Strengthening Local Economies through Farm to School

Central Texas Local Food Economic Development Seminar

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Farm Fresh Initiative
Texas Department of Agriculture
Texas Farm Fresh
Texas Agriculture Industry
By the #s

1 in 7 working Texans is in an agriculture-related job

Texans in agriculture-related job 14%

$4.2b Net Farm Income

$439m Cash receipts, Vegetables

130m acres of Texas farmland

248k Texas Farms

Source: USDA Economic Research Service (2014), Texas Department of Agriculture Statistics
Farm to School Impacts

Lake County Community Development Corporation
Ronan, MT (pop. = 1871)

- **Revenue Generation**
  - 40% increase in revenue to growers
  - 20% increase in revenue generated from processing

- **Job Growth**
  - Hired 5 new people to process products
Economic Impact

### Economic Impact – Farm to School Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Creation</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2.16 / $1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Jobs for Every Job Created by Districts Purchasing Local Foods</td>
<td>Generated / Spent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmers</th>
<th>Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>9%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Income Increase + Market Diversification</td>
<td>Avg. Increase in Meal Participation = Increased School Revenue</td>
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- Each dollar invested in farm to school stimulated local economic activity by an additional $2.16
- For every job created by school districts purchasing local foods, additional economic activity would create another 1.67 jobs
- Average increase in student meal participation by 9% resulting in increased revenue through school meals programs
- Average 5% increase in income from farm to school sales for individual farmers adding an increase in market diversification and new opportunities

Source: National Farm to School Network
Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center
Ronan, MT \( \text{pop.} = 1871 \)

- Revenue Generation
  - 40% increase in revenue to growers
  - $40K in sales in quarter
- New Vertical Market
- Job Creation
- AmeriCorps FoodCorps
  - Helped develop strategy
  - Mission to increase access to local foods
## Trends

### Increase in local & regional marketing channels

- Farmers’ markets (2014)
- Regional food hubs (2014)
- School Districts with farm to school programs (2011-12 school year)

**Sources:** USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Food Nutrition Service; National Farm to School Network.

### School districts in Texas are currently buying the following types of local foods:

- **71%** Fruits
- **69%** Vegetables
- **39%** Milk
- **16%** Meat or Poultry
- **36%** Of Texas districts surveyed plan to increase local food purchases in the future.

**Sources:** USDA Farm to School Census, 2015
Rural Texas Examples

**Sides Pea Farm**
Canton, TX (pop. = 3581)

- **New Vertical Market**
  - Started selling fresh black-eyed peas to Dallas ISD (1 month during school year)
  - Expanded to three items, three different months (during past 2 years)

- **Job Creation**
  - Company added jobs due to this market opportunity

**Marfa ISD**
Marfa, TX (pop. = 1981)

- **Local Purchasing**
  - Actively look for local Texas products
  - Village Farms

- **Meal Appeal**
  - Drives increased meal participation
  - Creates demand for better tasting, local foods
Connecting

“Our farmers and ranchers and school food service teams share the same goal – to help produce the healthy foods that nourish young Texans and that our children enjoy. By fostering these connections and serving healthy, locally grown meals, we are building a stronger future for our state.”

- TDA Commissioner Sid Miller

Networks

Farm Fresh Network
Healthy Community Network

ABOUT

Healthy Community Network

The Healthy Community Network (HCN) is an expansion of the Texas Department of Agriculture’s (TDA) Healthy Challenge. The Healthy challenge is now a collaborative and more comprehensive effort to improve health and wellness for entire communities.

Members are local leaders who are committed to sharing knowledge in the interest of promoting health and wellness. Their commitment is evidenced by their desire to make Texas a healthier state.

The Healthy Community Network:
- SHOWCASES elected officials and their efforts to model healthy behaviors, develop local-based partnerships, and support key health initiatives.
- CONNECTS elected officials to like-minded leaders, city-specific data and grant opportunities.
- INSPIRES leaders to choose healthy lifestyles, serve as role models for young people and partner with others for stronger communities.
- Take the HCN PLEDGE today and join other leaders in their pursuit of a healthier Texas.
TDA AmeriCorps VISTA Program

Project: TDA AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer Program
Locations: Rural Counties throughout the State
Project Sponsor: Texas Department of Agriculture
Project Issue Area: Community Engagement VISTAs
VISTAs: 20 (+ 2 VISTA team leaders)

TDA AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) members will:

- Live and actively participate in rural Texas communities for 3 years
- Conduct community outreach & encourage engagement
  - Speak in public forums to inform, educate, & engage local citizens
  - Match local farmers to schools for direct sourcing opportunities
  - Develop strategies to expand meal service options
- Establish Farm to School programs that will expand each community’s capacity building efforts by providing long-term economic opportunities to producers, laborers, distributors, processors, cooks and foodservice staff, as well as others who support the local food system
- Assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with building capacity to promote healthy futures for targeted youth
- Ensure that low-income youth receive the benefits of good school wellness policies

TDA’s Mission

To partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation’s leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles, and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

VISTA Program Focus

Farm to School Initiatives (including Farm Fresh Fridays)
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
School Local Wellness Policies

TDA VISTA Geographic Focus: Rural Texas Counties

About AmeriCorps VISTA: dedicated volunteers commit to a year of service and live in some of our nation’s poorest urban and rural areas. With passion, commitment, and hard work, they create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/americorps-vista
Everyone Wins

Why farm to school?

**Kids WIN**
Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm to school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture and nutrition.

**Farmers WIN**
Farm to school can serve as a significant financial opportunity for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers by opening the doors to an institutional market worth billions of dollars.

**Communities WIN**
Buying from local producers and processors reduces the carbon footprint of food transportation while stimulating the local economy. Educational activities such as school gardens and composting programs create a healthy environment around the school community.

Source: National Farm to School Network
Resources

TDA Farm Fresh Initiative
Online clearinghouse with links available for producers, community members, schools, and childcare centers looking for Farm to Institution materials, toolkits, resources, funding opportunities, and success stories.
www.SquareMeals.org/TexasFarmFresh

Texas Farm Fresh Network
Texas farmer, rancher, and distributor profiles used by school and child care nutrition staff interested in providing more Texas products to their students. An application is available online for those interested in selling to schools.
www.SquareMeals.org/FarmFreshNetwork

USDA Farm to School Census, 2015
Census conducted to establish realistic goals with regard to increasing the availability of local foods in schools and to measure progress towards reaching this goal. Results are broken down at the national, state, and school district levels.
https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/home

National Farm to School Network
Information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into school systems and preschools.
http://www.farmtoschool.org/

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