationships. The Program helps producers sell to schools by informing them of the market requirements of schools and other institutions, from insurance and certification requirements to the processing, distribution and billing expectations of school buyers and by connecting them directly to nearby districts seeking farm partners.

Schools receive resources and assistance to identify and purchase Washington food products, plan seasonal menus, handle and prepare field-harvested produce, and bring educational messages about food and farming into the cafeteria. The Program also provides schools with resources and tools to promote Washington foods and teach students about agriculture, health and the environment. Farms and schools benefit from WSDA expertise in direct marketing, as well as from the strong working relationships the Farm-to-School Program initiated with other agencies, organizations and commissions around Washington.

Program Goals:

RCW 15.64.060 established seven priorities for the Farm-to-School Program. Budget and staff reductions required further prioritization of these goals. For the first year, the goals were to:

- Create the Farm-to-School Program within WSDA.
- Raise awareness of the Program among food producers and distributors, school foodservice directors and nutritionists, and existing community farm-to-school organizations.
- Advise and provide technical assistance to growers seeking to sell local food to schools, schools seeking local foods and organizations and individuals seeking to create farm-to-school programs.
- Assess the interests, capacities, and needs throughout the food distribution system—from farm to plate—to identify impediments and opportunities.
- Seek additional resources to achieve Program goals and leverage existing resources through partnerships with other agencies and organizations.



Resources:

The Legislature appropriated \$290,000 from the general fund to the WSDA Farm-to-School Program for fiscal year 2009. The 2009 supplemental budget reduced this to \$142,000 and cut staffing from 2.5 to 1.5 full-time equivalents. To deliver services with reduced resources, the program works closely with WSDA's two Small Farm Direct Marketing staff members and relies on partner agencies and organizations to raise awareness of the program across the state.

2008 - 2009 Accomplishments

- Established WSDA Farm-to-School Program, hired staff and developed strategic plan for implementation and performance measurement. Established working partnerships with OSPI, the Washington State University (WSU) Small Farms Team, Department of Health (DOH), Department of General Administration (GA) and others to implement the program.
- Increased awareness of the Program and its resources around the state. Outreach efforts included numerous presentations to school nutrition services staff, educators and community advocates; launch of a program website and listservs; e-mail notices to school foodservice directors; a mailer and survey to farmers; and interviews for radio and print media.
- Directed initial efforts to those schools participating in OSPI's Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant program and other organizations actively seeking Washington-grown foods. Successfully supported getting healthy fruit and vegetable snacks to students in 25 schools, including facilitating nearly 40 new direct farm-to-school sales relationships.
- Gleaned preliminary information on farm and school capacity and needs from stakeholders, building on information from existing research. Distributed a new survey to almost 2800 farms larger than 20 acres to build a database of farms interested in selling to schools. Planned additional surveys of food processing needs and capacities.
- Won a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant which provides \$250,000 over three years to hire additional staff and to provide training, conduct research, develop a video on food safety certification and adapt an online foodservice toolkit.
- Partnered with the WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing Program to win USDA Risk Management Agency grants that included over \$10,000 for participation in the 2009 National Farm to Cafeteria conference and a series of workshops for minority and limited-resources growers on how to sell to schools.



The WSDA Farm-to-School Program

Farm-to-school programs are gaining public awareness and policy support around the country as concern grows about childhood obesity, nutrition and health. Schools are asked not only to feed our youth, but to build healthy food habits and instill understanding about the impacts of food choices on farmers, the economy, health and the environment. The media frequently highlights farm-to-school projects, agriculture education and school gardens as potential solutions to these important challenges. Congress increased farm-to-school support in the most recent Farm Bill and is considering school food improvements in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization, including support for local purchasing and school gardens. The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) new "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" campaign will include tactical teams to review and support farm-to-school programs in schools around the country.

Washington State already has many stellar examples of farm-to-school projects, providing examples of how connections between farms and schools can work to benefit students, farmers, and communities. With the WSDA Farm-to-School Program, Washington has the opportunity to build on these examples, expand the opportunities for schools and farms, and serve as a model for those in other states working toward the same goals.

Program Description

Initiated by a coalition of advocates for children's health, agricultural vitality, farmland preservation and environmental protection, the Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act was passed by the Washington State Legislature and signed into law by the Governor in March of 2008. The full text of RCW 15.64.060 is attached as Appendix A.

The Farm-to-School Program consists of a program manager (WMS 1) and a half-time program assistant and is located in the Director's Office of WSDA. The Program joins the Small Farm Direct Marketing Program to comprise the Department's Domestic Marketing and Economic Development team. The Small Farm Direct Marketing Program works with many farmers who may sell to schools and, prior to creation of the Farm-to-School Program, conducted farm-to-school workshops and published the Farm-to-Cafeteria Connections guide to expand market opportunities for farmers.

The Program assists food producers, distributors and food brokers to market Washington-grown foods to schools; assists schools in connecting to local producers; and identifies and recommends mechanisms to support the success of these connections. Additionally, the Program gathers and shares educational resources to help schools teach students the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of preparing and consuming locally grown food, and supports efforts to advance other farm-to-school connections such as school gardens and farm visits. Finally, the Program seeks additional funds to leverage state expenditures on the program.



Program Resources

The Legislature appropriated \$290,000 from the general fund to the WSDA Farm-to-School Program for fiscal year 2009 and 2.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Prior to hiring these staff, all agency budgets and new hiring were frozen. The Governor authorized an exemption to this freeze to allow hiring of the program manager, but the second FTE was postponed. The 2009 supplemental budget reduced funding to \$142,000 and permanently cut staff to 1.5 FTEs. Looking ahead, the biennial budget provides about \$152,000 per year for the program, not including the \$250,000 grant funding obtained by WSDA staff to supplement program operation through 2012.

Fiscal Year 2009 Farm-to-School Budget

Fund Origin	Fund Source	Amount	FTEs
FY 2009 Appropriation (Jul08)	GF-S	\$290,000	2.5
As reduced in FY 2009 Supplemental (Feb09)	GF-S	\$142,000	1.5
USDA/Risk Management Agency Grant (May09)	Federal	\$3,000	0
Total Funds Available FY 2009		\$145,000	1.5

2008-09 Results/Accomplishments

Objective 1. Setup the Farm-to-School program within WSDA

Shortly after passage of the Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act, WSDA convened a meeting of representatives from OSPI, GA, WSU, and DOH to define the role of each agency, clarify understandings of the new statutes, and develop an initial business plan. WSDA also consulted with farm-to-school program staff in other states. In December 2008, a Program Manager was hired and charged to take the initial business plan and develop a strategic plan for implementing this new program (Appendix B).

The WSDA Farm-to-School Program is designed to allow a small staff to deliver significant impact across a large and diverse agricultural state.

To reach 295 school districts and 39,000 farms in Washington, the Program developed efficient methods to provide sufficient outreach and technical assistance. Following are some strategies to expand the impacts of program efforts:

Efficient communication with stakeholders is crucial to the success of the Farm-to-School Program. The program website (<http://agr.wa.gov/marketing/farmtoschool>) provides easily-accessed information and resources for farms and schools. The “F2Sconnections” listserv, originally a project of the Farm-to-School Connections Team at WSU King County Extension, grew from 200 to nearly 600 people around the state, including farmers, school staff, parents, educators and agency representatives who share information about farm-to-school successes and best practices, jobs, events, funding opportunities and educational resources. The “WAGrown” listserv connects over 80 school foodservice buyers in the Washington Grown or USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables programs to facilitate communication about sourcing Washington produce and share seasonal recipes and ideas for educational partnerships.



Partnership-building and cross-pollination efforts are essential to spread the word and provide information and assistance quickly. Within WSDA, strong ties to the Small Farms Direct Marketing Program, the Food Safety Program and the Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program help prepare farmers for institutional markets. A partnership with OSPI's Child Nutrition Services Program provides direct access to school buyers and foodservice managers at workshops and through the WA Grown listserv. The WSU Small Farms Team, Washington Small Farms Advisory Board, Washington Agricultural Commodity Commissions, WSU Extension offices and nonprofit agriculture organizations provide state-wide networks of agriculture professionals to inform the Program and assist with farm-to-school outreach. To foster these relationships and assure coordination, WSDA staff actively participates on multi-agency and nonprofit organization boards. A more complete list of partners is attached as Appendix C.

WSDA recognizes the importance of measuring success and continually charting program improvement with input from experts in farm-to-school work and childhood nutrition.

Program progress will be evaluated using biennial surveys of schools, farms and other stakeholders to gauge changes in interest and awareness and to measure increased purchasing of Washington foods. The Program is identifying efficient ways to track the number of requests for technical assistance.

Volunteers gather case studies

Ralph Ariza, an Americorps intern at the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Meg McPhaden, a volunteer with a keen interest in agriculture, spent time this past spring researching farm-to-school projects in communities around Washington. They learned about school gardens in the San Juan Islands, local purchasing in Olympia, Auburn and Walla Walla, and WA Grown education programs in Warden and Yakima. These and other case studies will appear in the "Farm-to-Cafeteria Connections" guide, a handbook on local purchasing for farmers, foodservice professionals and community members. The guide will be revised and re-published by WSDA in 2010.

Farm-to-School staff consult and collaborate with researchers to identify effective policies and procedures for local purchasing and improving food quality in schools, and to inform development of tools to evaluate Program activities. Program participation on the Leadership Team of the University of Washington Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research Network provides access to expertise in evaluation and implementation of policies to address nutrition and obesity. Collaboration with these partners is expected to offer the opportunity to study the effects of school, district or local jurisdiction policies to support farm-to-school purchasing and access to healthy foods. Program staff also learn from farm-to-school researchers in the National Farm-to-School Network to inform program development and evaluation.



Objective 2: Raise awareness of the program among food producers and distributors, school foodservice directors and nutritionists and existing community farm-to-school organizations

WSDA Farm-to-School Program conducted extensive outreach efforts in its first year.

Since December of 2008, Farm-to-School staff have presented farm-to-school topics at twenty events, reaching nearly 1,000 people. Presentation topics include direct purchasing, farm-to-school education, school gardens, and ways to overcome common challenges such as availability and price, food safety certification and liability insurance requirements. Where possible, the Program uses annual meetings, workshops or training sessions organized by other organizations as an opportunity to raise awareness of Program services, invite participation and share knowledge, insights and best practices for farm-to-school projects. Radio interviews and print media also featured the Program. See Appendix D for a complete list of presentations and media features. Successful Program outreach resulted in daily requests for assistance, advice or attendance at meetings and workshops. Currently, requests exceed Program capacity to respond, even with assistance from Small Farm Direct Marketing personnel.

North Olympic Peninsula Farm-to-Cafeteria Conference

After attending the National Farm-to-Cafeteria Conference in Portland, Beth Loveridge and others in her Olympic Peninsula community decided to hold one of their own. The group envisioned an event to bring together school foodservice, farmers, civic leaders and community advocates to work for concrete solutions. In consultation with the WSDA Farm-to-School Program, they identified key issues and designed an agenda that would lead to action plans. WSDA Farm-to-School staff spoke at the conference about the benefits of purchasing locally grown food, developing supportive policies and providing agriculture education. Staff also co-facilitated a session for school buyers, farmers and food producers in which they identified some challenges and questions requiring further investigation. Another meeting is planned for farmers and buyers in 2010. Other sessions focused on policy and advocacy, and local food system development.

Farm-to-cafeteria and buyer-seller events provide opportunities for producers to meet with buyers directly.

Events also encourage a wider range of stakeholders to come together in support of local purchasing. The Farm-to-School Program works with others to conduct these events around the state. In the first year, these included a regional Farm-to-Cafeteria Conference on the North Olympic Peninsula, and Farm-to-Table events in Mason and Skagit Counties. Additional events are planned for 2010.

Marketing efforts to highlight seasonal produce items and their potential uses introduce buyers to products and encourage sales.

E-mail communication with school buyers provides news about seasonality and recipe ideas to encourage them to purchase Washington products. Program staff coordinated with Oregon Department of Education staff to provide information on specific items like asparagus so that they could highlight product availability to Oregon schools when promoting seasonal foods.

A Western Washington grower seeks to sell directly to schools



Black River Blues farmers at a Bremerton elementary school

Last year, Nik Pitharoulis of Black River Blues sold frozen berries to the Olympia School District, where Nutrition Director Paul Flock spends 30% of his district's produce budget buying direct from local farmers. Flock sent news of the berries through the WA Grown Schools listerv, where Bremerton School Nutrition Director Lisa Johnson saw the posting and began buying Black River Blues berries.

Pitharoulis began working toward WSDA Good Agricultural Practices certification after learning of the audit program from Farm-to-School staff at a Farm-to-Table event (organized in partnership with Cascade Harvest Coalition, WSU Mason County Extension and Enterprise for Equity). The certification will allow Pitharoulis to sell berries to Rochester School District and others in the area managed by Chartwells, a foodservice company. Sandy Conradi, Nutrition Director at Rochester, also learned of the Farm-to-School Program at the Farm-to-Table event. Now, she and her colleagues work with WSDA to develop strategies to purchase local food directly from farms. The Farm-to-School Program also met with Food Services of America and Chartwells to discuss purchasing Washington-grown products in their regular orders. The Farm-to-School Program assists local growers to get the required certifications and insurance, and Chartwells has made a commitment to paying prices that allow farms like Black River Blues to cover the costs of meeting those requirements.

The Farm-to-School Program is building a network of partners around the state with expertise and resources to support farm-to-school efforts in their regions.

As part of this effort, the Program presented a full-day workshop to teach extension agents and agriculture professionals about identification and purchasing of Washington-grown food, good agricultural practices and food safety certification, liability insurance, and school-based agriculture education. Demand was great and the event was filled to capacity, with additional participants via videoconference. The workshop was presented in partnership with WSU King County Extension and the WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing Program with a grant from WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education.

Objective 3: Provide technical assistance and advice to growers seeking to sell local food to schools, schools seeking local foods and organizations and individuals seeking to create farm-to-school programs

The Farm-to-School Program helps farms make direct links to schools.

An expanding farm database and regular e-mail contact with schools allows staff to efficiently share information with schools about product availability and potential partners. The Farm-to-School Program compiled product and operating information on sixty-five farms interested in selling to schools. Of those, approximately half sold to schools through the 2008-2009 Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program. To expand the database, an introductory mailer and survey was sent to 2,750 farms around Washington (those growing food crops on over 20 acres of active land). As a result, several farms contacted the Program for assistance in marketing to schools, and sales resulted directly for some of these contacts.

The Farm-to-School Program staff provide technical assistance to school foodservice buyers through informational meetings, listservs and individual consultation.

Meetings and consultations are at the request of schools, farms or community organizations who wish to increase Washington foods in their school food programs. Initial assistance efforts for schools were directed to those already participating in OSPI's Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant program and others actively seeking Washington-grown foods. The Washington Grown program provided healthy fruit and vegetable snacks to students in 25 schools and initiated nearly 40 direct farm-to-school sales relationships in its first year, along with new distribution and processing partnerships. Due to budget reductions, the Washington Grown program is only available to 12 schools in the state for the 2009-2010 school year.

The Program seeks to increase availability and identification of Washington-grown food products from distributors, processors and foodservice companies serving Washington schools and other institutions.

Most food purchased for school meals is provided by large foodservice distributors. The Program works with these companies to increase their offerings of Washington-grown products and to improve Washington-grown labeling. Food

Northeast Washington has geographic challenges but educational opportunities.



Kitchen training at Colville High School

Northeast Washington school districts have alerted WSDA to the challenges of getting fresh produce deliveries to their remote corner of the state. The Farm-to-School Program is seeking partners for research and infrastructure planning to assist with getting Washington-grown foods to these areas.

In the meantime, Northeast Washington has seen great workshops for educators and foodservice staff in the past year, and opportunities for WSDA staff to introduce the Farm-to-School Program. Program services were highlighted at a hands-on foodservice training presented as part of Washington Health Foundation's launch of the Northeast Washington Healthiest State Campaign. Led by Antonia Demas of the Food Studies Institute, the event featured recipes using fresh local foods along with USDA commodity foods for healthy school meals. Other school workshops in the area are offered by Quilliscut Farm School, which offers on-farm culinary and sustainability education. Two courses this year were offered for those working in schools. At their 4-day school garden workshop, WSDA staff presented on food safety and school gardens. The farm also held a five-day workshop entitled "Food Choices that Make a Difference," targeted to high school teachers.

Services of America (FSA) is the prime vendor for many school districts. FSA works closely with the Farm-to-School Program to improve communication about Washington products. The Program is also in contact with other distributors and processors who wish to sell to schools and will identify ways to help them market to schools. Farm-to-School Program staff connect interested farmers with distributors who may be able to carry their product and encourage schools to ask their distributors to stock and identify Washington-grown products. The Program also consults with foodservice management companies who provide meals in some school districts, helping them adjust their systems to accommodate more local purchasing.

The Program compiles and shares information concerning farm-to-school programs and efforts.

These resources include:

- **Model policies and procedures for schools:** The Program compiles and shares existing models of policies that support farm-to-school programs. Based on this year's experience coordinating with food buyers to identify best practices to overcome obstacles, staff will develop model policies, procedures and recommendations for schools to adopt at their discretion.
- **Guidance for school gardens:** The Farm-to-School Program shares methods and examples from successful school gardens. Program staff also work with the WSDA Food Safety Program to provide sound guidance on garden practices and pertinent food safety issues to those who wish to serve school garden produce to students. The Program partners with the Department of Health to develop model policies to help local health districts respond to increased interest in school gardens.
- **Tools and resources for farm-to-school education:** The Farm-to-School Program website provides links to existing educational materials about food, farming, health and the environment. In response to educator requests for more resources that highlight Washington agriculture, Program staff met with representatives from Washington Ag in the Classroom, the Washington State Dairy Council, the King County Agriculture Program, and others to learn about existing tools and plan development of educational resources.
- **Case studies of best practices in farm-to-school projects:** Staff collected many examples of successful programs and policies, from school gardens and wellness policies to innovative distribution and processing networks. These lessons provide inspiration and encouragement to those who attend WSDA Farm-to-School presentations or seek program resources.



North Central Washington grows school gardens for education and food production



Students at Classroom in Bloom (from their website)

School gardens are grown all over the state, and great examples are found in central Washington. The Methow Valley School District's Classroom in Bloom program provides education and garden experience to students in grades 3, 5, 7 and 10. Started by a pair of local farmers in 2004, the ½ acre garden now provides hundreds of pounds of produce to the school cafeteria each year, all grown and harvested by students. WSDA highlights Classroom in Bloom on a school garden webpage and in presentations to inspire others considering garden-to-kitchen projects.

School gardens are an opportunity for parents and community members to participate in farm-to-school programs. Several school gardens in the Wenatchee area are supported by Angela Schaub, a volunteer with EATLocal, a nonprofit dedicated to building the local food system in North Central Washington. Schaub works with schools to create school-sited educational produce and flower gardens and designed a school garden curriculum, available on the WSDA Farm-to-School website.

These gardens and many others will appear on a Washington School Garden Map started by Ralph Ariza, who volunteers with the Farm-to-School Program to support school gardens.

Objective 4: Assess the interests, capacities and needs throughout the food distribution system—from farm to plate—to identify impediments and opportunities

In the course of its outreach and technical assistance to producers and food buyers, the Program requested input from stakeholders in order to identify barriers and opportunities to increase purchases of Washington-grown foods for schools. Efforts to establish partnerships with farms and schools revealed additional obstacles farms face in reaching institutional markets.

These insights, combined with existing knowledge from a 2008 survey of Washington's school foodservice directors, uncovered great opportunity for increasing the amounts of Washington-grown foods in schools.¹ Survey responses demonstrated that foodservice directors already order produce that can be grown in Washington State, and that a few purchase directly from local farms, providing models for others. Food buyers indicated they are interested in purchasing a wide variety of products locally, especially if price, quality and availability are competitive. Foodservice directors who are not already sourcing locally, cited barriers such as inconsistent produce quality, unavailable produce when needed, high prices, unreliability among farmers, and the effort and difficulty required to coordinate with farmers. While nutrition service directors

¹ The survey, conducted by WSU King County Extension and facilitated by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, will be published in 2010 in partnership with the WSDA Farm-to-School Program.

purchased some produce in a form that is completely unprocessed (such as whole apples and cherry tomatoes), many commonly purchased items were minimally processed (such as salad mix, shredded lettuce, cut cucumbers, and apple wedges). These findings, along with insight gained from the first year of the Farm-to-School Program, guide efforts to increase purchases of Washington-grown foods in schools.

The challenges and opportunities identified, and Program plans to address them, are detailed in the section of this report entitled, *Moving into the Future*.

Objective 5: Seek additional resources to achieve Program goals

Demand for Program services is high. To provide excellent service with minimal resources, the Farm-to-School Program and other Domestic Marketing and Economic Development staff successfully obtained two grants in the past year:

- **USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant - \$250,000 over three years** to hire one additional staff and to provide training, conduct research, develop a video on food safety certification and adapt an online foodservice toolkit. Activities will be conducted in partnership with Oregon's Farm-to-School and School Garden program, the WSU Small Farms Team and others.
- **USDA Risk Management Agency - \$10,000** – The WSDA Small Farm Direct Marketing program has received over \$10,000 for a series of workshops to train minority and limited-resources growers how to sell to schools and support Program participation in the 2009 National Farm to Cafeteria conference.

Moving into the Future: Planned Responses to Known Challenges

The Farm-to-School Program made great progress in its first year of operation, gaining clear insight into what is needed to overcome obstacles to increased purchasing of Washington-grown foods. As noted above, the Program identified fundamental challenges to increasing schools' purchases of Washington-grown food. Below is a brief list of known challenges, as well as the Farm-to-School Program's immediate plans to address them.

Schools need training and time-saving resources to help them purchase Washington foods and build menus to cost-effectively use seasonal produce.

School purchasers are often unaware of locally available produce and how to incorporate it into their meals. To overcome these challenges, Program staff will conduct foodservice workshops and adapt an online toolkit to encourage foodservice professionals to incorporate Washington-grown foods into their menus. Workshops will assist with seasonal recipes and menu planning, food preparation techniques, and purchasing guidance. These projects will also raise awareness of the opportunities to purchase highly nutritious, locally-grown fruits and vegetables, how and where to purchase them and how to incorporate them into school meals.

The Farm-to-School Program is also exploring online producer-buyer transaction sites to facilitate purchasing relationships and streamline the process of identifying and buying the full



range of Washington-grown food. The Puget Sound Food Network and FoodHub are two promising sites that help institutional buyers locate and purchase Washington food products.

Farm-to-School staff will work with the Child Nutrition Services division of OSPI to support increased purchases of Washington foods. The division is establishing a statewide purchasing cooperative for school buyers, with an expressed interest in purchasing more foods from Washington producers and highlighting Washington agriculture. OSPI asked the WSDA Farm-to-School Program to partner on that project to help identify potential sources for Washington products.

A coordinated project with Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden program will use their program specialty crop funds to create promotional materials for schools to highlight Northwest-grown fruits and vegetables for students in Washington and Oregon cafeterias.

Farmers need guidance to satisfy requirements for selling to schools and take advantage of school market opportunities.

Schools represent a new market for most farmers, who require information and guidance to meet the unique market requirements of schools. School food programs are governed by a combination of federal, state and local rules and policies to ensure competitive purchasing and safe handling of foods. Schools also have different payment, delivery and unit size expectations than other markets. The Farm-to-School Program will develop and conduct training for farmers around the state to provide guidance on these requirements and practices.

The Program recognizes the need for schools and farms to coordinate early in order to plan for adequate supply and predictable sales for the school year. Program staff are developing an outreach plan and publications to help buyers and sellers make early arrangements in winter and spring for the following school year.

Food safety certification is often required by foodservice buyers. Many small and mid-sized direct-market farms need guidance and tools to meet this requirement.

Food safety is paramount to school foodservice managers, as it is to WSDA, OSPI, and USDA. Increasingly, schools, foodservice companies and distributors require Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) or other certification from farm vendors. GAP/GHP help assure crops are grown according to standards that minimize health risks. Farmers, especially smaller farmers, are often anxious about the complexity and expense of the GAP/GHP audit process. The Farm-to-School Program will work with the WSDA Commodity Inspection Division to educate growers about the requirements of GAP/GHP certification, including two on-farm training events and production of an educational DVD. The programs will monitor producer certification efforts to identify and overcome barriers to certification.

School buyers often require processed products, yet farmers may have limited knowledge of, or access to, necessary processing facilities.

Many schools have very limited equipment and facilities for preparing fresh foods, and their labor budgets and staff schedules preclude many of the most basic food preparation tasks (cleaning, chopping, shredding, etc.). Farmers can expand their opportunity to sell to schools by producing value-added, consumer-ready products, but they rarely have the equipment, skills or resources to process their own produce. Consequently, farmers need processors who can help develop and manufacture these products. To address these issues, the Program will conduct a survey of farmers to assess processing needs. In addition, the Program will complete a detailed



inventory of food processors in Washington to compile data on their resources, capacities and accessibility. The study will identify gaps and opportunities for processing businesses and farm-based processing to meet the institutional demand.

Most schools purchase the majority of their food products from large food distributors, which neither focus on local purchasing nor readily identify the sources of their foods to their customers.

Some of the major distributors are working with WSDA and others to build their local buying programs and to market Washington-grown products to schools and other institutions. Similarly, foodservice companies provide the meal service in many school districts around the state, and some have requested assistance from the Farm-to-School Program to overcome barriers to sourcing food from Washington producers. WSDA staff will support producers to market to distributors and foodservice companies and will assist the companies to identify and promote these products to schools and other institutions.

Conclusions

The WSDA Farm-to-School Program made great strides in its first year. An ambitious campaign of outreach, education and direct service has raised awareness of the program statewide and has yielded farm sales results and new relationships. Building on knowledge and experience from this first year, Program staff will continue to develop targeted resources, tools and services to assist farms and schools to connect successfully for purchasing and education. Grant funding will enhance WSDA's ability to meet the demand for new program services in the next three years.

Because of the Local Farms-Healthy Kids legislation, and WSDA's state-wide Farm-to-School Program, Washington is recognized as a leader in farm-to-school work. People from around the country (and beyond) contact WSDA to learn from Washington's experience with the Local Farms-Healthy Kids legislation, the Washington Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Grant Program and the WSDA Farm-to-School Program. Representatives from USDA's "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" team; the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; School Food FOCUS; and the National Farm-to-School Network are among those who have sought WSDA knowledge and expertise to inform development and implementation of their programs. As the Farm-to-School Program moves forward from its inaugural year, WSDA is committed to increasing purchases of Washington-grown food for schools and providing a model to others who seek to improve farm-to-school programs in their states and communities.





The OSPI Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

First Year Assessment (FY July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009)

Written and submitted by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Prepared by Gaye Lynn MacDonald, SNS, Administrator for the 2008-2009 Grant Program

Summary

The Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program is one of several new programs created by the Local Farms Healthy Kids Act which the state legislature passed in 2008. The legislative intent of the act is to “strengthen the connections between the state’s agricultural industry and the state’s food procurement procedures in order to expand local agricultural markets, improve the nutrition of children and other at-risk consumers, and have a positive impact on the environment.” The legislation specifically requires OSPI to track “specific quantifiable outcome measures of the program such as the number of students served by the program, the dollar value of purchases of WA grown fruits and vegetables resulting from the program, and development of state, local and private partnerships that extend beyond the cafeteria.”

This report tracks the first year of the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program:

- Grants were awarded to 25 schools throughout the state
- 9,939 children benefited from fresh fruit and vegetable snacks
- \$226,000 was spent on fresh Washington grown produce for the schools
- At least 30 farms sold to schools through the program, establishing new partnerships between farmers and schools

The first year of the program was successful in establishing a strong foundation for building new relationships between schools and farmers and getting Washington grown fruits and vegetables into our schools. Both opportunities and challenges were identified during the program’s first year to better understand how to develop the school market for Washington farmers. Those findings are contained within this report.

In addition to establishing the grant program, The Local Farms Healthy Kids Act also established the state’s Farm-to-School program at Washington State Department of Agriculture. Having this program in place along with the measurable objectives from the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program has put Washington State in an excellent position to leverage additional resources to support this area of work. Washington’s Farm-to-School Program recently leveraged funding from the United States Department of Agriculture to support the relationships between schools and farmers that have resulted from the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the Farm-to-School Program. Federal interest in getting more fresh fruits and vegetables into our schools continues to grow. As resources become available Washington State’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the Farm-to-School Program will be well positioned to leverage additional resources.



Introduction

The Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act (SSSB 6483) appropriated \$570,000.00 in direct grant funding to facilitate school snack programs that offer Washington grown, packed and processed fresh, dried and/or frozen fruits and vegetables in schools with greater than 50% free or reduced lunch eligibility.

The Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act specifically identified that the following outcomes be tracked:

- Number of students served
- Dollar value of purchases
- State, local and private partnerships

In addition, the legislation provided funding for Farm-to-School Program staff in the Department of Agriculture whose responsibilities included work with the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant coordinator to help implement the program with the overall aim of assisting schools in buying Washington-grown produce, working with farms who wish to sell product to schools and identifying and overcoming barriers to implementing the grant program. The WSDA Farm-to-School manager position was not filled until half way through the school year due to the state hiring freeze.

This report covers activities conducted by the grant schools, OSPI child nutrition section program grant coordinator and staff and collaborations with Farm-to-School staff at the Washington State Department of Agriculture

All twenty-five grant schools were personally visited by the grant coordinator. Schools were reviewed as to grant administration, implementation, equipment purchases, nutrition and environmental education, partnerships and outreach. Challenges and opportunities were identified at each school. School administrators and/or teachers were asked how the grant program had impacted student learning and/or behavior.

Grant Recipients – Schools and Students

Twenty-five school districts submitted grant applications for Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant funding. Schools with students in grades K-8 with 50% or more of the students qualifying for federal free and reduced meal benefits were eligible to apply. The schools receiving grants represented a mix of urban and rural schools covering all geographic areas of Washington State.



A total of 9,939 students had access to Washington grown, packed and processed fruit and vegetable snacks during the 2008-2009 school year.

School District	School	Number of Students	Free and Reduced %
Aberdeen	A.J. West Elementary	379	71.24%
Auburn	Gildo Rey Elementary	424	69.58%
Bellevue	Lake Hills Elementary	529	62.76%
Bremerton	Armin Jahr Elementary	453	69.32%
Bridgeport	Bridgeport Middle	167	80.84%
Clarkston	Highland Elementary	328	75.91%
East Valley (Spokane)	East Valley Middle	499	56.31%
East Valley (Yakima)	Moxee Elementary	525	61.90%
Eastmont	Grant Elementary	419	57.28%
Ephrata	Columbia Ridge Elementary	392	64.03%
Highline	Beverly Park Elementary	455	74.07%
Kent	Meadow Ridge Elementary	528	67.42%
Kiona-Benton City	Kiona-Benton City Elementary	677	58.35%
Mead	Shiloh Hills Elementary	552	67.21%
Mount Vernon	Lincoln Elementary	363	50.41%
Nooksack	Nooksack Elementary	253	62.06%
Olympia	Madison Elementary	171	54.97%
Onalaska	Onalaska Middle	547	65.31%
Onion Creek	Onion Creek	41	68.29%
Pomeroy	Pomeroy Elementary	154	53.90%
Republic	Republic Elementary	216	62.04%
Seattle	Van Asselt Elementary	510	83.33%
Taholah	Taholah Elementary/Middle	198	74.24%
Wapato	Satus Elementary	677	83.90%
Warden	Warden Elementary	482	77.80%

Grant Purchases

A wide variety of Washington grown, packed and processed fruits & vegetables were purchased for the snack programs at a total value of \$226,270.00. All of these foods were purchased using the Washington Grown grant funds provided in the Local Farms-Healthy Kids legislation. Many districts developed new direct purchase relationships with small family-owned farms.

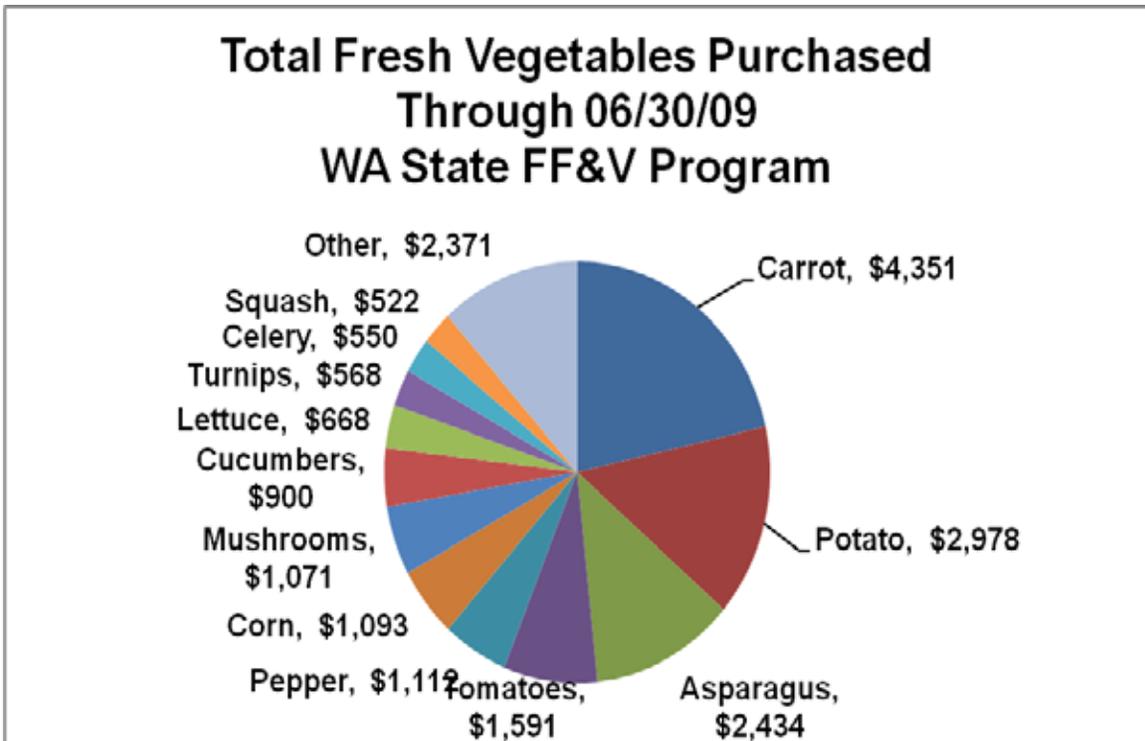
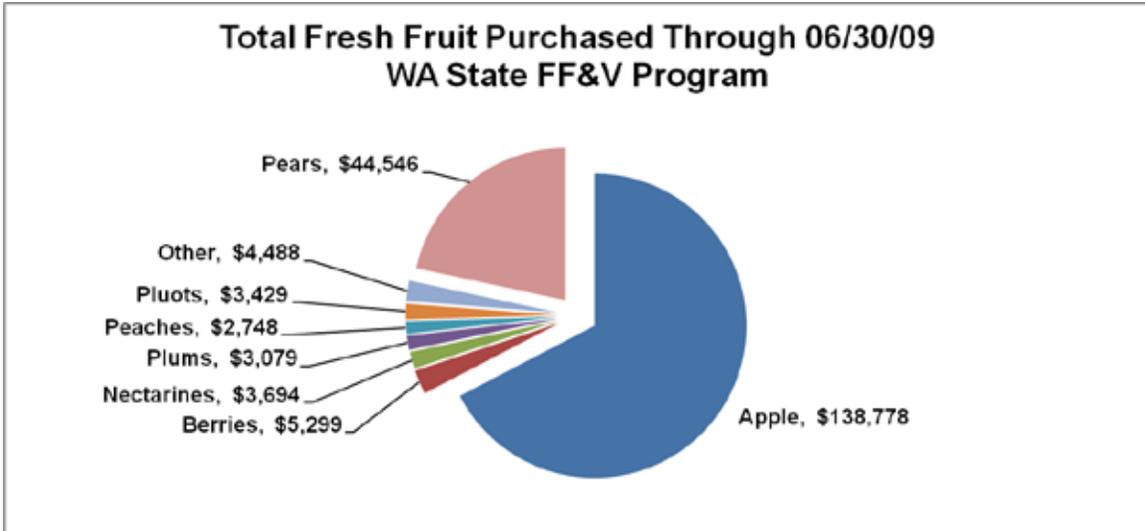
Fruit accounted for approximately 90% of the purchases and included: apples, pears, berries, nectarines, plums, peaches, pluots, cherries, grapes, melon, and prunes.

Vegetables accounted for 10% of the purchases and included: carrots, potatoes, asparagus, tomatoes, peppers, corn, mushrooms, cucumbers, lettuce, turnips, celery, squash, beets,



broccoli, cabbage, beans, cauliflower, parsnips, onions, radishes, eggplant, salads, bok choy, brussels sprouts, basil, peas, okra, leeks, and spinach.

Schools demonstrated impressive creativity in their nutrition curriculum. They offered a variety of pears, apples and peppers, highlighting the nutrition benefits of each one. Schools experimented with serving vegetables raw that were typically cooked, such as parsnips and butternut squash. Spaghetti squash was cooked and then chilled for snack the following day. Fresh tomatoes, onions and eggplant were combined into salsa that the children enjoyed.



Partnerships – State, local and private

Many partnerships between state and local community and private businesses were developed as a result of the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program. The primary partnerships resulting from the program were between schools and farmers in the immediate geographic area of the schools. Schools not only purchased Washington fruits and vegetables but many of the schools invited the farmers to talk to their students about their farms.

Five school districts (Onion Creek, Bremerton, Auburn, Olympia and Onalaska) formed partnerships with local community members, clubs, churches or agencies to plant school gardens and/or greenhouses to support the efforts of the snack program.

Partnerships were developed between WSU, Americorps and the schools to provide the Food Sense Nutrition Education Program. Communities were educated about the program through family nights and farmers market events.

In Pomeroy, the school utilized the home economics class to provide nutrition education to classrooms. In Yakima, the physical education teacher augmented the snack program by incorporating nutrition education into a four week curriculum unit focused on nutrients and physical activity. The Kent School District partnered with the Multi Care Center for Healthy Living to provide on-going nutrition education and with the local YMCA to provide additional physical activity. In rural areas the schools partnered with retail markets such as Wal Mart, Costco or other smaller local markets to provide Washington-grown produce to the community.

Education & Stewardship

Key educational components of the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program included discussing the nutritional benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables, learning about the farmer's environmental stewardship practices, linking the farms and farmers to the foods that were eaten in class, and helping to increase children's knowledge of where food comes from.

Schools found numerous creative ways to implement these education components. The nutrition, environmental benefits and agricultural stewardship information was provided in a range of snack delivery venues (classroom, cafeteria and recess areas). Educational information was provided to teachers relative to the snack of the day. The information was either communicated by the teacher or read by a student. This generated great discussion within the class as the snack was consumed.

Nutrition, environmental, and agricultural stewardship information was also posted near the snack site at the time when the snacks were served.

Bulletin boards featuring a fruit or vegetable of the month were produced by students. Information on the bulletin board linked local farms and farmers to the foods as well as

providing information on the nutrition benefits and the positive environmental impact of eating healthy foods produced by local farmers. In some schools, school nutrition staff held fruit and vegetable tasting to introduce students to less familiar foods.

One distributor, Charlie's Produce, developed a Powerpoint presentation on Washington-grown produce and included photographs of the food growing on-site and of the farmers in the fields and packing sheds. Some schools used photos of local farmers and their farms to connect students, fruit and vegetable snacks, and farmers. Other grant schools provided farm tours to students.

School nutrition staff at Shiloh Elementary School in the Mead School District provided classroom visits that included fruit or vegetable tasting along with reading a book with a fruit or vegetable theme. One particularly interesting discussion took place after tasting potatoes and talking about the various ways they can be prepared and eaten. For example, many students in the class thought mashed potatoes only came from a box.

A number of school districts had farmers bring produce to the school and talk about their farm. Students interviewed a watermelon grower (Warden Elementary), learned about spaghetti squash (East Valley Yakima), and carrots with tops (Auburn, Mt. Vernon and Seattle Schools).



Van Asselt Elementary school students enjoy locally-grown apples.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Links to Learning and Health

Although comments were anecdotal, the following examples show that administrators, parents, students and school nutrition staff identified links between the Washington Grown Program and better health and understanding of Washington agriculture.

“Having a healthy snack at a certain time each day creates a healthy habit.” (Auburn – Gildo Rey Elementary)

“Eating a fresh fruit or vegetable snack supports our students making good choices in breakfast and lunch.” (Auburn – Gildo Rey Elementary)

“They love having fruit to eat. They work better on days they have their fruit snack.” (Kent – Meadow Ridge Elementary)

“I love this program! My students love having fruit to eat. It feels so good to be able to give kids healthy snacks. Thank you very much for getting this program for our school.” (Kent – Meadow Ridge Elementary)

“It has helped students maintain a focus on learning, rather than focusing on their stomachs and hunger during our morning math time and afternoon writing.” (Kent – Meadow Ridge Elementary)

“This program helps create a great sense of community – schools working with farmers.” (Olympia – Madison Elementary)

“We’ve incorporated this grant into our 4th grade Washington State history/social studies curriculum. It’s an opportunity to talk about what grows in our state and the important role of agriculture.” (Aberdeen – A. J. West Elementary)

“Our teachers support this snack program – they wouldn’t support it if it didn’t make a difference for their students. It’s also a godsend for our families.” (Bremerton – Armin Jahr Elementary)

“After the snack, students are excited again and motivated to continue learning. The snack gives them a boost of physical and mental energy.” (Warden – Warden Elementary)

“It is a wonderful way to support what is encouraged and required by our local wellness policy.” (Highline – Beverly Park Elementary)

“I’m trying fruits and vegetables I’ve never tried before – I even eat them without dip!” (Warden – Warden Elementary)



Students at Moxee Elementary School in Yakima perform songs about local food

Challenges and Opportunities

Seasonality

Most of Washington's fruits and vegetables are abundant through the summer when schools are not in session. Availability is good September and October, tapers off in November and becomes very limited December through March. Crops availability begins to pick up in April, May and June which ends the school year.

During the winter months schools were challenged to find vegetables. Since this was a snack program, distribution was primarily using raw products. A vegetable could be cooked and offered once a week as long as there was some type of nutrition information/education provided.

The program allows dried and frozen produce. Sources were identified later in the year with the help of the Washington Department of Agriculture and shared with grant schools via the WA Grown Schools listserv set up for nutrition services staff at schools and districts with the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grants, along with those administering the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grants.

Since it is more typical to have all types of fruits and vegetable available year round (e.g. from other places), there was a learning curve to educating students and adults on eating foods when they are in season. Highline and Seattle are examples of districts using a Harvest of the Month approach that focuses on Washington grown, packed and processed fruits and vegetables available in each month.

There is an opportunity for growers using greenhouses and other season extending production methods to provide additional fruits and vegetables for schools through the late fall and winter months, as well as for freezing and drying produce for use in the off season.

Identifying Local Farmers

In many areas schools were not immediately aware of growers or producers in their vicinity. Likewise, growers/producers were not aware that schools were a viable market for them. During the visits to the grant schools a list of growers and distributors was compiled. The WSDA Farm-to-School Program is developing a database of Washington growers, and has a goal to create a map showing Washington school districts and growers/producers and distributors in each area.

A list of participating growers, food companies and small distributors was compiled by the grant coordinator and forwarded to the Farm-to-School coordinator at the Department of Agriculture. This list will be used by OSPI and the Washington State Department of Agriculture to educate schools about farms and distribution in their area.

There is an opportunity for local growers to plant more crops to meet school needs and for farms to recognize schools as a market for their products. The WSDA Farm-to-School



Program was started in the middle of the 2008-2009 school year and worked to partner farms with schools where possible. Many farms who actively promote their farms online and in farm guides, or those which sell their products at farmers markets and to local grocery stores, may not be aware of the potential market with schools. Many of these local growers were not able to meet the requests of the schools in the Washington Grown program, often because of packing and distribution limitations. The WSDA Farm-to-School Program continues to work to identify farms that are interested in selling to schools and which farms have the appropriate volumes and distribution capacity to meet the needs of school programs.

Distribution

A major challenge to all schools participating in the Washington Grown Program was distribution – getting the fruits and vegetables to schools. In most cases, the farms did not have a delivery infrastructure in place. In addition to all of their daily duties, school nutrition personnel were time-challenged to go to the farms to pick up produce.

Food Services of America is a large distributor who is beginning to identify Washington grown, packed and processed fruits and vegetables available for schools and restaurants. However, they only buy from a small number of growers or producers, and they do not deliver in all areas of the state.

Some family operations are exploring a model of picking up produce from other growers in their area to deliver to schools along with products ordered from their operation.

There were challenges in operation expectations between schools and farm vendors. Since many farm products are sold by weight, schools are accustomed to buying by the serving or portion size. Sometimes the number of pieces of fruit or vegetable per container was inconsistent, which made it difficult for schools to secure the necessary number of servings. This is an issue that needs to be discussed between school buyers and growers to determine a solution. Schools also need ask farmers and distributors if there are minimum or maximum amounts to purchase.

Once distribution challenges are solved it will be easier to incorporate Washington grown, packed and processed foods into not only the snack program, but also into the school lunch and breakfast programs.

Processing

It was a challenge finding frozen and dried fruits and vegetables that were grown, packed and processed in Washington. In numerous instances, the items were grown in Washington but were transported to other states or Canada for processing.

The large packing houses in Eastern Washington cannot ensure that the frozen fruits and vegetables all come from Washington State. They purchase crops from surrounding states and mix them with Washington crops to meet processing demands. The same is true for canned fruits and vegetables.

Some small schools did purchase produce in season (corn and fruit) and froze or dried it in small quantities for later use. However, this required a significant amount of labor.

Only a few producers/distributors were able to do further processing. For example Van Asselt in the Seattle School District was able to work with a distributor who partnered with a smaller processor in Marysville to produce turnip slices and carrot coins or sticks. The WSDA Farm-to-School Program is collecting information on processors, distributors and farms with additional processing and distribution capacity that can provide products in a form schools can more easily use (chopped, sliced, etc.), as well as value-added products like dried or frozen fruits and vegetables that can supplement the fresh produce in the winter and early spring months. The development of facilities for regional food processing may be another opportunity.

Conclusion

The first year of the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program has built a solid foundation. Continuing to address the challenges and opportunities noted in this report as well as others identified as the program moves forward will be critical to the success of the intent of the legislation and to children's health. As relationships build between Washington farmers and schools, the market for local produce will expand to increase the availability of fresh, healthy food in school meals.





Appendix A—RCW 15.64.060 – Farm-to-school program

(1) A farm-to-school program is created within the department to facilitate increased procurement of Washington grown food by schools.

(2) The department, in consultation with the department of health, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department of general administration, and Washington State University, shall, in order of priority:

(a) Identify and develop policies and procedures to implement and evaluate the farm-to-school program, including coordinating with school procurement officials, buying cooperatives, and other appropriate organizations to develop uniform procurement procedures and materials, and practical recommendations to facilitate the purchase of Washington grown food by the common schools. These policies, procedures, and recommendations shall be made available to school districts to adopt at their discretion;

(b) Assist food producers, distributors, and food brokers to market Washington grown food to schools by informing them of food procurement opportunities, bid procedures, school purchasing criteria, and other requirements;

(c) Assist schools in connecting with local producers by informing them of the sources and availability of Washington grown food as well as the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of purchasing Washington grown food;

(d) Identify and recommend mechanisms that will increase the predictability of sales for producers and the adequacy of supply for purchasers;

(e) Identify and make available existing curricula, programs and publications that educate students on the nutritional, environmental, and economic benefits of preparing and consuming locally grown food;

(f) Support efforts to advance other farm-to-school connections such as school gardens or farms and farm visits; and

(g) As resources allow, seek additional funds to leverage state expenditures.

(3) The department in cooperation with the office of the superintendent of public instruction shall collect data on the activities conducted pursuant to chapter 215, Laws of 2008 and communicate such data biennially to the appropriate committees of the legislature beginning November 15, 2009. Data collected may include the numbers of schools and farms participating and any increases in the procurement of Washington grown food by the common schools.

(4) As used in this section, RCW [43.19.1905](#), [43.19.1906](#), [28A.335.190](#), and [28A.235.170](#), "Washington grown" means grown and packed or processed in Washington.

[2008 c 215 § 2.]



Appendix A

Notes:

Findings -- Intent -- 2008 c 215: "(1) The legislature recognizes that the benefits of local food production include stewardship of working agricultural lands; direct and indirect jobs in agricultural production, food processing, tourism, and support industries; energy conservation and greenhouse gas reductions; and increased food security through access to locally grown foods.

(2) The legislature finds there is a direct correlation between adequate nutrition and a child's development and school performance. Children who are hungry or malnourished are at risk of lower achievement in school.

(3) The legislature further finds that adequate nutrition is also necessary for the physical health of adults, and that some communities have limited access to healthy fruits and vegetables and quality meat and dairy products, a lack of which may lead to high rates of diet-related diseases.

(4) The legislature believes that expanding market opportunities for Washington farmers will preserve and strengthen local food production and increase the already significant contribution that agriculture makes to the state and local economies.

(5) The legislature finds that the state's existing procurement requirements and practices may inhibit the purchase of locally produced food.

(6) The legislature intends that the local farms-healthy kids act strengthen the connections between the state's agricultural industry and the state's food procurement procedures in order to expand local agricultural markets, improve the nutrition of children and other at-risk consumers, and have a positive impact on the environment." [2008 c 215 § 1.]

Short title -- 2008 c 215: "This act may be known and cited as the local farms-healthy kids act." [2008 c 215 § 12.]

Captions not law -- 2008 c 215: "Captions used in this act are not any part of the law." [2008 c 215 § 13.]

Conflict with federal requirements -- 2008 c 215: "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state." [2008 c 215 § 14.]



Appendix B—WSDA Farm-to-School Program Strategic Plan

January 2009

Goal #1: Increase knowledge, awareness and ability among school nutrition services for purchasing food products grown, packaged and processed in Washington.

Objective 1: Assist school buyers to connect directly with farms or to identify local partners who can connect them to farms

- Task 1 Facilitate and attend local meetings to support direct relationships between farmers, school buyers and other local partners
- Task 2 Identify and share case studies of successful farm-to-school partner models in WA and elsewhere (online resource)
- Task 3 Work with WSDA and WSU food safety experts to establish recommendations for schools in purchasing food direct from farms or serving food grown in school gardens

Objective 2: Facilitate better purchasing systems and increased product diversity for buying WA grown products through distributors

- Task 1 Meet with main distributors to determine and support system improvements
- Task 2 Inform schools about working with distributors to locate and purchase WA grown, packed and processed products
- Task 3 Inform producers about opportunities to sell to distributors who can identify their products as WA grown when selling to schools

Objective 3: Provide schools with resources to locate WA grown products (web-based searches, organizational resource, local contacts, etc.)

- Task 1 Gather resource information and search tools and post online
- Task 2 Workshop presentations explaining process and providing information
- Task 3 Update and/or create materials needed to support programs (Farm to Cafeteria Guide, etc.)

Goal #2: Improve producer awareness and capacity for selling to Washington schools

Objective 1: Increase producer awareness of school market and associated market requirements

- Task 1 Inform producers of school market opportunities, bid procedures, and other purchasing requirements (processing levels, grower certifications, liability insurance, etc.) through workshops, partner organizations, list serves, newsletters, and online resources



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- Task 2 Educate and support local partners to provide assistance to producers seeking to sell to schools
- Task 3 Provide farm to school materials and/or make presentations at ag industry meetings

Objective 2: Assist producers to market to school buyers

- Task 1 Attend local meetings to support direct relationships between farmers, school buyers and other local partners
- Task 2 Identify and share case studies of successful farm-to-school partner models in WA and elsewhere (online resource)
- Task 3 Recruit producers and buyers to be included in the “Guide to Local and Seasonal Products” (with EcoTrust and SF&DM) and other buyer/seller resources, and disseminate information about these resources, the Puget Sound Fresh Farm Guide and the Puget Sound Food Network project

Objective 3: Identify and recommend mechanisms that allow farmers to reach school markets and improve the adequacy of supply for school food purchasers (expanding farm operations, cooperative solutions, value-added opportunities and processing, packing and distribution relationships, etc.)

- Task 1 Work with partners (NWCDC, Heifer Int’l, WSU, NABC, CHC, Shippers & Grower Associations, etc.) to identify the need, meet this objective and support producers in implementation.

Goal #3: Improve policies and procedures for schools to purchase food grown and packed or processed in Washington and improve educational opportunities relating to food and farming.

Objective 1: Develop model policies for school districts

- Task 1 Work with GA to review large state contract provisions for requesting WA Grown
- Task 2 Research, review and develop model policies and procedures for school districts to facilitate purchases of WA Grown food products
- Task 3 Research, review and develop model policies and procedures for school districts to encourage educational programs relating to food, farming, culture and the environment, including farm visits, farmers in the classroom, and school gardens

Objective 2: Disseminate and support adoption of model policies and procedures in school districts around the state

- Task 1 Work with the Director of Child Nutrition Services and others at OSPI to disseminate model policies to schools



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- Task 2 Develop letters and information sheets for use in working with school boards to explain and support adoption of model policies
- Task 3 Put out press releases and post model policies on our webpage to encourage stakeholder involvement in encouraging schools to adopt model policies

Goal #4: Better connect students to the sources of their food through education about food, agriculture, nutrition, health, culture and the environment.

Objective 1: Identify, gather and share educational resources through newsletters, list serves and an online resource page

Objective 2: Work with partners to develop WA-specific materials and curricula that reflect WA agriculture and meets state learning requirements, where such materials are not currently available (Ag in the Classroom, WSU Food Sense, DOH, OSPI, SNA, Dairy Council, etc.)

Objective 3: Identify, encourage and support opportunities for direct educational partnerships between farms and schools

- Task 1 Develop model farm profile materials
- Task 2 Provide guidance on farm visits or farmers in the classroom
- Task 3 Identify and share materials and guidance on school gardens and garden-based education
- Task 4 Identify and partner with local programs working to raise awareness of agriculture, the origins of their food, and links to nutrition, culture, health and the environment

Goal #5: Actively involve stakeholders and increase customer (i.e. farmers, school staff, educators, parents) awareness of Farm-to-School Program activities

Objective 1: Maintain communication with an advisory board

- Task 1 Convene an advisory board for the Farm-to-School Program – include members from the WSU Small Farms Team (and its joint advisory board), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and individual school districts (education and nutrition services), Department of Health, Department of General Administration, Local Farms-Healthy Kids advocacy groups, and industry professionals (farmers, distributors and processors, commodity commissions, etc.)
- Task 2 Conduct two in-person meetings of the advisory board per year
- Task 3 Participate in stakeholder activities in an advisory capacity – including those relating to agriculture, education, children’s health and related topics
- Task 4 Actively seek out and engage new partnerships for farm-to-school in WA



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Goal #6: Implement documentation, evaluation and recommendation protocol for monitoring and reporting on the program

Objective 1: Perform a biennial survey of farms and schools served by the program, to identify changes in purchasing, sales and evaluate effectiveness of program activities.

- Task 1 Seek technical assistance and possible evaluation support from academic researchers and professional evaluators with experience in farm-to-school and other related topic areas (school food and beverage policy and practice, direct farm marketing, etc.)
- Task 2 Develop a schedule for survey evaluation and reporting on activities of schools and farms served by the program.
- Task 3 Develop or adapt a survey tool for use with schools and farms served by the program

Objective 2: Identify and implement documentation protocol for monitoring and reporting on the program

- Task 1 Identify and test protocol for documenting requests for service and other data collection

Objective 3: Monitor and report on the program, with recommendations for program changes and policy options for WSDA to support farm-to-school work.

- Task 1 Analyze survey results and other documentation of program activities and outcomes
- Task 2 Report to the Legislature biennially, starting on November 15, 2009
- Task 3 Make recommendations to the program and WSDA based on findings

Appendix C—Farm-to-School Program Media Features and Presentations

Media Features

- 12/10/08 ***Farm to School, Northwest Ag Information Network Line on Agriculture radio interview*** with Greg Martin.
<http://www.aginfo.com/index.cfm/event/report/id/12418>
- 3/6/09 ***First step up to farmers, Capital Press newspaper article*** by Cookson Beecher about the Farm-to-School Program.
- 3/16/09 ***The 2008 Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act Programs: Working Together for More Fresh, Local Food in School Foodservice***, Washington School Nutrition Association's *Apple Press* newsletter article by WSDA Farm-to-School Program Manager Tricia Sexton Kovacs about the Farm-to-School Program and the Washington Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program.
- 3/18/09 ***Farm to Cafeteria, KUOW Weekday radio interview*** with Marcie Sillman. Program Manager Tricia Sexton Kovacs was featured, along with Nutrition Director Lisa Johnson of Bremerton School District and Clayton Burrows of Growing Washington
- Winter 09 ***Connections***, the newsletter for Northwest Cooperative Development Center, Winter 2009. Article highlighted the Farm-to-School Program.

Presentations

- 12/11/08 ***Supporting Local Farm-to-School Connections*** – A full-day workshop for extension agents and other agricultural professionals
- 2/26/09 ***Cowlitz ABCs of Farm-to-School Workshop*** – Presentation for school foodservice staff and directors
- 3/2/09 ***Mt. Vernon Farm-to-Table Event*** – Breakout session on Farm-to-School
- 3/27/09 ***Lewis County Meeting*** with farmers and Horizons Community representatives (and follow-up communication to facilitate school gardens and local food in cafeteria)
- 4/29/09 ***NE Washington Healthiest State Collaboration Launch Event*** – Introduced the Farm-to-School Program to northeast Washington school nutrition services directors from 6-8 districts
- 5/11/09 ***Shelton Farm-to-Table Event*** – Planning team and breakout session for farmers and school buyers
- 5/28/09 ***Healthy Schools Summit*** – Two hour presentation and one hour roundtable, reaching nutrition directors, school food staff, and educators from around the state



Appendix C

- 6/1/09 **WSU Horizons Community Coaches Meeting** – Presentation to leaders in communities around the state about potential for farm-to-school projects for community economic development
- 7/28/09 **School Nutrition Directors in Eastern Washington** – Presentation on Farm-to-School Program and how and why to buy Washington-grown produce. Part of OSPI's orientation for the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- 7/29/09 **Food, Farming, Culture and the Environment Summer Institute** – Rethinking School Lunch Session as part of week-long program of Global Source Network, with participants and school district representatives from Bainbridge Island, Quilcene and Port Townsend
- 7/30/09 **School Nutrition Directors in Western Washington** – Presentation on Farm-to-School Program and how and why to buy Washington-grown produce. Part of OSPI's orientation for the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- 8/11/09 **Lewis County Healthy Communities Coalition** – Presentation on farm-to-school and school gardens, which was filmed to share with school superintendents and principals in Lewis County
- 8/14/09 **Whatcom County Farm-to-School Meeting** – Overview of Farm-to-School in Washington at Sustainable Whatcom planning meeting for county-wide farm-to-school initiative
- 8/19/09 **Quillisascut Farm School** – Presentation on school gardens and food safety
- 9/25/09 **Washington State Food and Nutrition Council** – Panel presentation for discussion on access issues in agriculture
- 10/10/09 **Washington School Nutrition Association** – Keynote and breakout session for Eastern Washington Farm-to-School Fall Workshop.
- 10/17/09 **Washington School Nutrition Association** – Keynote and breakout session for Western Washington Farm-to-School Fall Workshop.
- 10/27/09 **Washington Family and Consumer Science Educators** – Farm-to-School presentation at fall conference
- 11/5/09 **North Olympic Peninsula Farm-to-Cafeteria Conference** – Planning assistance, Farm-to-School presentation, and co-facilitated buyer-seller session.
- 11/6/09 **Career and Technical Education Conference Sessions on “Greening your CTE Program”** – Presentations to teachers and administrators for Family and Consumer Science Programs and Agriculture and Horticulture Programs on the potential for farm-to-school projects in their programs.



Appendix D—Farm-to-School Program Partners

State Agencies:

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

- Child Nutrition Services
- Agriculture and Horticulture Program
- Environmental Education Program
- Coordinated School Health (co-project with Department of Health)

Department of Health

- Healthy Eating and Active Living
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program

Washington State University

- Small Farms Team
- King County Extension Small Farms and Food Systems
- King County Extension FoodSense Program
- Mason County Extension
- Horizons Communities Program

University of Washington

- Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research Network

Department of General Administration

- Purchasing and Contracts

Department of Corrections

- Food Service Program

Washington Agricultural Commodity Commissions

- Washington State Dairy Products Commission
- Washington State Potato Commission

Oregon Department of Agriculture

- Farm-to-School Program
- Certifications Program

Oregon Department of Education

- Farm-to-School and School Gardens Program



Appendix D

Nonprofit Organizations and Coalitions:

All Together Farming

Blue Earth Farms

Cascade Harvest Coalition

Common Threads Farm

EAT (North Central Washington)

Ecotrust

Enterprise for Equity

Global Source Education

Growing Washington

National Farm-to-School Network

Northwest Agriculture Business Center

Northwest Cooperative Development Center

Pacific Education Institute

Quilliscut Farm School

Sustainable Connections

Sustainable Whatcom

Washington Environmental Council

Washington Green Schools

Washington Health Foundation

Washington School Nutrition Association

Access to Healthy Foods Coalition

Good Food Coalition

Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition

