



Purchasing Michigan Products

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE





PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

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PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Table of Contents

Section I. Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-by-Step Guide	5
Step 1: Get Started	5
Step 2: Build Community Connections	5
Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents	6
Step 4: Evaluate and Award Bids	7
Step 5: Begin Purchasing Local Products!	7
<i>Step 1: Get Started - Local Food Purchasing Assessment.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Step 1: Get Started - Michigan Products Chart</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Step 1: Get Started - Food Distributors Linking Farms with Schools.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Step 2: Build Community Connections - Resources to Link with Local Farmers.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Step 2: Build Community Connections - Sample Farm to School Language for School Wellness Policies</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Criteria for Selecting Vendors.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Vendor Questionnaire</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Product and Availability Pricing Form A.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Product and Availability Pricing Form B.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Letter/Notice to Purchase Fruits and Vegetables.....</i>	<i>23</i>
Section II. Michigan Farm to School Regulatory Environment	24
The National School Lunch Act	24
Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments	24
Michigan’s Small Purchase Threshold	25
The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (The Farm Bill).....	26
(j) Purchases of Locally Produced Foods.....	26
Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 Conference Report.....	27
USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Midwest Region Memorandum Regarding Procurement Procedure Questions	27
The Harrison Institute for Public Law Memorandum: Preemption of Geographic Preferences in School Food Procurement	28



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

USDA Food and Nutrition Service Memorandum SP 02-2007: School Districts and Federal Procurement Regulations..... 28

Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (The Farm Bill)..... 29

Local Food and Farm Support Act - Purchases of Locally Produced Foods 29

USDA Food and Nutrition Service Memorandum SP 30-2008: Applying Geographic Preferences in Procurements for Child Nutrition Programs..... 29

Section I. Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-by-Step Guide

Welcome to “Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-by-Step Guide”. Follow these steps to incorporate Michigan foods into your school cafeteria. Communication, flexibility, and understanding risks and benefits are keys to success!

Step 1: Get Started

- Determine your interest and ability to purchase locally-grown products directly from farmers for your school meals program.



Tool: Local Food Purchasing Assessment

- Decide which Michigan products you would like to buy. It's okay to start slow in the first year by substituting one or two products you typically use with locally-grown items. You can build over time.



Tools: Michigan Products and Seasonal Availability Charts

- Locally-grown foods also may be available through your food distributors.



Tool: Food Distributors Linking Farms with Schools

Step 2: Build Community Connections

- Use state or regional resources to find farmers in your area.



Tool: Resources to Link with Local Farmers

- Organize a farm to school meeting to share your ideas, gather support, and build enthusiasm from your school community. Build a farm to school collaborative. Invite farmers, food distributors, community organizations, teachers, school staff, and others who could be allies.
- Incorporate local school food procurement into your school wellness policy or action items for your coordinated school health team.



Tool: Sample Farm to School Language for School Wellness Policies

Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents

- Determine criteria for selecting vendors. Build a plan to evaluate farmers' bids based on categories such as price, food quality, taste test results, dependability, delivery plans, flexibility, promotional or education programs, insurance requirements, growing practices, and food safety and/or sanitation standards.



Tool: Sample Criteria for Selecting Vendors

- Prepare a vendor information questionnaire. This questionnaire will help you identify whether and how closely a farmer meets your criteria for selecting vendors.



Tool: Sample Vendor Questionnaire

- Prepare a product availability and pricing form. Ask for information that is most important to you. For example, if you are going to serve apples as fresh, whole fruit, uniform color and size may be important. If so, indicate this on the product availability and pricing form (Form A) under condition/description. However, uniform color and size may not be important to you, depending upon your use for the product. Being flexible may increase the likelihood that a farmer will be able to meet your needs. In this case, use a simple, more open-ended product availability and pricing form (Form B).



Tools: Sample Product Availability and Pricing Form A
Sample Product Availability and Pricing Form B

- Talk with local farmers to identify a mutually beneficial timeline for the bid process. Some farmers would like to begin this process early in the spring so they can plan their crops and plantings accordingly, but other may not want to submit bids until the summer when they are more certain of market prices and product availability.
- Prepare a letter or notice of intent to purchase fruits and vegetables. If you can purchase your local products under the small purchase threshold through informal bid procedures, this letter or notice can be included with your other bid documents for local farmers to complete. Be sure to include your school or district's requirements for payment and payment method in this letter or notice.



Tool: Sample Letter/Notice of Intent to Purchase Fruits and Vegetables

- Spread the word. Increase the likelihood that farmers will respond to your request for bids by posting your notice in the local newspaper, school newsletter, or other outlet where it will grab their attention. Include information about how farmers should get in touch with you and learn more.



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

- Mail bid documents to interested farmers. Include your letter or notice of intent, vendor information questionnaire, and product availability and pricing forms as well as instructions for farmers on completing the forms and returning them to you for evaluation.

Step 4: Evaluate and Award Bids

- Compare bids. You may use a point system based on a 100 point scale to evaluate bids. While price may earn the majority of points, other bid categories like variety available, freshness, and delivery schedule may be nearly as important to you. Identify bids that meet your selection criteria and determine products to purchase from local farmers.
- Notify selected farmers of bid awards.
- Visit the farms and/or meet in person with the farmers to determine your mutual needs. Be sure to discuss with the farmer your school or district's standard payment method and requirements for payment.
- Develop a written contract with farmers from whom you will purchase local products. Be sure the contract clearly describes requirements for quantity and quality of food, specifications and packaging, delivery, price, terms of payment, insurance requirements, etc. Completed, signed bid documents may serve as a contract.
- Have farmers review and sign contracts before you place any orders.

Step 5: Begin Purchasing Local Products!



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 1: Get Started - Local Food Purchasing Assessment¹

The following questions are designed to help you determine your interest and ability to purchase food from local farmers. This information will be helpful when you begin talking with farmers and distributors about supplying your school or school district with local food.

1. Food service type and volume

a. How would you describe your food service operation?

- Scratch cooking
- Heat and serve
- Semi-prepared
- Combination of _____ and _____
- Other _____

b. Numbers served:

Breakfasts served per day: _____

Lunches served per day: _____

Snacks served per day: _____

Number of schools or feeding sites: _____

Number of sites where cooking occurs: _____

Number of lunches served per day in summer food service: _____

Number of snacks/suppers served in at-risk after-school program: _____

2. Current produce purchasing

- a. What is a typical order for fresh produce in September, in dollars or volume by month or week?
- b. Are there local products you would consider purchasing if you had a salad, pasta, pizza bar, etc.?

¹ This document is adapted from "Evaluating a School Food Service Customer" developed by Kelly Irwin at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Farm to School Project.
http://www.mass.gov/agr/markets/Farm_to_school/Evaluating%20a%20School%20Food%20Service%20Customer.pdf



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

3. Logistics - ordering, payment, delivery

- a. What are your procurement procedures?
- b. Does the school/district have contracted food distributors?
- c. What percentage of food is required to be purchased through contracts?
- d. Do you also use independent produce distributors?
- e. To how many locations do you have produce delivered?
- f. How many deliveries are made per week per location? And at what times?
- g. How do you prefer to place orders? Telephone, fax, email?
- h. How often do you place orders? Monthly, weekly, or on a specific day of the week?
- i. What are your payment procedures? For instance, how long will it take for your payment to be received?

4. Purchasing local products

- a. Many reasons exist for buying locally-grown and produced foods. What do you see as the advantages of offering local foods in your school meals program?
 - Access to fresher foods
 - Higher quality of food
 - Lower cost of food
 - Ability to purchase special varieties and types of food
 - Promoting greater consumption of fruits and vegetables
 - Increasing the participation rate in school meals
 - Knowing the product source
 - Supporting the local economy and local farms
 - Building partnerships between the school system and community
 - Lower transportation costs
 - Less use of pesticides, hormones, etc.
 - Positive public relations for the food service
 - Fulfilling student, parent, and/or teacher requests for local food
 - Other: _____
 - None of these



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

4. Purchasing local products, continued:

- b. Schools and school districts take different approaches to include local foods in their meal programs. Which approach(es) might be of interest to you?
- Ask current vendor(s) to sell identified farm products
 - Try to buy directly from local farmers
 - Highlight locally-grown foods on printed/online menus
 - Plan menus around seasonal availability of local products
 - Buy and highlight only one or two local products each month
 - Host one or two local food meals or events each school year (Fall Harvest Festival, etc.)
 - Begin by serving local foods on a limited or pilot basis, such as at only one school
 - Educate students about local food and food systems with educational materials and events (food tastings, farmer visits) within the cafeteria
 - I'm not sure yet
 - Other _____
 - None of these
- c. What are your school/district's requirements for purchasing from local farmers and vendors?
- Insurance policy
 - Food safety and sanitation standards
 - Packing requirements
- d. When would it be feasible for you to start purchasing and offering local products through your food service?



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 1: Get Started - Michigan Products Chart

A. The following chart shows fruits and vegetables that are grown in Michigan. Which of these fruits and/or vegetables do you currently purchase and/or prepare, whether processed or fresh? Which would you consider purchasing locally?

Product	Processed (Frozen, canned, etc.)	Unprocessed (fresh)	Purchase Locally
Apples	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blueberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cantaloupe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cherries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grapes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muskmelon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raspberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhubarb	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strawberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watermelon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asparagus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broccoli	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brussel Sprouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cabbage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carrots	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cauliflower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Celery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cucumbers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eggplant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Green Beans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greens (collards, kale, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Herbs (basil, oregano, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lettuce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Onions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parsnips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peppers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

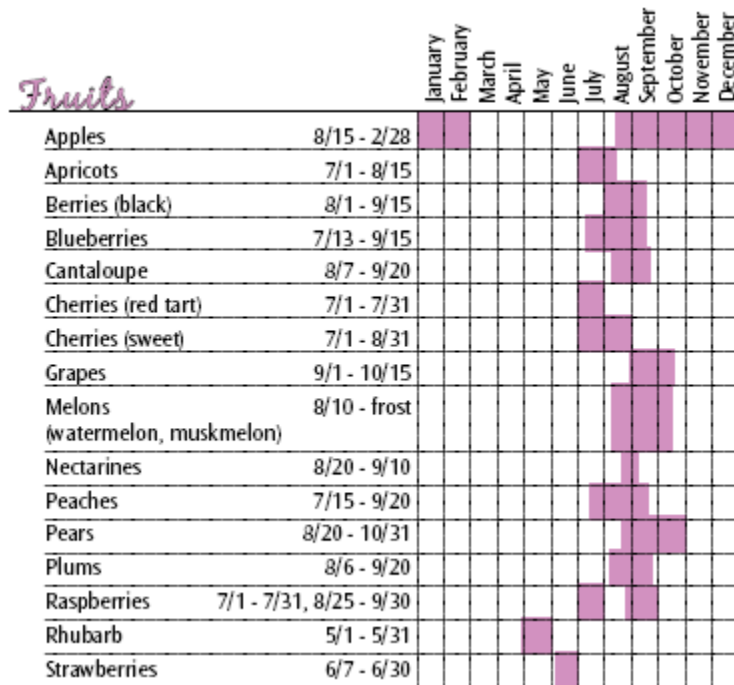


PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Product	Processed (Frozen, canned, etc.)	Unprocessed (fresh)	Purchase Locally
Potatoes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pumpkins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radishes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spinach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Squash (yellow, zucchini)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Squash (butternut, acorn, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tomatoes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turnips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. The following charts were developed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture¹ to indicate the seasonal availability of locally-grown products. Check the seasonality of the products you would like to purchase locally to see if they can be incorporated into your school meals program, even if for just a week or a month.



¹ Michigan Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Association in partnership with Michigan Farm Bureau and Michigan Department of Agriculture. "Michigan Farm Fresh Produce: Availability Calendar" in Michigan Farm Market and Agricultural Tourism. Accessed September, 2008. <http://www.michiganfarmfun.com/Dirinteractive.pdf>



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Vegetables

		January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Asparagus	5/1 - 6/30												
Beans (snap, green, etc.)	7/1 - 9/30												
Beets	8/1 - 10/20												
Broccoli	7/10 - 10/15												
Brussel Sprouts	10/1 - 11/15												
Cabbage	7/1 - 10/31												
Carrots	7/20 - 10/31												
Cauliflower	8/1 - 10/31												
Celery	7/1 - 12/31												
Corn (sweet)	8/1 - 9/21												
Cucumbers (for pickling)	8/1 - 9/15												
Cucumbers (salad)	7/7 - 9/21												
Greens	6/1 - 10/10												
Eggplant	7/1 - 10/31												
Lettuce (head, leafy)	6/15 - 9/15												
Mushrooms (limited supply)	All Year												
Onions	8/25 - 1/31												
Onions (green)	6/15 - 9/30												
Parsnips	9/1 - 10/15												
Peas (sugar)	6/1 - 6/30												
Peppers	6/15 - 10/15												
Potatoes (white)	8/1 - 3/31												
Pumpkins	9/15 - 10/31												
Radishes	6/15 - 10/31												
Rutabagas	9/15 - 11/30												
Spinach	6/15 - 10/15												
Squash (yellow, zucchini)	7/15 - 9/15												
Squash (butternut, acorn)	9/15 - 12/31												
Tomatoes (cherry, roma, slicers)	8/10 - 10/15												
Tumips	6/10 - 11/15												

Step 1: Get Started - Food Distributors Linking Farms with Schools

Many food distributors, especially those that are locally owned and operated, already buy food directly from nearby farmers or farmer cooperatives. Buying food from local sources helps food distributors take advantage of cost savings, including reduced transportation, and improved product quality. Listed below are some ways in which you can work with your food distributors to link to local farms.

1. Involve your food distributor in your farm to school collaborative. Let them know that you are interested in buying locally-grown products.
2. Gather baseline information from your food distributor. What locally-grown products does your food distributor already carry? Ask your food distributors to send weekly updates of what products are available locally. Food distributors that work directly with farmers will have the most up-to-date information of products that are in-season and how long they will be available.
3. Buying locally-grown food through your distributor does not have to mean losing your connection to the farmer. Ask your food distributor to link you with their suppliers so that you can develop relationships with the farmers and, in turn, link them with school staff and students. Ask your distributor to provide you with a profile of their suppliers. Profiles should include information about farmers that will help you make a decision about whether or not to buy the product. What information is important to you? If the farmer's growing practices are important, the profiles should include how the food was grown (e.g. organic, integrated pest management, conventional).
4. Build flexibility into your menu so that you can take advantage of the local, seasonal food supply. If farmers need to sell their products quickly, distributors may pass on the savings to you if you are able to make last-minute changes to your menu.



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 2: Build Community Connections - Resources to Link with Local Farmers

Statewide Resources

Local Harvest

Find farmer's markets, family farms, community supported agriculture (CSA), and other sources of sustainably produced food.

<http://www.localharvest.org/>

Michigan MarketMaker

This interactive mapping system links producers and consumers in Michigan.

<http://mimarketmaker.msu.edu/>

Michigan State University Extension

County and Regional Offices

http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/default.cfm?pageset_id=25744&page_id=25770&msue_portal_id=25643

Natural Resources Conservation Service

County/State Service Centers

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>

Michigan Department of Agriculture

Farm Market, U-Pick, and Agricultural Tourism Directory

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mda/Upick_all_173388_7.pdf

Michigan Farm Bureau

County Bureaus

<http://www.michfb.com/counties/>

Michigan Agricultural and Commodity Organizations

Legislatively Established Commissions

http://www.michigan.gov/mda/0,1607,7-125-1570_2468_2470---,00.html

Michigan Farmer's Market Association (MIFMA)

Market Locations

<http://farmersmarkets.msu.edu/2007MarketLocations/tabid/772/Default.aspx>

Michigan Organic Food and Farming Alliance (MOFFA)

"Eating Organically: A Guide to Michigan's Organic and Local Farms and Related Businesses"

http://moffa.org/f/2005_MOFFA_Farm_List.pdf

Certified Naturally Grown

Statewide list of certified farms

<http://www.naturallygrown.org/farm-list-detail.html?state=MI&country=227>



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Regional Michigan Resources

Taste the Local Difference

Michigan Land Use Institute's Guide to Local Farm Foods, Northwest Lower Michigan

www.LocalDifference.org

Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP)

Farm Product Directory, Washtenaw County in Southeastern Michigan

<http://gisapp.ewashtenaw.org/fsep/map.aspx>

Greater Grand Rapids Food Systems Council

West Michigan FRESH Guide to Local Food Southwestern Michigan

<http://www.foodshed.net/foodguide/0607FoodGuide.pdf>



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 2: Build Community Connections - Sample Farm to School Language for School Wellness Policies

As part of the Child Nutrition and WIC Authorization Act of 2004, schools participating in the National School Lunch Program were required to establish school wellness policies by July, 2006. A particular emphasis on establishing healthy school environments, reducing childhood obesity, and preventing diet-related chronic diseases is promoted. According to Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, school wellness policies, at minimum must:

1. Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness;
2. Include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;
3. Provide an assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the Child Nutrition Act and the National School Lunch Act;
4. Establish a plan for measuring implementation of a school wellness policy;
5. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of a school wellness policy.

The following suggestions are a sample of model language for incorporating farm to school into school wellness policies developed by the **Community Food Security Coalition**¹ and the **Center for Ecoliteracy**².

Wellness Policy Requirement I: *Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness*

- Staff is encouraged to utilize food from school gardens and local farms in kitchen classrooms and cafeterias based upon availability and acceptability.
- School food service, in partnership with other school departments and community organizations, will work to creatively market and promote locally-produced food to students, through activities such as:
 - Featuring food grown in the school garden in the cafeteria through sampling and inclusion in school meals based upon availability and acceptability.
 - Developing cafeteria themes and activities relating to local farmers and products grown in the region.
 - Developing school fundraisers based on healthy food items, integrating locally-grown produce where appropriate.
- Staff is encouraged to establish relationships with local farms so that farmers and farm workers will visit school classrooms and students will visit farms.
- Sampling and tasting in school gardens and kitchen classrooms shall be encouraged as part of nutrition education.

¹ Community Food Security Coalition. "Tools for Promoting Local Purchasing and Farm to School Activities: Model Wellness Policy Language for Schools." Accessed March 2008. <http://www.foodsecurity.org/F2Cwellness.html>

² The Center for Ecoliteracy. "Model Wellness Policy Guide." Accessed March 2008. http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/wellness_policy.html



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

- Staff shall integrate experiential education activities, such as gardening, cooking demonstrations, farm and farmers' market tours, into existing curricula at all grade levels.
- Nutrition education messages from the classroom will be modeled in the cafeteria and across campus by offering locally-grown food whenever possible within the reimbursable federal meal program as well as a la carte sales, including vending machines.

Wellness Policy Requirement II: *Include nutrition guidelines for all foods available on the school campus (enhance broader nutrition guidelines to increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables)*

- Meals served within the meal program will be designed to feature fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods from local sources to the greatest extent possible.
- Schools are encouraged to offer locally-grown food at every location on the school site where food is sold and in all school-sponsored events and activities.

Wellness Policy Requirement III: *Provide assurance that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the Child Nutrition Act and National School Lunch Act*

- The School Food Service Authority ensures that the policies set here are not less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Wellness Policy Requirement IV: *Establish a plan for measuring implementation of the school wellness policy*

Evaluation of farm to school programs could include indicators or methods such as:

- the percentage of food purchased from local sources
- the budgetary impact of increasing local purchases
- the impact of local purchasing on participation in the school meal programs
- pre- and post-studies on what students have learned about healthy eating and local fruits and vegetables.

Wellness Policy Requirement V: *Involve parents, students, representatives of the school authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in development of the local wellness policy*

- For the purposes of developing a school wellness policy, the wellness committee will involve parents, students, representatives of the school authority, the school board, school administrators, and representatives from the local agricultural community and food and nutrition professionals, like farmers, representatives from agricultural organizations, farmers' market managers, local public health professionals, chefs, nutritionists or health educators.
- A team of district and community representatives will be established to support the food service director and teachers in implementing local purchasing and other farm to school activities on an on-going basis.



Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Criteria for Selecting Vendors

School District: _____

Vendor: _____ Date: _____

- Food quality
- Price
- Taste test results
- Dependability of vendor
- Service after sale
- Delivery schedule
- Payment method and schedule
- Flexibility
- Promotion/education programs
- Insurance requirement
- Food safety and sanitation standards

Write justification for award below.



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Vendor Questionnaire

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and/or email: _____

Are you willing to deliver to more than one location? Yes No

Amount of liability insurance coverage (provide copy of policy): _____

Other current local customers and contact information: _____

Payment terms and expectations (receipt must be left at each delivery, one statement to be paid to vendor, etc.):

List inspections your facility receives from USDA/State/Local Inspectors and their frequency (annual, bi-annual, etc.), and attach copies of latest inspection report(s):

Please describe your pest management practices:

Credit/return policy for poor quality:

Are you available to visit school(s) and talk with students about how your product is grown?

Yes No

Is your farm available for student field trips?

Yes No

Vendor's Signature

Date

School Food Authority Signature

Date



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS
A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Product and Availability Pricing Form A

Name of Vendor and Contact Information: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please fill in count, packaging, price, and minimum delivery. List additional products and varieties you would like us to consider.

Product	Count	Variety	Quality	Packed	Condition/Description	Price	Projected Quantity	Minimum Delivery	Months Available
Apples		Gala/Royal Gala	US Fancy or US No. 1		Ripe, firm, crisp, juicy, smooth skin free of blemishes, bruises & scars. Color typical of variety. Washed.				
Asparagus		Spears	US No. 1		Spears to be bright green, free from woody stalks and discoloration. Straight stalks free from decay and wilt. Washed.				
Lettuce		Cut Romaine	US No. 1		Fresh cut, washed, 1" to 2" pieces, preservative free, packaged in a gas permeable package, expiration date printed. Free from decay and wilt.				
Potatoes		Russet or Round White	US No. 1		Firm and smooth, (not wrinkled); free of soft and/or dark spots, cut surfaces and greenish color. Loose dirt removed. Washed.				
Winter Squash		Butternut	US No. 1		Firm and smooth, (not wrinkled); free of soft and/or dark spots, and cuts. Caramel color skin with orange/yellow flesh. Washed.				

Upon review and evaluation, this bid has been awarded by the School Food Authority.

School Food Authority Signature: _____ Date: _____



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS
 A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Product and Availability Pricing Form B

Name of Vendor: _____

Contact Information: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please fill in the availability and pricing of the listed products. If there are products not listed below that you would like considered for use in the school meals program, please add them to this form in the space provided below.

Product	Projected Quantity	Availability	Price/Quantity
Pears	10 cases/month		
Apples	10 cases/month		
Pre-washed Blue Potatoes – Size B	30#/month		
Pre-washed Red Potatoes – Size B	30#/month		
Grape/Cherry Tomatoes	50 flats/month		

Upon review and evaluation, this bid has been awarded by the School Food Authority.

School Food Authority Signature: _____ Date: _____



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Step 3: Prepare and Distribute Bid Documents - Sample Letter/Notice to Purchase Fruits and Vegetables

Dear Produce Vendor:

Great Lakes Public Schools is now accepting bids for fruits and vegetables for delivery to all Great Lakes Public Schools for the 2008/2009 school year. Your contact information was provided by [e.g. Michigan State University Extension] as a potential supplier.

If awarded a contract by Great Lakes Public Schools, Vendor(s) may be asked to host school field trips and/or visit schools within the school district and present their product(s) to students and staff as an educational tool and hands-on method for introducing local produce within the school or cafeteria. All successful Vendor(s) will be asked to meet with Great Lakes Public Schools Food Service Department and/or Administration individually or collectively prior to delivery of produce and/or school presentations to review a vendor contract. All contract arrangements between Great Lakes Public Schools and any successful Vendor(s) regarding delivery schedules, ordering, payment, and availability/pricing of produce will be made during that meeting. Great Lakes Public Schools reserves the right to award contracts to multiple Vendors, and does not guarantee any specific ordering volumes.

Enclosed are product availability and pricing forms and a written questionnaire to complete if you wish. If there is a product that you would like us to consider that is not listed, please add it to the produce pricing/availability form for consideration. Submit the completed forms to the Food Service Department, Great Lakes Public Schools. All bids are to be delivered in a sealed envelope, identified **Produce Service** clearly printed on the outside of the envelope. The bids must reach the address below by **12 noon on August 15, 2008** and be addressed to the attention of [name]. Bids submitted by fax will not be accepted.

Direct all responses, questions, and inquiries to:

[Contact information]

Sincerely,

[Name]



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

Section II. Michigan Farm to School Regulatory Environment

The National School Lunch Act

7 CFR Chapter II (1-1-07 Edition)
Part 210 – National School Lunch Program
Subpart E – State Agency and School Food Authority Responsibilities
Section 210.21 Procurement
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/Historical/PL_108-265.pdf

“(a) *General.* State agencies and school food authorities shall comply with the requirements of 7 CFR part 3016 [Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments] or 7 CFR part 3019 [Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations], as applicable concerning the procurement of supplies, food, equipment and other services with Program funds. These requirements ensure that such materials and services are obtained for the Program efficiently and economically and in compliance with applicable laws and executive orders.”

Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments

7 CFR Chapter XXX
Part 215
Section 3016.36 Procurement
http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2001/janqtr/pdf/7cfr3016.36.pdf

7 CFR 3016.36(c)(2)
“Grantees and subgrantees will conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed in-State or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except in those cases where applicable Federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference. Nothing in this section preempts State licensing laws...”

Procurement by small purchase procedures (informal bids)

7 CFR 3016.36(d)(1)
“Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that do not cost more than the simplified acquisition threshold fixed at 41 U.S.C. 403(11) [currently set at \$100,000]. If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations shall be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources.”

Procurement by sealed bids (formal advertising)

7 CFR 3016.36(d)(2)
“Bids are publicly solicited and firm fixed-price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price...”

Conditions of sealed bids:

1. "A complete, adequate, and realistic" description
2. Two or more responsible bidders
3. "The procurement lends itself to a firm fixed price contract and the selection of the successful bidder can be made principally on the basis of price."

Requirements:

1. Public advertising of an invitation for sealed bids with sufficient time prior to opening bids;
2. The bid invitation includes specifications, pertinent attachments, defines items or services for procurement so that the bidder can properly respond;
3. All bids will be publicly opened at the place and time set out in the bid invitation;
4. "A firm fixed-price contract award will be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder." Discounts, transportation costs, and life cycle costs may be considered in determining the lowest bid, but discounts will only be taken into account to determine the lowest bid "when prior experience indicates that such discounts are actually taken advantage of";
5. "Any or all bids may be rejected if there is a sound documented reason."

Michigan's Small Purchase Threshold

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-451-of-1976.pdf>

School districts must adhere to the small purchase threshold (otherwise known as the State of Michigan's Bid Index Amount) as set by sections 623a and 1274 of the Revised School Code (Act 451), unless school districts have established a more stringent threshold level.

Procurement of supplies, materials, and equipment

380.623a. (1) An intermediate school board shall adopt written policies governing the procurement of supplies, materials, and equipment.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (3), an intermediate school district shall not purchase an item or a group of items purchased in a single transaction costing \$19,650 or more unless competitive bids are obtained for those items and the purchase of those items is approved by the intermediate school board. The maximum amount specified in this section shall be adjusted each year by multiplying the amount for the immediately preceding year by the percentage by which the average consumer price index for all items for the 12 months ending August 31 of the year in which the adjustment is made differs from that index's average for the 12 months ending on August 31 of the immediately preceding year and adding that product to the maximum amount that applied in the immediately preceding year, rounding to the nearest whole dollar.

Procurement of supplies, materials, and equipment

380.1274. (1) The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall adopt written policies governing the procurement of supplies, materials, and equipment.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (3), a school district or public school academy shall not purchase an item or a group of items in a single transaction costing \$19,650 or more unless competitive bids are obtained for those items and the purchase of those items is approved by the school board or board of directors. The maximum amount specified in this subsection shall be adjusted each year by multiplying the amount for the immediately preceding year by the percentage by which the average consumer price index for all items for the 12 months ending August 31 of the year in which the adjustment is made differs from that index's average for the 12 months ending on August 31 of the immediately



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

preceding year and adding that product to the maximum amount that applied in the immediately preceding year, rounding to the nearest whole dollar.

Proposed House Bill 5967

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2007-2008/billintroduced/House/pdf/2008-HIB-5967.pdf>

In April 2008, Rep. Lee Gonzalez (D-Flint Township) introduced a bill that would expand opportunities for schools in Michigan to purchase local products. Food service directors who have been buying locally-grown food directly from farmers have been doing so using the small purchase threshold informal bid process. If passed, the bill would increase Michigan's small purchase threshold from just under \$20,000 to \$100,000, giving school food service directors greater room to purchase local products through the informal bid process.

Michigan Food Policy Council, Report of Recommendations

(10/12/06)

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mda/MFPC_Report_2006_174216_7.pdf

“Recommendation C2: Increase the purchase of Michigan-produced foods by Michigan schools for service to students.

- a. MDA should assist farmers, processors and suppliers providing Michigan foods in working with school food service directors.
- b. MDE should assist school food service directors in working with farmers, processors and suppliers when providing Michigan foods to schools.”

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (The Farm Bill)

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/2002_farm_bill/special_nutrition.html

As noted in the “2002 Farm Bill: Section by Section Summary of Provisions Affecting Special Nutrition Programs” by the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA, effective October 10, 2002, Section 4303 of The Farm Bill of 2002 “requires the Secretary [of Agriculture] to encourage institutions participating in the school lunch and breakfast programs to purchase locally produced foods, to the maximum extent practicable; advise institutions of the locally produced food policy; and provide startup grants to up to 200 institutions to defray initial costs of equipment, materials, storage facilities, and similar costs. It authorizes \$400,000 a year for each of fiscal years 2003-2007.”

U.S. Code, Title 42, Chapter 13

Section 1758. Program Requirements

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+42USC1758

(j) Purchases of Locally Produced Foods

“(1) In general, The Secretary shall—

(A) encourage institutions participating in the school lunch program under this chapter and the school breakfast program established by section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773) to purchase, in addition to other food purchases, locally produced foods for school meal programs, to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate;



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

(B) advise institutions participating in a program described in subparagraph (A) of the policy described in that subparagraph and post information concerning the policy on the website maintained by the Secretary; and

(C) in accordance with requirements established by the Secretary, provide startup grants to not more than 200 institutions to defray the initial costs of equipment, materials, and storage facilities, and similar costs, incurred in carrying out the policy described in subparagraph (A).”

Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 Conference Report

(Report 107-424)

Title IV – Nutrition

Subtitle C – Miscellaneous Provisions

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_reports&docid=f:hr424.pdf

(52) Purchase of Locally Produced Foods

“The Senate amendment requires the Secretary to: encourage institutions participating in the School Lunch and Breakfast programs to purchase locally produced foods, to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate and in addition to other food purchases; advise these institutions of the locally produced food policy; and provide start-up grants up to 200 institutions to defray initial costs of equipment, materials, storage facilities, and similar costs incurred in carrying out the locally produced food policy. Also it authorizes appropriations of \$400,000 a year for FY2002-FY2006. (Section 458)...

The Conference substitute adopts the Senate provision....

The intent of the Managers is to authorize the Secretary to award modest start-up grants for equipment, materials, and similar costs associated with purchasing locally-produced foods. It is not the intent to create a geographical preference for purchases of locally produced foods or purchases made with grant funds. All purchases are to be made competitively, consistent with federal procurement laws and regulations....

The Managers want to make clear that school food authorities are still required to follow federal procurement rules calling for free and open competition and limit local product purchases to those that are practicable....”

USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Midwest Region Memorandum Regarding Procurement Procedure Questions

(5/11/2005)

http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/doc/05_20procureprocquest.doc

“**Question 11:** Are Farm-to-School efforts exempt from the prohibition on using in-State or local geographic preferences?”

Answer: No. Section 4303 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 adds a new paragraph (j) at the end of section 9 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act pertaining to purchases of locally produced products. The provision requires the Secretary to encourage institutions participating in the school lunch and breakfast to purchase locally produced foods, to the maximum extent practicable.

However, in review of the Committee Notes to the 2002 Farm Bill, page 124 (note 53), although encouraging the purchase of locally produced production, Section 4303 does not allow for geographic preferences, “It is not the intent to create a geographical preferences for purchases of locally produced foods or purchases made with grant funds.’ The notes continue by stating, “The Managers want to make



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

clear that SFAs are still required to follow federal procurement rules calling for free and open competition and limit local product purchases to those that are practicable.’

Therefore, although school food authorities participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are encouraged to purchase locally produced foods, to the maximum extent practicable, this provision does not permit SFAs to use in-State or local geographical preferences. SFAs should always remember that all purchases must be made competitively, consistent with Federal and State procurement laws and regulations.

Question 12: Does USDA’s efforts to promote Farm-to-School mean schools do not have to follow procurement rules?

Answer: No. Although the Farm-to-School initiative was developed to encourage schools to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from small, local farmers and growers, SFAs must make all purchases in accordance with all Department procurement regulations and applicable State and local laws and statutes. However, this does not preclude SFAs from identifying potential local farmers or providing these farmers with its procurement solicitations. Further, an SFA can inform its local farmers or its interest in particular fresh fruits and vegetables so that the local farmers may plan future crop plantings accordingly. It is important to note that Farm-to-School purchases are often less than the applicable small purchase threshold. In these cases, SFAs are able to use these relatively simple, informal procedures to obtain these desirable products...”

The Harrison Institute for Public Law Memorandum: Preemption of Geographic Preferences in School Food Procurement

(12/5/06)

<http://www.foodsecurity.org/preemption%20analysis%20dec%205%20final.doc>

“Question Presented: Do federal statutes or regulations preempt state or local efforts to favor local producers when purchasing food for public schools?

Brief Answer: No. The 2002 Farm Bill included language that explicitly encourages the procurement of local food by states as part of school food service programs, and this charge from Congress has not changed. Although there has been some confusion because federal agencies have assumed that current law forbids geographic preferences, any such interpretation is inconsistent with Congress’s clear mandate in the Farm Bill.”

USDA Food and Nutrition Service Memorandum SP 02-2007: School Districts and Federal Procurement Regulations

(1/23/07)

http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2007/SP_02-2007.pdf

“We have received numerous inquiries in the past several weeks concerning a document produced by the Harrison Institute for Public Law at Georgetown University addressing the purchase of products from local farmers. The document expresses the view that Congress, as part of the 2002 Farm Bill, expressed clear support for geographic preferences in purchases made for school food service programs.



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

That interpretation is incorrect and FNS disagrees with it as a result. Federal procurement regulations at 7 CFR 3016.60(c) clearly prohibit the use of State or local geographic preferences. All purchases made with nonprofit school food service account funds are to be made competitively, consistent with Federal laws and regulations.”

Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (The Farm Bill)

HR 2419

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:h2419enr.txt.pdf

Local Food and Farm Support Act - Purchases of Locally Produced Foods

Section 4302. “Section 9(j) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(j)) is amended to read as follows:

- ‘(j) Purchases of Locally Produced Foods – The Secretary shall –
 - a. encourage institutions receiving funds under this Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.) to purchase unprocessed agricultural products, both locally-grown and locally raised, to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate;
 - b. advise institution participating in a program described in paragraph (1) of the policy described in that paragraph and paragraph (3) and post information concerning the policy on the website maintained by the Secretary; and
 - c. allow institutions receiving funds under this Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.), including the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, to use a geographic preference for the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products, both locally-grown and locally raised.”

USDA Food and Nutrition Service Memorandum SP 30-2008: Applying Geographic Preferences in Procurements for Child Nutrition Programs

(7/9/08)

http://www.farmtoschool.org/files/publications_178.pdf

“As amended, effective October 1, 2008, the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) allows institutions receiving funds through the Child Nutrition Programs to apply geographic preference when procuring unprocessed locally-grown or locally raised agricultural products. This applies to operators of all of the Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program, as well as to purchases of fresh produce for these programs by the Department of Defense.

The institution responsible for the procurement has the discretion to determine whether and how geographic preference meets its needs. Additionally, the procuring institution may define the area for any geographic preference (e.g., State, county, region, etc.). Geographic preference may only be applied to the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products which are locally-grown and locally raised, and that have not been cooked, seasoned, frozen, canned, or combined with any other products... The Managers (of the legislation) do not intend to preclude de minimis handling and preparation such as might be necessary to present an agricultural product to a school food authority in a usable form, such as washing vegetables, bagging greens, butchering livestock and poultry, pasteurizing milk, and putting eggs in a carton. Pasteurized milk is the only dairy product for which geographic preference may be applied.



PURCHASING MICHIGAN PRODUCTS

A S T E P - B Y - S T E P G U I D E

...this provision does not eliminate the requirement for procurements to be conducted in a manner that allows for free and open competition, consistent with the purchasing institution's responsibility to be responsible stewards of federal funds."