



NATIONAL
FARM TO
SCHOOL
PROGRAM

FARM TO SCHOOL FIRST ORGANIZING MEETING

Who to Invite

Schools

School food service staff
Nutritionist
Principals
Teachers
Students
Parents, PTA
Nurse
School Board members

Farmers and Places to Find Them

Farmers' Markets, Internet
4-H groups, feed supply stores
U.S. and State Departments of Ag.
Roadside Stands/U-Pick/CSAs
Commodity boards and commissions
Farm Bureau, Cooperatives
Cooperative Extension, Small Farm
County fairs, farm equipment shows

Community and Government Agencies

Environmental organizations	U.S. and State Departments of Agriculture
Sustainable agriculture groups	County Agriculture Commissioner
Anti-hunger, food security organizations	City Council members
County health and nutrition staff	Representatives from local congressional and state representative offices

Sample Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Why a Farm to School Project – Goals and Justification
- III. Examples of Farm to School Projects in Across the U.S.
- IV. Assessing the Current Situation
 - A. Farmer Issues – Crops, Seasonality, Marketing Channels
value-added Processing, transportation and delivery, ability to meet demand
 - B. School Issues – present buying practices, kitchens, storage and prep areas,
labor, equipment, food budget
 - C. Partnering with Others – are there joint projects happening now (e.g., school
gardens, cooking classes, nutrition education).
- V. Envisioning a Local Farm to School Project
 - given local resources, what can be done?
 - What barriers exist to starting a project
 - how can they be overcome?
 - What other potential partners should be part of the process?
- VI. Forming a Working Group and Assigning Tasks
- VII. Set Next Meeting Date

GENERAL ORGANIZING TIPS

Work with a larger group. Virtually all successful farm to school projects have

an organization that is actively taking the lead in developing the project. This can be a community or non-profit organization, a farmer organization, a PTA, or a university-related group. It can also be a committee made up of members from a number of organizations.

This project will require funding. While voluntary efforts are commendable, and may play a role in developing the project, they will most likely not be sufficient to create the project and keep it in operation. Labor is needed to both organize the project and keep it in operation. Identify possible funding sources as you are gathering information about farming and school food service in your area.

Take baby steps. Many projects fail due to rushed, incomplete planning – very few suffer from too much planning. Know that a series of meetings will be necessary to develop this project.

Take the time to build relationships. Successful arm to school projects result in relationships of mutual respect and trust among the participants. In most instances, these projects require farmers and school food service folks to venture into new areas, requiring an investment of time and energy. Taking the time to understand each other's perspectives and abilities will help ensure that you create an effective, sustainable project.

Use the enclosed telephone surveys before holding an organizing meeting.

The more you know going into that initial meeting, the more productive that meeting will be.