

FARMER CHECKLIST: MEETING A SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR

BEFORE

Start small – decide on realistic sales volumes and a delivery schedule that will fit your life.

Create a [Product Price and Availability](#) sheet that can be given to a school.

Complete a short [Farm Bio](#) to tell the school a little more about your business.

Read through the Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services [Q&A for Farmers](#)– it might be able to answer some common questions about selling to Florida schools.

Learn more about Florida farm to school programs, and determine if you have certain products that could fit these programs.

- » [Harvest of the Month](#)
- » [Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program](#)

Set up an appointment with a School Food Service Director. Try to send them your [Product Price and Availability](#) and [Farm Bio](#) before your meeting!

Bring to the meeting your insurance documentation and any farm food safety plans or certifications (GAP).

Come prepared to talk about your farm! This might include history, growing practices, your wash/pack and storage systems, and any safety measures you take - including water quality testing, cleaning methods, etc.

- » Try using [Iowa State University's Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce](#) to prepare.

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL PRODUCTS THAT MIGHT BE ON A SCHOOL MENU:

- Dairy: milk, cheese and yogurt
- Grains: flour, tortillas, roll or pizza crust
- Condiments: BBQ sauce, salsa, and seasoning
- Meat/meat alternates: beef, pork, chicken, eggs, beans and nuts
- Produce: fruits and vegetables



PRO TIPS: SELLING TO SCHOOLS

- Call the school early in the morning or after 1:00PM. Ask for the name, phone extension and email of the school food program.
- Some schools participate in the USDA's Summer Meals Programs. Ask the food service director if selling during the summer is an option.
- If there are several schools in your area, bring up the possibility of multiple schools purchasing a larger amount of product together for a lower bulk price.

DURING

Think about bringing sample products if possible.

Review your [Farm Bio](#) with the school nutrition director – encourage questions!

Sell yourself! Present what you can offer the School Food Service Director and how your products will meet their needs.

Consider if you're willing to connect with kids in the cafeteria or the classroom, or even on your farm. Be ready to share what educational opportunities you're willing to provide to the school and students.

Discuss the details:

- What product(s) is the school looking for? Are they willing to try something new?

- What volume of product are they looking for?

- Does the pricing work for all parties?

- What is their ordering process?

- Delivery schedule (time of day, frequency, location)

- Do the items need to be washed or packaged in a certain way?

- Does the school require your farm to have liability insurance, or a food safety plan?

- What does the billing and payment process look like?

- Gather names, phone numbers and email addresses of contact people for ordering and billing.

AFTER

Follow up with the School Food Service Director by giving them a call or email. Keep the conversation and sales going!

Send the School Food Service Director updated [Product Price and Availability](#) sheets -let them know what's in season and available. Sometimes a school will be interested in seconds or items that are less appealing in other markets due to inconsistencies in shape, size or other qualities.

Invite nutrition staff to your farmers' market booth or offer a farm tour.

NOTES

