

## CT DEPT OF AGRICULTURE – FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The purpose of the Farm-To-School Program is to grow and reenergize interest in buying and supporting Connecticut businesses and local products, and supplying fresh food for kids at their schools and to grow and expand the markets for farmers in Connecticut. CT farmers can sell produce directly to their local schools or to have the schools purchase CT Grown using existing contracts and agreements, wholesale distributors, and USDA programs.



### **How do I as a farmer “join” and participate?**

Call the Connecticut Department of Agriculture at 860-713-2503. The food service directors will need to know if you are willing to deliver to schools directly or you sell to a wholesaler or both, what type of crops you are growing that schools can buy, and how far you are willing to travel, etc. We have a database and schools use our lists to contact you.

### **Is there a fee?**

No, there is no fee to be in this program. This is strictly voluntary for all parties involved. It is also honor system! There are no mandates. The state’s Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education to support this program.

### **What kind of products are schools looking for?**

The National School Lunch Program requires American produce. Most schools use apples and other fruits, however, some schools also look for vegetables, like tomatoes, corn, potatoes, peppers, and items that have a shelf life. Fragile items, like strawberries and raspberries, for instance, are not purchased frequently. There is a great need for orange and dark green leafy vegetables and ready to eat size products. Remember, this is basically unprocessed products. Processed foods would have to be produced in an appropriately approved facility, with appropriate packaging and labeling. Private schools will have their own specialized requirements.

### **What quantities are schools looking for?**

Schools have limited storage, except for major cities like Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, etc. For the typical school you may only need 5 cases of apples a week, 2-3 cases of slicing tomatoes. Ask the school for more information.

### **What about counts, special sizes and other special needs?**

Good question! In general, elementary schools use smaller apples and fruits and like prepared or easy to serve. No stickers, please! A food service director will have to have them peeled off and re-wash the fruit or vegetable. There is a great need for orange and dark green leafy vegetables.

### **How does delivery to school work? Do I have to deliver to each school? Is there special paperwork?**

Most schools in Connecticut work with wholesale distributors. However, some farmers successfully work out direct delivery. Some school systems like to have delivery to each school, but some accept goods at one school and then deliver to the individual schools themselves. Please discuss this with the food service director or business manager. Schools are food safety conscience and may require GAP or other certifications. You should be ready to present proof of insurance. For payment issues you may have to provide your farmer tax ID number or FEIN or social security number, have a dated invoice with your farm name on it listing the products you sold to them. Remember, have the school sign for the produce when you deliver, at the time and day they arrange with you. Your boxes should have the name of the farm, and content of the box labeled, for traceability. Schools in Connecticut are also will require strict adherence to safe driver and delivery policies. Make sure to discuss this with the school in advance.

#### ***For more information, contact:***

Connecticut Department of Agriculture  
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(860)713-2503  
[www.ctgrown.gov](http://www.ctgrown.gov) Agency website  
<http://www.ct.gov/farmtoschool> Farm to School website

