



SEEDS to SUCCESS

THE LOUISIANA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Local Procurement in Child Nutrition Programs



Crystal Besse
LSU AgCenter
CBesse@agcenter.lsu.edu

Today's Objectives

- 1 Overview of Farm to School Principles
- 2 Preparing Local Foods
- 3 Identify strategies to support implementation of farm to school procurement
- 4 Purchasing Options



About Me

- Nutrition educator with University of TN Extension as an Extension Agent
- Master of Public Health in Epidemiology
- Fellowship with Louisiana Department of Health
- Began working as a Program Manager of School Food Procurement in 2017
- Moved into the Louisiana Farm to School Program Director role in 2018
- Expanded Louisiana Harvest of the Month pilot statewide



What is Farm to School?

- The purchase and use of local foods in meals, snacks, and taste tests
- Hands-on learning and engagement through gardening
- Educational activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition

CORE ELEMENTS OF FARM TO SCHOOL



Education

Promoting and delivering curriculum and opportunities for agriculture, food, health, or nutrition education.



School Gardens

Providing support for schools to develop and maintain school gardens. Could be mini-grants, technical support via Master Gardeners, in-school and community activities.



Procurement

Using local food in school meals, snacks, or taste tests.

Buying local is good for public health, community engagement, economic development, and the environment!



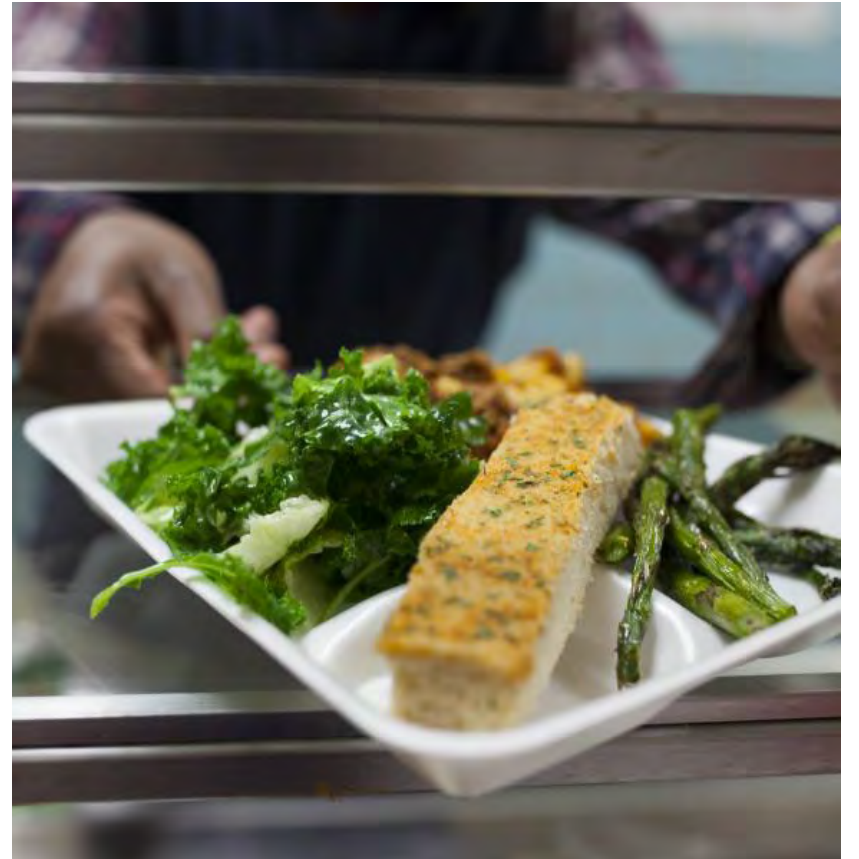
Benefits of Farm to School

- ✓ Improved Student Health
- ✓ Enhanced Meal Appeal
- ✓ Support for Local Economy
- ✓ Educational Opportunities
- ✓ Community Engagement
- ✓ Environmental Benefits



Getting Started

- Assess and Plan
 - Conduct a menu audit, set goals, form a team
- Start Small
 - Begin with 1 or 2 local products
- Build Partnerships
 - Connect with local farms or other food service directors to identify local sourcing options
- Educate and Engage
 - Promote the program in the cafeteria, involve students
- Evaluate and Grow
 - Track purchases, gather feedback from students



Available Foods in Louisiana



Fruit



Vegetable



Grain



Meat



Fun Ways to Integrate Local Foods

- Louisiana Harvest of the Month
- Louisiana Tray of the Week
- Louisiana Lunch Week
- Taste Tests
- New Recipe Development
- Tasty Tuesdays



Salad Bars

- Highlight Local Produce
 - Great way to offer and highlight more locally produced fruits and vegetables
- Menu Flexibility
 - Offers variety and selection



School Gardens

- Student engagement
 - Great way to engage students in agriculture and educational opportunities
- Sustainability and community
 - Offers an avenue for students, teachers, and families to collaborate and create a sense of community



Farm Fresh Meals for Louisiana

- Enhance School Meals with Local Foods
- Offered at no cost
- Virtual training available anytime



Louisiana HARVEST *of the* MONTH



Harvest of the Month: Celebrate Local All Year Long

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THE LOUISIANA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Promotional campaign promoting locally grown foods in Louisiana schools, institutions, and communities. Each month, participating sites focus on promoting one locally grown item (e.g., strawberries).

Activities could include:

- serving local items in a meal or snack
- offering taste tests
- featuring posters around the school
- teaching food education to help students get to know the featured item.



Louisiana Harvest of the Month

A perfect way to launch or grow a farm to school program, HOM provides an easy framework that stands alone or use it to enhance the work you already do! We provide access to an extensive suite of Louisiana HOM materials.



Louisiana HARVEST of the MONTH Lettuce

Produce Tips

- Choose lettuce with tighter, crisper leaves.
- Avoid lettuce that is limp or wilted.
- For the best texture of the lettuce, choose a head grown in soil rather than hydroponic lettuce.
- After purchase, refrigerate immediately in a perforated plastic bag or in the crisper for up to 5 days.
- When getting ready to prepare the lettuce, wash and dry it well.

Make It

Turkey Lettuce Boats

Lettuce Learn

There are many types of lettuce and lettuce is a very healthy vegetable. Lettuce is a member of the Compositae family. There are a good few varieties, such as iceberg, romaine, and butterhead. Lettuce grows best in cool weather and is easy to grow.

Let's Eat Some Lettuce!

Butterhead
Butterhead lettuce has large, soft, wavy leaves. It's a good choice for a salad or a sandwich.

Crisphead
Crisphead lettuce is the most common type of lettuce. It has a crunchy texture and is good for salads.

Leaf
Leaf lettuce is a loose-leaf variety that is easy to grow and eat.

Romaine
Romaine lettuce is a long, pointed variety that is good for salads and sandwiches.

Lettuce is this month's Louisiana HARVEST of the MONTH

Lettuce Activity Sheet

Word Search

W D A E H R E T T U B G Y R M
Y A X K M C H I J F C S E V B H
M F C N U E I P L X F L E A P
M Y T N I C R I S P H E A D
U F T S N I E R G D A L A S N
Y E X P X A X C I B E V W
L G R E B E C I R O M A I N E

Helping in the Kitchen!

It is fun to use food that you helped to make! You can help prepare lettuce in the kitchen too.

- Washing greens in a bowl of water to remove dirt.
- Peeling or cutting lettuce in wedges.
- Measuring and weighing ingredients for salad dressings.

Take a Guess!

On average, how many pounds of lettuce do people eat each year?

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 piece (24g)
Amount Per Serving
Calories 460

Mini BLT Pizzas

Ingredients

- 4 Pita Breads
- 1/2 cup tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 4 slices of bacon
- 3 Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 1/2 head of romaine lettuce, shredded
- 2 to 3 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cooking Instructions

- 1) Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Place pita breads on a lined baking sheet with foil.
- 2) Cook the bacon on desired doneness. Place cooked bacon on a cooling rack layered with paper towels. When bacon is cooked, crumble into pieces.
- 3) Add about 1 Tbsp. of tomato sauce on each pita bread. Spread it around until covered, then top with cheese and about 3 slices of tomato. Place in oven and bake until cheese is melted, about 5-10 minutes.
- 4) In the meantime, in a bowl toss the lettuce, mayonnaise, garlic powder, salt and pepper until well combined. Set in fridge until pizza is ready.
- 5) Once cheese has melted, top the mini pizzas with bacon and lettuce mixture.

Fun Facts About Lettuce!

- Lettuce can be grouped into four main types: butterhead, iceberg, leaf and romaine.
- Americans love lettuce! On average, each of us eats about 30 pounds of lettuce a year.
- Lettuce is a common hydroponic plant, grown with nutrient-rich water delivered to the roots instead of growing in soil.

Lettuce Is Nutritious and Good for You!

- Low in calories.
- Dark green lettuce is an excellent source of vitamins A and K and folate.
- Good source of potassium.

Free Resources

Louisiana Harvest
of the Month
Posters, Coloring
Pages, Newsletters

Louisiana Harvest
of the Month
Recipes for
Cafeteria & Home

Taste Test Guide &
"I tried it" stickers

Louisiana Harvest
of the Month
Compendium of
Activities & Lessons

Louisiana
Harvest of the
Month Toolkit

NEW! Harvest of
the Month video
series

What's In Season
Seasonality Chart
for Louisiana-grown
produce

Menu Analysis
Worksheet

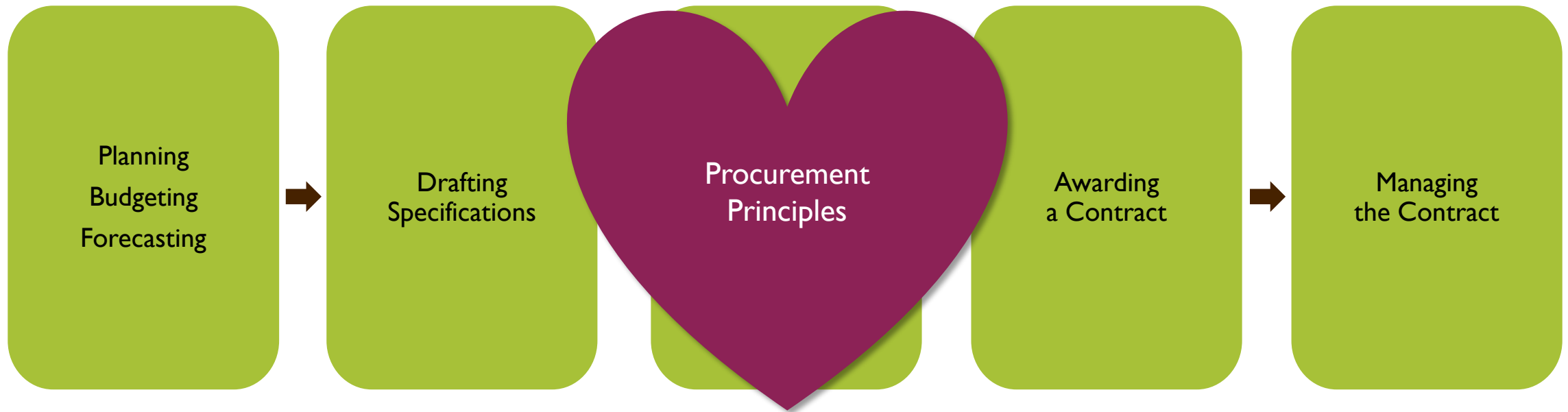
Farmer Checklist
and Conversation
Guide

Checklist for
Producers Selling
Produce to K-12
Schools

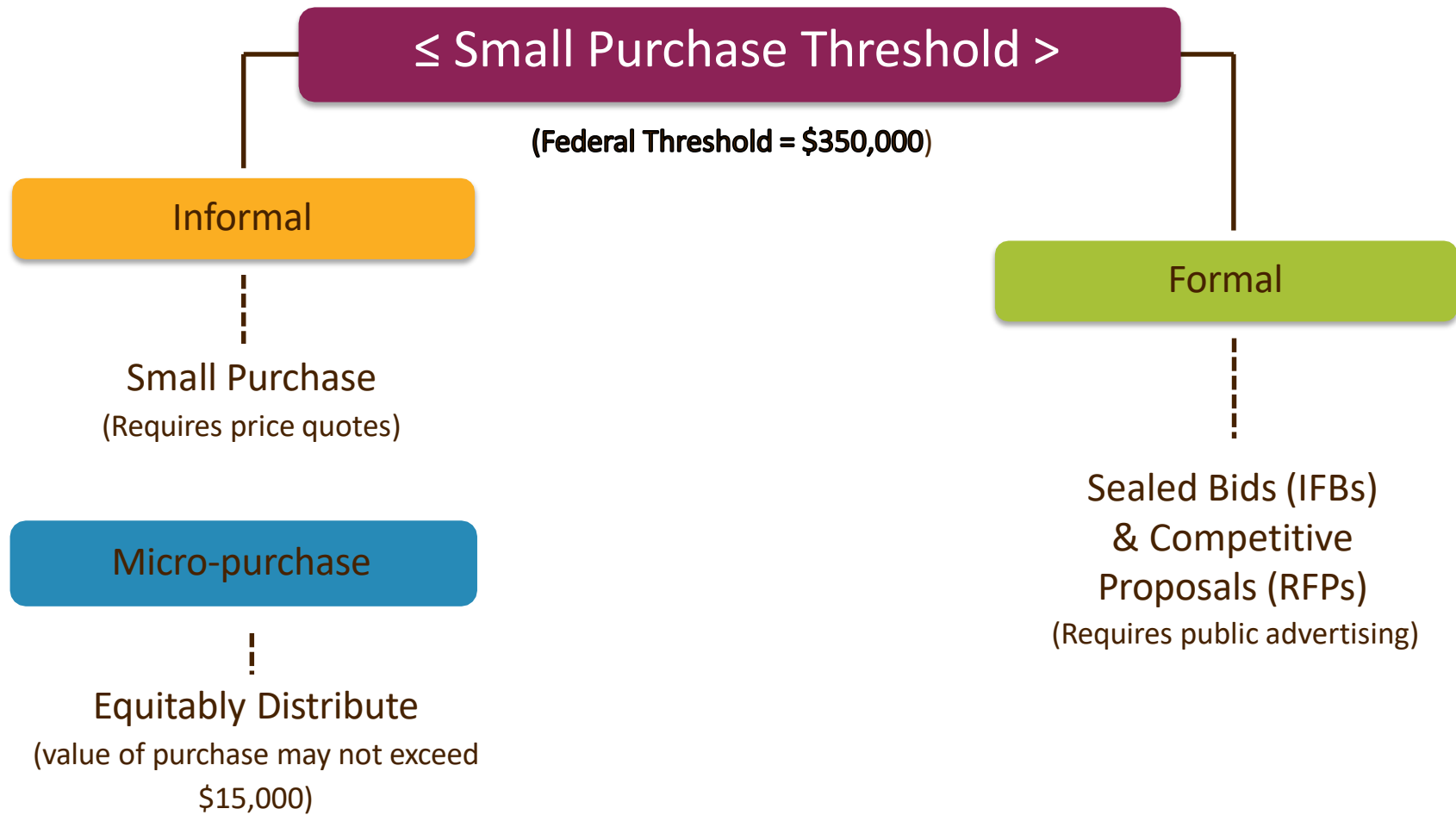
Local Foods
Worksheet



Procurement Process



Procurement Methods





Micro-purchase Procedure

Use it when:

The aggregate value of your purchase falls below the micro-purchase threshold of \$15,000.

Micro-purchases enable schools:

- To purchase supplies or services without soliciting quotations, if the school considers the price reasonable.

When using the micro-purchase option, schools must:

- Distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers, and
- Document all purchases.

Informal

MEMO
FM 03-
2018



2

Federal Small Purchase Procedure

Use it when:

The estimated amount of your purchase falls below \$350,000, your small purchase threshold.

****Louisiana small purchase threshold is \$60,000**

Small purchases require that schools:

- Acquire bids from an adequate number of responsible and responsive vendors;
- Develop written specifications; and,
- Document all bids.

Informal

MEMO
FM 03-
2018



3

Invitation For Bid (Competitive Sealed Bid)

Procurement by competitive sealed bidding is done by issuing an invitation for bid (IFB).

Use it when:

- A complete, adequate, and realistic specification is available.
- The contract can be awarded on the basis of price.

Invitation for Bids require that schools:

- Acquire bids from an adequate number of responsible and responsive vendors;
- Advertise the solicitation publically;
- Open bids at the time and place identified in the solicitation; and
- Award to the lowest, responsible and responsive bidder.

**Formal**

4

Request for Proposals (Competitive Proposals)

Procurement by competitive proposal is done by issuing a request for proposal (RFP).

Use it when:

- Conditions aren't appropriate for a sealed bid.
- Price won't necessarily be the sole basis for the award.

Request for Proposals require that schools:

- Identify all evaluation factors and their importance to awarding the solicitation;
- Acquire bids from an adequate number of responsible and responsive vendors;
- Advertise the solicitation publically
- Award it to responsible and responsive bidder with most advantageous proposal, price and other factors considered.

**Formal**

Formal Procurement

Include Your Desire for Local in the Introduction

- A school's interest in purchasing local products (and the broader context of its farm to school program) can be expressed in the introduction to a solicitation.
 - Remember: a school **may** specify that it wants local products (it can be a product specification).
 - A school **may** indicate its desire to serve local products and emphasize the importance of its farm to school program.



Examples

- **Anne Arundel County Public Schools**, in Maryland, defines local *under Specifications* as
 - “Locally grown products are defined as any food item that is grown within a two hundred-fifty (250) mile radius of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Items purchased by AACPS shall be determined by availability and school menus.”



Other Things to Consider When Writing Solicitations to Target Local Products

- Be flexible
- Don't include unnecessary requirements
- Consider what a vendor new to the school food market might not know
 - Condition upon receipt of product
 - Food safety needs
 - Size uniformity
 - Vendor requirements



Product Specifications

- Some may be brief, while others may be extensive
- Single ingredient food specs are typically simple
- The clearer the specification, the more likely you will receive what you want
- Must always include the Buy American Provision language



Two Ways to Use Specifications and Requirements to Target Local Products

1. Use product specifications
2. Use additional requirements to determine vendor responsiveness



Example: Use Product Specifications

Product Specification

- Celebrity Tomatoes,
 - US. No. 1,
- Five 185 count boxes per week for September - November



Example: Use Product Specifications

Product Specification

- Celebrity or Creole tomatoes,
- US. No. 1 or No. 2,
- Prefer five 185 count boxes per week but willing to consider other pack sizes for September – November
- Delivered within 48 hours of harvest



Example: Vendor requirements

Vendors will provide products:

- **Grown on farms that are less than 50 acres in size;**
- **Grown on farms that grow more than five food crops at one time;**
- **Grown on farms that utilize a majority of hand harvesting, hand packing or human labor power in growing, harvesting, and packing of food;**
- Delivered directly to multiple school sites (not a central warehouse). The number of drops is to be determined by the district on a case-by-case basis;
- Produce should be generally free from insect damage and decay; and,
- Product must be rinsed, cleaned and packed in appropriate commercial produce packaging, such as waxed cardboard boxes. Standard industry pack (case counts) is required and/or half packs are allowable when it comes to bundled greens.



Technical Requirements

Farm

- Size
- Growing practices
- Harvest techniques
- Crop diversity

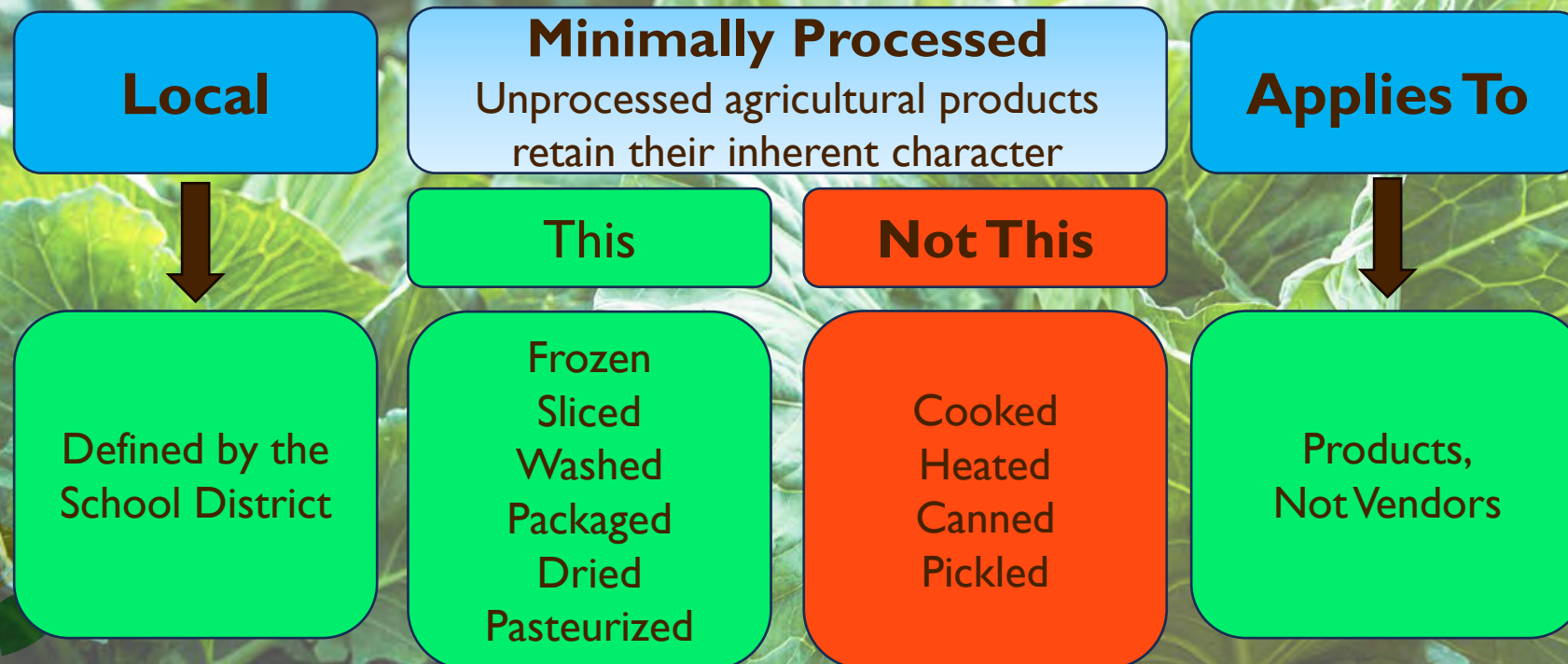
Technical Requirements

- Origin labeling
- Farm or classroom visits
- Marketing materials
- Staff time to support district in increasing local purchasing

*Reserve the right to go off-bid for special events (ex: HOM, quick sales)

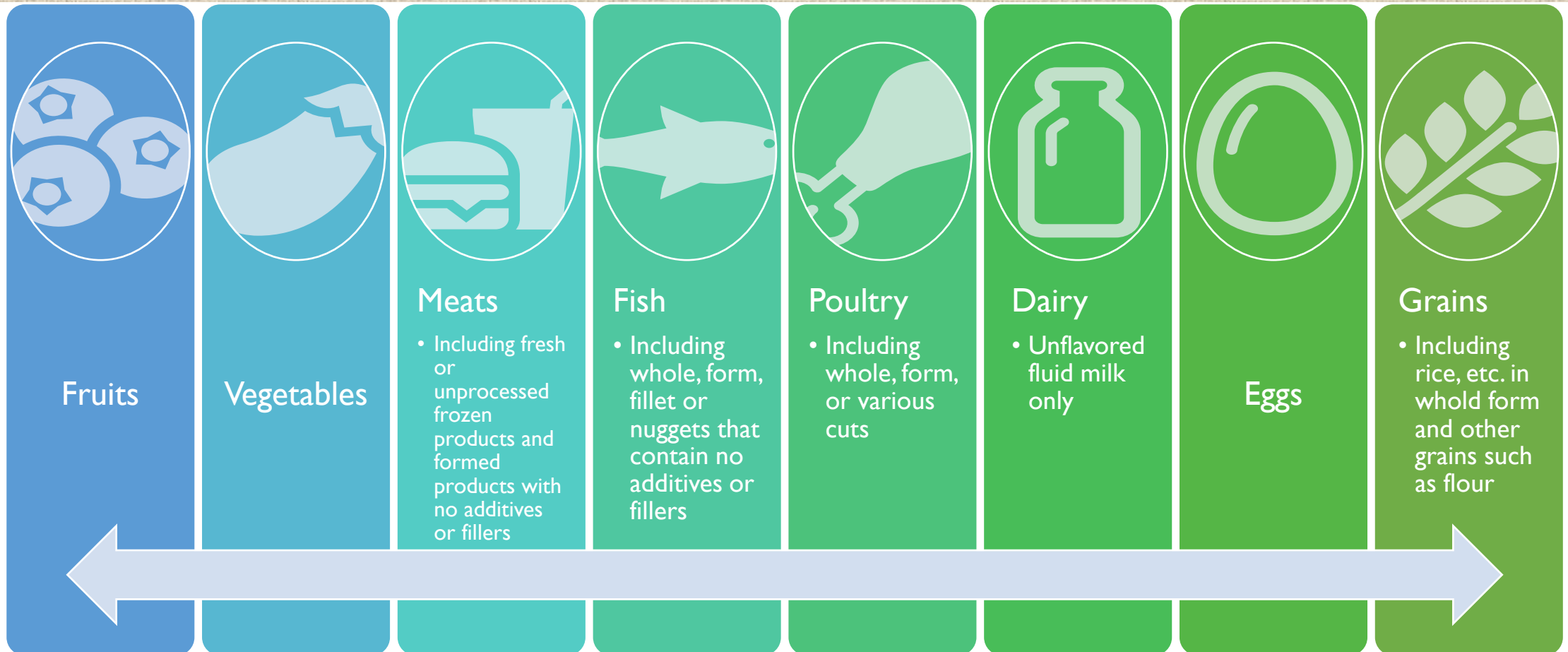


Geographic Preference



“Local” may now be used as a procurement specification for the unprocessed agricultural products

Allowable Products



Eligible Programs

- National School Lunch Program
- DoD Fresh
- School Breakfast Program
- CACFP
- Summer Food Service
- Seamless Summer Option



Expanded Geographic Preference Option

TIPS:
Local definition may not unnecessarily restrict “free and open” competition.
Geographic preference applies to the product and NOT the vendor.
Geographic preference only applies to determining the winning bid and not actual price to be paid.

- A method CNP operators or State agencies purchasing on their behalf can use to increase their procurement of local, unprocessed agricultural products for program meals.

• Updated by the *Final Rule – Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2023 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, April 25, 2024.

- Adds “local as a specification” as a strategy
- Defined scoring advantage



Defining Local

- Who defines local?
 - School food authorities
 - Childcare institutions
 - Summer Food Service Program sponsors
- What are you trying to accomplish?
 - Is there state based legislation regarding local purchasing that you'd like to be aligned with?
 - Do you want to bring as many local product as possible onto the menu quickly?
 - Do you want to couple local purchases with farm visits and have personal relationships with suppliers?



Defining Local

- Within a radius
 - Within a parish
 - Within Louisiana
 - Within a region
- A district's definition of local may change depending on the:
 - Season
 - Product
 - Special events

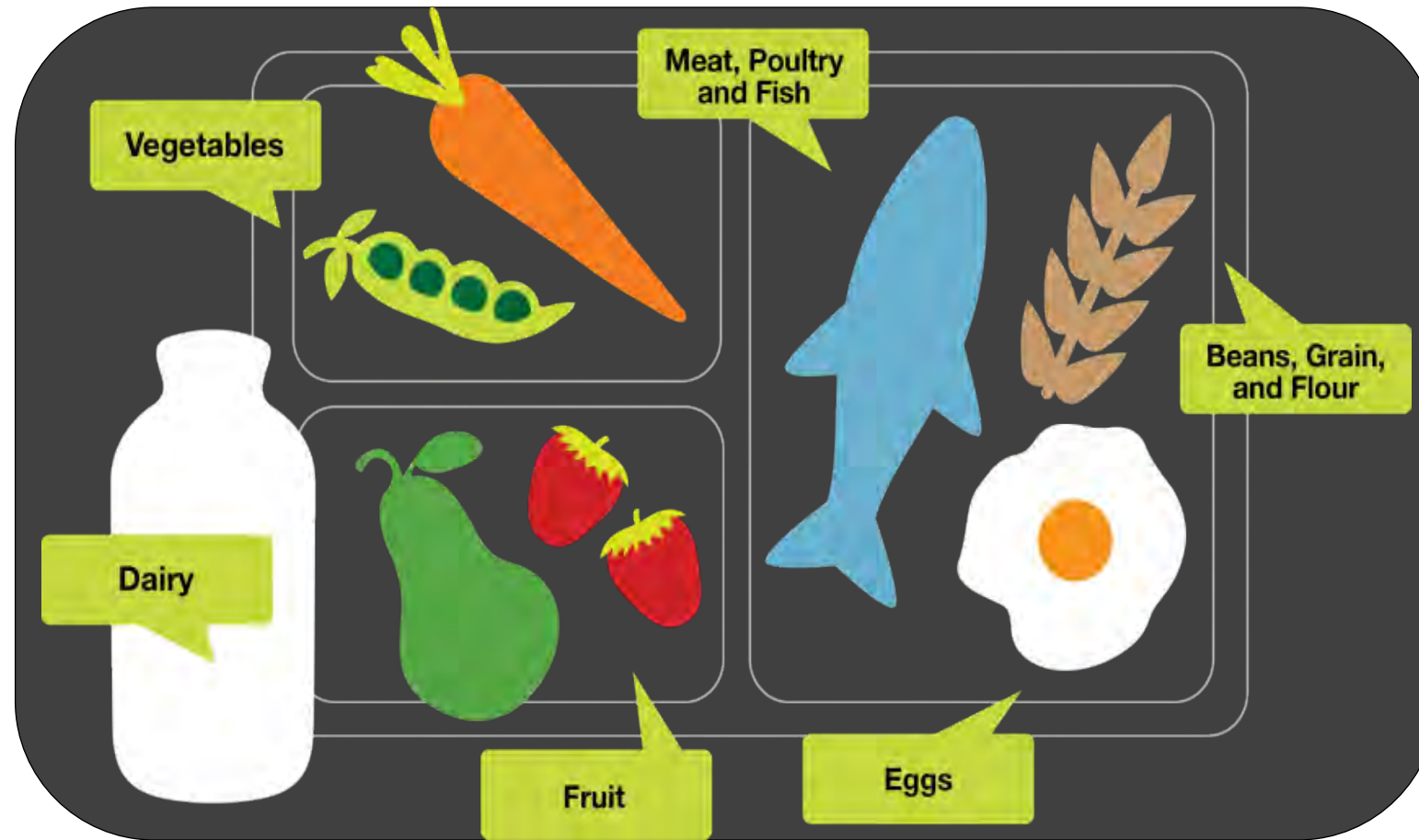


Local Production & Seasonality Resources

- Conversations with farmers and other producers
- Visits to the farmers market
- Outreach to Cooperative Extension agents
- Outreach to Louisiana Farm to School Program
- USDA Census of Agriculture
- USDA Farm to School Census
- Seasonality chart



What Types of Products?



Geographic Preference Strategies

1. Local as a Specification

- Only locally unprocessed agricultural products
- Includes a definition of “local”
- Vendor products must meet criteria

2. Defined Scoring Advantage

- Awards extra points to products meeting “local” definition
- When locally produced products are preferred, but not required
- Solicitation defines bid evaluation methods



Strategy 1: Local as a Specification Example

A school usually buys whole tangerines and oranges for lunch service.

They would like to begin sourcing local satsumas during the winter months.

Definition of Local: Must be grown within 200 miles of Bogalusa, LA

Original specification reads:

ORANGES, SWEET TYPE, US NO 1

Oranges, sweet type, U.S. No. 1. Count 138 (Calif., Ariz) or Count 125 (Fla., Tex.). Each will average 2 ½ - 2 5/8 " diameter. Cartons average 40 lbs. By the carton.



REVISED specification would read:

LOCAL SATSUMAS, 180 count, whole, free from decay, injury, or disease. Cartons average 50 lbs. By the carton.

Strategy 2: Defined Scoring Advantage

Louisiana Lagniappe School is purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Local is preferred but not required.

In this scenario, vendors may receive additional points based on a sliding scale for offering local unprocessed agricultural products.

Points are awarded as follow: 75% or more = 20 points

50% or more = 10 points

25% or more = 5 points



Strategy 3: Mix of Both

(Might be useful when buying more than one product at once)

When buying a mixed order of fruits and vegetables:

Use local as a specification for products for which local is a requirement

Use a defined scoring advantage for products where local is a preference



Solicitation for Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables Happy Place Child Care Center Louisiana

Satsumas	Locally grown , within a 150-mile radius of Sunny Town
Strawberries	Locally grown , within a 150-mile radius of Sunny Town
Cabbage	10-point preference for product within a 200-mile radius of Sunny Town

TIP: A Geographic Preference can be applied to small purchases, IFBs, and RFPs.

1

2

3

4

	Micro-purchase	Small purchase	Invitation for Bids	Request for Proposals
Value	≤\$10,000	<\$350,000	>\$350,000	>\$350,000
Outreach Targeting Local	Yes	Yes+	Yes+	Yes+
Specifications Targeting Local	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
Technical Requirements Targeting Local	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geographic Preference	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes



Simplified Acquisition Procedures *for* Local Agricultural Products

- Informal Procurement Methods
- Any local agricultural product
- Up to a maximum per order amount of the federal small purchase threshold (currently set at **\$350,000**)
- Louisiana R.S. 17:194(D)
 - The state DOE and any governing authority of a nutrition program provider may use the simplified acquisition procedures for small purchases up to the Federal Small Purchase Threshold set by 41 U.S.C. 403(11), in order to support procurement of local agricultural products and the USDA Farm to School initiatives. No such authority in this statute shall be in conflict with the USDA child nutrition program requirements, including 2 CFR 200.319(b).



Things to Remember

- Federal regulations require that all procurements above the Micro-Purchase Simplified Acquisition Threshold (\$15,000) are competitive even if other entities do not.
- **MUST** update procurement plan to reflect increased small purchase threshold for local agricultural products above \$60,000



Local Food Logistics

- Coordinate with schools in your region
- Talk to regional distributors
- Meeting distributor minimum pallet or pack size by ordering as a group of SFAs
- Potential cost savings by placing larger bulk orders



Buying from a Farm

Things to consider:

- Search the market for local suppliers.
- Communicate/negotiate pricing and payment terms.
- Multiple orders, deliveries, and invoices.

Order as early as possible

- Consider contracting in winter for the growing season
- Weather affects harvest times and product condition
- Develop a back-up plan

Obtain food safety quality assurances

- GAPs certification
- Grower training about GAPs
- Document Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)
- Farm Visit



Finding Local Growers

- Louisiana MarketMaker - <https://la.foodmarketmaker.com>
- Seeds to Success website under “Finding Local Food”
<https://seedstosuccess.com/>
- Louisiana Grown website - www.louisianagrown.com
- Louisiana Direct Seafood - www.louisianadirectseafood.com
- Visit your local farmer's market
- Call your parish Extension office



MARKET  MAKER
LOUISIANA



Louisiana MarketMaker Search Tool

Search

strawberries 1 - 34 of 34 X

Location Business Type Certifications Product Attributes + Filters Relevance

Faust Farms Learn More...
12519 Liuzza
Amite, LA
9854746251

Johnsdale Strawberry Farms Learn More...
22061 Robertson Ln
Ponchatoula, LA
9855421040

Mary's Country Produce Learn More...
21351 Hwy. 22 E
Ponchatoula, LA
9855071641

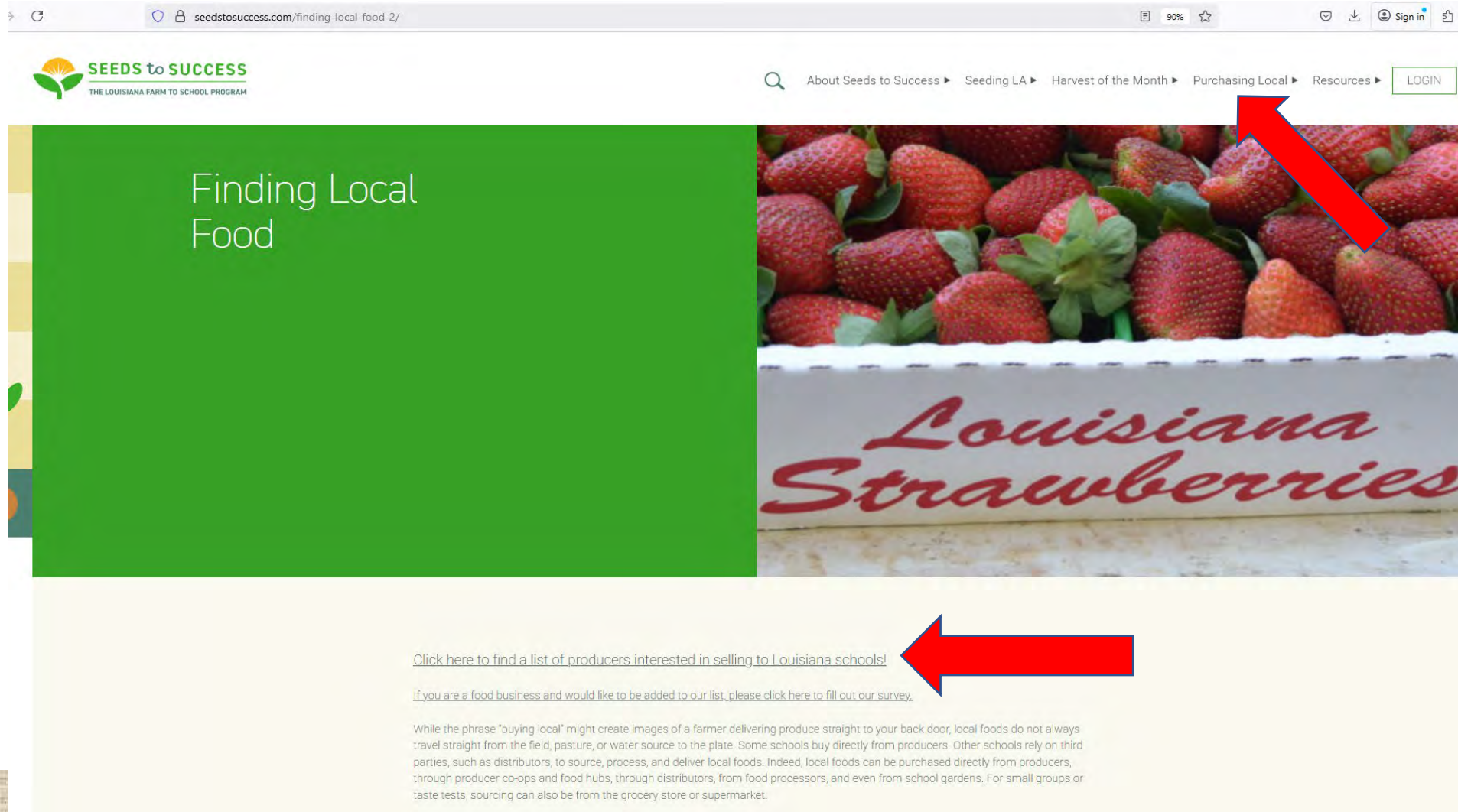
Kevin Liuzza Farms, LLC Learn More...
14342 New Genessee Rd
Tickfaw, LA
9859815788

Map of Louisiana showing search results locations (indicated by green and yellow dots with numbers).

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Local Food Sources Contact List



Local Purchasing Resources

www.SeedstoSuccess.com

- School Guide for Local Food Purchasing
- Food Safety Checklist
- Verifying On-Farm Food Safety

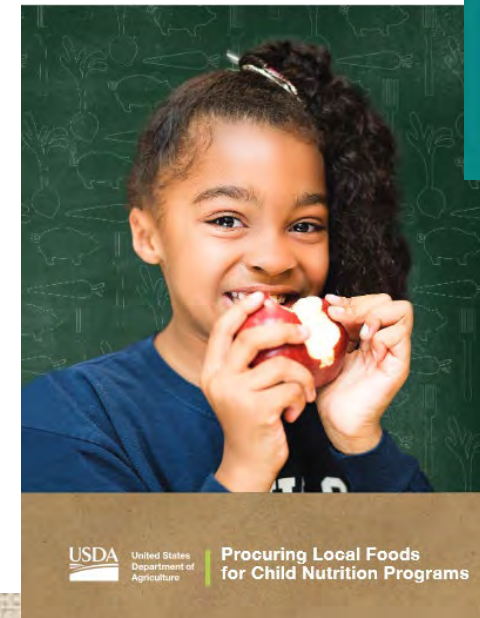
<https://www.lsuagcenter.com/articles/page/6339694/1997>



USDA Farm to School Procurement Resources

- Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Guide
- USDA Farm to School Fact Sheet: Decision Tree
- USDA Finding, Buying, and Serving Local Foods Webinar Series

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/f2s/procuring-local-foods>



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Thank you!

Questions?
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