



Farm to School-Let's Get Local in 2013 - 2014

In the 2013-2014 school year San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) will be expanding their Farm to School program. The SDUSD Food Service produce bid/RFP will be advertised by the end of March or the beginning of April of 2013. Farm to School and local foods will be a major focus and judging criteria of this year's bid. SDUSD Food Services seeks to retool sourcing systems and relationships with vendors that allow us to more easily source and serve local grown produce that supports student nutrition and farms within San Diego County, the region, and California.

The Farm to School program at SDUSD seeks to increase children's participation in the school meal program and consumption of fruits and vegetables, thereby improving childhood nutrition, reducing hunger, and preventing obesity and obesity-related diseases. We seek to do the above by improving the health of our school meals by decreasing the distance food travels between farmers and students to 25 miles from the San Diego County border and investing 15% of our annual fresh fruit and vegetable budget in local fresh foods. SDUSD Food Services Department strives to buy as much San Diego grown fresh (raw, cut) and processed (nuts, tofu, etc.) product as possible, but SDUSD has a 3-tiered definition of local that includes (Mexico is excluded from Farm to School sourcing):

1. San Diego Local- Grown within 25 miles of San Diego County border
2. Regional- Grown within 250 miles of San Diego County
3. California- Grown within the State of California

We would like to invite you to attend a one-on-one vendor meeting with the Farm to School Specialist, the Contract Specialist, and other key staff of SDUSD's Food Services Department as we would like to learn more from area distributors how their firms and their produce lines

might support farm to school local sourcing efforts. We are interested in learning more about how or if vendors:

- Track and publicize seasonal availability of local foods,
- Cultivate relationships with local farmers and school sites/staff,
- Identify unique, small and new farm partners that are not already part of standard local sourcing programs,
- Understand and/or conceptualize Farm to School,
- Understand and/or conceptualize food systems, sustainable agricultural and equity in food production,
- Offer competitive local food pricing and quality local school food,
- Offer grower profiles and/or provide detailed information about growers operations, locations and farms,
- Offer farm to school educational/promotion materials (e.g., grower profiles, ready-made farm to school programs, agricultural/nutrition curricula, product profiles) and opportunities (e.g., field trips, grower visits) and
- Promote sustainable and organically-grown produce.

This meeting request is designed to assist our district in understanding how produce vendors can best meet our Farm to School program goals and assist us in developing a bid/RFP document that best meets these objectives. *This meeting is for informational purposes only and does not imply that our district will enter into any contract with your company.*

For more information about the Farm to School program contact Vanessa Zajfen at
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