

The Power of Farm to School in Colorado



COLORADO
Department of Education



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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Learning Objectives

- Define the components of Farm to School in Colorado
- Gain knowledge on how to procure local products
- Recognize the benefits and importance of building relationships with Colorado producers



Why Farm to School?

NOURISH COLORADO
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

St Vrain Valley with English Captions

Share

I THINK THAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT.

Watch on YouTube

Why Practice Farm to School?

- **Nutritious & higher quality products**
- **Less supply chain disruptions**
- **Agriculture & Nutrition Education**
- **Benefitting the next generation**
- **Community connection**
- **Families and communities love local food!**

The Local Food Program (LFP)

LFP offers districts funding for the purchase of Colorado grown, raised, minimally processed, and value-added products.

- Value-added products must meet CO Proud designation
- Competitive grant program for the last 3 years
- 31 school districts in SY 23-24
- The program expands to all districts operating Healthy School Meals for All (HSMA)
 - Timing TBD
 - Districts will receive 25 cents per lunch served this year
- Technical Assistance to producers and aggregators



Goals

1. Support CO producers
2. Increase CO foods in schools



Values Based Procurement

Set a
values
statement

Determine
what
products you
want

Determine
your
purchasing
threshold

Identify
vendors,
ask for
prices

Document
everything



Forecasting products you need. Examples:

- Do you want to source local apples? Think of how many you buy from a mainline vendor by the month or week. Can you substitute this amount from a farmer?
- Let's do one local meal for CO Proud Day
 - What ingredients are you serving and how many students do have?
 - Now convert this to servings



Get Creative!

Values Based Procurement

- What are your meal quality values and what does Farm to School mean for your district?
 - Nutrition, Education, Community

Cost Effective Farm to School

- Burritos vs. Hamburgers
- Sliced vs. whole apples
- Less expensive ingredients like potatoes, grains, beans

Community Involvement

- Community foundations, agriculture groups,
- Steak dinner nights & raffles



CO Farm to School Success

- Since 2021, about 25% (54 of 207) of districts have purchased over \$5.1 million in local foods
- The LFP has provided \$500,000 in funding to districts for each of the last 3 years.
 - \$1.4 million was spent in SY 2021-22 on CO foods between 21 districts
- \$500,000 equates to \$864,001.38 in local economic impact
 - CSU economic impact calculator
- In SY 2018-19, districts implementing FTS spent an average of \$68,000 on local foods

School Lunch participation is up 53%
Breakfast participation is up 94%



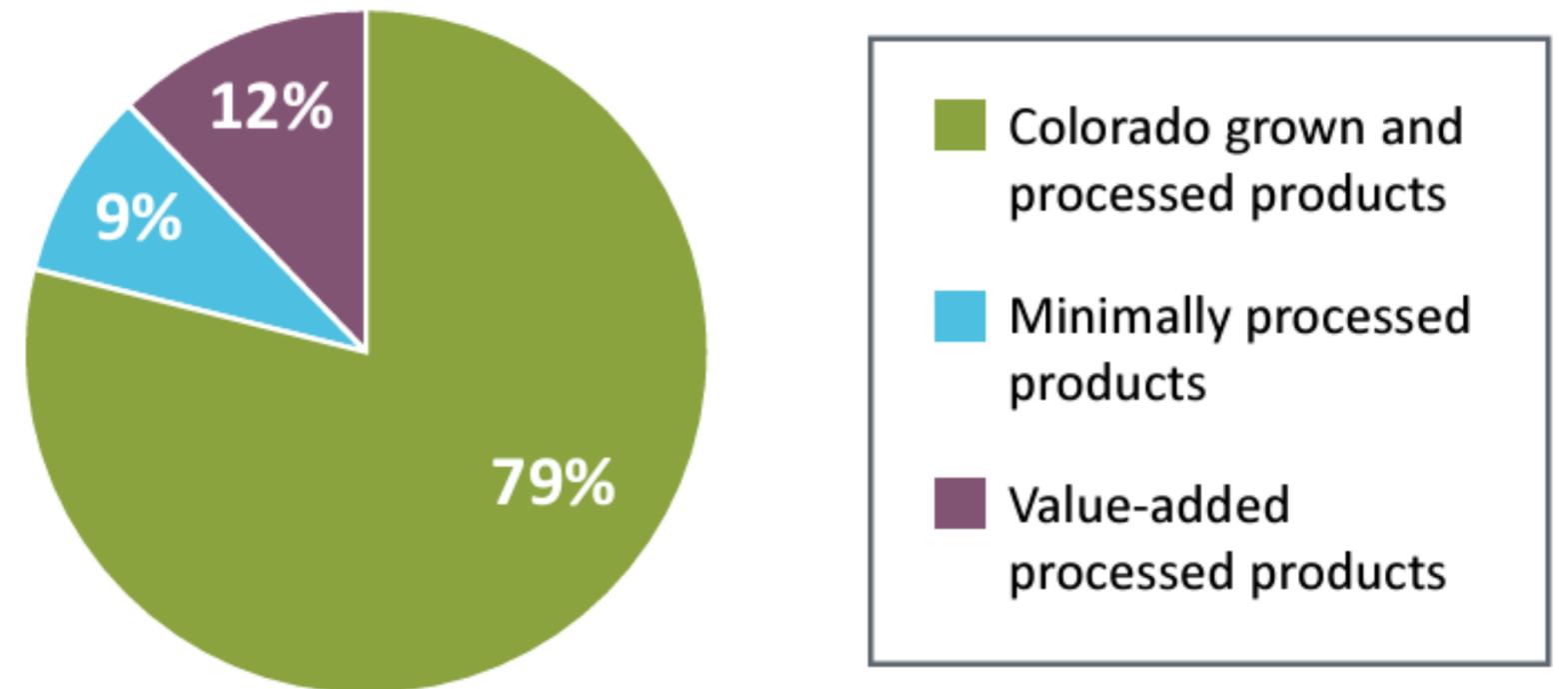
Local Products in Colorado Schools

- Over 70% of funding was utilized on raw fruits & veggies.
- Beef made up majority of animal protein purchases.

LFP 2022-23 Total Spending

PRODUCT TYPES	
Product Code	Percent of Total
Vegetable	39.58%
Fruit	31.12%
Animal Protein	16.80%
Value Added	11.83%
Grains	0.08%
Dairy	0.04%

SY 2022-23
Colorado Purchases by
Product Category

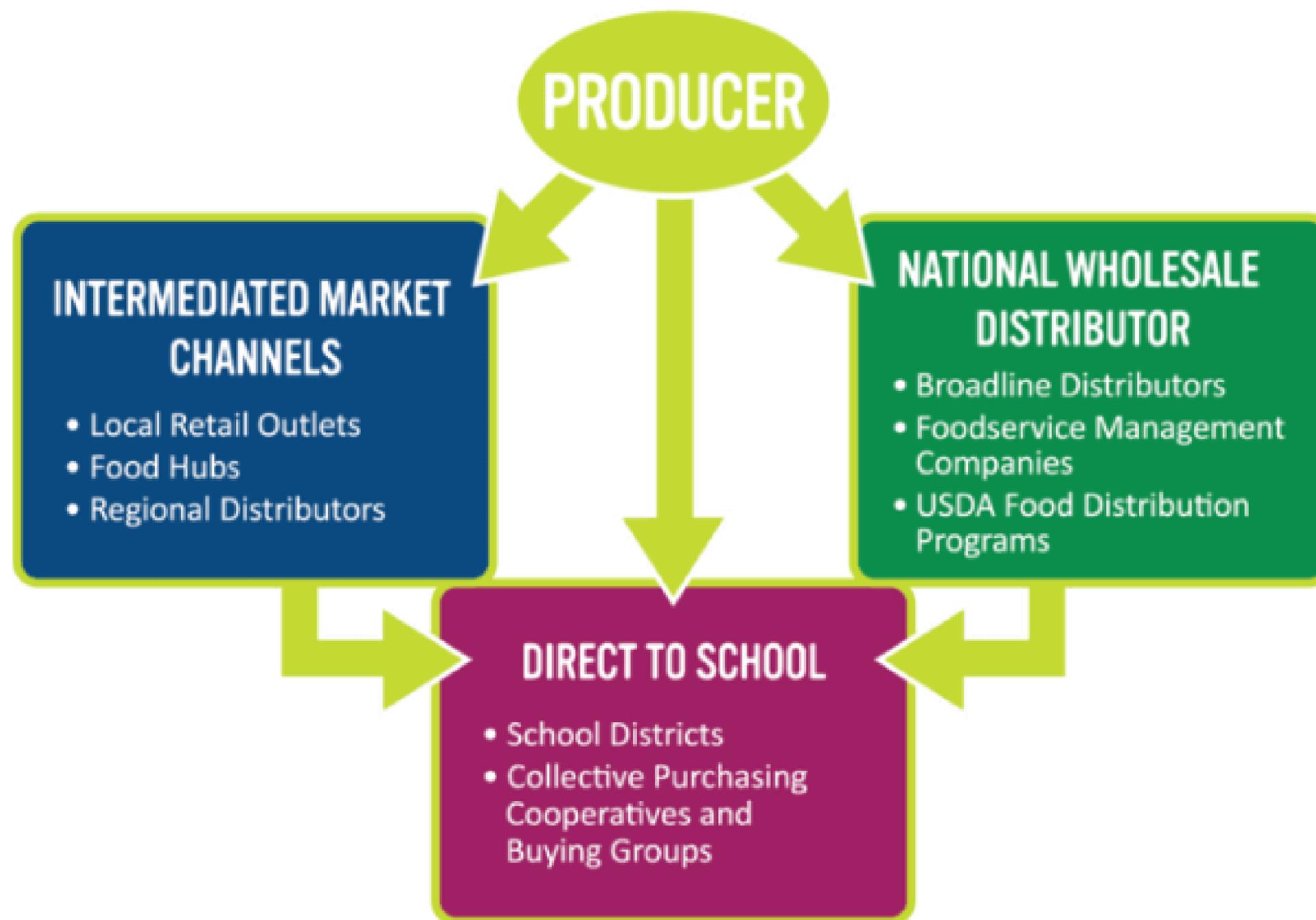


Questions?



How Does Your Product Get to the School?

MARKET CHANNELS FOR SELLING TO SCHOOLS



Finding Local Vendors

Local Farmers, Ranchers, & Businesses

- Community Connections: local farmers, ranchers, and community businesses
- Colorado Producer Directories
 - CDE Farm to School Producer Directory
 - CO Proud Farm Fresh Directory

Food Hubs, Retailers, Businesses

- Food Hubs specialize in local foods and can provide easier delivery & logistical options
 - East Denver Food Hub, Valley Roots (San Luis Valley), Fresh Food Hub (Western Slope), Mountain Freshies, Farm Runners
 - Retailers like grocery stores can stock local items



Every Farm and Ranch is Unique

Questions to ask:

- Key products and seasonality
 - High volume products
- Scale of operation - delivery
- Pricing and volume
- Food Safety
- Opportunities for tours or education

Remember: All proteins served in nutrition programs must be processed in a USDA inspected facility.



Selecting a Procurement Method

Micro-purchase (less than \$10,000 spent annually)

Small/Informal purchase (\$10,000-\$250,000)

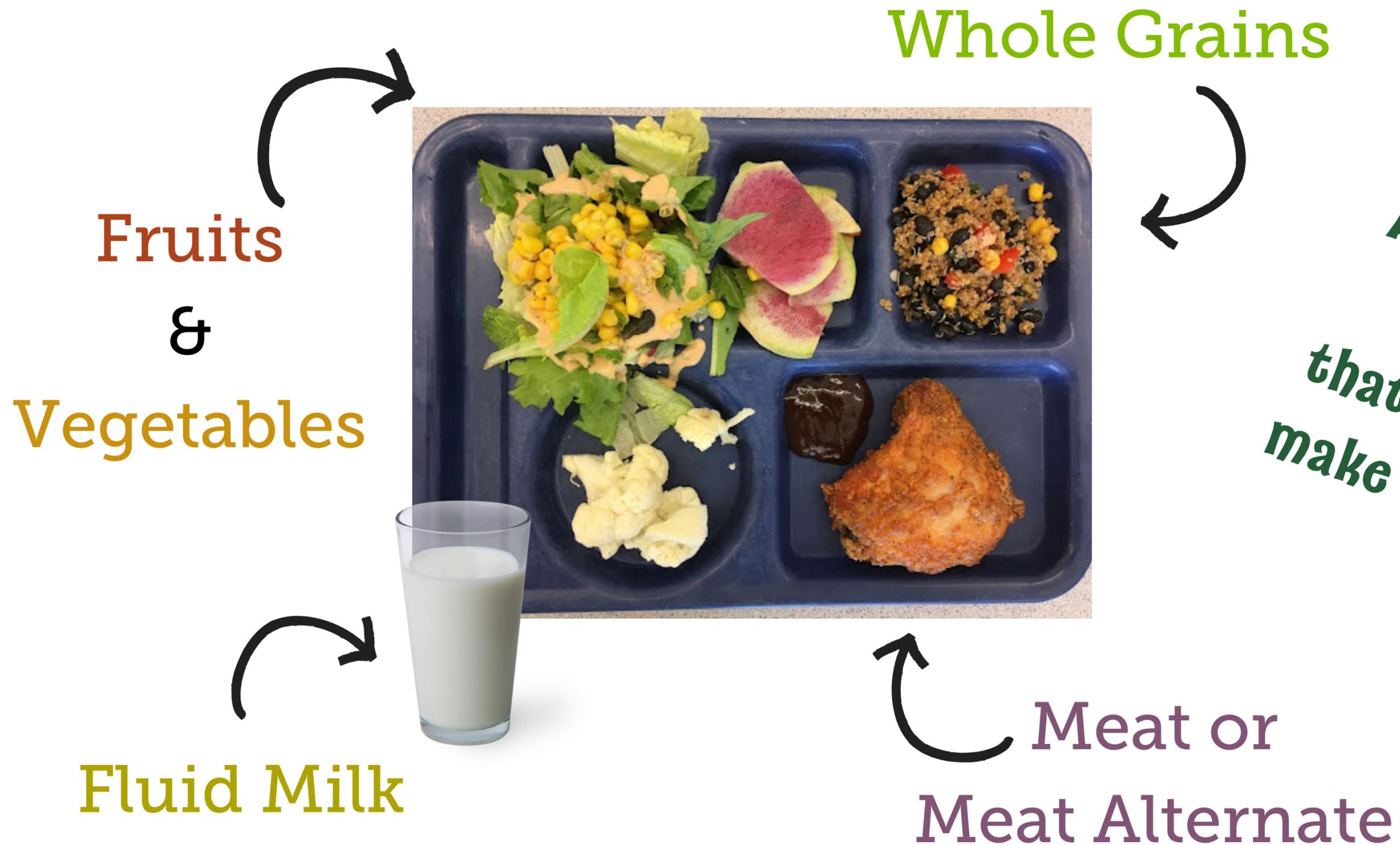
Formal procurement (more than \$250,000)



Make sure to check your local purchase thresholds!



Meal Pattern Requirements



Breakout Activity

Groups of 3

Discuss a local product that can be included into your menu today and where you may be able to purchase this product.

- If you are already procuring locally, please share your experiences
- Each group will have 6 minutes, 2 minutes per speaker
- Be prepared to share what's discussed



How it's being accomplished!

Frenchman School District, less than 300 students

- Relationship with local processor has led to over \$20,000 spent on local beef this year.
- Purchasing price of \$5 per pound.

Mancos school district, about 500 students

- Taproot Coop & Phoenix Foods
 - Once per week ordering in online portal
 - Pricing based on market price

St. Vrain Valley, about 32,000 students

- 125 students participating in agriscience
- School grown products enter meal operations
 - Taste tests & recipes



Making it Happen!



- Cultivate relationships with producers!
 - Start early
 - Visit the farm or have them visit the school
 - Consider coordinating with FFA or agriculture education instructors
 - Start small (think easy swaps and small orders)
 - Look for those easy substitutes
 - Salad bars and easy menu swaps
 - Special events - Colorado Proud School Meal Day
 - Innovate
 - Speak to ranchers about cull animals or bulk items
 - Involve parents and the community
 - Steaks for the fundraisers!



A Few Examples

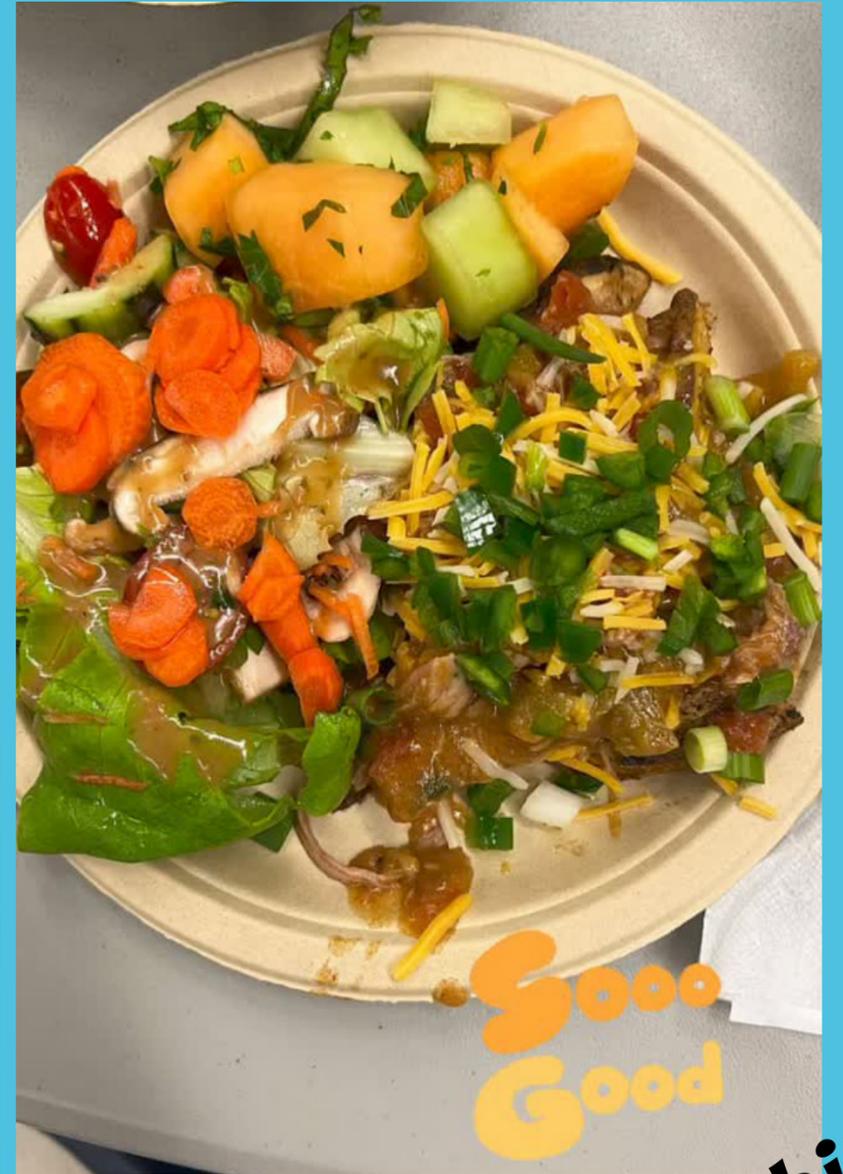


**Bison Meatballs
\$900 on one bison order
for special events!**

**Local Rancher
on the menu!**

Monterey Community College Tuesday, October 3, 2023

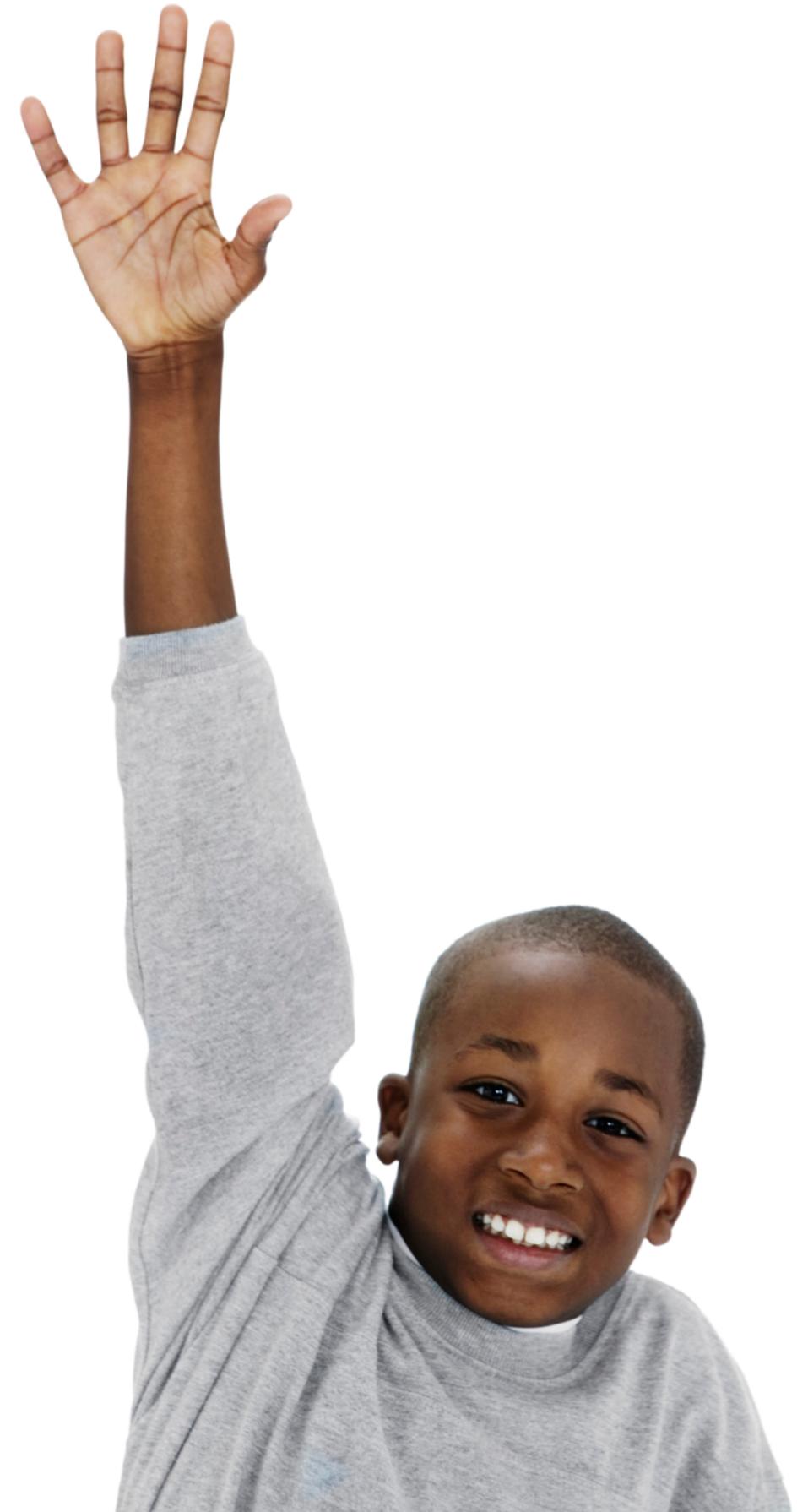
Category	Item	Calories
Condiments	Housemade Salsa	18 cal
Entree	COLORADO PROUD Beef and Bean Burrito	484 cal
PBJ	PBJ	300 cal
Fruit	Wag's COLORADO GROWN Apples	84 cal
	COLORADO GROWN D'anjou Pears	1 cal
Vegetable	Infinite Harvest COLORADO GROWN lettuce	6 cal
	Baby Carrots	12 cal
	Cucumbers	2 cal



Local Pork Green Chili!



Questions?



Evaluation & Professional Standards

Training Evaluation: Please tell us how we did!

or

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6TPFLXH>

Professional Standards: 2400 (1 hour)

Use the CDE Professional Standards Training Tracker to document Annual Training Requirements.



Thank You!

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