

### **What is Farm to School?**

The 2008 Farm Bill amended the Richard B. Russell School Lunch act to direct that the Secretary of Ag encourage institutions operating Child Nutrition Programs to purchase unprocessed locally grown and raised ag products. The Farm to School initiative is an effort to connect schools with farms to serve healthy meals using local foods.

### **What are unprocessed products?**

They are only those ag products that retain their inherent character such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Canned goods can NOT be purchased independently through local sources. Local ag products such as eggs, meat, poultry and milk cannot be purchased by schools unless they come from a licensed facility and have been inspected.

### **How do we define 'local'?**

This is at the discretion of the school sponsor. There is no requirement that they be grown or raised within a certain area or distance.

### **What are the purchasing options?**

Put specifications in writing before contacting potential bidders/suppliers. Schools may choose from several purchasing options. The GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) sticker or seal promotes locally-grown foods and ensures food safety protections.

### **What is the geographic preference rule?**

Although geographic preference is not required; it can be specified in purchasing guidelines.

### **What are the food safety requirements?**

KSDE's HACCP guidance requires that a letter is on file for each supplier/vendor stating that they have a HACCP plan in place with standard operating procedures for produce production, harvesting and post-harvest handling OR that they follow safe food handling procedures. Traceability of the produce used is required. In the event that produce purchased for your school nutrition program is recalled, you are responsible for tracing the produce one step back (trace back) to your supplier and one step forward (trace forward) to when and to whom it was served.

### **Is donated produce allowed in School Nutrition Programs?**

The Kansas Department of Ag approves the use of donated produce that has not been cooked, chopped, or cut. Products accepted must come from an approved source. Our guidance requires that a letter is on file from each supplier stating they are following safe food handling procedures. A copy of this letter is to be kept in the Food Safety Plan at the serving site. The school should document the date of the donation, list of produce items received, and record the estimated value of the product. Keep this information in the HACCP file with your Food Safety Plan.

### **Can produce grown on school property be incorporated into the Child Nutrition Programs?**

Produce grown in the school classroom, container gardens or school garden can be incorporated into Child Nutrition Programs. Everyone involved with growing and harvesting produce from the school garden should be trained on basic food safety practices including hand-washing, glove use, personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing, and handling ready-to-eat produce. A list of all school gardeners should be kept on file.