



FLORIDA FARM TO SCHOOL VIRTUAL PRODUCER TRAINING

Module 1



DIVISION OF FOOD,
NUTRITION AND WELLNESS



BRINGING THE FARM TO SCHOOL PRODUCER TRAINING GOALS

Training program goal:

Help Florida agricultural producers build their capacity to launch or expand efforts to market to schools, therefore supporting producers in diversifying their business while increasing Farm to School activity in schools and communities across the state.

Training program objectives:

- Increase producers' knowledge and understanding of Farm to School initiatives
- Increase agricultural education opportunities like school field trips to your farm
- Increase the sales of local foods to schools



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Gain an understanding of what Farm to School is

- How can it benefit your business, Florida's children, and your community?

2. Identify motivations for selling to schools

- Schools are a stable market opportunity
- How do your farm goals align?

3. Learn about action planning

- Can this help meet farm goals through school sales?
- How can you connect with schools?





DIVISION OF FOOD, NUTRITION AND WELLNESS (FNW)

FNW Vision

- To be the national leader in the administration of food, nutrition and wellness initiatives

FNW Mission

- Ensuring that every child in Florida has access to nutritious food
- Increasing awareness and consumption of Florida's agricultural commodities
- Reducing food insecurity among Florida's most vulnerable populations
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles among Florida residents



Module 1: Introduction

The Introduction Module of the Florida Farm to School Virtual Producer Training will provide you with an overview of:

- The Florida Farm to School initiative
- Next steps for connecting with schools through our Florida Farm Connect Portal
- An overview of the Florida Farm to School website for easy navigation
- The power of Farm to School and how it can benefit your business



WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?

We're going to focus primarily on procurement in this section, but it's important to know that Farm to School includes agricultural education opportunities for our kids, and producers can have an important role.

- **Procurement:** Local foods are purchased from a farm, food hub, or distributor, promoted, and served in the cafeteria or as a snack or taste-test
- **Education:** Students participate in education activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition, which may include an in-class or school garden visit from a farmer or a classroom field trip to a producer's farm or place of business
- **School gardens:** Students engage in hands-on learning through gardening, providing additional opportunities for farmers to engage in mentorship, management of the garden, or on-site education

CORE ELEMENTS OF **FARM to SCHOOL**



Credit: National Farm to School Network

While core elements can be used to leverage one another, this training will primarily focus on the element most meaningful to you, our producers: selling your products to nearby school markets.



FARM TO SCHOOL IS A WIN FOR KIDS, PRODUCERS, AND COMMUNITIES!

- **KIDS** win with better food!
 - Local foods are fresher and more nutritious
 - Learning about local food encourages increased consumption of fruits and vegetables
- **PRODUCERS** win with sales!
 - Schools are a stable market
 - School purchases are equivalent to one of the largest restaurant chains in the state
- **COMMUNITIES** win with economic impact!
 - Economists have shown that every dollar spent locally has \$2.00 of economic impact.





WEBSITE OVERVIEW

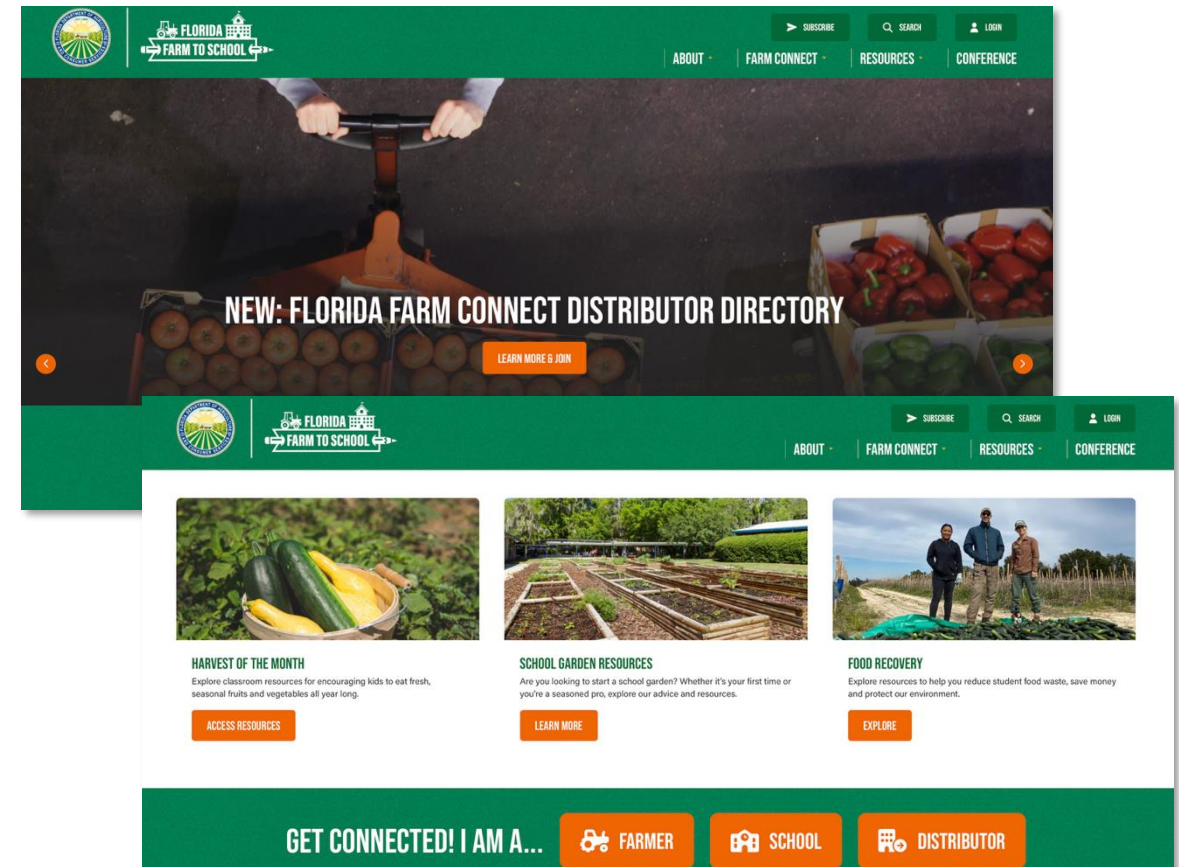


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GET CONNECTED: FarmToSchoolFL.com

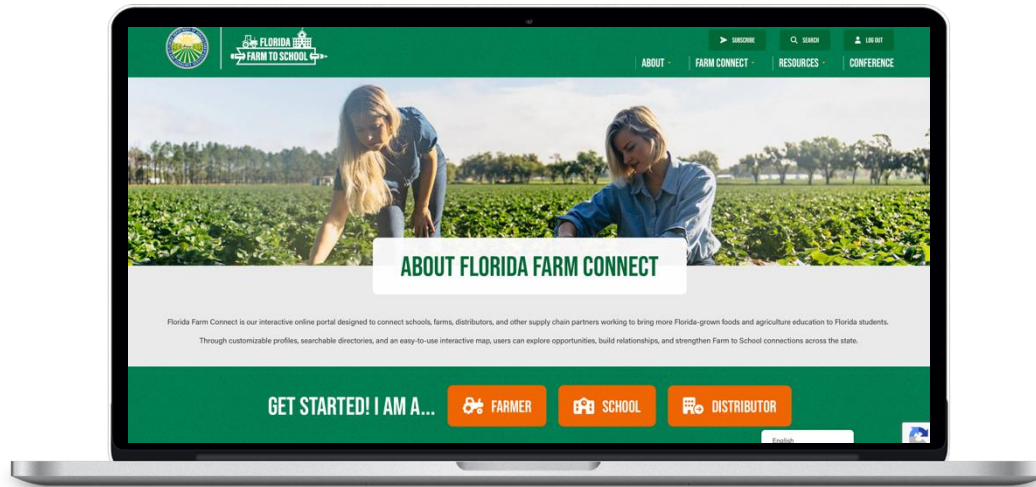
FarmToSchoolFL.com is your one-stop shop for Florida Farm to School information and resources, including:

- Updates, announcements, and events
- Educational tools for teachers, school nutrition professionals and farmers, including PDFs, FAQs, and training videos
- Harvest of the Month and Virtual Farm Field Trip materials for Florida classrooms
- Grants to help fund your Farm to School efforts
- Information on school gardening, food safety, share tables, gleaning, composting, and more
- Florida Farm to School newsletter sign-up
- Interactive Florida Farm Connect portal



FLORIDA FARM CONNECT

Within the Farm to School website is **Florida Farm Connect**: our interactive online portal, featuring a searchable directory and map, designed to connect schools, farms, distributors, and other supply chain partners working to bring more Florida-grown foods and agriculture education to Florida students.



- **Why Florida Farm Connect?**
 - Helps initiate partnerships, including buying and selling Florida foods for school meals
 - Easily search for schools looking to buy from Florida farms and producers available to sell to schools
 - Identify opportunities to partner on agriculture and nutrition education for kids
 - Explore educational resources and FAQs
- **To be included in the directory and appear on the interactive map, you'll need to create a producer profile.**
 - While anyone can browse, a profile allows schools and other Farm to School partners to discover your farm, learn about your products and growing seasons, and explore opportunities to work together.





SETTING UP YOUR ACCOUNT



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Why Florida Farm Connect?

The Florida Farm Connect Directory is Public-Facing. Make an Account Today to Share Your Florida Products with Schools and Distributors.

- Located within the FarmToSchoolFL.com website
- Free online portal for Florida farmers, schools, and distributors
- Helps initiate partnerships, including buying and selling Florida foods for school meals
- Easily search for schools looking to buy from Florida farms and producers available to sell to schools
- Identify opportunities to partner on agriculture and nutrition education for kids
- Explore educational resources and FAQs





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FLORIDA FARM CONNECT: ACCOUNT SETUP

To be included in the directory and appear on the interactive map, you'll need to create a producer profile. While anyone can browse, a profile allows schools and other Farm to School partners to discover your farm, learn about your products and growing seasons, and explore opportunities to work together. It's a simple way to increase your visibility and build relationships across Florida's Farm to School network.

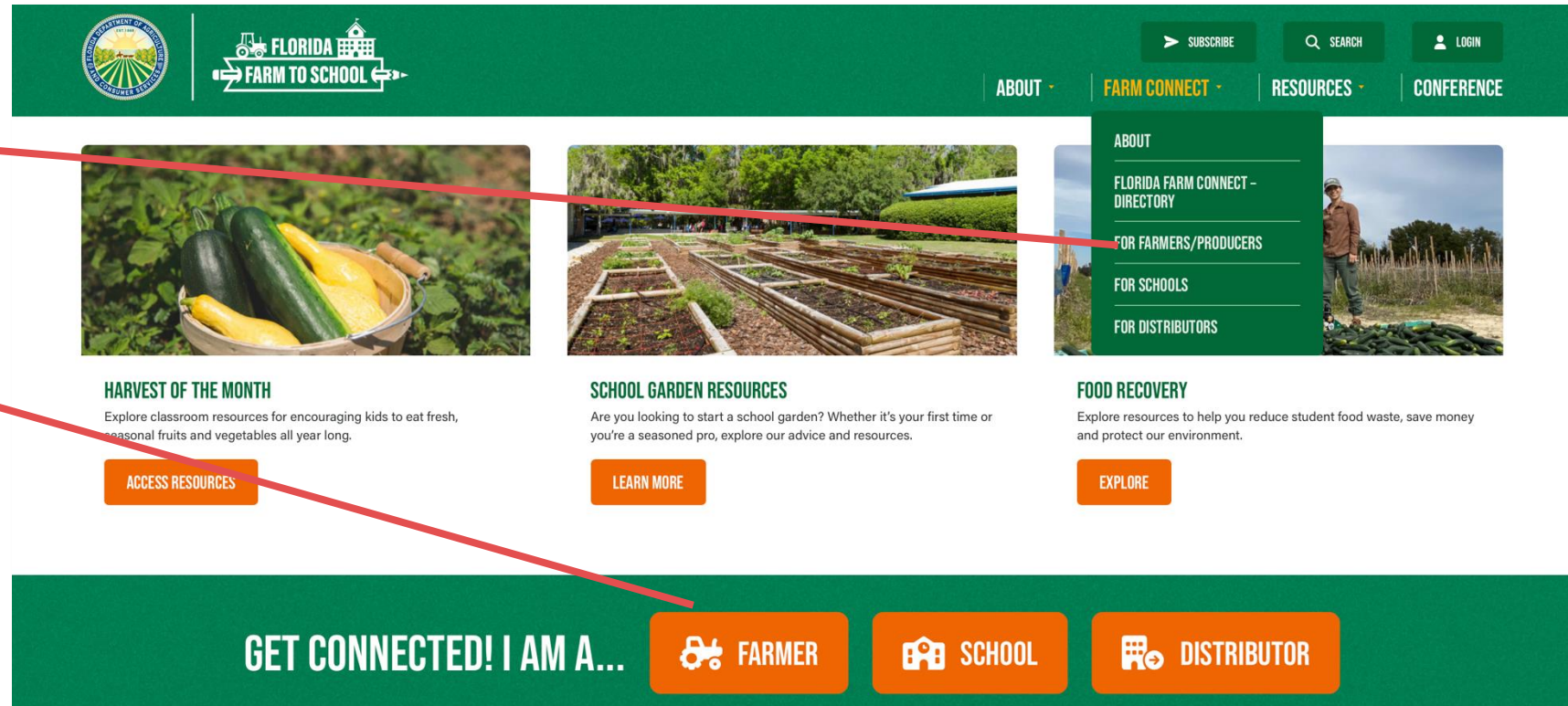


FLORIDA FARM CONNECT ACCOUNT SETUP

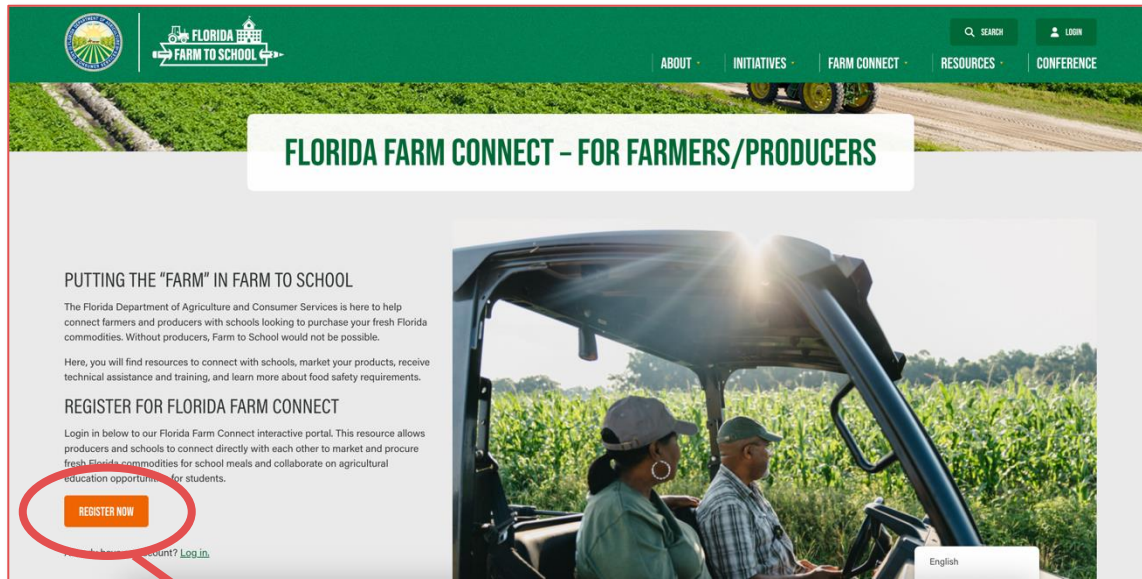
From the **FarmToSchoolFL.com** homepage, there are two ways to begin account setup:

1. Hover over "Farm Connect" in the navigation bar, then click **"For Farmers/Producers"**
2. Click **"Farmer"** button under the in the "Get Connected" section on the homepage

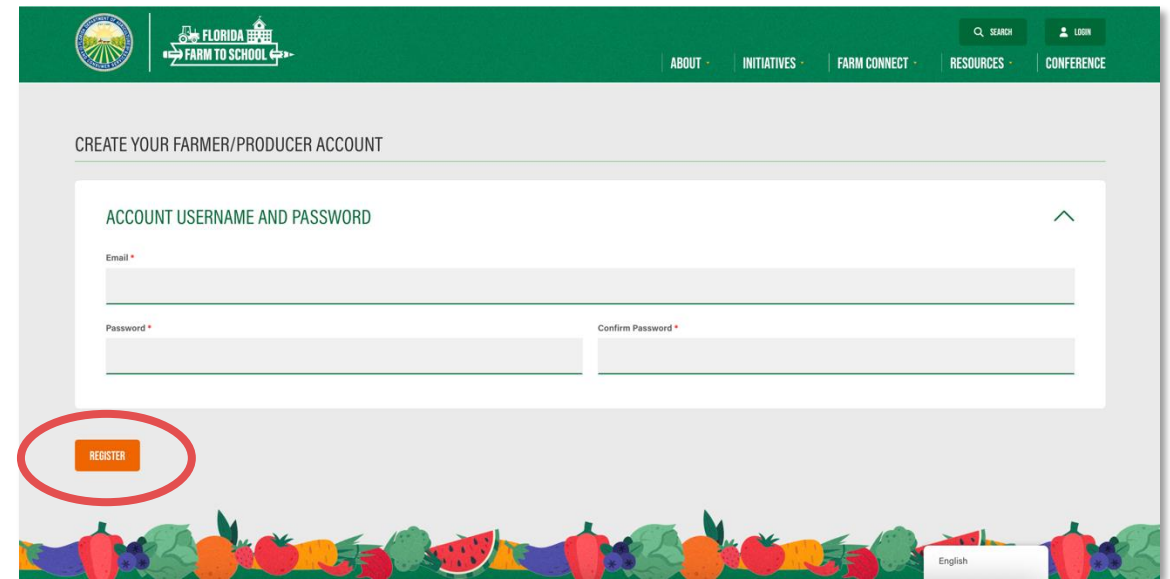
Tip: Farmers can also use the URL FLFarmConnect.com to navigate directly there.



ACCOUNT SETUP: REGISTER AS A USER



- Once on the Florida Farm Connect page, click "Register Now" to begin the account setup process.

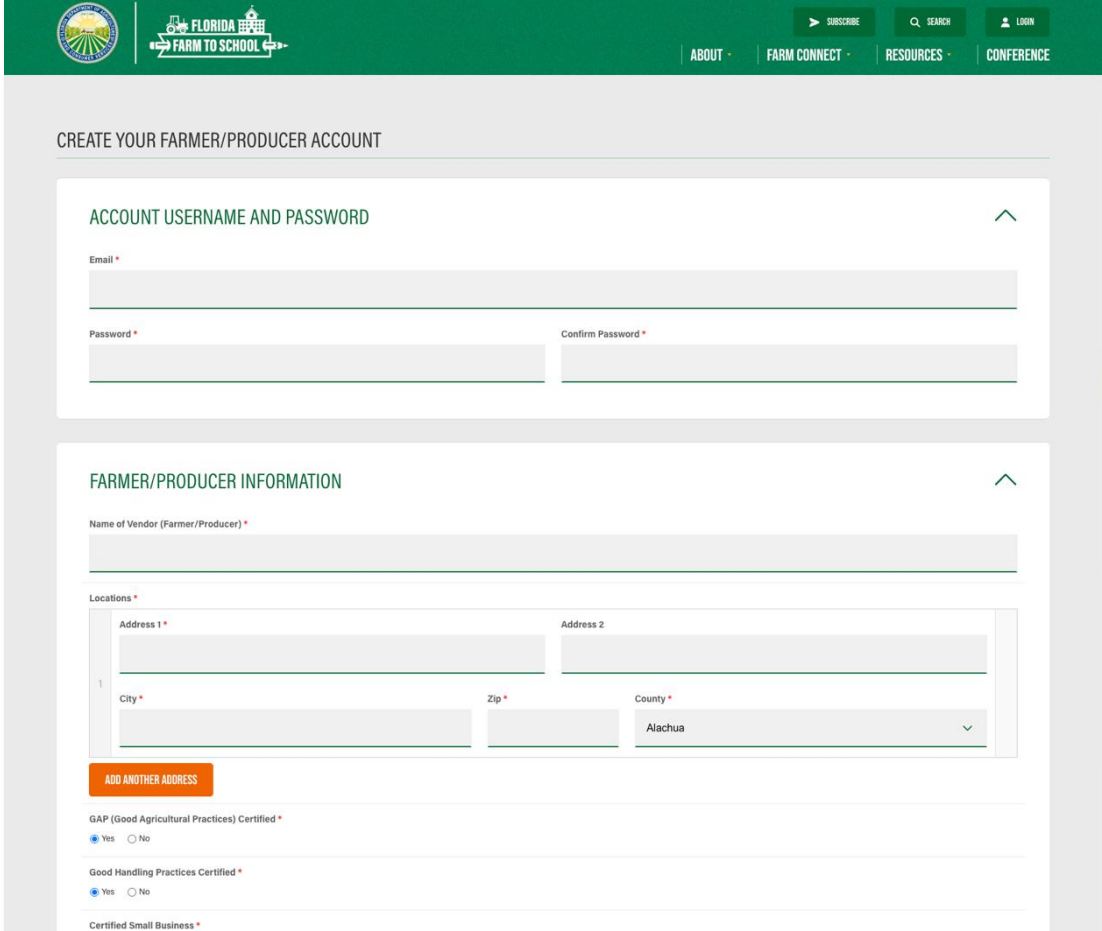


- Then, enter your business email and create a password.
- Click "Register" to proceed.



ACCOUNT SETUP: COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

- You will be redirected to complete your farm's profile.
- First, you will create a profile by providing your email and setting a password.
- Then, you will answer a series of questions about your farm, including:
 - **Name of vendor:** This is the name of your business
 - **Location:** You can submit multiple under one account
 - Other various descriptors about your farm



The screenshot shows the 'CREATE YOUR FARMER/PRODUCER ACCOUNT' page on the Florida Farm to School website. The page has a green header with the Florida Farm to School logo and navigation links: ABOUT, FARM CONNECT, RESOURCES, and CONFERENCE. There are also links for SUBSCRIBE, SEARCH, and LOGIN. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'ACCOUNT USERNAME AND PASSWORD' and 'FARMER/PRODUCER INFORMATION'. The first section contains fields for Email, Password, and Confirm Password. The second section contains fields for Name of Vendor (Farmer/Producer), Locations (Address 1, Address 2, City, Zip, County), and checkboxes for GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certified, Good Handling Practices Certified, and Certified Small Business.

CREATE YOUR FARMER/PRODUCER ACCOUNT

ACCOUNT USERNAME AND PASSWORD

Email *

Password *

Confirm Password *

FARMER/PRODUCER INFORMATION

Name of Vendor (Farmer/Producer) *

Locations *

Address 1 *

Address 2

City *

Zip *

County *

Alachua

ADD ANOTHER ADDRESS

GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certified *

Yes ☒ No ☐

Good Handling Practices Certified *

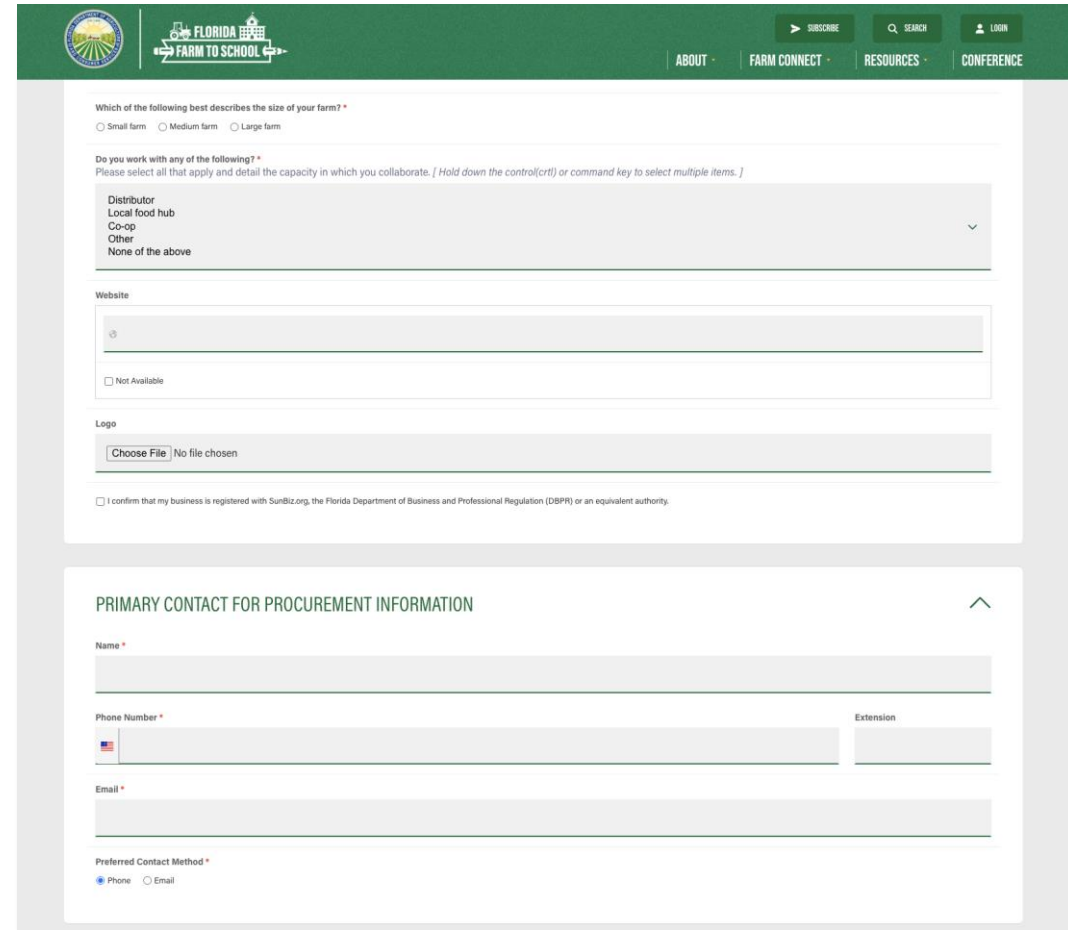
Yes ☒ No ☐

Certified Small Business *



ACCOUNT SETUP: COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

- Addition questions include:
 - **Size of your farm:** Roughly, small, medium or large
 - Whether you work with **food hubs, distributors, etc.**
 - **Business website**
 - **Logo:** This will appear in your profile listing when schools search for you
 - **Confirmation** that your business is registered
 - **Primary contact person:** This is who schools can contact regarding partnership opportunities



The screenshot shows a web form for account setup. The header is green with the Florida Department of Education logo, the 'FLORIDA FARM TO SCHOOL' logo, and navigation links: ABOUT, FARM CONNECT, RESOURCES, and CONFERENCE. There are also buttons for SUBSCRIBE, SEARCH, and LOGIN.

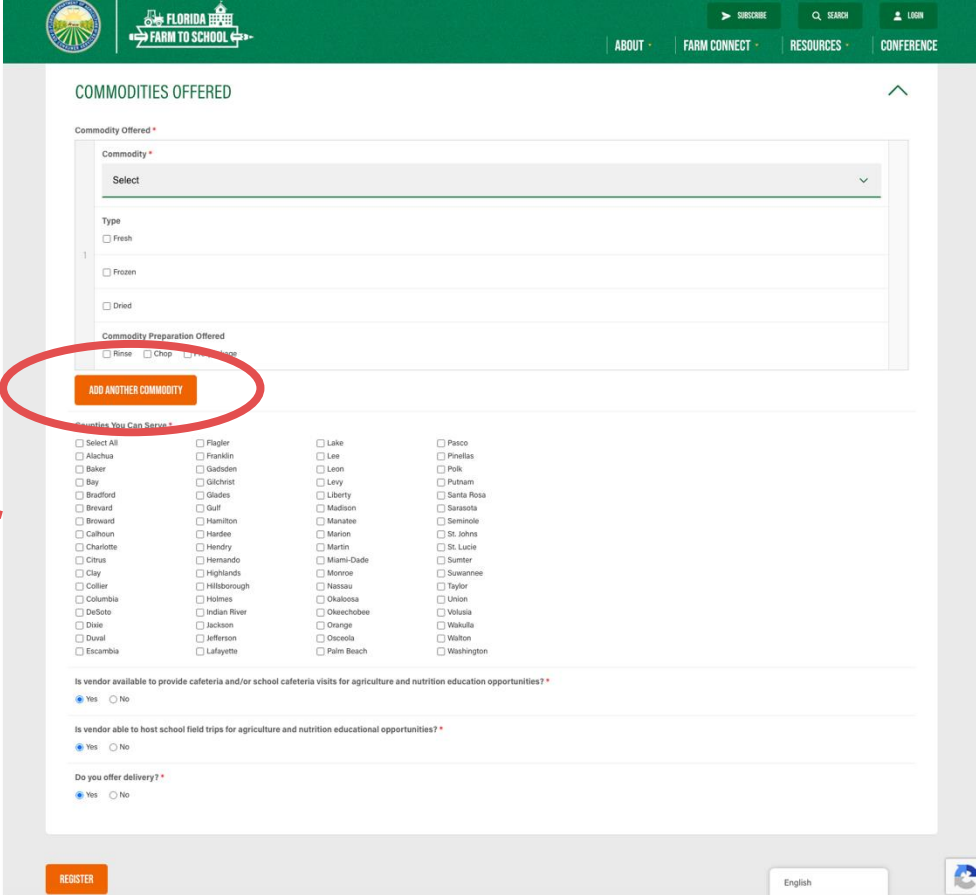
The main form area has a white background. The first section asks 'Which of the following best describes the size of your farm?' with radio buttons for Small farm, Medium farm, and Large farm. Below this, it asks 'Do you work with any of the following?' with a dropdown menu containing: Distributor, Local food hub, Co-op, Other, and None of the above. There is a note: 'Please select all that apply and detail the capacity in which you collaborate. [Hold down the control(ctrl) or command key to select multiple items.]'. The next section is 'Website' with a text input field and a checkbox for 'Not Available'. The 'Logo' section has a 'Choose File' button and 'No file chosen' text. At the bottom of this section is a checkbox: 'I confirm that my business is registered with SunBiz.org, the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) or an equivalent authority.'

The second section is titled 'PRIMARY CONTACT FOR PROCUREMENT INFORMATION' and has an upward arrow icon. It contains fields for 'Name', 'Phone Number' (with a US flag icon), 'Extension', and 'Email'. At the bottom, there is a 'Preferred Contact Method' section with radio buttons for 'Phone' (selected) and 'Email'.



ACCOUNT SETUP: COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

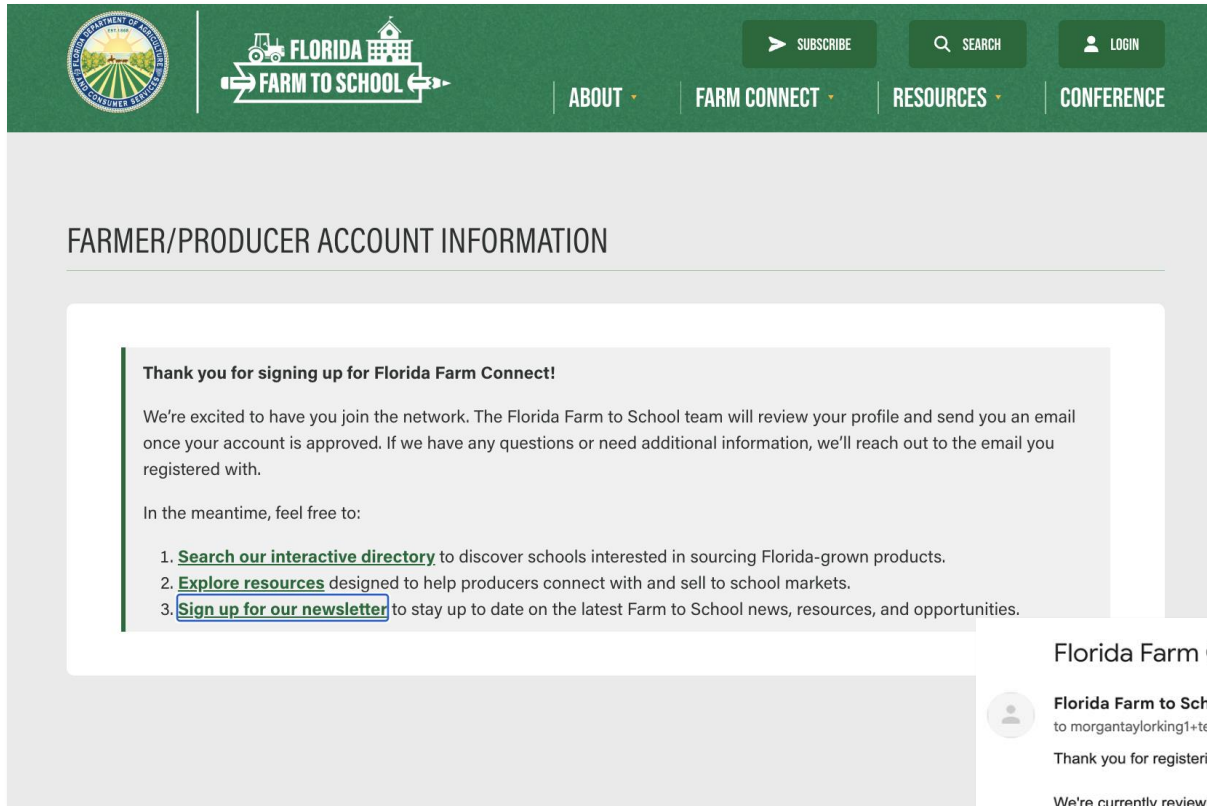
- Then, **list which commodities you produce**, including whether they are fresh, frozen and/or dried, the type of preparation you provide and months offered.
 - **Tip:** You can add multiple commodities by clicking “Add Another Commodity.” So, include as many as you like! You can always update this later.
- Final questions include:
 - **Which counties you serve:** There is a “Select All” option
 - Whether you’d be open to participating in **school field trips or classroom visits**
 - Whether you provide **delivery**
- Then **click “Update”** to complete your profile setup!
 - **Note:** You will be prompted with an error message if any of the required fields have been left empty. Simply complete them to proceed.



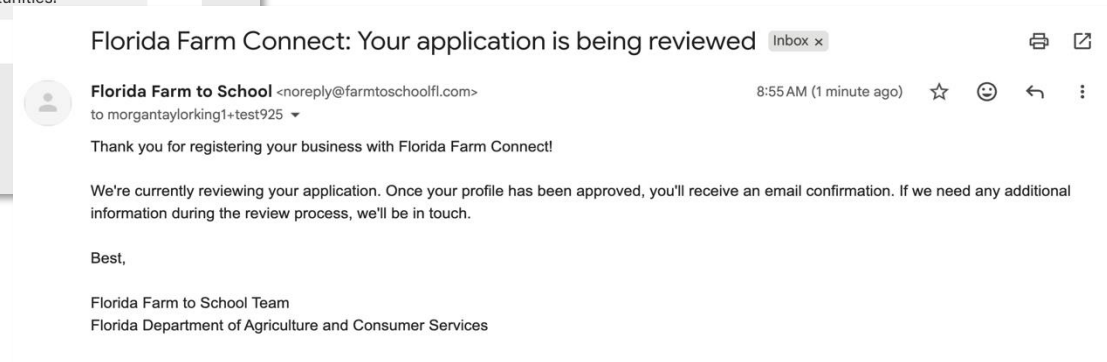
The screenshot shows the 'COMMODITIES OFFERED' section of a web form. At the top, there's a green header with the Florida Farm to School logo and navigation links: ABOUT, FARM CONNECT, RESOURCES, and CONFERENCE. Below the header, the form has a section titled 'COMMODITIES OFFERED'. Inside this section, there's a 'Commodity Offered' dropdown menu with a 'Select' button. Below the dropdown, there are checkboxes for 'Type': Fresh, Frozen, and Dried. Further down, there's a 'Commodity Preparation Offered' section with checkboxes for 'Prep', 'Chop', and 'Other'. A red circle highlights the 'ADD ANOTHER COMMODITY' button. Below this, there's a section titled 'Counties You Can Serve' with a grid of checkboxes for various Florida counties, including Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Broward, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Holmes, Indian River, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Okechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington. At the bottom of the form, there are three questions with radio button options for 'Yes' and 'No': 'Is vendor available to provide cafeteria and/or school cafeteria visits for agriculture and nutrition education opportunities?', 'Is vendor able to host school field trips for agriculture and nutrition educational opportunities?', and 'Do you offer delivery?'. A red arrow points from the 'Select All' option in the counties list to the 'ADD ANOTHER COMMODITY' button. The bottom of the page features a 'REGISTER' button and a language selector set to 'English'.



ACCOUNT SETUP: UNDER REVIEW

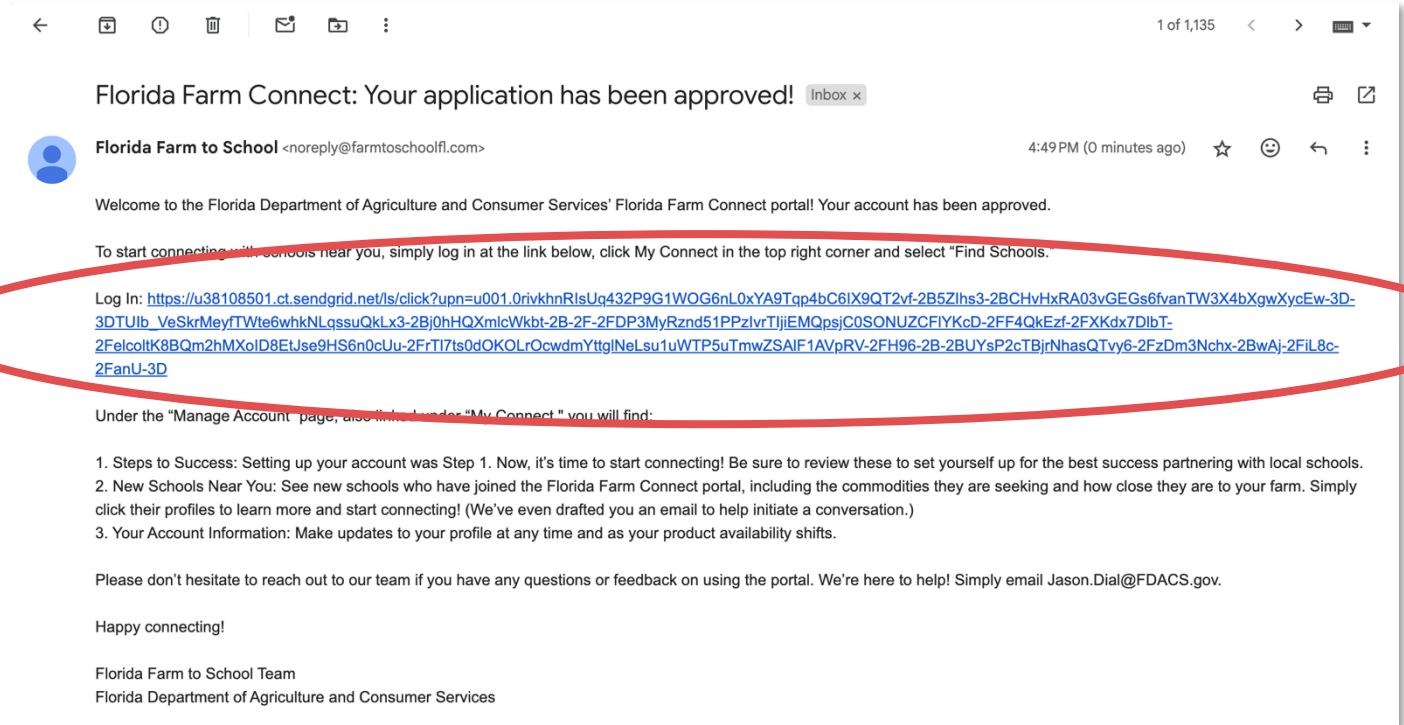


- You will then receive a confirmation email letting you now your account is **Under Review**.
- Our Farm to School team reviews all accounts to ensure the necessary information is complete.
- That said, you can begin browsing schools and distributors in the directory right away!



ACCOUNT SETUP: YOU'RE APPROVED!

- You will receive an email as soon as your account is approved.
 - We aim to review all new accounts within 3 business days.
- Then, it's time to continue connecting! Simply click on the link in the email to log in and begin searching for schools in your area.
- **What if my account isn't approved?**
 - Our team will reach out to you directly to discuss your account status and any additional information needed.





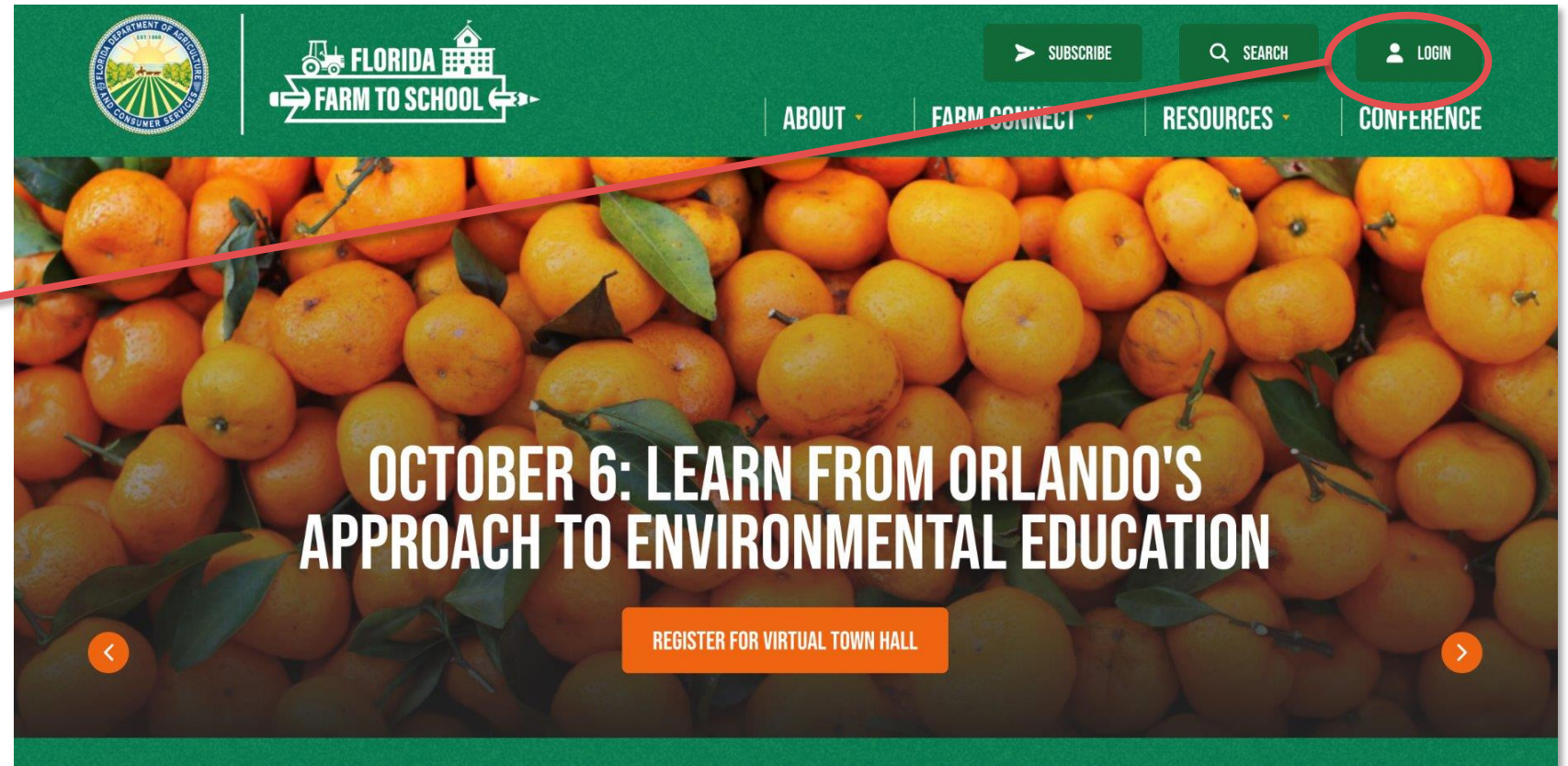
MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT

It is important to keep your Florida Farm Connect Account up to date so schools have the most accurate information to get in contact with you.



MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT: LOG IN TO FLORIDA FARM CONNECT

- You can log in from any page on FarmToSchoolFL.com by simply clicking **“Login”** in the top right corner.
- Then input your account email and password to proceed.

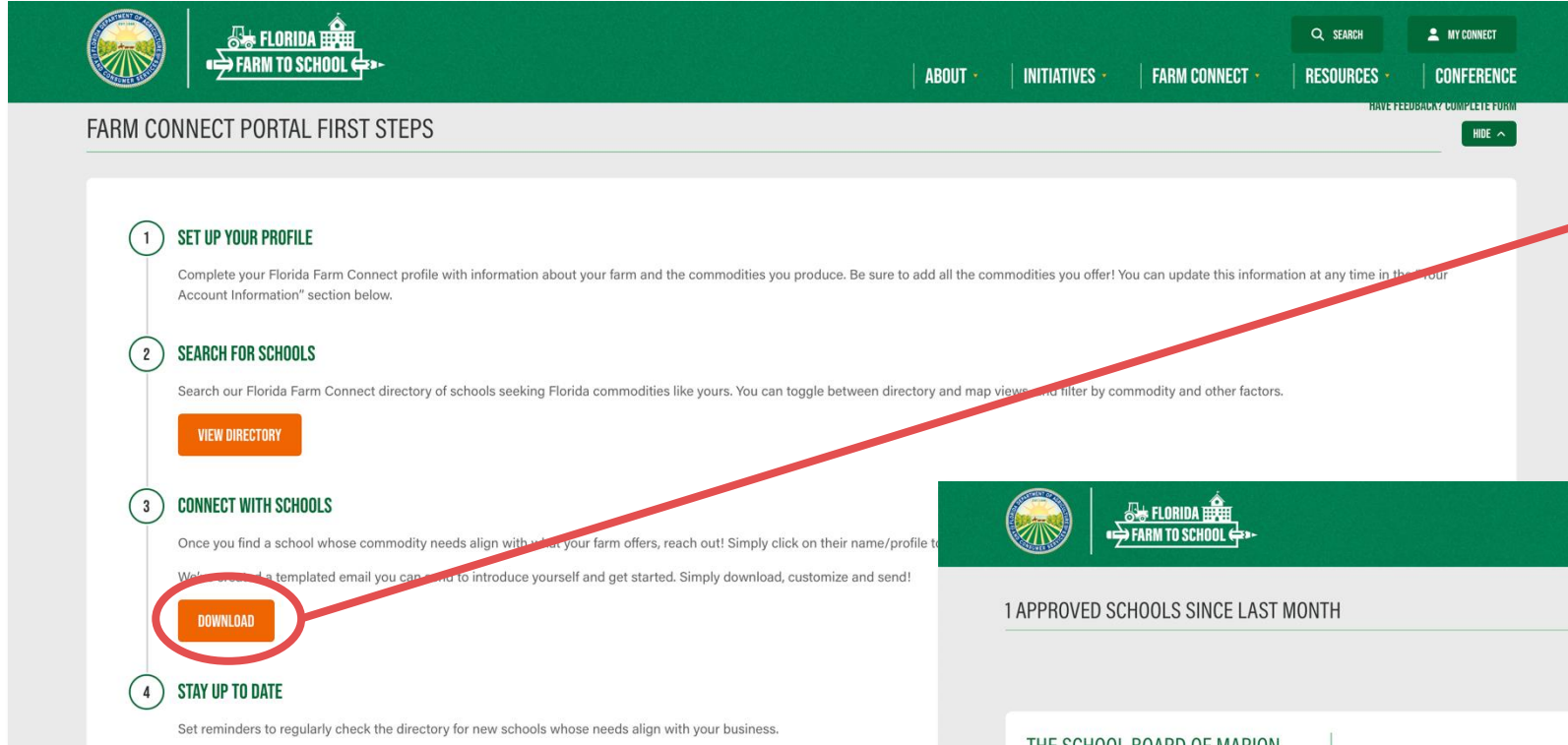


MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT: ACCOUNT NAVIGATION

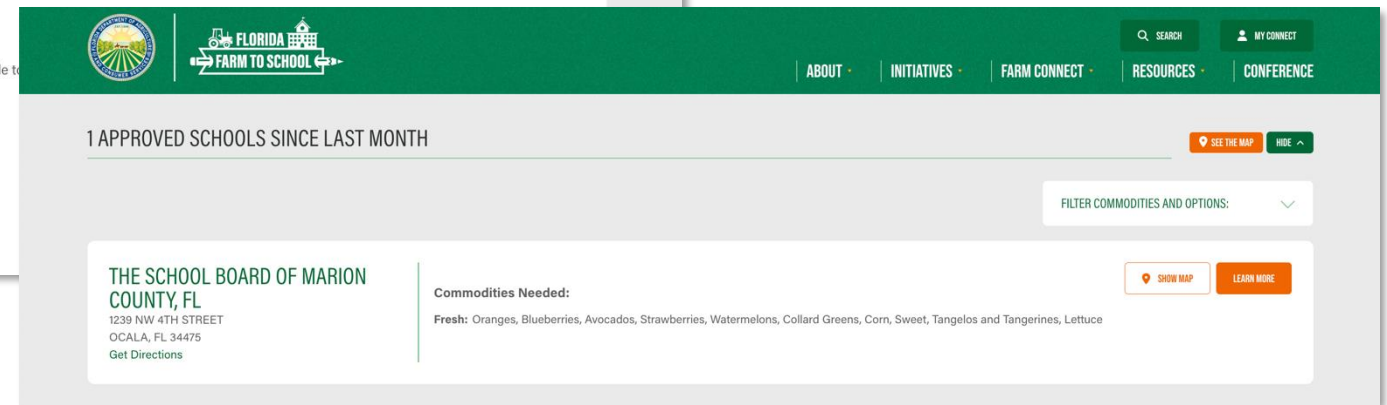
- Once logged in, this button will now say **“My Connect.”**
- Hover over it for a menu of actions:
 - **Manage Account**
 - **Find Schools**
 - **Log Out**



MANAGE ACCOUNT: FIRST STEPS & NEW SCHOOLS



- Clicking **“Manage Account”** will bring you here.
- The first thing you will see are **“First Steps”** for using Florida Farm Connect.
- **Tip:** Download a drafted email to send to schools to open partnership discussion.



- Then, you will find a summary of **new schools who have joined the portal**, and how close they are to you.



MANAGE ACCOUNT: Updating Your Account Information

- Below there, you will find the **“Your Account Information”** section.
- Here, you can update information about your farm at any time, including adding, subtracting or revising commodities you can provide.

The screenshot displays the 'YOUR ACCOUNT INFORMATION' section of the Florida Farm to School website. The page is divided into two main panels. The left panel contains the 'ACCOUNT USERNAME AND PASSWORD' section with a text input for the email (alcantara@farmtoschool.org) and a 'CHANGE PASSWORD' button. Below this is the 'FARMER/PRODUCER INFORMATION' section, which includes a 'Name of Vendor (Farmer/Producer)' field (Alcantara Farms Corp), a 'Locations' section with an address (19450 SW 184th st, Miami) and a city (Miami), and two certification checkboxes: 'GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certified' and 'Good Handling Practices Certified', both currently set to 'No'. The right panel shows the 'COMMODITIES OFFERED' section. It features a 'Commodity' dropdown menu set to 'Avocados'. Below this, there are checkboxes for 'Type' (Fresh, Frozen, Dried) and 'Months Offered' (January through September). The 'Commodity Preparation Offered' section includes checkboxes for 'Rinse', 'Chop', and 'Pre-package'. At the bottom of the right panel, there is an 'ADD ANOTHER COMMODITY' button and a list of 'Counties You Can Serve' with checkboxes for each county. The page also includes a navigation bar at the top with links for 'ABOUT', 'INITIATIVES', 'FARM CONNECT', 'RESOURCES', and 'CONFERENCE', and a search bar.

YOUR ACCOUNT INFORMATION

ACCOUNT USERNAME AND PASSWORD

Email *
alcantara@farmtoschool.org

Change Password
[CHANGE PASSWORD](#)

FARMER/PRODUCER INFORMATION

Name of Vendor (Farmer/Producer) *
Alcantara Farms Corp

Locations *

Address 1 *
19450 SW 184th st

City *
Miami

[ADD ANOTHER ADDRESS](#)

GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certified *
☐ Yes ☒ No

Good Handling Practices Certified *
☐ Yes ☒ No

Certified Small Business *

COMMODITIES OFFERED

Commodity Offered *

Commodity *
Avocados

Type
☒ Fresh
☐ Frozen
☐ Dried

Months Offered *

☒ Deselect All ☒ January ☒ February ☒ March ☒ April
☒ May ☒ June ☒ July ☒ August ☒ September
☒ October ☒ November ☒ December

Commodity Preparation Offered
☒ Rinse ☒ Chop ☒ Pre-package

[ADD ANOTHER COMMODITY](#)

Counties You Can Serve *

☒ Deselect All ☒ Alachua ☒ Baker ☒ Bay ☒ Bradford ☒ Brevard ☒ Broward ☒ Calhoun ☒ Charlotte ☒ Citrus ☒ Clay ☒ Collier ☒ Columbia ☒ DeSoto ☒ Dixie ☒ Duval ☒ Escambia ☒ Flagler ☒ Franklin ☒ Gadsden ☒ Gilchrist ☒ Glades ☒ Gulf ☒ Hamilton ☒ Hardee ☒ Hendry ☒ Hernando ☒ Highlands ☒ Hillsborough ☒ Holmes ☒ Indian River ☒ Jackson ☒ Jefferson ☒ Lafayette ☒ Lake ☒ Lee ☒ Leon ☒ Levy ☒ Liberty ☒ Madison ☒ Manatee ☒ Marion ☒ Martin ☒ Miami-Dade ☒ Monroe ☒ Nassau ☒ Okaloosa ☒ Okeechobee ☒ Orange ☒ Osceola ☒ Palm Beach ☒ Pasco ☒ Pinellas ☒ Polk ☒ Putnam ☒ Santa Rosa ☒ Sarasota ☒ Seminole ☒ St. Johns ☒ St. Lucie ☒ Sumter ☒ Suwannee ☒ Taylor ☒ Union ☒ Volusia ☒ Wakulla ☒ Walton ☒ Washington

Is vendor available to provide cafeteria and/or school cafeteria visits for agriculture and nutrition education opportunities? *
☒ Yes ☐ No





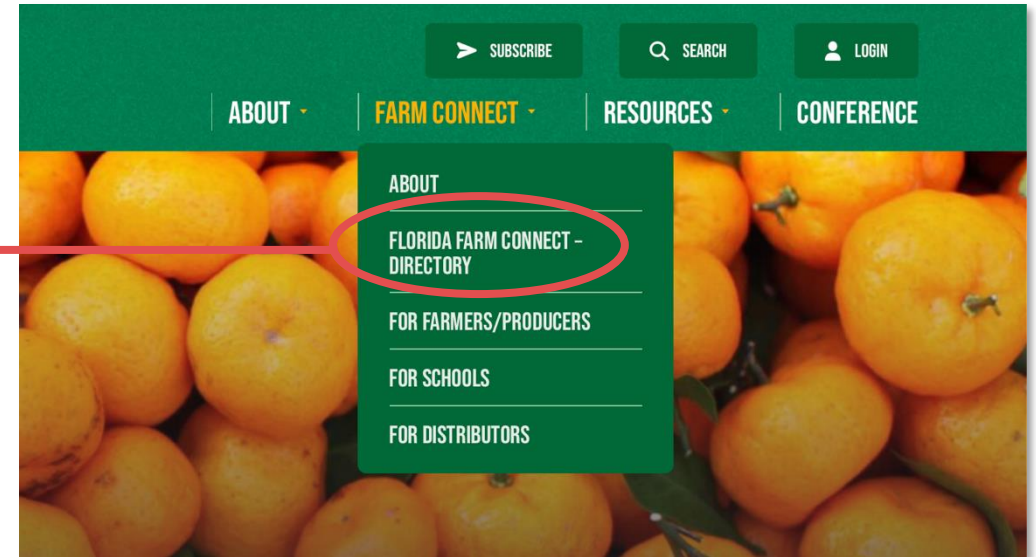
CONNECT WITH SCHOOLS AND DISTRIBUTORS



DIVISION OF FOOD,
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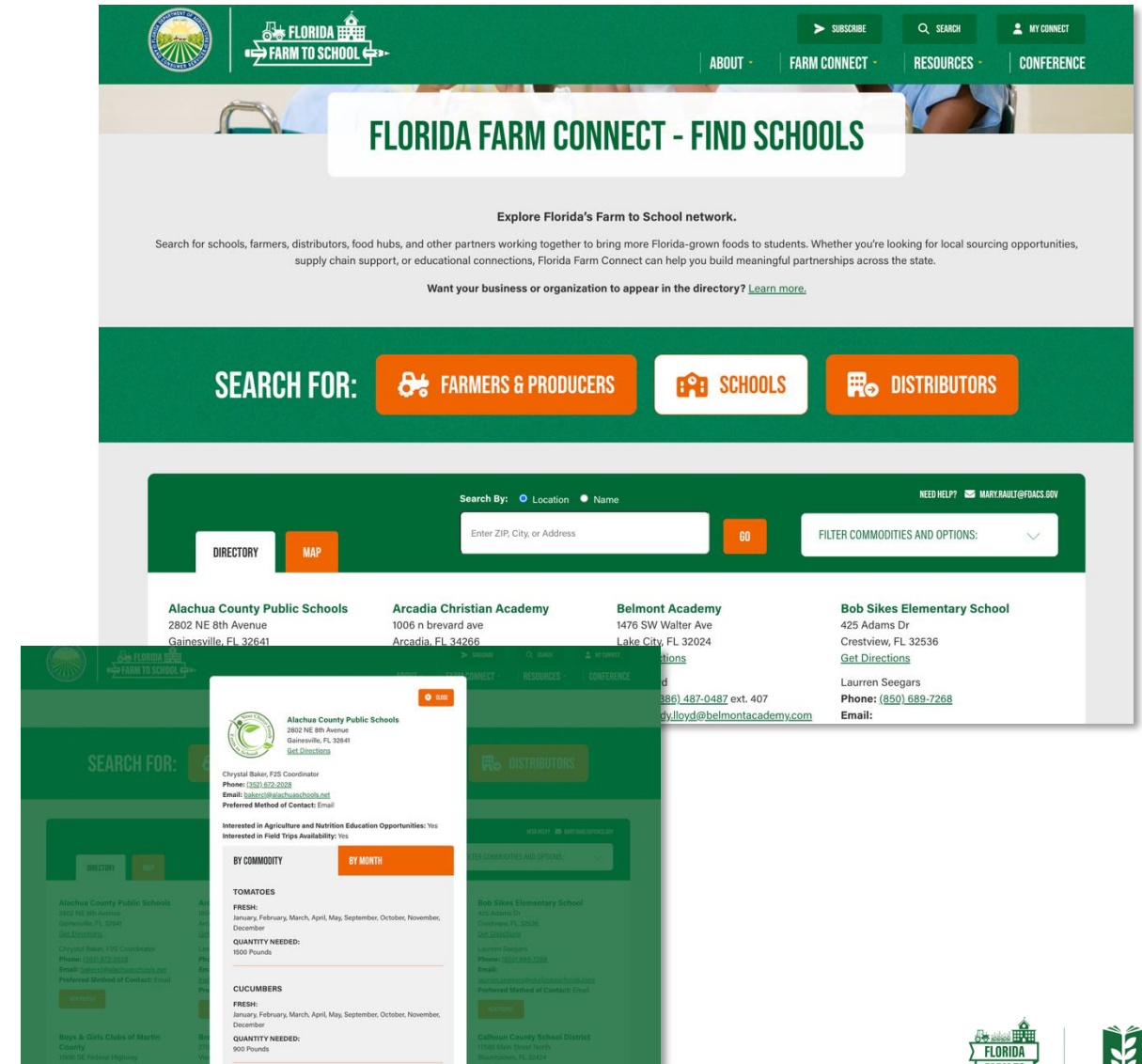
FLORIDA FARM CONNECT DIRECTORY: GETTING STARTED

- Navigate to the Florida Farm Connect directory and map using the **"Farm Connect"** dropdown on the main page of the website.
 - [Here's a direct link.](#)
- Then use the **"Search for"** toggle at the top to switch between three directories: Farmers & Producers, Schools, Distributors



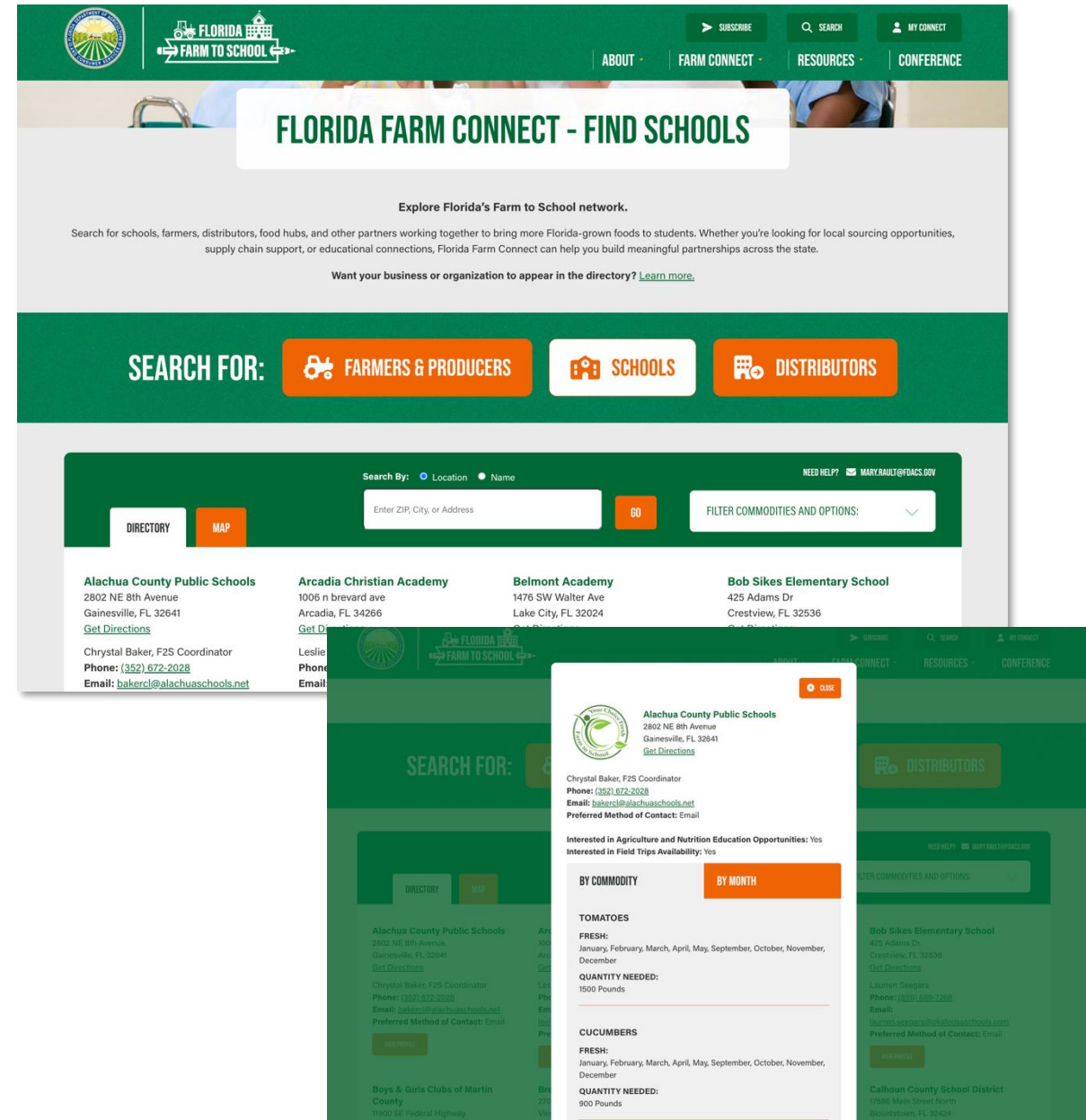
FLORIDA FARM CONNECT DIRECTORY: FIND SCHOOLS

- Schools that set up a profile are telling you they want to buy local. They're on Florida Farm Connect to find Florida farmers like you!
- Choose **Schools** in the **Search By** toggle, then pick **Directory** (list view) or **Map**.
- Search by **Location** or **Name**
- Filter by what schools want to buy from you:
 - **Commodities:** produce, dairy, meat, seafood, nuts, specialty items, and more
 - **Type:** Fresh, Frozen, or Dried
 - **Months:** January through December, so you can match your harvest calendar
- Each school profile lists its purchasing needs and delivery preferences, so you can find a good fit before you reach out.



FIND SCHOOLS: Florida Farm Connect Directory

- Under each listing, click “View Profile” to learn more about each school.
- A pop-up will appear with details about:
 - Products they are seeking
 - Quantities needed
 - Preparation requirements
 - Whether they are open to field trips/class visits
- **From here, you take action:** Call or email them to discuss partnering!



FLORIDA FARM CONNECT DIRECTORY: HOW YOU APPEAR TO SCHOOLS

The screenshot displays the Florida Farm Connect Directory website. A central profile for **Berry Tropic LLC (Haines Family Farm)** is highlighted. The profile includes the farm's logo, name, address (221 Kuder Ranch Road, Haines City, FL 33844), and contact details (Phone: (863) 588-6767, Email: info@hainesfamilyfarm.com, Website: https://hainesfamilyfarm.com). It also lists services offered: Delivery, Field Trips, and School Visits. Below this, a section titled 'BY COMMODITY' shows products available by month. The 'BLUEBERRIES' section lists 'FRESH' (February, March, April, May) and 'FROZEN' (January through December). The 'BLACKBERRIES' section lists 'FRESH' (March, April, May, June). The background shows other farm profiles like Backyard Farm Express, Burgin farms, and Brown and Brown Farms.

- Meanwhile, schools will be searching for farms like you.
- Here's an example of how your profile will appear to them.



FLORIDA FARM CONNECT DIRECTORY: INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- Creating your profile gets you listed, but schools won't always come to you.
- **You have to reach out!** Use the directory to find schools that fit what you grow, then contact them directly.
- To help you get started, the **Steps to Success** section of your Manage Profile page has a template introduction email.

Florida Farm to School Draft Email for Producers to Initiate Contact with Schools

Subject Line: Florida Farm Connect Introduction: **Your Farm Name**

Hello,

My name is **(insert name)** and I am a Florida producer located in **(insert location)**. I have reviewed your Florida Farm Connect profile, and I am interested in scheduling a brief introductory meeting with you to learn more about your Farm to School food service program goals, and how my farm might be able to help.

During our meeting, here are a few key points I'd like to discuss regarding your specific needs and requirements for procurement of local commodities:

- What kinds of products are you interested in purchasing locally? How much and how frequently?
- How are you used to receiving products? What are your processing requirements, including pack size and standards?
- Are you open to new products?
- Can products be delivered to a central site, or do you need delivery to each school site?
- Are you able to purchase directly from local farmers, or do you prefer to work through a distributor?
- What local or regional vendors do you currently work with?
- When are product solicitations issued and how can they be accessed?
- Do you have vendor requirements outside of state and federal regulations?
- Do you have any vendor preferences, such as geographic preference?
- Is there an opportunity for piloting sales through an informal agreement, such as a micro-purchase?
- What are your invoicing requirements, including frequency? Can you share an invoice template?
- How are payments processed, and what is the turn-around time for payments?

In addition, I can share with you details about my farm's operational cycles and product availability. I believe the quality of our product speaks for itself and would be happy to share product samples, too. You can learn more about our farm by visiting **(insert website or Facebook page link if available)**.

Please let me know if you prefer to be contacted by email or phone to discuss a meeting date and time that works for you. Thank you, and I look forward to connecting with you soon!

Respectfully,

(Insert Name)
(Insert Farm Name)

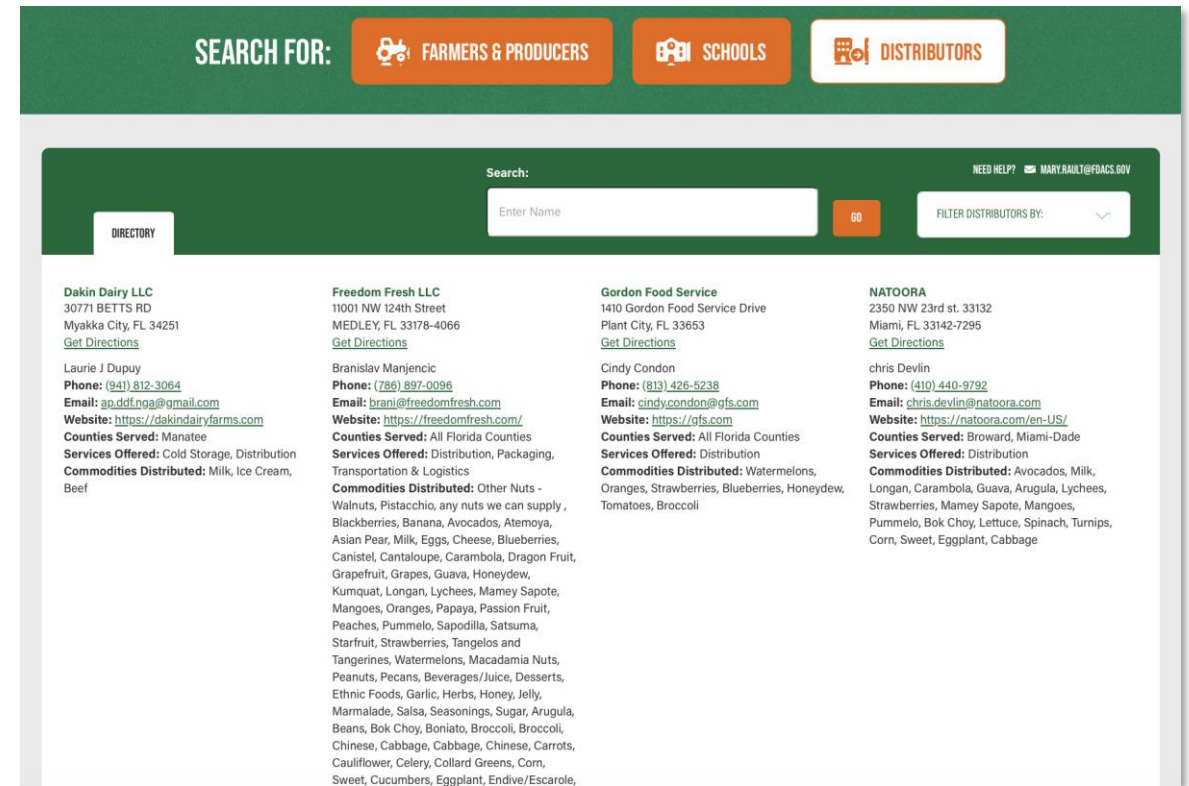


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FLORIDA FARM CONNECT DIRECTORY: FIND DISTRIBUTORS

- Selling to schools often takes more than a direct farm-to-school connection. Distributors, food hubs and processors can bridge the gap between your farm and the cafeteria.
- Choose **Distributors** in the **Search By** toggle.
- Filter by **Commodities Distributed, Counties Served** and **Services Provided**, including:
 - Cold storage
 - Distribution
 - Packaging
 - Processing
 - Product Aggregation
 - Transportation & logistics
- Reach out using the contact information listed on their profile.



TIPS FOR USING FLORIDA FARM CONNECT

- Provide as much detail as possible in your profile.
- Check back regularly to:
 - Update your profile as your needs change.
 - Find new schools and distributors that have joined or updated their queries since you last checked.
- Be sure to keep an eye out for schools who've indicated they're open to educational partnerships (like field trips and class visits) in addition to procurement.
- Initiate a conversation!
 - If you see a school whose needs appear to align with your offerings, don't wait for them to reach out to you. Call or email them!
 - Schools plan their menus far in advance, so the earlier you can get in touch the better.





THE POWER OF FARM TO SCHOOL



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KEY PLAYERS: FROM FEDERAL TO LOCAL

United States Department
of Agriculture Food and
Nutrition Service
(USDA FNS)

State Agency
(Florida Department of
Agriculture and Consumer
Services, Division of Food,
Nutrition and Wellness)

School Food Authority
(School District)

- Funding for school meal programs comes through the federal government. Specifically, the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS). USDA FNS determines meal patterns and nutrition requirements and meal reimbursement rates, which will be discussed later in this section.
- Federal funds are paid to **state agencies**, who are responsible for the administration and oversight of the Child Nutrition Programs. The **state agency** provides program support and manages reimbursement for meals served to the School Food Authority.
- The **School Food Authority (SFA)** is the administering unit for the operation of school meal programs.
 - The School Food Authority is most often a school district. You may hear "School Food Authority" and "school district" used interchangeably.
 - They submit an application to the state administering agency to get approval to run a USDA Child Nutrition Program (school meal program) in their community.
- SFAs (or school districts) receive federal reimbursements for meals served and are responsible for running the child nutrition program (including purchasing) and ensuring that number of meals served are being counted correctly and eligibility criteria are met.



STATE SNAPSHOT: FLORIDA BY THE NUMBERS

- Number of children served by Child Nutrition Programs: **+2.8 million**
- Amount of funding provided to programs: **\$1.37 billion** average reimbursement
- Amount Florida schools spend on local food: **\$45 million***
*(*voluntarily submitted invoice data)*



WHY LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOL MEALS?

- **Supports** local farmers, businesses, and local economies
- **Increases** school meal quality and overall National School Lunch program participation
- **Increases** students' willingness to try new fruits and vegetables
- **Supports** school wellness policies and broader school board priorities



HOW SCHOOLS CELEBRATE LOCAL FOOD AND FARMERS

Here are some ways in which schools feature partnerships with local farms:

- Cafeteria promotion campaigns like posters and point of sale signage
- Educational events like farmer in the classroom
- Local product/producer highlights in school menus and on school webpages
- On-site farmers' markets / Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Special events (barn raisers, local food/harvest community dinners)
- Communications: School newsletters, social media, school and community announcements



Credit: National Farm to School Network



BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL

Farm to School can benefit profitability either:

- **Directly** through increased sales: working with new school markets, expansion of product offerings or increased quantity/frequency.
- **Indirectly** through a diversified marketing strategy: marketing to students and families through initiatives (CSA, farm visit, barn-raisers) or promotion (highlighting school relationships by partnering with the community at farmers' markets, grocery stores, restaurants). You can build off Farm to School successes to help grow your brand!

It can also align with you values and farm/business goals:

- Be a part of nourishing kids: Your products help make school meals reflective of the community food culture and encourage kids to try new foods.
- Be a key part of increasing access to fresh and local foods in your community.
- Help promote farming as both a career path for youth and lifestyle choice aligned with community values.
- Increase the visibility of small-medium sized family farms, keep farmland in production, and keep farmers farming!
- Manage risk through market diversification and consistent sales .

