

Weekly Market Bulletin

State of New Hampshire, John H. Lynch, Governor
Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food, Lorraine S. Merrill, Commissioner

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Farm to School Program

As you begin to plan and prepare for the upcoming growing season, please consider participating in the NH Farm to School program. The Farm to School program works to connect school cafeterias with locally grown fruits and vegetables. The program provides farmers with another market while offering schools an opportunity to educate students about local agriculture while increasing their consumption of local fruits, vegetables, and other fresh products.

If you are wondering what to do with your bumper crop of cucumbers or zucchini, consider selling them to your local schools. If you normally wholesale some of your crops to a distributor, check whether they sell to schools and make sure your produce is noted as 'local' or you could consider selling direct to your local schools. Selling directly to schools is a great opportunity to create a market for your products and to form new connections with your community.

Before making the connection, however, it is important to know some things about selling to schools. A few things to keep in mind: Since menus are written at least a month in advance, it is helpful for schools to know ahead of time what products will be available when so they can be planned into their menus or snacks; it may take 30 days or longer to receive payment; schools need items delivered at an agreed upon day and time; a proper invoice is required; and finally schools expect lettuce, carrots or other vegetables to be grown and handled with Good Agricultural Practices.

NH Farm to School can help make various kinds of connections including growing crops specifically for the schools or participating in local harvest meals. Take a few minutes to look at our website, nhfarmtoschool.org. On it you will find the most recent list of schools that have purchased locally as well as distributors in the region who carry local foods and some of the New Hampshire farms whose fruits and vegetables have been served in our schools. Contact Stacey. Purslow@unh.edu or 603-862-2542 for more information.