

# The School District of Palm Beach County

## School Food Service Department

### Farm to School Bullet Points

#### **Objective:**

If we had an opportunity to participate in creating a Farm to School legislative bill, what would we want included?

#### **1. Distribution Model**

- a. The most vital component to a successful Farm to School program is distribution
  - i. Direct delivery considerations
  - ii. Drop ship to distributor
    1. Farmer to pack and deliver to distributor
    2. Local liaison/broker to assist with distribution
  - iii. Multiple deliveries of fresh produce per week – currently working with one delivery per week. Fresh produce is delivered to distributor on Monday to be sent to schools Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday for use on Friday
  - iv. Encourage school districts to commit to like seasonal produce to assist farmers in planning the growing season

#### **2. Safety and Sanitation**

- a. Children are one of the most vulnerable populations susceptible to food borne illnesses
  - i. Required Practice:
    1. HACCP
  - ii. Preference given to:
    1. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
    2. Good Handling Practices (GHP)
    3. Microbial Testing

#### **3. Packaging**

- a. Produce should to be delivered to school sites ready for use when applicable
  - i. Washed & Cleaned
  - ii. Prepped & Trimmed
  - iii. Packaged in pre-determined amounts examples are:
    1. 5/10 pound bags
    2. 80-100-125 counts
    3. 8-12 containers per flats
    4. Individually pre-portioned

#### **4. Bidding Process**

- a. Pre-qualified Vendors
- b. Firm/fixed maximum pricing to include delivery to distributor
- c. Prime buying for seasonal products grown in Florida and/or acceptable per-determined regional areas
- d. Preference given to Florida farmers

#### **5. State/Federal Financial Incentives**

- a. School Districts
  - i. Increased reimbursement to School Food Authorities for using local products in menu planning
  - ii. Provide grant opportunities to secure a determined amount of money for purchasing fresh locally grown produce
  - iii. Allowance for School Food Authorities to utilize entitlement dollars for purchases

- b. Farmers
  - i. Allocate incentive funding to famers that commit to growing specific products to be used for Child Nutrition Programs
  - ii. Provide assistance for farmers to become certified in safety and sanitation practices (GHP/GAP)
    - 1. Funds
    - 2. Training Opportunities
    - 3. Purchase Computer Software
    - 4. Equipment Needs
  - iii. State to allocate land for farmers to plant produce specific to Child Nutrition Programs

#### **6. Priority Consideration for School District**

- a. Current procurement is dependent on “good” growing season; school districts are the first user to be shorted product
- b. Priority consideration would guarantee that school districts would receive products even when supply is less than demand
  - i. Dedicated land for Child Nutrition Programs would help to ensure products are not pulled from general/retail distribution

#### **7. District Purchasing Allowances**

- a. Currently our district has a limit on the dollar amount that can be spent on quotes per year
  - i. In order to ensure the availability to participate in opportunity buys:
    - 1. A dollar amount should not be set for the procurement of fresh produce
    - 2. Districts should not be required to go through a qualifying bid process

Integrated Farm to School programs have the ability to positively affect entire communities. One of the most valuable components of supporting Farm to School initiatives is the opportunity to increase access to fresh produce within a domestic food assistance program that services low-income families. Farm to School programs encourage a lifelong appreciation for healthy eating habits by creating an environment that exposes children to a variety of fruits and vegetables. Aside from the nutritional benefits of increasing the availability of fresh produce in school meals, the local economy benefits from an additional marketplace and could indirectly promote job creation in the agricultural community.