Farm to School

SOUTH DAKOTA



Why Farm to School?

South Dakota knows how to produce good food; agriculture is our #1 industry. The South Dakota Farm to School program enhances the access our state's youth have to fresh, locally grown foods via schools, childcare facilities, and summer feeding programs.

Farm to School connects local producers – from small fruit and vegetable growers to family cattle ranchers – to those feeding children in our communities. The result is a win-win: Producers find new markets and economic opportunities, while kids get to eat fresh, nutritious, locally grown foods. More than that, Farm to School incorporates learning opportunities for children to understand what good food is, where it comes from, and how to prepare it.

The opportunities with this program are wide-ranging: school gardens, Harvest of the Month programs, and incorporating local meat and tribal foods into menus.

Farm to School is a growing effort in South Dakota. It's time to cultivate connections between producers and youth feeding programs for better health and flourishing communities!

BENEFITS:

- Increases children's consumption of nutritious foods, especially fruits and vegetables
- Increases children's knowledge of agriculture, food, and nutrition
- Increases markets and opportunities for local producers
- Supports local economies
- Provides opportunities to build family and community engagement

For Schools, Summer Feeding Programs, and Child Care Facilities:



The South Dakota Department of Education's Child and Adult Nutrition Services encourages schools, childcare facilities, and summer feeding programs to consider how a Farm to School program might look at your location. You can start by looking for seasonally available local foods to ensure that kids can enjoy fresh-from-the-fields goodness, or by developing a relationship with a local meat producer. And remember, Farm to School is more than just providing fresh local food – it's also about helping kids learn about food production and preparation.

For Growers and Producers:



Producers interested in participating in South Dakota's Farm to School program should work directly with the local school district, childcare facility, or summer feeding program. The nutrition directors of these organizations know the federal regulations and safety requirements that impact their feeding programs. You can also contact the Department of Education's Farm to School or South Dakota State University's Extension office with questions. If you're a small producer, don't rule yourself out. There are opportunities for producers of all sizes to participate.

Beef to School:



South Dakota ranchers are famous for the high-quality beef they produce. Serving local beef is a common way that schools, childcare facilities, and summer feeding programs participate in Farm to School. Beef products have wide appeal among kids, and the year-round availability of this food makes it ideal for the program.

Cattle producers who are interested in making their beef available in cafeterias can visit our website to review Frequently Asked Questions.

5 ways to start a Farm to School program

1. **Identify a local food producer** in your community or region. You can find them through connections in your community or through an internet search.
2. **Start small:** Choose one local item for kids to taste test or serve it as a part of your program's meal service.
3. **Plant a garden.** Involve the kids from start to finish! Incorporate into your menu.
4. **Take a field trip** to a local producer's farm or ranch.
5. **Contact** the Department of Education's Farm to School specialist for more ideas!



PRODUCERS: 3 things to get you going

- ☑ **Reach out to potential partners in your area (childcare facilities, schools, summer feeding programs) and have an initial conversation.**
- ☑ **Find out if the products you have available match a partner's needs.**
- ☑ **Be prepared to talk about your operation: how you grow food, quantity of product available, and transportation methods.**

To learn more about South Dakota Farm to School and to find ways you can participate, visit doe.sd.gov/FarmToSchool.

Questions? Email DOE.SchoolLunch@state.sd.us or call (605) 773-3413.

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