

Healthy Farms and Healthy Kids:  
The Potential to Increase Local Food  
Sourcing in Vermont Schools



Cortney Stewart

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for:  
Bachelor of Arts with Honors  
Environmental Studies  
Brown University  
December 2002

Cover Photo Credits (L-R): A farmer-chef connection in Starksboro (E. Zipern), A high school student marches with her message in Brattleboro (C. Stewart)

This thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honors in the Department of Environmental Studies at Brown University.

**PRINCIPAL  
ACADEMIC  
ADVISOR**

UU \_\_\_\_\_ (*signed*) \_\_\_\_\_ 12/11/02  
Harold Ward, Ph.D, J.D.  
Director, Center for Environmental Studies  
Professor of Chemistry & Environmental Studies  
Brown University  
Providence, Rhode Island

**OUTSIDE  
READERS**

\_\_\_\_\_ (*signed*) \_\_\_\_\_ 12/11/02  
Peter Heywood, Ph.D  
Professor of Biology  
Brown University  
Providence, Rhode Island

\_\_\_\_\_ (*signed*) \_\_\_\_\_ 12/11/02  
Bil Johnson, M.A.T  
Clinical Professor of Education  
Brown University  
Providence, Rhode Island



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a great deal of thanks to people who helped me with this journey. Abbie Nelson, Joseph Keifer, and Linda Wellings allowed me to tag along on their project and their teaching style re-energized me about the potential power of education. Enid Wonnacott invited me to work with NOFA with open arms, and contributed so much to a wonderful summer working and living experience. Elizabeth Zipern was constantly a friend and partner in this overwhelming and often fragmented work and I am grateful for the workings of her brain and her sense of humor along the way. My advisor at Brown, Harold Ward, who afforded me space to make my own journey through college and honest guidance when it was needed, and professors Bil Johnson and Peter Heywood who agreed to be additional readers. Holly Peake, Marty Spaulding, Jo Busha, Karen Russo and others who opened their offices and kitchens to me and entertained my constant questions and perplexed attempts at understanding such a complex system. The teachers at Waitsfield and Milton, school cooks throughout the state who do great work day after day with the resources they have. George Schenk, for great flatbread and impassioned commentary about school food for our children. Understanding housemates who put up with me in all my craziness and parents who supported me through this adventure, as they always have. This is some strange way is my attempt to recognize the love I have for them and the work they do in public schools every day, and overlap it with my passions an appreciation for the environment and working landscape of Vermont where I was so fortunate to grow up.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Healthy Farms and Healthy Kids: The Potential to Increase Local Food Sourcing in Vermont Schools**

Cortney Stewart  
December 2002

- Schools are in the powerful position of providing nutritious food and nutrition education to millions of schoolchildren every day. In Vermont, 48,000 children eat school lunch each day; 98,000 have a school lunch program in their schools.
- Our schools face mounting pressure for corporate influence to allow fast food and soda companies to become food providers to schools, while at the same time, family farms face the uncertainty of limited direct marketing options. Increasing local food sourcing through innovative farm-to-school programs and partnerships can provide school children with healthy, fresh, local food while supporting local farms.
- The increase of local food can lead to better nutrition, resist increasing rates of obesity and other diet-related diseases plaguing our nation's children, lessen the environmental impact of producing and transporting school food, and increase environmental and agricultural awareness.
- Vermont has unique opportunities as a rural state with community schools and working farms to pioneer a statewide model farm-to-school program that incorporates experiential and community-based education, as well as farm visits and field studies for the rest of the nation.
- There is some state-level and national policy already in place that supports local food sourcing in schools, and an organization (in FEED) that is doing valuable community level work. FEED aims to expand their program to work with 13 schools with their program, and help facilitate the purchase of \$300,000 of local produce from 26 Vermont farmers.
- The influence of the commodity food system and lack of an extensive in-state distribution mechanism present formidable challenges to increasing local food sourcing, and additional development of national, state, district, and school level policy and funding support is essential to extend the influence of farm-to-school programs in Vermont.

- A coordinated statewide effort and the publicity of current initiatives in the state could generate excitement and local action, and further the influence of Vermont's pioneering farm-to-school program.
- Specifically, this report recommends that the state Department of Agriculture and FEED work together to develop a local distribution mechanism for larger schools and school districts, and implement policy at the state level to support and fund local purchasing changes. These two organizations, along with Child Nutrition and Commodity Foods need to work closely together to address these issues.
- Vermont's congressional delegation needs to put national pressure on the USDA to change the commodities available to schools and appropriate national funding for these types of projects.
- Additional publicity and information clearing house for FEED and Ag in the Classroom is needed to promote these programs, and communicate the good work that is already being done.
- Schools and school districts ought to develop comprehensive school level food policy with input from teachers, students, administrators, community members, and school boards.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Objectives .....	7
Methodology.....	9

## *Why Bring Local Food Into Vermont Schools?*

---

<b>THE CASE FOR LOCAL FOOD SOURCING.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<u>Health &amp; Nutrition</u>	
Local = More Nutritious? .....	11
Are Alternatives to Local More or Less Healthy? .....	13
<u>Economic</u>	
Statewide Economic Benefits .....	14
Agricultural Marketing Opportunities .....	15
<u>Building &amp; Strengthening Community</u>	
Community Food Security.....	16
<u>Environmental Sustainability</u>	
Environmental Impacts of Local Food .....	19
<b>Case Study: Local Food Systems in Cuba .....</b>	<b>23</b>
What Vermont Can Learn From Cuba.....	24

<b>SCHOOLS AS AGENTS FOR LOCAL FOCUS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<u>Health &amp; Nutrition</u>	
Schools as Providers of Food and Nutrition .....	27
Childhood Hunger & Diet-related Diseases .....	27
Health & Nutrition Education.....	29
<u>Economic</u>	
Schools as Markets .....	30
<u>Building &amp; Strengthening Community</u>	
Schools within Communities .....	31
Equity, Justice, Access and Food .....	31
<u>Environmental Sustainability</u>	
Education for Sustainability & VT State Standards .....	33

## *Current Farm-to-School Connections*

---

<b>SCHOOL FOOD PURCHASING POLICY .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<u>National Policy.....</u>	37
<u>State of Vermont .....</u>	38
<u>District and School Level.....</u>	40
<b>FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAMS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<u>Vermont .....</u>	41
F.E.E.D. (Food Education Every Day) .....	41
School Programs .....	42
<u>Nationwide.....</u>	43

## Current State of Vermont School Food

---

<b>SCHOOL FOOD FUNDING</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<u>Local Funds</u> .....	45
<u>Federal Funds</u> .....	46
<b>SCHOOL FOOD SOURCING</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<u>The Commodity System</u> .....	47
Available Commodity Foods .....	47
Commodity Comments .....	49
Fresh Foods Through the Commodity System?.....	50
<u>Direct Purchasing</u> .....	51

## Envisioning A Local Shift- Key Findings

---

Introduction.....	53
<b>STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<u>The Potential for Vermont Products in Schools</u> .....	54
<u>Community Interest and Desire for Change</u> .....	55
<u>Child Nutrition in Crisis</u> .....	56
<u>Vermont Leads the Way</u> .....	57
Political Support.....	58
<u>Experiential Education/School &amp; Community Gardens</u> .....	58
<u>Unique Community Partnerships</u> .....	59
<u>Classroom/Community/Cafeteria: Success with the FEED Approach</u> .....	59
<b>BARRIERS</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<u>Economic Barriers and Limited Local Distribution Systems</u> .....	61
<u>Unengaged Students and Communities</u> .....	62
Local or Organic? .....	63
<u>Issues of Scale</u> .....	63
<u>Lack of Statewide Coordination and Support</u> .....	64
<u>Inertia</u> .....	64

## Conclusions & Recommendations

---

<b>SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<u>Exploration and Development of a Local Distribution mechanism</u> .....	69
<u>Supporting Policy and Funding</u> .....	70
Federal Level .....	70
State Level .....	72
School & District Level .....	72
<u>Coordinated State Level Effort</u> .....	73
<u>Increased State-Wide Communication and Publicity</u> .....	74

<b>References Cited</b> .....	77
Appendix A- Vermont Framework Of Standards and Learning Opportunities.....	81
Appendix B- Commodity Food System	
Expected Available Commodity Foods, 2002-2003. USDA .....	85
Type B Order Form, June 2002. Donated Food Section, OEO .....	89
Type A Order Acknowledgement, March 2002. Harwood Union High Schools.....	91
Appendix C- Local Food Resources	
Draft of Harvest Calendar .....	93
Sample Page from Directory of Vermont Products .....	95
Appendix D- Local School Food Policy: Fairfield Town School District.....	97



# INTRODUCTION

Schools have been providers of food as well as institutions of education for quite some time. Once schools were in session for full days, and children could not go home for lunch, schools were forced to address the issue of food in schools, and informal school feeding systems grew from the realization that kids needed to be fed so they would be better prepared to learn. The National School Lunch Act was signed into law in 1946. With the establishment of a national school lunch program, the federal government formally acknowledged the role schools have in providing food and nutrition to children.

Further national legislation was passed with The Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and The Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act of 1994. These acts addressed declining nutrition by codifying nutritional requirements for meals receiving government funding. They also centralized the administration of the national lunch program under the USDA, removed some of the barriers that prevented needy children from benefiting from the program, and coordinated efforts for all nutritional programs to educate the general public about health and nutritional issues.<sup>i</sup> After the primary responsibilities of providing education for our nation's youth, schools today must also be providers of food and nutrition, as well as providers of nutrition education. Schools are starting to realize how tightly these three areas are linked.

The average school day in this country is roughly 6 hours, and many children spend additional hours at school at the start or end of the school day in extra-curricular activities, after school care programs, or simply waiting for parents to finish work. When one considers that many children spend over half of the time they are awake during the week in school, eat at least one meal

there (often two, with rising participation and availability of school breakfast programs), and have multiple "snack" times, it is clear that schools are helping to shape nutritional habits and patterns in many generations of Americans. It is important to acknowledge that many of our habits and attitudes towards food and nutrition begin in childhood, and often in schools.

Our schools are molding a "food culture" through the food we serve, the lessons we teach (or don't teach) about food and nutrition, the time we devote to meals in our schools, and the environment of the lunchroom. There is a disconnect in knowledge about food, where it comes from and how it is grown or processed, and who is growing or processing it. There is an obvious preference amongst many of our school-aged children for brand name (often also highly processed) foods. And recent childhood and adolescent epidemics such as obesity, anorexia and other eating and body image disorders point to severe imbalances in diets and an inability or unwillingness by children to make healthy food choices, or even be able to define what healthy means.

We can hardly blame our kids. They receive information and modeling from parents and other adults, media advertisements, and the entertainment industry about what bodies are supposed to look like and what foods they *should be* eating to make them look, feel, or act great. Nutritional levels and obesity rates among our nation's children are worsening<sup>ii</sup>. In contrast to a plethora of information from the food industry, children receive very little information about farming systems, harvest cycles, and seasonal produce. There is an extreme disconnect between the way we think about food and the way we think about farming and food production, and there are confounding complexities in the delivery systems that link the two. It is clear that we must re-imagine this interaction of schools and food and take action to enact effective policy at the national, state, and community level to address food in our schools.

A focus on local food in schools might help construct one viable connecting strategy with great potential. Farm-to-school programs provide a framework to address food issues within a community or region, holistically examining the way food links farmers, food processors, delivery systems, and schools. There is also room to question how knowledge and education, existing policy, socio-economic divides, and outside corporation and government agencies affect those links, and how they might be strengthened within a community and with community resources. The farm-to-school movement is also implicitly questioning the scope of the role of schools as food educators, and the situation of schools within larger communities<sup>iii</sup>. The ideas behind farm-to-school initiatives invite discussion concerning educational philosophy and curriculum, the role of food service providers as educators, nutrition, economic development, community building, youth empowerment, and community food security.

- Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Evaluating the Barriers and Opportunities for Farm-to School Programs<sup>iv</sup>, is a founding document in the farm-to-school movement, written by Andrea Misako Azuma and Andrew Fisher, that greatly informed my national perspective of farm-to-school issues. It is with utmost respect, full credit given, and the hope to help build a national language of farm-to-school programs that I have borrowed part of their title for this paper. Azuma and Fisher define farm-to-school programs as those that:
  - *Address multiple problems and provide multiple benefits;*
  - *Improve children's access to nutritious food, especially for lower income kids who are reliant on the school lunch program;*
  - *Employ prevention-oriented strategies to obesity and other diet-related diseases through fostering good dietary habits;*
  - *Support local agriculture and family farmers;*
  - *Incorporate a food systems approach;*
  - *Create opportunities for a better understanding of agriculture, and a healthier relationship to food.*

Local food sourcing<sup>1</sup> aims to strengthen conceptual understanding as well as actual economic links between farms and schools that provide marketing opportunities and support for local farmers. Increasing the amount of local produce purchased by and served in school cafeterias, can give educators and food service providers a new entry point to improve the nutritional levels of their students and address increasing obesity and eating disorders in kids. Supporting efforts to increase the consumption of this fresh produce and reduce the consumption of more processed food must accompany this purchasing switch. Creative and innovative complementary curricula and educational activities, which have been found to be essential to support and sustain shifts in cafeteria purchasing practices, can also enhance the public educational system by incorporating experiential, community-based curricula. Further, a focus on locally grown food in Vermont schools can help increase the understanding and valuation of Vermont agriculture and the contributions of farmers to the Vermont economy and Vermont way of life.

Increasing local food consumption in schools could also have a positive environmental impact. There is great potential for students to have more say in the selection and service of school food, which is essential to support a shift of this kind. Lessons in civic responsibility, community building, youth empowerment, and leadership could be part of this local food shift as well. News and communication to publicize programs within the larger community, supportive local, state and national policy, and creative, hands-on educational curricula are essential for a multi-faceted success of farm-to-school programs. Simply focusing on finding a mechanism for increasing the amount of local purchasing by schools will have very little effect on child nutrition, environmental and

---

<sup>11</sup> In this paper, Local Food Sourcing means purchasing food that is grown or raised close to where it is to be used. For the most part in this paper I am focusing on fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products. The concepts of local food sourcing could, however, extend to any Vermont food product, including locally produced highly processed or "junk" foods. In general, those foods are excluded from the argument in this paper. Although I might argue that there is time and place for "junk food" and if we *are* going to allow it in schools at all, it ought to be local, that is beyond the scope of this paper.



agricultural awareness, or community building without this supporting work. And to create successful, sustainable school markets for local farmers means many shifts in the way we imagine school food and the ways we teach about, prepare, and purchase the food used in our schools.

Vermont has strong potential for successful farm-to-school programs:

- the majority of public school students and their families live within clearly defined communities, and schools are natural community centers in many cities and towns
- existing support for community agriculture (CSAs, Farmer's Markets)
- environmental appreciation and stewardship
- working farmland close to many schools
- a strong agricultural heritage
- the beginnings of policy that support local purchasing for state institutions
- state educational standards that address sustainability, sense of place, and environmental issues

In this paper, I will explore the ideas driving farm-to-school programs, local food systems and the potential for Vermont schools to use local food systems as they act as food providers, food educators, and educators for empowerment and change.



## OBJECTIVES

My personal objective in doing this research and writing this paper was to use a case study to synthesize the four and a half years of my college education, and attempt to translate ideas and theories into a strategy where actual change might be possible. During my undergraduate years at Brown, I focused my studies on International Development and Agricultural Issues through the Environmental Studies Department. Through research and study abroad, I was able to look at local food systems and their environmental consequences in Costa Rica and Samoa, as well as the way the global food system was affecting life in these smaller countries. My experiences abroad have most certainly informed my perspective on local and global food systems, and I feel fortunate to have the support and resources to focus my senior thesis on an area much closer to home. It has been fascinating to see how these global forces are affecting things in the fields and mountains of my own backyard.

I found my thesis question after asking numerous people in Vermont about the state of Vermont farms and what might be done to help strengthen Vermont's small farms and farmers. Many people in Vermont are concerned with local food systems and creating markets to help Vermont farmers help themselves to keep a culture of working farmscapes alive in Vermont. It appealed greatly to me to use schools as a case study to look at these issues, and finding an organization (in NOFA) that was starting to look at similar issues from a school perspective was extremely exciting to me.

To frame my research, I developed a set of driving questions. The overarching question I hoped to answer was the following: **To what extent and in what ways could Vermont schools increase local food sourcing in their school food programs?**

As I proceeded in my study, I realized that there were many underlying questions I would have to address to get to the heart of this thesis question, including:

- **Why is increasing local food use in schools desirable?**
- **What are the characteristics of the current school food program in Vermont?**
- **What food is served?**
- **Where does that food come from?**
- **What might a locally based food system program look like in a Vermont school?**
- **What are the barriers to increasing local food sourcing? How can these be overcome?**

This paper raises as many new questions as it provides answers. While I do present very concrete recommendations and suggestions at the end of this paper, my greater hope is more ambitious. I challenge people working in fields of education, health & nutrition, agriculture, business, and environmental management to further explore local food ideas to identify creative solutions to problems such as childhood obesity, malnutrition, and declining markets for small farmers, while empowering citizens (including kids) and strengthening local economies and communities.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper is the result of one year of independent work in 2002. Two independent study thesis research courses at Brown University in the Spring and Fall of 2002 sandwiched an unpaid summer internship and research position with Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) of Vermont, and provided me with time and resources to examine these ideas about local food in schools.

NOFA has taken the lead with Shelburne Farms and FoodWorks to create the FEED program (Food Education Every Day) which is starting multi-year pilot projects in schools in Vermont to increase local food sourcing and develop locally-based food and agriculture education based on Vermont State Standards. I was fortunate enough to attend summer FEED institutes where teachers, administrators and food service providers within a school worked together to create curriculum and school-wide initiatives to support the FEED program. I was able to observe the process and conduct both formal and informal interviews with many of the people and organizations involved in this work in Vermont.

I worked closely with Elizabeth Zipern, the FEED local purchasing coordinator, Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT Executive Director, and Abbie Nelson, FEED coordinator, to help address school specific local purchasing needs and desires in the FEED schools, and start to assess on a state-wide scale what it would take to broaden the current FEED influence and more systematically address local sourcing. With Elizabeth's help, I interviewed state and local officials and did extensive background research on farm-to-school programs and school food policy. We conducted two simple surveys of food service directors and parents' views on school food programs at one of

the participating FEED schools, and convened a meeting with representatives from the Dept. of Agriculture, policy advisors from Senators Pat Leahy and Jim Jeffords' and Representative Bernie Sander's offices, a local dairy farmer and local bread baker, and the school nurse and parent from one of the FEED schools to initiate conversations about local food sourcing on the state level.

Although I was working very closely with the FEED program, I tried to maintain an objective perspective on their work and the effectiveness of their chosen methods. I had to examine the role they played on a statewide level and try to ascertain the scope of their influence. In some ways I was an intern with FEED and in some ways I took the role of consultant, asked to bring my research and outside knowledge to the table to broaden FEED's perspective. It was difficult to balance these roles, and I present these tensions here as a possible bias. These dual roles were necessary, however, since as an intern, I had access to years of collected information and opinions not publicly available and the expert mentorship of people working closely with these issues.

I have come to believe that environmentalists and those of us in the field of environmental studies and sciences must move beyond the scientific and moral arguments for conservation or effective environmental and land management and address directly the very human behaviors and preferences that are often seen to be in conflict with environmental values. I believe very strongly in win-win situations, and this paper is a test to see how that view might play out with farms and schools and children in Vermont. I have chosen to present issues of school food through four perspectives: economic, environmental, community, and health & nutrition. Through the course of my research, I saw these perspectives as common themes and concerns raised by people on all sides of the issue.

## *Why Bring Local Food Into Vermont Schools?*

---

### **THE CASE FOR LOCAL FOOD SOURCING**

#### Health & Nutrition

##### LOCAL = MORE NUTRITIOUS?

Many people speculate that local produce may be more healthy than imported or well-traveled produce because of less surface chemical use (due to transnational agricultural customs policies and intense batch spraying) and because smaller agricultural systems may have less chemical use in the growing process as well as better soil health<sup>v</sup>. Local does not inherently mean less toxic or healthier. However, the promotion of local foods *can* lead to more nutritious *diets* and more healthy eating, because when people become more aware of and feel more connected to where their food comes from, they also become more aware of what they are eating. And if local food is more fresh or less processed than alternate foods, the consumption of that local food is much more likely to increase as people change to healthier eating habits.

Antonia Demas, PhD of the Food Institute of Trumansburg, NY spoke of a group of adolescent boys in South Florida who came to the Bay Point School after not succeeding in traditional schools. Many were gang members or had prior crime involvement. Demas created a pilot program where the students cooked all of their own meals and took trips to farms, fruit orchards, health food, and spice stores, and were introduced as culinary students. Throughout the program, the boys also monitored their blood chemistry with the help of a local Miami Hospital, and kept detailed journals of their energy levels. The study is in press, but Demas reported that through the program, the boys' cholesterol levels dropped and their energy levels significantly increased. Many of the boys continued on to culinary schools or full-time jobs. One athlete was so convinced

of the power of food and its links to performance that he brought his own food with him when he went on to football camp. Demas' studies have shown that education that focuses on food and utilizes methods senses such as smell, touch, and taste (what she calls sensory-based education) reaches 75% of students. She echoed over and over again that we often get what we expect from kids, and if we changed *our* beliefs about what they might eat, we may be pleasantly surprised.<sup>vi</sup>

School cooks that I talked with in Vermont told me about replacing the California iceberg lettuce they had been serving with local red and green leaf lettuce from a neighboring farm. They saw more student interest in eating lettuce, and had to throw away much less waste from lettuce that had wilted and spoiled.<sup>vii</sup>

A recent study from a Bio-Organic Chemistry Laboratory at Kagawa Nutrition University in Japan<sup>viii</sup>, suggests that in-season produce has a higher nutritional content than produce grown out of its natural growing season with the aid of structures or heating systems. The study concludes that:

- The content of VITAMIN C seems to be significantly influenced by the cropping season. In spinach, for example, the vitamin-C content was reduced by 1/5 to 1/8 in off-season produce, in comparison with its peak in in-season produce. It was also reduced in tomato and broccoli by up to one half in off-season produce.
- The content of CAROTENE, a preceding substance of vitamin A, was also affected by the crop season. In off-season broccoli, it was reduced by 1/4, and in off-season carrot, it was reduced by more than half, compared to the one-peak level in in-season produce.
- On the other hand, the vitamin C and carotene content of some vegetables and fruits, such as sweet pepper, celery and kiwifruit, was fairly stable in different seasons.
- Thus, in order to take in more vitamins in our daily diet, and also for economic reasons, it is recommended to choose in-season vegetables, especially spinach, broccoli, tomato, carrot and cabbage, rather than off-season ones.
- Judging from the wide variation in nutritive values between in-season and off-season vegetables and fruits, it is recommended to choose an appropriate value depending on the season in calculating the nutritive value of any diet. The standard table of nutritive value of raw materials, therefore, should be revised based on current seasonal analysis of produce in markets.





## ARE ALTERNATIVES TO LOCAL MORE OR LESS HEALTHY?

I am left to wonder what other changes in school food programs would mean for health. I am certain that a shift towards fast food and heavily processed food is not for the benefit of our children's health<sup>ix</sup>. Companies clearly understand the scale of school food markets and have been working to sell, serve, and advertise their products in schools and to children for years. As Dr. Marion Nestle, of New York University, points out, "Given their purchasing power, large numbers, potential as future customers and captive status, it is no wonder that food companies view schoolchildren as an unparalleled marketing opportunity."<sup>x</sup> Soda companies offer large sums of money to schools to have exclusive "pouring rights contracts", and needy schools have a hard time refusing such seemingly free cash<sup>xi</sup>. Other food companies sponsor Channel One television programming that subjects 8.3 million schoolchildren a day to 2 minutes of commercial messages with the 10 minute news and features program. The television advertising between children's cartoons has very clearly been targeted by food companies trying to sell chips, cookies, soda, fast food, candy and other "junk" foods of little nutritious value, and studies have shown it is difficult for children to distinguish between program content and commercials.

What message do we want to send our kids in our schools? Vending machines and soda machines send a message to children as well as greatly influence what foods they will put into their bodies throughout their lives. Having McDonalds or Pizza Hut take National School Lunch Program contracts and provide fast-food lunches to schools does the same. Schools and districts are starting to recognize the far-reaching influence of having nutritionally poor foods dictated by corporate interests. Recently, the Los Angeles School District, one of the largest in the country, banned soda from their schools. And other schools are starting to follow suit. What will replace the soda machines and vending machines? Our schools are ripe for change.

Certainly fruits and vegetables have long been proven to be part of a healthy diet, and a healthy diet needs to be balanced with foods from many different food groups. It is clear that to address human health, we must extend the discussion of food beyond simply increasing local sourcing.

## Economic Justification

### STATEWIDE ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The Vermont Job Gap Study's "Leaky Bucket" report says very clearly, "If Vermont substituted local production for only ten percent of the food we import (10% of \$1.808 billion = \$181 million), it would result in \$376 million in new economic output, including \$69 million in personal earnings from 3,616 new jobs".<sup>xiii</sup> Along with creating direct markets for farmers, or increasing demand for Vermont produce and foods through established distribution systems, a commitment to local purchasing by Vermont schools could stimulate the Vermont economy in other ways. Creating demand for more Vermont farm production, for value-added processed Vermont foods such as salsa, tomato sauce, or frozen berries, could contribute to the creation of an infrastructure of jobs and businesses within the state. In a state where the majority of produce is grown during months in which schools are not in session, creative strategies are required to have high levels of local purchasing year-round. There is currently plenty of fresh local produce that could be purchased by schools in September and October, and other farm products such as apples, onions, dairy products, and frozen or canned fruits, berries, and vegetables that could be in schools all year. Summer feeding programs (for children who qualify based on need) are often operated out

of public school facilities and may be a good testing ground for local purchasing to feed 4000 children at the height of Vermont's growing season.

Agriculture is part of the very foundation of Vermont's history as well as current economy, landscape, and culture<sup>xiii</sup>. Vermont's 1.3 million acres of farmland (roughly 21% of the state's area) has been estimated to contribute at least \$1.95 billion to the Vermont economy each year (about 11% of the Gross State Product) through direct contribution as well as indirectly through effects on tourism and second home ownership<sup>xiv</sup>. Farmers pour large amounts of money into local businesses. In 2001, one Ryegate dairy farmer with 160 cows paid 101 local businesses more than \$410,000. Other sectors of business depend a great deal on the quality of life, open space, and landscape in Vermont; 72% of executives in the state believe Vermont quality of life is the greatest advantage to doing business in the state.<sup>xv</sup> Vermont has worked hard to market itself as a state with an environmental conscience, as well as having beautiful landscapes and seasons. The state welcomed 12.25 million tourist trips in a one-year period in 1999-2000, which had a \$4.16 billion total impact in the Vermont economy, and contributed to 20% of the state's jobs. We need to ask ourselves why people are coming to Vermont, and will they continue to come if the state keeps losing farmland?<sup>xvi</sup>

### AGRICULTURAL MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

One hope for farm-to-school programs is that by creating direct marketing opportunities for small farmers, those farmers can retain a larger share of each food dollar and help to keep their farms working and economically viable. The Vermont Department of Agriculture, in their Comprehensive Plan for Agricultural Development in Vermont<sup>xvii</sup>, declares that enhancing agricultural stability and doubling processing capacity for value-added agricultural products by 2005 are Industry Development priorities. The Primary Marketing Priority is to: "Build new and innovative

partnerships across all Vermont economic sectors to support Vermont agriculture and anticipate changing market forces." Other marketing goals are to increase direct market sales by 5% each year, increase in-state sales of Vermont products through wholesale channels by 30% by 2005, and increase sales of Vermont products through food service channels by 25% by 2005. Increasing local food sourcing by schools has great potential to help meet these marketing goals with innovative partnerships. FEED proposes that with their program alone, thirteen schools in Vermont will purchase at least \$300,000 of food from 26 local farms<sup>xviii</sup>.

## Building & Strengthening Community

### COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY

Farm-to-school partnerships fit within the larger ideas of *community food security* and local food systems. The idea of community food security, a relatively new concept whose precise definition is still being debated, calls attention to the fact that food is part of the economy in every community, and that social, health, economic, and environmental conditions are tied very directly to the types of food that is available, who is growing it, who is selling it, and who has access to the purchase and consumption of that food. It is also, at its core, about community action and activism. As the agricultural and food systems in this country become more industrialized and more global, the community food security movement focuses on creating and maintaining connections between consumers and local food producers. These connections economically support local food producers and farmers and raise awareness about agricultural production methods, the difficulties facing family and small farms in the U.S., as well as community nutrition and public health.

The USDA sees community food systems as providing a first line of defense against hunger, malnutrition and food poverty, as well as strengthening rural communities. By looking at the "underlying social, economic, and institutional factors within a community that affect the quantity, quality, and affordability of food", community-based initiatives such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, food co-ops, community gardening and farm-to-school programs can boost the effectiveness of federal nutrition assistance programs to help people break the cycle of poverty and transition to a state of more self-sufficiency and food security. The USDA study names Vermont, along with California, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington, as states with strong support for community food programs.<sup>xix</sup>

A focus on community food systems in Vermont can bring nutritious food to individuals in communities and help farmers retain a larger share of each food dollar. The larger corporate global food system ships and trucks produce across oceans and continents, puts billions of dollars into the pockets of multinational corporations making agricultural chemicals, seeds, and processed foods, and dis-empowers small farmers throughout the world. Vermont farmers are not exempt from this phenomenon. Marketers receive 67% of profits in the food business while farmers receive only 9%.<sup>xx</sup> Food is an extremely political system, and local community food systems can address issues of fair trade, livable wages and safe working conditions for farmers, and access to nutritious food for everyone, regardless of ability to pay. A valid debate ensues, as the editors of Hungry for Profit: The Agribusiness Threat to Farmers, Food and the Environment summarize:

"Activists must help people confront immediate day-to-day problems in their lives. Yet a left analysis would question whether this pathway (of local sustainable food systems) is really a solution to the problems or rather something that will produce only a minor irritant to corporate dominance of the food system. A complete transformation of the agriculture and food system, it might be argued, requires a complete transformation of the society. On the other hand, any attempt to create a more humane, just, and ecologically rational society will have to embrace the struggle for sustainable agriculture."<sup>xxi</sup>



## Environmental Sustainability

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF LOCAL FOOD

There is evidence and a growing understanding that community-based food systems and a focus on local agriculture can reduce environmental impact: reducing transportation distance and fossil fuel use, reducing reliance on intensive agricultural inputs needed to supply certain foods year round from large scale "factory farms", and reducing food waste. A recent study by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Iowa found that if Iowa were to produce and transport just 10% of the state's per capita consumption of 28 produce items through regional and local distribution systems where farmers sold to institutional markets such as hospitals, restaurants, and conference centers, instead of through a conventional, national system, there would be an annual savings of 280,000 –346,000 thousands of gallons of fuel, and an annual reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 6.7 to 7.9 million pounds. These numbers may seem low, but this model study looked at less than 1% of total Iowa food and beverage consumption by weight, and one can speculate that effects would be more dramatic if a larger volume of food were to be produced and transported with these local and regional methods. Food would travel an average of 44.6 miles from farm to plate with local and regional systems versus 1,546 miles with conventional national sources.<sup>xxii</sup>

This sort of environmental valuation is relatively new to the economic argument for local food, and models and methods are still being worked through. Fuel costs alone would not justify the sort of switch indicated by the Iowa study, but authors of the study argue that the "comparative advantages" of some areas of the country and world are virtually eliminated if one factors in external environmental and social costs due to food production, processing, storage, and distribution (often called a Life Cycle Assessment approach). Our national food system accounts for almost 16% of



total U.S. energy use<sup>2</sup>, and substituting a portion of the national and international food supply and distribution with local community-based systems might be able to reduce this total energy use slightly, while providing some buffering against market fluctuations due to climate, resource scarcity (water, petroleum, etc), and political instability.

Though local Vermont produced goods can be more expensive than imported goods, there may be ways to level the playing field and even out the cost of these items. Along with hidden costs (externalities) associated with imported food as discussed above, there may be hidden benefits by investing in local agriculture. As Hoffer points out in the Job Gap Study, Vermont spends millions of taxpayer funds to support tourism because it brings money into the state, and we could justify public support for expanded agricultural production and distribution systems within Vermont because it would *keep* money from going *out of* the state. Tourists have long been targeted as buyers of Vermont Products, and while in Vermont in 2001, over half of all visitors (50.9%) purchased Vermont made products<sup>xxiii</sup>.

In 1997 Vermont imported \$1.808 billion worth of food and kindred products into the state, and only \$445 million of the total \$1.23 billion in-state agriculture production was non-dairy products<sup>xxiv</sup>. Clearly there is some room to increase in-state production of non-dairy food items, and there is demand by school food service directors for fresh, locally grown produce items<sup>xxv</sup>.

Proponents of a global, free-market agricultural system, reliant on intensive industrial agriculture often cite the productivity of our global food system, as per capita production has increased by 15% over the last 35 years. They question if a food system based on local production, small farms, organic or pesticide free farming could ever feed the population of a country, or the

---

<sup>2</sup> Includes energy used in food production, processing, transportation, restaurants, and home preparation. From John Hendrickson research, as cited in Pirog, Rich, Timothy Van Pelt, Kamyar Enshayan, Ellen Cook. "Food, Fuel and Freeways: An Iowa perspective

world. Questions abound as environmentalists, social justice activists, and others counter with questions of the capabilities of land to continue to be productive over the long term under intensive chemical farming, ecological threats to biodiversity, decreases in crop genetic diversity, and groundwater contamination and runoff. Further critiques extend to the increasing size of farms and centralization of agricultural power, loss of farmland nationwide, and the price squeeze due to more expensive inputs and lower crop prices leading to the decline and bankruptcy of small farmers. Growing centralization and economies of scale make small-scale farming unprofitable, even though per acre productivity is continually shown to be higher on small farms. . I am not proposing to make Vermont fully food self sufficient, but even a 10% increase in local food distribution could have a big impact. The biggest economic impact of farm-to-school programs is by eliminating the middlemen with direct distribution and marketing, smaller local farms can retain lost income and potentially be competitive or cheaper than larger, national farms.



## **Case Study: Local Food Systems in Cuba**

Peter M. Rosset points to Cuba to argue that alternative, sustainable agricultural systems can indeed produce enough food to feed a nation, and show hope for parallel successes in the U.S. and perhaps even in a small rural state such as Vermont. Cuba, a nation with land area slightly less than Pennsylvania, and a population of over 11 million<sup>xxvi</sup> has made a dramatic shift from export dependent monocrop agriculture, with 75% of all agricultural land planted with sugarcane, and nearly 60% of their food calories imported in 1989, to small scale management units that put 80% of state owned farmland into the hands of workers. These shifts were part of a movement to "link people with the land" and increase productivity. The 1991 collapse in trade with the Soviet Union left Cuba with a 53% reduction in oil imports, reducing their use in the country, and also reducing national income previously derived from reselling the petroleum to other nations. Food imports dropped by more than 50% and fertilizer and pesticide imports dropped by 80%.

Cuba had to come up with a new plan, quickly. Thankfully, with a large group of scientists and researchers (thanks to government investment in human resources), alternative technologies were quickly adopted that were often local, biological substitutes for pest management and fertilization as well as the use of animals instead of mechanized farm machinery. At the time of the trading collapse, 80% of Cuba's agricultural land was state controlled. The small percentage of land privately owned by peasantry (the other 20%) was producing more than 40% of domestic food production. Production levels in the state sector, dominated by industrial farms with chemical demands, quickly stagnated with the trading collapse, and have still not fully recovered. The small farm peasant sector, on the other hand, responded to fair prices offered by the government by

boosting production levels right away, inspiring the eventual shift to privatization and cooperative based management of the state sector.

Rosset concludes that the Cuban example can teach us that self-reliant agricultural systems are possible and that imports and international food aid are not necessary to address food shortages. With virtually no synthetic agricultural chemicals and high productivity from small parcels of agricultural land, Cuba has found an extremely successful model of local agriculture that provides enough food to feed a large percentage of its people. Urban gardening and backyard gardening have taken off, and the later nineties saw the highest ever production levels for 10 or 13 basic food items in the Cuban diet, showing that systems 1) with an agroecology approach, 2) that assure fair prices for food crops, 3) that address redistribution of land, and 4) place a huge emphasis on local production to address food security and local economic development can be extremely effective in producing food to feed a large population.<sup>xxvii</sup> Cubans had little choice in making these dramatic changes, and business as usual was not an option. While there are not yet similar forcing circumstances in the U.S., the Cuban example is valuable to show one potential course of agricultural development should some agricultural inputs (i.e. petroleum) become more costly or limited.

#### WHAT VERMONT CAN LEARN FROM CUBA

Cuba clearly shows how sustainable effective agriculture systems can work in small areas of land. Clearly the case in Vermont is different. There are no trade embargoes against Vermont, no shortage of petroleum (at least not yet), and Vermont is not a communist state. The climate, furthermore, is certainly not tropical.

However, there are important parallels to consider. Vermont's agricultural sector has long been dominated by dairy farmers. Dairy products, the top Vermont agricultural commodity in 2000, accounted for \$785 million in receipts as part of a total of \$1,230 million in-state total food and kindred product production.<sup>xxviii</sup> Yet Vermont dairy products comprise only 1.8% of the National Dairy commodities value. (In contrast, Vermont's maple products, which make up only 2.7% of state agricultural receipts comprise 42.5% of the national maple production.) With the expiration of the Northeast Dairy Compact last year, dairy farmers are no longer guaranteed milk prices to allow them to compete favorably with larger milk producers in the Midwest. Vermont is a small producer on the national scale, ranking 48<sup>th</sup> overall in an estimate of exports of its top 5 agricultural commodities. With less economic security for Vermont dairy farmers, it seems prudent to start thinking about other options for agriculture in Vermont. The majority of Vermont farms are already small (in comparison to other U.S. states)- 40% are less than 100 acres, and another 50% between 100 and 500 acres. Farmers in Vermont are still very much "linked to the land"; nearly 92% of farms are fully owned or partially owned by the farmer, and nearly 90% of farms in Vermont are individual or family farms. There seems to be great potential for a shift to food crops by Vermont farmers, especially if we can create markets with fair prices for food crops. Schools may be able to provide just that market.

There are also technical advances and low-impact greenhouse methods of growing food year round, even with Vermont's harsh winters and shorter traditional growing season, that Vermont ought to explore. Eliot Coleman, an organic farmer in Harborside, Maine has pioneered techniques with unheated greenhouses and layers of ground warming plastic to keep vegetables growing year round. Unlike most vegetable growers in the Northeast, Coleman plants in the fall and harvests all

winter and through the spring. Chefs line up for his mid-winter fresh carrots, and his small farm has certainly proved instructional as well as quite profitable.<sup>xxix</sup>

There are certainly examples of successful local food systems elsewhere in the world beyond Cuba, and in the United States, and I urge that we examine these closely for insight into creating successful food systems in our own communities, rural areas, and cities. Community Supported Agriculture, Farmers' Markets, Community Gardens, and food cooperatives have taken root across the country. Innovative projects in cities like Athens, Ohio that created a incubator center for local food entrepreneurs and farmers which led to the creation of more than 120 specialty food businesses and many jobs provides plenty of inspiration for further work. Projects and organizations at work in Vancouver, BC, Belo Horizonte, Brazil and Berkeley, CA also are doing exciting work.<sup>xxx</sup>

## SCHOOLS AS AGENTS FOR LOCAL FOCUS

### Health & Nutrition

#### SCHOOLS AS PROVIDERS OF FOOD & NUTRITION

As a nation, and as Vermonters, we have entrusted our schools with an extremely important job. Increasingly, schools are feeding our society's school-aged children, often for two of three meals per day (and some children do not receive a third meal at home). Schools often have snack programs and after-school feeding programs as well. Academic and athletic performance, nutrition, obesity and other health issues, and child hunger are all closely connected to how and what we serve our kids, and the culture of food we create in our schools. A few facts about school food in Vermont:

- There are roughly **132,000 school aged children (aged 5-19) in Vermont**, roughly 20% of our state population.<sup>xxxix</sup>
- An average of **48,000 students eat school lunch each day** in Vermont; over 98,000 children have a School Lunch Program in their school.<sup>xxxix</sup>
- There are 331 schools in Vermont participating in the National School Lunch Program. 261 schools have National School Breakfast Programs.<sup>xxxix</sup>
- School breakfast programs in VT have more then doubled since 1992. 12,877 students ate school breakfast in 2000 and **13,455 ate school breakfast in 2001**. The **breakfast program is now available to over 50,000 children**.<sup>xxxix</sup>
- **Over 4,000 kids are eating through the Summer Food Service Program in Vermont**. Often these are administered by school food service programs.<sup>xxxix</sup>

#### CHILDHOOD HUNGER & DIET-RELATED DISEASES

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs were designed, in part, as "a measure of national security to safeguard the health and well being of the Nation's children"<sup>xxxix</sup>.



Childhood hunger and food insecurity are "detrimental to our educational investments, our ability to maintain a skilled workforce and our capacity to compete in world markets"<sup>xxxvii</sup>. Hunger and undernourishment can have a dramatic impact on in-school attentiveness, test performance, cognitive reasoning, and social development. Hungry and underfed kids are more likely to get sick, putting strain on state medical resources, and are put at a disadvantage in the school environment. They are put at a disadvantage in terms of educational success and job opportunities, often perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

- In Vermont, 15,400 children are hungry or "food insecure", meaning their families cannot afford food or nutritionally adequate diets.<sup>xxxviii</sup>
- Over 18,500 Vermont children officially qualify for free lunch, and over 7,300 qualify for reduced lunch.<sup>xxxix</sup> (There may be more children who could qualify but have not applied for free & reduced standing.)
- In 2001, there was a 77% participation rate for those that qualify for free lunch, and 69% average participation by students who qualify for reduced lunch. An average of only 39% of students who would pay full price elected to eat school lunch.<sup>xl</sup>

This line of analysis might suggest to you that instead of focusing on bringing more local food in Vermont schools, the focus should be on building a case for universal free lunch and equitable access to nutritional food. Access to nutritional food is a basic human right and especially so for children. The discussion of local food in schools highlights not only these issues of equity, hunger, and nutrition but also brings issues surrounding agriculture, environmental awareness, and the surrounding community into our local schools. Unique opportunities abound to extend our ideas of education from classrooms into the larger community with innovative and creative community field studies and on-farm educational opportunities.

In the last few months, our national media has been blasting headlines about alarming rates of obesity, our country's obsessions with fast food and the sloth-like exercise habits of our countrymen. There is certainly reason to worry. The 1999-2000 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), using BMI data, estimates that 15% of children and adolescents aged 6-19 are overweight, an increase by 4% from 1988-1994 statistics, and another 15% of children in that age range at risk.<sup>xli</sup> Nearly 1/3 of American adults are now classified as obese. As CDC director Dr. Julie Gerberding points out, "One of the most significant concerns from a public health perspective is that we know a lot of children who are overweight grow up to be overweight or obese adults, and thus are at greater risk for some major health problems such as heart disease and diabetes."<sup>xlii</sup>

## HEALTH & NUTRITION EDUCATION

A recent study conducted in California found that participation in classroom nutrition education was positively related to both healthier eating and increased physical activity. It also found that lower consumption of fruits and vegetables was positively correlated with higher obesity rates<sup>xliii</sup>. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast have higher academic performance than those that do not. And we know that children are taking responsibility for their own food consumption outside of school. The same California study found that 47% of students prepare their own after-school snacks, 41% make evening snacks, and 40% prepare their own breakfasts. Children have a large amount of agency in controlling what they eat, and schools have a unique opportunity not only to educate about healthy food choices in the classroom, but also by example and through conscientious decision making and modeling in the cafeteria. We could get children thinking about, more interested in, and eating more nutritious food if we use local agricultural

resources and hands-on experiential education in creative ways to include community members, farmers and parents. This would empower children with choices and methods to improve their own nutrition.

Researchers at Texas A & M University discovered that when 4- and 5- year olds spent about 30 minutes per week planting and tending to a garden, they became less likely to refuse vegetables when offered to them, especially those vegetables that they were growing. They also increased their preference for green beans after spending 8 weeks working in a garden (planting, watering, weeding, and doing some composting) that had green beans in it. Study author Saundra G. Lorenz concluded that bringing young children to gardens may be an easy way to get them to like vegetables and they may be more willing to try unfamiliar types.<sup>xliv</sup> It is clear to me, from many conversations I've had with people working with school food, and from studies like these, that making purchasing changes in schools will have very little effect on children's eating habits and nutrition, and will be unsustainable economically, if children are not eating this new local produce. It is also clear that using local food that looks visibly different or is clearly fresher is a good way to get children interested in eating more healthy foods.

## Economic

### SCHOOLS AS MARKETS

As discussed above, school food provides a potentially lucrative market for farmers. Nationwide, there are 53 million students who eat in school cafeterias every day, and school food service is a \$16 billion market. In Vermont, in 2001, the total operating cost for School Food Service Programs was \$27,861,826. Of that, \$12,352,276 (44% of total costs) was used to purchase

food<sup>xlv</sup>. The potential economic impact of entering this market is quite large, especially when considering the formation of eating habits and preferences that last well into adulthood and can affect adult consumers. There are many companies and corporations trying to capture large shares of this market, and it seems prudent to consider the way farmers and local food processors could enter this market as well.

## Building & Strengthening Community

### SCHOOLS WITHIN COMMUNITIES

Schools are in a strong position to address issues of local food on many levels. Classroom curricula, cafeteria environments and food programs, and community-based educational ventures such as farm visits and field studies provide three powerful avenues to educate children about food, nutrition, and agriculture issues. Schools have the potential to affect changes in student's home environments. Kids take home what they are learning in schools, and have the power to influence the buying and eating habits of their parents. Schools are often natural community centers, bringing together children and parents and extended family from all parts of a community.

### EQUITY, JUSTICE, ACCESS, & FOOD

Rights to food access, food equity, and social justice are also issues that are inherently part of food security programs (including farm to school connections), but must be addressed with an awareness and an understanding of community perceptions and realities surrounding them. Often, community food security projects, and their underlying ideas, as put so succinctly by Michelle L. Mascarenhas, "speak especially well to highly educated, middle-class people, the vast majority of

whom are white"<sup>xlvi</sup>. Many of the people working in the farm-to-school movement fit squarely in this socio-economic and racial grouping, especially in Vermont, a very white state. This argument suggests that there are many people who feel no identification with farm-to-school movements because they don't believe these programs will affect their lives in any way. The challenge becomes to have farm-to-school programs rooted in and developed from widespread community support among farmers, parents, teachers and food service personnel, as well as students.

Socio-economic divisions among school children are visible and talked about, often stigmatized, around issues of school lunch. Students know who among their classmates are eligible for free or reduced lunch (determined by a national standard of family income). If the quality, nutritional content, or type of food served in cafeterias varies dramatically from the bag lunches brought from homes, and access to each type of food is limited by the student's ability to pay, we are setting our children on an unequal educational playing field from a very young age. School food, I argue, becomes a very politically charged topic, and certainly indicative of power dynamics in schools. School administrators and educational policy makers know this as well.

At a recent in-service day, my parents, who are both Vermont public school teachers, were presented with the results of an academic achievement test and the results were divided into groupings based on eligibility for free- and reduced- prices for the school food program. Performance results varied dramatically between these groupings. I highlight this not to prove a direct causal relationship between school food and school performance, but to lead to another line of questioning. We know that children eligible for free and reduced lunch are performing at lower academic levels than those who do not qualify. We also know that those who are eligible for free and reduced lunch have much higher participation levels in school food programs (77% for free and 64% for reduced lunch) than those who do not (39%<sup>xlvii</sup>). Are we then, further exacerbating

educational disparities by serving foods of questionable nutritional value to children who are already performing at a lower level than the majority of the peers?

The quality of school food (although often casually criticized) has not raised much concern from upper- and middle-class parents in this nation. Instead of fighting to change a bureaucratic and complicated food system, parents with time and means can simply opt out of the school food programs and send their children with food of their own choosing, or utilize the school food program on some days and not others. Other families do not have this luxury, and this inequity deserves our attention. If school food were of higher quality, more of those students who currently bring their lunch might choose school lunch instead, reducing this classism in food choice.

## Environmental Sustainability

### EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY & VERMONT STATE STANDARDS

Finally, there is clear evidence that from an educational philosophy standpoint, the State of Vermont is already committed to many of the ideas associated with local food, and to teaching about values such as sustainability and sense of place. The Vermont Department of Education published Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities in the Fall of 2000<sup>xlviii</sup>, with aims to improve student learning. The standards will be used to provide a structure for standards-based curriculum, a basis for the development of comprehensive assessment systems, and to make explicit what might be included in a statewide assessment of student learning.

The standards most directly relevant to issues of local food, as I see it, are listed on the next page. These are listed as Vital Results standards, "which are the responsibility of all teachers in all fields of knowledge", and count the fulfillment of field of knowledge standards (organized by subject area)

to be successful. In the appendix, I have included the full frameworks of evidence, organized by grade level, to measure that standards are being met. Excerpts from these standards follow.

## FRAMEWORK OF STANDARDS AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### **Sustainability**

3.9 Students make decisions that demonstrate understanding of natural and human communities, the ecological, economic, political, or social systems within them, and awareness of how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of these interrelated systems. This is evident when students:

- 3.9.d. Explore local natural and human communities (e.g., vernal pools, farms, mines, cities), identify the systems within them, and what is required for these communities to be sustained (*grades PreK-4*);
- 3.9.bb. Collect data in order to investigate and analyze how personal consumption patterns affect the sustainability of natural and human communities (e.g., buying local and imported apples in Vermont) (*grades 5-8*);
- 3.9.dd. Demonstrate understanding that natural and human communities are part of larger systems (e.g., farms as part of the regional watershed and food systems for cities, a mine as part of the regional economy) and that the interrelationships between all systems (*grades 5-12*);
- 3.9.aaa. Prepare an impact assessment (which includes ecological, economic, political, and social factors) that analyzes the effect of a particular product's or project's life-cycle on the sustainability of a natural and human community (*grades 9-12*); and
- 3.9.bbb. Collect data in order to investigate and analyze the sustainability of societal consumption patterns that have direct and indirect impact on the local and global environment, economy, and society (e.g., fuel efficiency of vehicles (*grades 9-12*)).

### **Service**

4.1 Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students:

- 4.1.a. Plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs (*grades PreK-12*); and
- 4.1.b. Use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations (*grades PreK-12*).

## Understanding Place

4.6 Students demonstrate understanding of the relationship between their local environment and community heritage and how each shapes their lives. This is evident when students:

- 4.6.a. Demonstrate knowledge and history of local environments, (e.g., soils, forests, watersheds) and how their community relies on its environment to meet its needs (e.g., nutritional, recreational, economic, emotional well being) (*PreK-4*);
- 4.6.b. Describe the role of agriculture, forestry, and industry on the development of their local community over time (*PreK-4*);
- 4.6.c. Demonstrate knowledge of past and present community heritage (e.g., traditions, livelihoods, customs, stories, changing demographics, land use) and recognize ways in which this heritage influences their lives (*PreK-4*).
- 4.6.aa. Apply knowledge of local environment through active participation in local environmental projects (e.g., work with local planning board to analyze existing agricultural land use from a variety of perspectives) (*Grades 5-12*);
- 4.6.bb. Explore the interrelationship between the local environment and the local community culture (e.g., settlement patterns, tourism, hunting, agriculture) (*Grades 5-8*);
- 4.6.bbb. Evaluate and predict how current trends (e.g., environmental, economic, social, political, technological) will affect the future of their local community and environment (*Grades 9-12*).

In addition, in the Learning Opportunities section, recommendations for practices to support all students in achieving the framework of standards state clearly that every student needs:

"Equitable and prompt access to accurate materials and current resources (in addition to textbooks) that are appropriate for learning goals". The first example listed suggests: "Frequent opportunities to engage the community as a resource and a learning laboratory (e.g., learning from artists, businesses, health-care providers, town records, town meeting, community theater, the local landfill)."

It is evident from this list that there are many creative ways the issue of local food sourcing, agricultural field study, and related farm-to-school connections could address these standards deemed important and appropriate for Vermont school children. In the following section, I will



outline my vision for such a system, and point to pieces already in place that could contribute to dynamic, community based school food programs in Vermont.

### **SCHOOL FOOD PURCHASING POLICY**

Both National and State governments and policy makers are starting to recognize the potential importance of local purchasing for farmers. This is essential to draw attention to issues of local purchasing and can provide much needed funds for a transitional period in thinking and in purchasing for schools.

#### National Policy

Section 4303 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, titled "Purchases of Locally Produced Foods"<sup>xlix</sup>, requires the Secretary to encourage those institutions participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to purchase local foods for school meal programs where "practicable and appropriate". The Section also requires the Secretary to advise participating institutions of relevant local purchasing policy on a website, and provide \$400,000 a year for fiscal years 2003-2007 as startup grants for not more than 200 institutions to defray initial costs incurred by increased local purchasing ("equipment, materials, and storage facilities, and similar costs").

Funding will need to be appropriated by a separate appropriations bill, and no money will be made available until this bill is passed. Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy's office is working on policy for this money to be released through the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill and then to try to secure some of the funding for VT schools. Leahy's office, through Food Research and Action Center, is also trying to reinstate a School Facilities Program that was cut during the Reagan era

which would provide funds for schools to upgrade facilities. For schools with inadequate kitchens or equipment to deal with fresh local products that can require more kitchen preparation (i.e. chopping) or additional storage, these funds could be invaluable.<sup>1</sup>

A recent pilot program funded through the 2002 Farm Bill<sup>h</sup> is providing *free* fruits and vegetables to 25 schools in each of four pilot states (Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan) and on one Indian Reservation in an attempt to induce children to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. \$6 million has been made available from Section 32 funds to carry out this program.

Stan Garnett, head of the Child Nutrition Division for USDA, has asked for farmer contacts in these four states as potential sources for the fruit and vegetables. Vermont should monitor the results of this pilot closely for successes and failures and should lobby to participate should the program continue and expand. Assessing and strengthening our local distribution infrastructure to get Vermont farm fruits and vegetables to Vermont schools will be invaluable should funds become available to purchase fresh local produce.

## State of Vermont

The Vermont State government has also recognized and made a commitment to strengthening in-state markets through supporting local purchasing by state-funded institutions. Effective July 1, 2001, ACT NO. 39 (H.490) added "state funded institutions" (which clearly include schools) to be included in the following statute encouraging Vermont institutions to purchase Vermont product. The full text of the current statute follows.

### Vermont State Statutes, Title 6, Chapter 207, § 4601 Vermont products

When purchasing agricultural products, the secretary of administration, the commissioner of buildings and general services and any state-funded institutions shall, other considerations being equal, purchase

products grown or produced in Vermont when available and when they meet quality standards established by the commissioner of agriculture, food and markets.

An Act Relating to Challenge Grants for Schools Displaying Exemplary Nutrition Practices<sup>lii</sup>, drafted in February of 2001, passed unanimously (with one person abstaining) out of the Senate Agricultural committee but stalled in the Senate Appropriations committee and was NOT passed into law. This Act acknowledged that the current structure of food procurement for Vermont's public schools presents obstacles to those institutions using Vermont Agricultural products. It further stated:

The legislature further finds that the use of Vermont agricultural products in schools not only supports the agricultural sector of our economy, but the economy as a whole, and helps preserve the culture of Vermont. In addition, the use of Vermont agricultural products in schools provides opportunity for educating students about exemplary nutrition practices and the role of Vermont agriculture, historically and at present, in making Vermont unique. In order to encourage this practice, the legislature finds that schools need incentives to discover ways to integrate Vermont agricultural products into their menus and curriculums.

The act called for appropriating \$7,500 from the general fund to the Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Markets, in consultation with the Department of Education nutrition program director, and Ag-In-The-Classroom to set up a challenge grant program and award grants to 15 schools which display exemplary nutrition practices and facilitate the use of Vermont agricultural products. This is good first step towards state involvement in local purchasing for schools, though such small amounts of funding may be more frustrating and burdensome than helpful. Unfortunately this act was not passed, nor were funds appropriated. Similar legislation needs to be adopted and funded to show financial support for schools making the effort to buy locally.

### District and School Level

There are individual schools in Vermont that have taken their own initiative to draft district or school-wide food policy. Fairfield Town School District in Fairfield, Vermont adopted a Food Policy on August 13, 2001, stating in their introductory *Responsibilities* and *Mission* sections that:

The Board of Education recognizes the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. The Board also recognizes the school's role, as part of the larger community, to promote family health, sustainable agriculture and environmental restoration.

The Board of Education recognizes that the sharing of food is a fundamental experience for all peoples, a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity, and an excellent bridge for building friendships and intergenerational bonds.

The educational mission is to improve the health of the entire community by teaching students and families ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. The mission shall be accomplished through nutrition education, garden experiences, the food served in schools and core academic content in the classroom.

Fairfield has also included local purchasing stipulations in their contract with the Abbey Catering Group that provides their school food (as well as school food for a handful of other schools in Vermont). The Abbey Catering group has agreed to purchase local food at wholesale prices, and adapt menus and recipes (when feasible) to accommodate the seasonal availability of locally grown produce. They also agree to use Grade A Maple Syrup, and will purchase one gallon of syrup for the school for every gallon donated by another source.

I did not attempt to search for or obtain other school or district level policy, but have come to believe that it is essential to include the local Board of Education in this sort of school food transformation to secure a formal commitment of support, and additional funding, if necessary. I include the Fairfield Food Policy in Appendix D for reference, and point to the Berkeley Unified School District, that created one of the original school-wide food policies, for comparison and further reference.

## **FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

### Vermont

#### VT F.E.E.D PROGRAM

Created through a partnership between the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT), FoodWorks, and Shelburne Farms, the VT FEED (Food Education Every Day) program is in its second year of existence. Funded through a USDA Community Food Security Grant, the program focuses on developing 10-week farm, food, and nutrition standards-based curricula in elementary schools (K-6), and developing school-level plans to incorporate more local food into school food programs. To become a FEED school, a school must apply with a FEED leadership team to assure school-wide changes will be made with the assistance of the community. The team must include teachers across grade-levels, school administrators, two local farmers, a community member, and a kitchen manager or food service director. Anyone can start forming a FEED team, but all representatives must be convened and committed before the application to FEED is submitted.

The school FEED teams and FEED staff come together in the summer for a five day summer institute supporting teachers in developing standards-based educational units and planning for a school-wide culminating event at the end of the ten-week fall curriculum. The institutes also spark brainstorming between teachers, administrators, and kitchen managers about purchasing and menu changes to support the food-based curriculum. The institutes certainly bring food, agricultural and nutrition issues to a school-wide forum. FEED staff remain committed to the program throughout the year, offering assistance as part of the teaching teams, and working closely with kitchen managers to identify barriers and possibilities to increasing local purchasing. The FEED program

has a one-year curricular commitment to each school and a three-year commitment to work with kitchen managers to examine and change purchasing practices.

After two successful pilot programs at Jay/Westfield Elementary School and Starksboro's Robinson School, the FEED program has added Waitsfield and Milton Elementary Schools as FEED schools for 2002-2003. The FEED executive team is looking to expand the program to 13 elementary schools throughout the state, and develop publications to allow portions of the FEED program to be replicated. The program is currently applying for additional funding through the USDA SARE grant program.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

It is important to point out that there are already people working in Vermont schools who are doing an amazing job addressing child nutrition issues, bringing agriculture into the classroom and children onto farms. There are cooks and food service directors who are working hard, often with tight budgets and limited resources, to find nutritious meals that children will eat and enjoy. It is the responsibility of all of us, as parents, taxpayers, and citizens to address the issues surrounding food in schools. There is nothing productive in placing blame on teachers, cooks and food service directors. We must help provide them with resources and information; and just as importantly, listen carefully and ask for their expertise on the day-to-day demands and limitations of their jobs, and the specific conditions and opportunities within their schools.

There are many unique and exciting things happening in Vermont schools directly addressing local food in schools. Some schools consciously buy local milk because local dairy providers are easier to deal with and provide better service<sup>liii</sup>, other schools buy a majority of their produce from a

local produce distribution trucking company that aims to source locally when possible because they believe the quality of produce is better. Some teachers are growing vegetables in school gardens with their classes and harvesting class-wide healthy snacks<sup>liv</sup>. A parent and part-time school nurse set up a healthy snack program at her school three days a week, partnering with a local food co-op to purchase food at cost and use their delivery systems and cooler space<sup>lv</sup>. One 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom teacher in Waitsfield created a curriculum where student grew their own tomatoes and then made salsa as a class<sup>lvi</sup>. Another school cook has made it a priority to source as much locally as possible and lobbies her School Board every year for additional funding to cover increased food costs; her lunch program is lauded state-wide and parents and community members regularly eat at the school<sup>lvii</sup>. There are undoubtedly more snapshots like these in Vermont, providing inspiration and sources of information that ought to be shared throughout the state.

## Nationwide

There are many farm-to-school programs throughout the nation, and a core of people working on these issues. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to go into detail about all of these programs, I would like to highlight a few organizations doing good work that deserve further study. The Community Food Security Coalition<sup>lviii</sup> has taken a lead nationwide in organizing around these issues, and recently convened the first National Farm-to-Cafeteria conference in Seattle in October of 2002. The Berkeley, CA school district is often cited as a pioneering farm-to-school and locally focused program, and programs in New York State, Hartford, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, and Florida have provided me insight about the workings of these types of programs. For an overview of these programs, I recommend Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids<sup>lix</sup>.



## Current State of Vermont School Food

---

To understand how we might be able to increase the amount of local food in schools and make a real transition to locally based school food systems we need informed, accurate information describing the current situation with school food funding and sourcing. The current system is full of complexities and involves many agencies, sourcing and distribution systems, as I describe below.

### **SCHOOL FOOD FUNDING**

To understand what food is being served in Vermont schools and where it comes from, it is crucial to understand the funding structures that control how school lunch programs receive money and assistance and what conditions or structures are associated with that money<sup>lx</sup>. Schools receive funding in two main ways, through local channels and through federal channels, detailed below. In Vermont, roughly 66% of all funding comes from local sources, with the other 34% coming from federal reimbursement<sup>lxi</sup>.

#### Local Funds

Direct income from cash sales of school lunches (student & adult). There are reduced price meals and free meals for students who qualify based on federally established family income guidelines. Average lunch prices charged by schools in 2001 were as follows<sup>lxii</sup>:

- Full Price Student- \$1.61
- Reduced Price Student- \$0.40
- Adult- \$2.09

A la carte sales- For many schools, a la carte sales are critically important financially, and their sales directly fund school meals. One food service director of a large program loses money every year on school lunch and breakfast, but keeps his program afloat and in the black with a la carte sales, which he marks up as much as 100% or 110%<sup>lxiii</sup>. These a la carte sales do not have to adhere to government nutritional standards and are often much more "snack foods" than nutritious options.

School district support- This varies by district. Some schools receive little to no funding this way. There are also schools in Vermont where the school cook makes a formal presentation each year to the school board to secure additional funding<sup>lxiv</sup>.

## Federal Funds

A Federal Cash Reimbursement is given to schools for all meals served, to subsidize free and reduced meals as well as paid ones. The 2002-2003 reimbursement rates are as follows<sup>lxv</sup>, and are based on the number of meals served the previous month:

- Paid Meals- \$0.20 per meal
- Reduced Price Meal- \$1.74 per meal
- Free Meal- \$2.14 per meal

State Match Program- Under federal regulations, states must provide matching funds to support the school lunch program, based on the funding received the previous year. This is paid in one lump sum, usually in October, and roughly equals \$0.05 per lunch.

## SCHOOL FOOD SOURCING

### The Commodity System

In addition to federal cash reimbursements, the federal government supports the national school lunch program with an allotment of entitlement to commodity foods. The commodity food program has the dual purpose of guaranteeing a market for agricultural products and surplus and providing food at low or no cost to schools. The amount of the entitlement is determined by multiplying number of meals served in the previous year by a yearly-determined commodity rate. In 2002, that rate was \$0.155 for every meal served<sup>lxvi</sup>.

### AVAILABLE COMMODITY FOODS

Commodity entitlement gives schools a commodity credit with which to order food from the state commodity list. Once they exhaust their entitlement amount for the year, they can no longer receive food items from the commodity program. There are two types of commodity foods, *Type A* and *Type B*, and schools obtain them in different ways, though they both use entitlement allotments. *Type A* commodities include meat, fish, poultry, fruits and vegetables, and *Type B* commodities include grains, cereals, cheese, milk, oils, and peanut products. The list of food expected to be available for each type of commodity can be found on the USDA website<sup>lxvii</sup>, and is included in Appendix B, although individual Vermont schools do not actually have that many choices or available products. There are also *Bonus Foods* which can be *Type A* or *Type B* commodities and are free to schools (above and beyond the commodity entitlement). *Bonus Foods* are made available to schools when there is a USDA surplus. As of June, 2002, the USDA was NOT planning to offer

any *Type A* Bonus commodities and was planning to offer only Nonfat Dry Milk (instantized or nonfortified) as a *Type B* commodity<sup>lxviii</sup>.

A national list of available commodity food is released to the responsible state office. Holly Peake, the coordinator of donated foods for the state, who works out of the Office of Economic Opportunity in Waterbury, trims down the list and determines what foods will be available in Vermont. Trucking, distribution and administrative ease all contribute to this shortened list. Holly makes decisions about which products to make available to Vermont schools through informal surveys and based on what she thinks and is told that children like to eat. She also takes the price of products into account as she makes these decisions. It is Holly's job to make the system efficient by assuring that full trailers of product come to the central storage and distribution hub in Plainfield, VT, where they are stored until schools make their own arrangements to have them delivered to the school.

Once Holly has chosen what *Type A* commodities will be available in Vermont, she orders an amount for the entire state and uses a computer program to allocate amounts to schools based on their entitlement share. Schools receive a confirmation notice (see Appendix B) about specific products and quantities that have been allotted to them, and they can refuse or request more or less of a product if they so desire. *Bonus Foods* are also allocated with this system. Holly tries to choose a diverse selection of food items, typically offering a few varieties of meat, a potato option, and one or two fruit items.

*Type B* commodities operate on a slightly different time scale. Holly sends an order form to schools for a three-month period, three months in advance of when it will be delivered. (For example, food is ordered in June to be delivered and used during September, October, and November). I have included a sample form in Appendix B)<sup>lxix</sup>. *Bonus foods* are also included on the

order form in this example, highlighting the options schools have in requesting more or less of certain bonus items.

School food directors do have some flexibility to make different choices within the commodity system, but often their choices are limited and they have very little say in what commodity food they receive. As the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine reported in Fall 2001<sup>lxx</sup>, the five most commonly served commodity foods in schools they surveyed were ground beef, breaded chicken nuggets or patties, cheese, canned fruit, and flour. Three of these five are high in fat and cholesterol; and the PCRM asserts that schools are often left with surplus high-fat meats, whole milk, cheeses and butter that other consumers are not purchasing.

#### COMMODITY COMMENTS

Schoolchildren and those who prepare and serve their food are certainly at the whim of the national agricultural market. In the past year, newspapers reported that catfish would be distributed to schools through the National Lunch Program. This suggests more a surplus of farmed catfish in this country than student clamoring for or the nutritional merits of the fish. Catfish is environmentally a smart choice and has lower amounts of bio-accumulated toxins since it feeds so low on the food chain, but accompanying education is needed to spread that message to teachers, parents, and students. The commodity food system seems to be a receiving ground for market surplus (often highly processed products from the dairy and meat industry) rather than a well thought out, planned system of nutritional delivery to 27 million children every day. Can it be both considering what foods are available to schools through the commodities program? Of nearly 110 commodity foods on USDA's national expected list for 2003, only 5 were fresh fruit or vegetables and the only vegetable was white potatoes.

Because commodity foods are very cheap and schools lose their entitlement amounts if they don't use them, it is a foolish business decision for school food directors to refuse items such as meats and potatoes or refuse free *bonus foods*. Many schools are struggling, under school district mandates to make their programs self-supporting, and the commodities food system represents virtually free capital. This explains why school lunch menus are often formed around chicken nuggets and tater tots, and how the commodity system frames the composition of lunch programs throughout the country.

#### FRESH FOODS THROUGH THE COMMODITIES SYSTEM?

The USDA and Department of Defense, which provides much of the transportation infrastructure for the project, teamed up in 1994 to create the DoD Fresh program in an attempt to bring more fruits and vegetables to schools. The program has made more fresh fruits and vegetables available to schools, although the impact has been small. In Vermont, a certain amount of *Type A* funds (see explanation above) is set aside for the DoD Fresh program and deliveries are made each month. DoD operates as a broker for the Northeast region (VT, NH, ME, MA, RI) and purchases the fruits and vegetables from wholesalers, generally from Boston produce markets. Storage and timely delivery has proved difficult, and perhaps only half of Vermont schools use the program. At the start of the year, when schools have more commodity entitlements available, Vermont might receive 300 cases of each item. By the end of the year, as schools use up their entitlements, that number might drop to 100.

Unlike other *Type A* commodities which are delivered unless refused, schools must call if they want the produce through the DoD Fresh program, and due to the small quantities delivered, the produce each school receives through the program would not last through one month. Baby carrots

are popular items through this program, and apples are generally well received by students. Food service directors have had more trouble with pears (they don't store well, go bad quickly, and kids don't eat them), and Holly does not order more delicate vegetables such as lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower because they do not keep through lags in delivery between purchase and arrival at schools.

### Direct Purchasing

Schools cannot use reimbursement money or local funds to purchase additional commodity foods, and direct purchasing from vendors of the schools' choice make up the majority of schools spending. Different studies have found that 20-30% of all food served in schools nationwide is sourced from the commodities program, while the other 70-80% is purchased directly by the school district<sup>lxxi</sup>.

In Vermont, many schools purchase directly from Burlington Food Service, Sysco, Hood/Booth, Bouyea Fassetts and Bonacorsi. Some schools are using smaller distribution companies such as Black River Produce, that makes a concerted effort to have local produce when it is available. There are also a handful of schools that are currently purchasing directly from farmers with handshake or verbal agreements and direct farm-to-school delivery systems. These direct farm-to-school connections seem to work much better in smaller schools, where there is more flexibility in menus and where less produce is needed because of the smaller scale of the lunch program. Larger programs tend to prefer the larger product availability and delivery options of the larger companies.

A group of 30 schools in Vermont, including some of the biggest school districts, have joined together to form the Food Service Directors Association (FSDA), to increase their purchasing power. These schools put out a call for bids each year (or multi-year period) for one company to meet all of its members' yearly projected needs in three categories: bread, milk, and groceries. Contracts are then awarded to the company that can best meet the needs of all members of the association with cost, quality, and availability. A few schools have joined the association yet maintain independent rights to contract with companies of their choosing for certain sub-categories. Burlington Food Service (BFS) currently has the Directors Association grocery contract. Terms of the contract include a stipulation that the schools must purchase 90% of all their grocery needs from BFS. As a rewarding incentive, each quarter, BFS pays each school back with a check in the amount equal to 1.5% of all their purchases. The BFS contract also stipulates that produce will be priced to schools at a set percentage over market value, effectively capping the markup increment for schools, and ensuring BFS profits regardless of market prices.



## Envisioning A Local Shift- Key Findings

---

It is clear from the previous section that commodity foods often dictate food selection and menu creation and that schools are under a great deal of financial pressure to find food at the lowest prices with the most convenient delivery systems. Where could local food come into this mix? Could local food come into schools through the existing commodity system and by expanding government programs like DoD fresh? Should distribution companies like Burlington Foods find ways for local food to replace non-local alternatives whenever possible? Will these sorts of efforts truly benefit local farmers, realizing that DoD contracts and sales to Burlington Foods often represent wholesale contracts and clearly favor larger food producers that can provide a large quantity of food at low prices? Is this type of shift really possible?

I believe it really is. Less than 60 years ago, there was no system of food in schools. It is reasonable to believe that we could have a more local system of food in the next 30. It is clear that the commodity food system has a huge impact on food in schools. Yet only 30% of school food is commodity food, and there are certainly many commodity food items not grown by Vermont farmers that are not available within the state, and store and travel well such as flour, peanuts and peanut butter, rice, oats, cornmeal, and beans. Citrus and other warm-weather fruits are other examples. Local food supporters must make the effort necessary to understand the intricacies of the commodity food system, and continue to put pressure on their elected officials to pressure the USDA to offer more healthy choices through the commodity system. When meals are formed around commodity chicken patties and french fries, prospects for local food looks bleak. Merely substituting local lettuce & tomato for existing imported vegetables as garnish or a side salad will have very little

impact on overall student health. To truly transform school food programs, the influence and product availability of commodity foods must change as well as changes in the way school food providers navigate commodity and local markets. The USDA is always under pressure to change the commodity food program in schools; in the past few years there has been a shift towards MORE processing, turning commodity chicken breasts into Tyson nuggets, or commodity flour and commodity berries into high-fat blueberry turnovers before they reach schools, for example<sup>lxxii</sup>. Counter-proposals are needed for changes that will help the health of our farms and our children, and not continue to let the food industry dictate what our children are eating.

## **STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **The Potential for Vermont Products in Schools**

Vermont currently grows, taps, bakes, cooks and processes many foods that could be integrated into school food programs. While I have focused primarily on fresh produce and dairy products thus far, I want also to highlight the opportunities for other products, such as bread, salsas, pastas, and the like to be incorporated into schools. As school food policy should support Vermont small farmers, it can also support Vermont small business and encourage the development of Value Added Agricultural Products, a priority according to the Vermont Department of Agriculture.

These Value Added Products could be used in schools year round, as could Vermont apples, onions and potatoes (from long-term cold storage), maple syrup, honey, meats, milk, cheese, and dairy. There is huge seasonal potential for fresh produce, especially in September and October. In many cases, schools food managers are unaware of the availability of local foods, and where they can be obtained. The further development of publications such as a Harvest Calendar or Directory of

Vermont Products (samples included in Appendix C), which Elizabeth Zipern and I worked on this summer, could be very helpful for schools that already have the desire to increase local sourcing, and to show others just what is possible!

### Community Interest and Desire for Change

Despite all the roadblocks, many groups in Vermont have expressed an interest in farm-to-school connections, and most people I talked with seem to think it's a good idea. Food service directors are interested in buying locally (15 of 38 surveyed were interested in buying locally grown fresh produce), although they are skeptical of higher costs and difficulty with distribution.<sup>lxxiii</sup> Parents, teachers, administrators, health officials, and cafeteria managers want to see children's eating habits change. Students have their own discontent with school food programs. The idea of supporting local food and helping kids make connections between the food they eat, the performance of their bodies, and the economic impact on their community intuitively makes sense to people working in education. Teachers and school cooks become excited upon hearing about these changes and often immediately contribute their own ideas. One woman teacher I talked with about my work was curious if there was a way to encourage healthier bag lunches. The challenge is working within time and resource limited situations to actualize the possibilities. In some communities, there is not widespread consciousness that local food is linked to local economy, children's health and local agriculture, and groups working to push local ideas must do a lot of educating to make the case for local food, especially as it often means higher expenditures for schools.

Cafeteria managers want fresh, local produce at good prices, and pilot programs have shown that making simple changes such as replacing iceberg lettuce with local romaine have made changes

in what kids are eating and how lunch programs are perceived. In a short survey answered by nearly 40 school kitchen managers, over 1/2 of respondents said they were interested in buying local lettuce while about 1/3 expressed interest in buying local tomatoes and cucumbers<sup>lxxiv</sup>.

### Child Nutrition in Crisis

I approached this research thinking that the primary reason to increase local sourcing in schools would be to increase marketing opportunities of and appreciation for local farms. I still believe there are great opportunities for farms to be positively impacted by farm-to-school programs, but I have come to believe that using local food sourcing to contribute to changing feeding and eating habits in schoolchildren has an even greater immediate importance and much more political support at this point in time. Finding ways to ensure that farm-to-school programs help change children's eating habits, and focusing on ways to make local equate to healthier are essential for continued support of these programs.

### Vermont Leads the Way

Vermont, through the FEED program, is leading the Nation in developing farm-to-school programs in rural areas, which means there are many eyes on Vermont to see how to make these connections, and address cost and distribution mechanisms in such a rural area with such a short growing season. There is great potential for Vermont to be a trendsetter and developer of ideas and information for other states to follow. People working in the field must continue to dream big and envision creative solutions to strengthen local food connections. Year-round greenhouses,

additional local processing and storage, and unique partnerships with private and public organizations could help construct a site-specific, sustainable, carefully tailored food system.

## POLITICAL SUPPORT

Vermont is fortunate to have the support of Senator Patrick Leahy and Representative Bernie Sanders who have taken clear action and made formal commitments to pursuing the ideas of farm-to-school connections. Sanders strongly supported an initial farm-to-school meeting in the state with an undersecretary from the USDA in the mid-1990s. Leahy and Senator James Jeffords were original sponsors of the Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act in 1994 (S.1614, 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress) that further reformed the School Lunch & Breakfast Program. All three politicians have great potential to continue to push for reform at the Federal level, which is much needed to overhaul the problematic commodity food system.

### Experiential Education/School & Community Gardens

Visible and exciting initiatives have the greatest potential to sustain themselves and affect lasting change in a climate and culture of food in our schools. Gardens, community service projects, and exciting experiential hands-on education are a necessary complement to changing purchasing practices. On-site school gardens and greenhouses become a school-wide resource: used for science and biology lessons, space for reflection and art and writing, a hands-on classroom for planting, growing and harvesting, as well as a food source for the school. It is educationally very powerful to have kids see the actual progression of planting to harvesting and cooking of a carrot; working in the greenhouse and then eating the fruits of their own labor. Students could potentially develop business

and marketing ideas surrounding their produce, or help neighboring farmers do so. Student groups or classes could help harvest food and then process it (freezing or canning) to be used later in the school year. Farm visits and field studies that are interactive and participatory will have much more lasting educational impact on food and nutrition awareness than reviewing the food pyramid while sitting at desks in classrooms. In addition, Vermont state standards support this community based educational style. Teachers cannot be expected to just add this food and nutrition education on top of everything else they are responsible for teaching and testing on. But there ought to be ways to incorporate this type education into science, social studies, math, and other existing subject areas.

### Unique Community Partnerships

There is exciting potential for community specific partnerships between private enterprises and public schools. I think of the Red Hen Bakery interested in taking schools' commodity flour and baking it into bread for the schools<sup>lxxv</sup>. I think of George Schenk of American Flatbread who has held community dinners to raise money to supplement the cost of having all-organic weeks at the cafeterias of neighboring schools<sup>lxxvi</sup>. I think of the Vermont Fresh Network that facilitates partnerships between restaurant chefs and farms throughout the state<sup>lxxvii</sup>. There are existing partnerships to learn from and many more that could be created with a little ingenuity and nurturing.

### Classroom/Community/Cafeteria: Success with the FEED Approach

FEED's integrated approach focusing on "the three C's" of Classroom, Community and Cafeteria seems to be reaching a point where it could be replicated state-wide and in other rural communities across the country. While more baseline and incremental data are needed to evaluate

long term changes in purchasing practices and children's eating habits, the FEED approach is having success pointing out that kitchen managers have three key areas of focus and is attempting to address each area of concern with an element of their program:

### **Serving food that children want to eat, that also meets national nutritional requirements**

FEED recognizes that children's eating preferences can be influenced with education, especially experiential and taste-test based, and that if children are not eating local food, local food will not last in schools. The FEED team local purchasing coordinator has started helping to develop *classroom* educational curriculum and actually teach short "lettuce lessons" to supplement cafeteria purchasing shifts.

### **Keeping participation rates high to maintain reimbursement and entitlement income**

To increase participation and solicit community support, FEED is recognizing the importance of building *community* and parent support for school food changes. Since local food often proves to be more expensive than traditional sourcing, it is crucial to have parents and *community* members support these shifts, and support the risk on the shoulders of the food service directors in changing food and menus. They are working to bring the importance of community food systems and issues of local food security to the community through their work in the schools.

### **Cost of Food**

For a true shift in local food sourcing, local food must be made affordable and able to fit the limited budgets of schools, not requiring schools to shoulder additional costs. FEED is attempting to

address this through looking at state and national policies and to the commodity food system for potential financial support for local food.

The idea of farm-to-school programs is an inherently multi-faceted one. To work towards successful implementation requires multi-faceted initiatives. There is no simple solution. These issues are very complex, and their main goal includes transformation of our food systems more than just incremental change. For now, though incremental steps will help work towards that transformation. Along the way, we should continue to ask ourselves the big questions:

**What do we want to be feeding our nation's children?**

**What culture of food do we want to be fostering in our schools?**

**What messages are we sending children by the way we treat food?**

**What sort of farming do we want to be supporting?**

**What are the environmental consequences of our choices?**

## **BARRIERS**

It is important to reiterate that all schools are in different places with the amount of current local sourcing, and interest in (or knowledge of) the potential for increasing local food use. Some need support and publicity for current practices, some need supporting educational curricula and classroom efforts to raise student interest in, and understanding of, local foods. Some need to know how to find local food and financial support to be able to purchase it. Some still need continued convincing that buying local is a good idea, and that kids do, in some cases, actually like vegetables. There are *many* barriers to increasing local food sourcing, both actual and perceived



(many of which I have already mentioned). Thorough understanding of these barriers is crucial to move forward. I outline some of the largest barriers below:

### Economic Barriers and Limited Local Distribution Systems

National School Lunch Program regulations require that any school food program that receives national funding must be not-for-profit. In addition, most school lunch programs are expected to be self-supporting with very little district support. School food directors often feel that they are always being tightly held to their own bottom line, which means making the most of the commodity food system and sourcing food as cheaply as possible. With current distribution channels, and because of economies of scale, local food can be hard to obtain in large quantities and is often more expensive than traditional national sourcing.

The Food Service Directors Association believes that bulk buying based on contract bids gives them the best economic advantage. They like the convenience of the ordering scheme they have arranged, and believe that there are no local suppliers that can meet their huge needs. Understandably, they want local food to be available through these more traditional channels of one call, one delivery, with no uncertainty about supply. There is also a perceived barrier that sourcing more food locally would mean more preparation time and in turn, more cafeteria labor, also increasing cafeteria costs. There are some counter arguments that more local food actually means less waste and can be *more* economical. However, there needs to be a much more extensive analysis of the true costs and benefits of local foods to make increased use of local food be an economically sound argument for schools.

Schools are doing the best they can (or the best they know how to do) with very limited income and resources. It is unfair to ask schools to shoulder the burden of this shift unless work is also done to increase their resources or purchasing options and pricing. Policy and funding work needs to be done to address this large barrier, and FEED and VDA can take the lead to make it happen.

### Unengaged Students and Communities

Marty Spaulding and other food service directors told me of their skepticism that kids will *eat* more nutritious foods, and these food service directors do not want to change menus and risk losing participation of students (reducing reimbursement and entitlement money) and putting their own programs in financial jeopardy. There is also a view that parents and communities won't justify additional spending for school food programs, when many schools are scrambling to find funds for critical classroom curricular items and more politically charged items such as sports and art. Students (and often parents) are notably absent from school food discussions. Through my experience with Vermont high school students this summer, I know there is a pool of students with concerns about healthy food, social justice, and the environment who have lots of energy to give and who want to be more actively involved in the decisions that affect their schools. Many of these students do not currently participate in school food programs because of choice, food quality, or other concerns, but could be called upon and welcomed into the discussion of how to improve school food.

## LOCAL OR ORGANIC?

There is also some skepticism that links local with organic and sees the farm-to-school movement as one that is drafted by upper-middle class environmentalists, imposed from above. Because the Northeast *Organic* Farming Association has taken much of the lead in exploring local food in Vermont, they must recognize and be careful not to alienate people who would otherwise be quite supportive of the idea. These same political dynamics, however, may make the local food issue much easier to discuss in wealthier communities where many people are consciously putting personal money into organic and local products in the home. FEED must be careful with language and make it clear whether local or organic is the goal. I have perceived their view to be that organic and local would be the ideal, but that local is a good first step. It does not seem to me that they are interested in replacing conventional lettuce from California or local lettuce with organic lettuce from California, and the long-term goal can definitely be local *and* organic. FEED just must be clear about its goals and methods to avoid unjustified criticism.

### Issues of Scale

There are clearly different circumstances and different purchasing realities for smaller and larger schools. Larger schools need larger quantities of food and need extensive delivery options. Larger schools tend to act much more like businesses and food is treated like any other business asset. In smaller schools, lunch programs feel much more like kitchens and have less of a business attitude, which translates into more flexible purchasing and delivery options. Smaller schools are much more open to the idea of direct farm to school delivery and often can be more flexible with seasonal produce. Larger schools trying to deliver over 1000 meals per day have much less room for

uncertainty in supply and delivery. This must be addressed when local food sourcing is approached at a statewide level. We should start with small schools and smaller partnerships and then scale up to the district and larger school level while developing distribution mechanisms to meet the needs of larger schools and districts.

### Lack of Statewide Coordination and Support

There are lots of people, across different sectors, interested in this issue in Vermont. Thus far, there has been very little communication between organizations that could contribute, and also benefit, from this program. FEED has taken the lead statewide and has initiated meetings with members of the Department of Agriculture, Child Nutrition Office, Office of Economic Opportunity, Senators and Representatives, farmers and businessmen to start an ongoing dialogue. FEED is also currently limited in its ability to work on the local purchasing issue, with only one person in a part time position who has is fully occupied working directly with FEED schools. A broader state picture needs to be developed, and agencies with resources and expertise such as VDA marketing specialists, and Holly Peake in the commodities office need to join the conversation and support FEED's community level work to cooperatively address the potential of local school food systems. There is certainly interest and momentum in this direction, and the ideas are very young.

### Inertia

A sense of inertia drives a notion that school food is just bad, will always be bad, and the system controlling it is too big to really change. It is easy to blame school cooks, lack of parental involvement, lack of time to eat, and poor quality food, and outside corporate influences for bad

school food and poor childhood nutrition. I see this as being tied very closely to feelings of alienation and not being engaged in school food systems, since for so many, it is easy to not be engaged and still be able to eat lunch. There is a lack of an alternative vision, and I hope this paper in some way can contribute to turning the tides in that regard.

A national Farm-to-School conference in Seattle last month built excitement and shared success stories from across the country for organizers and community food activists. Vermont needs to cultivate this excitement at the state level. School food service providers need to be recognized as crucial providers of nutrition and empowered with tools and assistance to implement changes in their school programs. An important first step is to generate excitement for the possibilities of changes in school food programs and translate that excitement into commitments and action plans for local change supported by state and federal initiatives.



## Conclusions & Recommendations

---

### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- Children spend a large percentage of their childhood years in schools, some eating nearly half of their weekly meals in schools. Lifelong eating habits are formed in these years, and given the impact of nutrition on cognitive performance and in-school attentiveness, schools have a significant responsibility as providers of nutrition.
- The culture of food created in schools, formed by the type of foods available, the time available to eat, and the atmosphere of school cafeterias, is a culture that promotes convenience foods, and contributes to a disconnect between the food we eat and the way it is grown and processed.
- Food and soda companies and the commodity food system often dictate what foods are available in schools and are motivated primarily by economic gain rather than nutritional goals.
- A dramatic health shift could be made by forming meals around seasonally and locally available foods, instead of around commodity foods. A shift to locally sourced food can contribute to positive changes in diets and eating habits by increasing fresh fruit and vegetable consumption, raising excitement about community fresh produce, and by taking advantage of the higher nutrient content of in-season produce.
- The potential exists to expand local markets for Vermont farmers by supplying schools with Vermont food. Providing markets for Vermont farmers helps preserve the agricultural heritage and working viability of small farms in Vermont. Increasing local food sourcing in schools could also spur additional economic benefits for the state through additional value added agricultural processing and job creation.
- Increasing local food sourcing in schools can contribute to increased community food security, lessen the environmental impacts of our food production systems, and give communities more control over the conditions under which their food is being produced.
- Ensuring a nutritious school lunch program is inherently an issue of social equity as needy children are more dependent on school lunches as providers of nutrition than other children.
- A simple purchasing shift in school will be ineffective (and perhaps even rejected) without supporting in-school communication, and complementary education curriculum. Experiential and community based education, on-site farm visits, taste test education, and the development of school gardens are proven educational tools to change not only the food served in school cafeterias, but the greater culture of food and nutritional habits of children.

- Many of the ideas driving local sourcing fit very closely into Vermont State Educational Standards that address sustainability, service, and understanding place.
- There is existing national and state-level policy that addresses local food sourcing in schools. However, a stronger government commitment and the allocation of funds are necessary to truly facilitate a shift in school purchasing.
- Schools do have a significant amount of money to spend directly as they choose, and there are a handful of distribution companies in Vermont that carry Vermont products. However, there is currently no statewide distribution mechanism in which schools can buy directly from farmers without going through a middleman. Development of this mechanism would greatly enhance the impact of local food sourcing on farmers.
- Because of economies of scale, local produce is often more expensive than commodity or traditionally sourced produce. For schools to buy food locally, this price gap must be addressed by policy or business arrangements.
- Bidding contracts often make local food sourcing more difficult because schools are locked into contracts with certain providers for multi-year periods. Some schools, however, have written local purchasing provisions into their contracts or opted out of certain contract pieces to leave room for more local sourcing.
- There is a strong interest in improving school food across the board in Vermont, and growing belief in the power of local food sourcing to contribute to this shift. Additional coordination between invested state agencies is necessary for further progress.
- National school food policy has a significant impact on the state level, most notably through the commodity food system. There is some room to choose what types of commodities come into Vermont through vocal pressures requesting more whole-food commodities and fresh, local or regional produce.
- There is a lot of good work being done within schools and through the FEED program to increase local food sourcing and this should be publicized through increased communication and publications. This publicity and marketing of local foods is necessary to increase school interest, state attention and spur action at all levels.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

My original question was: To what extent and in what ways should Vermont schools increase local food sourcing in their school food programs? Through this paper, I have articulated and argued that schools should increase local food sourcing as much as practicable. The ways in which these increases come about will look different in every school, and should be tailored to the unique situations of every school and community as much as possible. Currently, the possibilities for increased local food sourcing are constrained by limited funds and minimal latitude for experimentation at the school level, and the opportunities for farmers to benefit from direct farm-to-school connections are limited by the lack of a direct marketing mechanism.

To increase the threshold of what changes are possible, there are three levels at which work must continue: 1) community and school based efforts such as those pioneered by FEED; 2) state-wide initiatives to develop distribution mechanisms and supporting state level policy; 3) national initiatives to address commodity food system and school food funding. I point again to Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids for a strong set of national level policy recommendations, and acknowledge that national level change is much needed for systematic change in school food. I do mention a few recommendations for national policy change in this section, but also wish to point out there is a significant amount of work that we can do as a state to strengthen local food sourcing while we wait for federal level change.

### Exploration and Development of a Local Distribution mechanism

To expand the impact of farm-to-school purchasing partnerships beyond smaller schools, a state-wide distribution mechanism must be developed that links farmer produce with schools in a

way that is convenient and reliable for both parties. A system organized around farmer cooperatives or the idea of a non-profit distribution company offer promise, but much more research must be done in this area to find an effective mechanism that would achieve fair prices for farmers at reasonable cost to the schools.

Until then, existing mechanisms can be used (direct farmer delivery, existing produce distribution companies) to bring local food to schools with some necessary additional funding to bridge the price gap. There is the potential for a group of Vermont farmers to bid on a DoD Fresh contract and utilize DoD's distribution mechanism, but it is unlikely that smaller Vermont farmers would be able to supply the volume DoD Fresh requests. State or regional cooperatives may enable successful bidding on larger scale contracts such as DoD Fresh and the FSDA, and the VDA and other experts ought to help these cooperatives form. The -term success and sustainability of local sourcing in Vermont depend on the development of strong distribution mechanisms to bring equal local sourcing opportunities to all schools in the state.

## Supporting Policy and Funding

### FEDERAL LEVEL

Vermonters would be well served to support federal level policy relating to farm-to-school programs as there is typically much more funding available through the federal farm bill.

Specifically, Vermonters should:

- Push for the appropriation of funds for Section 4303 of the new Farm Bill pertaining to local purchasing and the allocation of startup grants;

- Monitor carefully the pilot program under the new Farm Bill for *free* fruits and vegetables currently happening in four states, and watch to see to what extent local produce are used in these programs. Should the program continue, having a distribution system in place to bring local produce to Vermont schools might make Vermont a likely candidate for this federal program (that carries significant federal funding); and
- Consider what an ideal federal policy might look like! The following section provides some ideas:

The first version of the Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act of 1994, originally called the "Better Nutrition and Health for Children Act of 1993", contained a section (Sec. 310) that would have further amended the National School Lunch Act to have the Secretary of Agriculture inform schools about opportunities to obtain organic agricultural products, establish an informational clearinghouse, and develop and distribute information about organic products to state agencies and schools. The section also called for \$2 million for a two year period to provide states and schools with organic products or to encourage organic purchasing in schools through price differentials payments, incentive payments for schools that commit to purchasing a significant amount of organic product, or other forms of payments. The funds could be prioritized to benefit schools purchasing from socially disadvantaged, very rural, small-scale, or limited-resource farmers or ranchers.

This section was removed from the final version of the bill, but is included here because the language provides a concrete idea of what local purchasing policy might look like on a national level, in stronger language than in the current Farm Bill. Substitute "local" for "organic" (*or better yet, specify" local and farmed with sustainable methods"*) and it may be possible to equip our

schools and kitchen managers with the information and funds to be able to feed school children healthy, fresh, local food while supporting local, small farms.

### STATE LEVEL

Until there is clear Federal policy and funding for local sourcing programs, the State of Vermont should continue to take a leadership role in developing State policy. Local food can cost more money, but also bring tangible benefits to and keeps money within the state. Statewide governmental support with stronger policy language and funding to support schools that want to transition to local purchasing is a good first step.

The State of Vermont should continue to draft legislation similar to the challenge grant funding appropriation that was never enacted into law to spur schools to make purchasing changes. With some startup money and significant publicity, local purchasing could become a cornerstone for renewed pride in school food programs and push other schools to follow suit.

### SCHOOL & DISTRICT LEVEL

At a level even closer to the lunchroom, schools and districts can make significant declarations of their own food policies, set purchasing goals, and connect related issues such as vending machines, length of the lunch period, and child nutrition and health. These changes can be dramatic, evidenced by the wide-ranging quality and feel of school food throughout the state right now, and the effectiveness of the FEED program. Fairfield's Food Policy in Appendix D is an example of one school's food policy. Having a school food policy endorsed by the school's Board of Education can be crucial to maintaining support and funding for school food programs threatened by financial constraints, shifting budget priorities, and pressures corporate influence.

School food action teams made up of students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members with local food resources can be extremely powerful to help create food policy of this nature, and also help to smooth challenging transitions created by the policy. Elementary schools should actively involve students on these action teams through surveys, menu taste tests, and creation of posters and publicity to communicate the new food policy. High schools must actively involve students in the creation of food policies in similar ways, while acknowledging the capacity of older students to have discussions and make decisions based on environmental, social, and community factors, not just their taste buds. In both cases, without student (and equal parent support at the elementary level), sustained support of lunch program changes is unlikely. By creating a sense of informed empowerment and ownership for students, there is great potential to transform school food programs to systems in which students, teachers, local farmers, and food service directors all benefit.

### Coordinated State Level Effort

At some point, there needs to be a state-level advisory team with the formal investment of the Department of Agriculture, Child Nutrition, and Commodity Foods along with the voice of FEED. The state should consider consolidating the administration of school food programs. It clearly says something about our priorities that the Office of Economic Opportunity (home of the one person who coordinates commodity foods) dictates so much about school food programs that are primarily under the jurisdiction of the departmentally and geographically separate Office of Child Nutrition within the Department of Education.

## Increased State-Wide Communication and Publicity

To continue to generate support for the FEED program and similar local sourcing initiatives, there should be increased communication and the publication of reasons for, and approaches to, increasing local food sourcing. Programs like FEED must market themselves in the same way companies do to outline a viable alternative for current school food sourcing. The centralization of this information could also help build significant political pressure to push through some of the state-level policy outlined above.

Information that should be made available to the public includes:

- The clearly stated mission of FEED, as different from NOFA
- Curricular ideas to bring local food, farming, and environmental issues (a lot of this is already developed through Ag-in-the-Classroom and other National resources, but needs consolidating to make available to teachers)
- Community Food and Agricultural Resources (such as regional farmers interested in school visits)
- Strategies for schools to navigate the ordering of commodity foods in healthy ways
- Sources of funds available for schools interested in starting projects such as school gardens, community kitchens, or service programs within community
- Poster and Signage for Cafeterias to publicize local food being served
- Guidelines and suggestions for district and school level food policy
- Justifying reasons for increased local food sourcing in the state
- Highlights of current local food sourcing
- Recommendations for state level action

- Related news about national programs and national farm-to-school movements

This could be very effective in the form of a website allowing access statewide as well as to interested organizations around the country. A statewide farm-to-school conference could meet a similar purpose to share and publicize this information. Effective work is being done in the state and increased collaboration could continue to build the strength of Vermont as a national leader of innovative agricultural support and school food reform.





## REFERENCES CITED

- <sup>i</sup> Bard, Bernard. The School Lunchroom: Time of Trial. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New York, London, Sydney, 1968. As cited by Antonia Demas, Ph.D. Hot Lunch: A History of the School Lunch Program. 2000.
- <sup>ii</sup> As evidenced by: NCHS- Health Statistics News Release. "Obesity Still on the Rise, New Data Show." <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/releases/02news/obesityonrise.htm>. Obtained on-line 10/18/02., and A Special Report on Policy Implications from the 1999 California Children's Healthy Eating and Exercise Practices Survey (CalCHEEPS). The California Endowment. <http://www.calendow.org/pub/publications/calcheeps050701.pdf> Obtained on-line 10/16/02.
- <sup>iii</sup> Azuma, Andrea Misako and Andrew Fisher. Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Evaluating the Barriers and Opportunities for Farm-to-School Programs. Community Food Security Coalition, January 2001. pg. 10.
- <sup>iv</sup> *Ibid* 11.
- <sup>v</sup> For an interesting comparison of two meals with seemingly similar ingredients, see "This American Meal: A Tale of Two Dinners." *Utne Reader*. May-June 2002. pp 52-53.
- <sup>vi</sup> Demas, PhD, Antonia.. Milton FEED institute. Milton, VT. 8/7/02.
- <sup>vii</sup> Baker, Sue and Joyce Shepard, Robinson School, Starksboro VT. Group conversation. Milton FEED Institute, 8/7/02.
- <sup>viii</sup> "Better Nutrition from Vegetables in Season." Obtained on-line 11/4/02. <http://www.agnet.org/library/article/pt2001002.html#pt2001002t1>
- <sup>ix</sup> For many good examples of why this is true, read Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser.
- <sup>xx</sup> Brody, Jane E. "Schools Teach 3 C's: Candy, Cookies, and Chips". The New York Times. 9/24/02. Obtained on-line 9/25/02: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/24/health/nutrition/24BROD.html>.
- <sup>xi</sup> Azuma 7-9.
- <sup>xii</sup> Hoffer, Doug and Ellen Kahler. "The Leaky Bucket: An Analysis of Vermont's Dependence on Imports." The Vermont Job Gap Study, Phase 6. Peace & Justice Center. July, 2000. Obtained on-line, 1/28/02: <http://www.vtlivablewage.org/JOBGAP6a.pdf>
- <sup>xiii</sup> For More Information, see Albers, Jan. Hands on the Land: A History of the Vermont Landscape. Rutland, VT: The Orton Family Foundation, 2000.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Hoffer, p. 6.
- <sup>xv</sup> Kiernan, Stephen. "Experts assess value of farming to Vermont." *Burlington Free Press*. 27 Nov. 2001. Obtained on-line, 2/7/02: <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/specialnews/farms/26000h.htm>
- <sup>xvi</sup> For the executive summary of the 2001 National Survey of the Vermont visitor, see [http://snr.uvm.edu/vtdc/publications/2001\\_Visitor\\_ExecSummary.pdf](http://snr.uvm.edu/vtdc/publications/2001_Visitor_ExecSummary.pdf).
- <sup>xvii</sup> "Strategic Opportunities for Agricultural Development in Vermont". Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Obtained on-line, 3/11/02: <http://www.state.vt.us/agric/stratplan.pdf>.
- <sup>xviii</sup> SARE Grant Proposal Draft 9/02. Obtained via email from Abbie Nelson, FEED coordinator, 9/1/02.
- <sup>xix</sup> Kantor, Linda Scott. "Community Food Security Programs Improve Food Access." FoodReview. Vol 24, Issue 1. Jan-April 2001. pp. 20-26. Obtained on-line 2/3/02: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/FoodReview/Jan2001/FRV24I1d.pdf>
- <sup>xx</sup> Olson, Karen. "Home Grown. How local food can enrich a community: 3 success stories." *Utne Reader*. May-June 2002. pp.54.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Magdoff, Fred, John Bellamy Foster, and Frederick H. Butel. Hungry for Profit: The Agribusiness Threat to Farmers, Food and the Environment. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000. pp.188.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Pirog, Rich, Timothy Van Pelt, Kamyar Enshayan, Ellen Cook. "Food, Fuel and Freeways: An Iowa perspective on how far food travels, fuel usage, and greenhouse gas emissions." Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, June 2001. Obtained on-line 8/6/02: [http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/food\\_mil.pdf](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/food_mil.pdf)
- <sup>xxiii</sup> "2001 National Survey of the Vermont Visitor: Executive Summary." Prepared by School of Business Administration and Vermont Tourism Data Center- School of Natural Resources, University of Vermont. [http://snr.uvm.edu/vtdc/publications/2001\\_Visitor\\_ExecSummary.pdf](http://snr.uvm.edu/vtdc/publications/2001_Visitor_ExecSummary.pdf) 11/25/02.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Hoffer, p. 6.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Informal survey. Summer Food Service Institute, August 2002. Williston, VT.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> CIA- The World Factbook 2002- Cuba. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cu.html>

- 
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Rosset, Peter M. "Cuba: A Successful Case Study of Sustainable Agriculture." Hungry for Profit: The Agribusiness Threat to Farmers, Food and the Environment. Magdoff, Fred, John Bellamy Foster, and Frederick H. Butel., eds. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000 pp. 203-213.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Hoffer, 4.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Coleman, Eliot. Presentation at Vermont Fresh Network Summer Event. Shelburne Farms, VT. 6/24/02. See also Four-Season Harvest and The New Organic Grower, books by Coleman, for more info.
- <sup>xxx</sup> See the May-June 2002 Utne Reader for more information.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Census 2000 demographic profile tables. <http://crs.uvm.edu/2000dps/04050.pdf> 8/5/02.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Census 2000 demographic profile tables.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> A Profile of Hunger & Nutrition Programs in Vermont. Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Vermont. <http://www.vtnohunger.org> 8/5/02.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Vermont Department of Education, Child Nutrition Home Page. [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp\\_avgcosts.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp_avgcosts.pdf). 8/5/02
- <sup>xxxv</sup> A Profile of Hunger & Nutrition Programs in Vermont. Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Vermont. <http://www.vtnohunger.org> 8/5/02.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> USDA. National School Lunch Act, Public Law 396, 79<sup>th</sup> Congress, June 4, 1946. As cited by Antonia Demas, Ph.D. Hot Lunch: A History of the School Lunch Program. ©2000.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> "The Effects of Childhood Hunger." The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger. <http://www.vtnohunger.org>. 8/6/02.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> "The State of Hunger in Vermont: Taking a Closer Look at Hunger." *Food to Learn*. The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger. Spring 2002.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> "School Participation Rates." Child Nutrition Programs. Vermont Department of Education. [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp\\_avgcosts.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp_avgcosts.pdf). 8/5/02
- <sup>xl</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>xli</sup> NCHS- Health Statistics. "Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999." <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm>. Obtained on-line 10/18/02.
- <sup>xlii</sup> NCHS- Health Statistics News Release. "Obesity Still on the Rise, New Data Show." <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/releases/02news/obesityonrise.htm>. Obtained on-line 10/18/02.
- <sup>xliii</sup> "A Special Report on Policy Implications from the 1999 California Children's Healthy Eating and Exercise Practices Survey (CalCHEEPS). The California Endowment. <http://www.calendow.org/pub/publications/calcheeps050701.pdf> Obtained on-line 10/16/02.
- <sup>xliv</sup> McCook, Alison. "Gardening Influences Tots' Views on Veggies." Philadelphia: Reuters Health, 10/22/02.
- <sup>xliv</sup> "How Much Does It Cost To Produce A School Meal?" Vermont Department of Education, Child Nutrition Home Page. [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp\\_avgcosts.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp_avgcosts.pdf). 8/5/02
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Michelle L. Mascarenhas, former employee of Center for Food and Justice, Urban Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College. Community Food Security Coalition List Serv posting 10/15/02.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Vermont Department of Education, Child Nutrition Home Page. [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp\\_avgcosts.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp_avgcosts.pdf). 8/5/02
- <sup>xlviii</sup> "Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities." Fall, 2000. Vermont Department of Education. Obtained on-line 10/10/02: <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pubs/framework.pdf>.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (H.R. 2646). Section 4303- Purchases of Locally Produced Foods (effective 10/1/02).
- <sup>l</sup> Marion Kalb. Farm to School Program Director, Community Food Security Coalition. personal correspondence, 8/15/02.
- <sup>li</sup> Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. H.R. 2646, Section 4305- Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program, effective immediately.
- <sup>lii</sup> I was made aware of this Act by Sara Kittell, Chair of Senate Agriculture Committee, personal correspondence 7/12/02, and obtained the text of this act from Sam Burr, Ag. Legislative Council via. personal correspondence, 7/31/02.
- <sup>liii</sup> Karen Russo, Randolph Elementary School Food Service Director. Personal Interview. 7/22/02.
- <sup>liv</sup> Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT Executive Director. Personal communication. June 2002. (Snack program is at Westminster School.)
- <sup>lv</sup> Sue Dillon, Waitsfield Elementary School Nurse, Parent. VT FEED Summer Institute Meetings. 6/11-13/02.

- 
- <sup>lvi</sup> VT FEED Summer Institute Meetings. 6/11-13/02.
- <sup>lvii</sup> Alison Forrest, Huntington School.
- <sup>lviii</sup> <http://www.foodsecurity.org>
- <sup>lix</sup> Azuma, Andrea Misako and Andrew Fisher. Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Evaluating the Barriers and Opportunities for Farm-to-School Programs. Community Food Security Coalition, January 2001.
- <sup>lx</sup> I obtained much of this information from the Child Nutrition Web Site: <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition>, and through personal interviews with Jo Busha, Director of Child Nutrition Programs for Vermont, and Holly Peake, who is the coordinator for the commodities program in Vermont.
- <sup>lxi</sup> "How Much Does it Cost to Produce a School Meal?" Child Nutrition Programs. Vermont Department of Education. Obtained on-line 8/5/02: [www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp\\_avgcosts.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp_avgcosts.pdf)
- <sup>lxii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lxiii</sup> Marty Spaulding. Food Service Director, Harwood Union High School. Personal interview, 7/15/02.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> Allison Forrest, School Cook, Huntington. As reported by Enid Wonnacott, NOFA-VT. Personal communication. June 2002.
- <sup>lxv</sup> "2002-2003 School Programs Reimbursement Rates." Vermont Department of Education, Child Nutrition Home Page. Obtained on-line 10/28/02: [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp\\_01rates.pdf](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/nutrition/files/snp_01rates.pdf)
- <sup>lxvi</sup> Commodities List. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/cnp/childfaq.htm>. 4/3/02.
- <sup>lxvii</sup> "USDA Foods Expected to be Available in School- Fiscal Year 2003 For Schools and Institutional Programs." USDA-FNS website. Obtained on-line 6/20/02: [http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods\\_avail/2003/syschfood.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods_avail/2003/syschfood.htm)
- <sup>lxviii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>lix</sup> Holly Peake, Personal Interview. Waterbury, VT 7/15/02.
- <sup>lxx</sup> "School Lunch Program Fails to Make the Grade." Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. Fall 2001. Obtained on-line 6/25/02: <http://www.pcrm.org/news/health010904lunchreport.html>
- <sup>lxxi</sup> Tropp, Debra and Surajudeen Olowolayemo. "How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers Are Building Alliances: Lessons Learned from the USDA Small Farm/School Meals Workshop, May 1, 2000." United States Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Marketing Service. October, 2000. As cited in Azuma, pg. 46.
- <sup>lxxii</sup> Holly Peake, personal interview, 7/15/02.
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> Short written survey conducted at the Summer Food Service Institute for School Food Personnel in Williston, VT. August 19, 2002.
- <sup>lxxiv</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>lxxv</sup> Discussed briefly at Meeting at FEED convened meeting at Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food & Markets. 8/7/02
- <sup>lxxvi</sup> American Flatbread Web Site: <http://www.americanflatbread.lcom>. For George's philosophy on school food, read this: <http://www.americanflatbread.com/publicschoolfood.htm>
- <sup>lxxvii</sup> Vermont Fresh Network.. For more information, see their web page: <http://www.vermontfresh.net/>



**APPENDIX A-  
VERMONT FRAMEWORK OF STANDARDS &  
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Making Decisions Standards**

**Sustainability**

3.9 Students make decisions that demonstrate understanding of natural and human communities, the ecological, economic, political, or social systems within them, and awareness of how their personal and collective actions affect the sustainability of these interrelated systems. This is evident when students:

<b>Prek-4</b>	<b>5-8</b>	<b>9-12</b>
<p>3.9.a. Identify items that they consume on a daily basis and analyze the resources used in producing, transporting, using, and disposing of these items, including the origins of the resources;</p> <p>3.9.b. Distinguish between personal wants and needs and identify how marketing and advertising inform their consumption patterns;</p> <p>3.9.c. Identify and practice ways to repair, re-use, recycle, and (e.g., use both sides of paper), and design and implement a plan to monitor personal resource consumption;</p> <p>3.9.d. Explore local natural and human communities (e.g., vernal</p>	<p>3.9.aa. Conduct a life-cycle analysis (e.g., production, distribution, consumption, disposal) for both synthetic and natural products (e.g., toothbrush, maple syrup, automobile), including the effects of these life-cycles on the sustainability of a natural and human community;</p> <p>3.9.bb. Collect data in order to investigate and analyze how personal consumption patterns affect the sustainability of natural and human communities (e.g., buying local and imported apples in Vermont);</p> <p>3.9.cc. Identify and practice ways to repair, re-use, recycle (e.g., collect and distribute leftover household paint),</p>	<p><i>Evidence cc. and dd. Applies, plus-</i></p> <p>3.9.aaa. Prepare an impact assessment (which includes ecological, economic, political, and social factors) that analyzes the effect of a particular product's or project's life-cycle on the sustainability of a natural and human community;</p> <p>3.9.bbb. Collect data in order to investigate and analyze the sustainability of societal consumption patterns that have direct and indirect impact on the local and global environment, economy, and society (e.g., fuel efficiency of vehicles).</p>

<p>pools, farms, mines, cities), identify the systems within them, and what is required for these communities to be sustained.</p>	<p>and design and implement a plan to monitor community resource consumption (e.g., survey community water, electric, and/or fuel use);</p> <p>3.9.dd. Demonstrate understanding that natural and human communities are part of larger systems (e.g., farms as part of the regional watershed and food systems for cities, a mine as part of the regional economy) and that the interrelationships between all systems.</p>	
--	---	--

## Civic/Social Responsibility Standards

### Service

#### Service

4.1 Students take an active role in their community. This is evident when students:

<b>Prek-4</b>	<b>5-8</b>	<b>9-12</b>
<p>4.1.a. Plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs; and</p> <p>4.1.b. Use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations.</p>	<p><i>Evidence Prek-4 applies.</i></p>	<p><i>Evidence PreK-4 applies.</i></p>

## Understanding Place

4.6 Students demonstrate understanding of the relationship between their local environment and community heritage and how each shapes their lives. This is evident when students:

Prek-4	5-8	9-12
<p>4.6.a. Demonstrate knowledge and history of local environments, (e.g., soils, forests, watersheds) and how their community relies on its environment to meet its needs (e.g., nutritional, recreational, economic, emotional well being);</p> <p>4.6.b. Describe the role of agriculture, forestry, and industry on the development of their local community over time;</p> <p>4.6.c. Demonstrate knowledge of past and present community heritage (e.g., traditions, livelihoods, customs, stories, changing demographics, land use) and recognize ways in which this heritage influences their lives.</p>	<p>4.6.aa. Apply knowledge of local environment through active participation in local environmental projects (e.g., work with local planning board to analyze existing agricultural land use from a variety of perspectives);</p> <p>4.6.bb. Explore the interrelationship between the local environment and the local community culture (e.g., settlement patterns, tourism, hunting, agriculture);</p> <p>4.6.cc. Explore and participate in sustaining or building on unique and valued elements of past and present community heritage (e.g., survey community to improve access to town meeting);</p>	<p><i>Evidence aa. And cc. applies, plus-</i></p> <p>4.6.bbb. Evaluate and predict how current trends (e.g., environmental, economic, social, political, technological) will affect the future of their local community and environment.</p>





# APPENDIX B- COMMODITY FOOD SYSTEM

## Expected Available Commodity Foods, 2002-2003, USDA

### APPENDIX B- COMMODITY FOOD SYSTEM

#### Expected Available Commodity Foods, 2002-2003, USDA



Search · Site Map · Links · E-Mail Us · FNS Home · USDA

About FD

What's New?

FAQs

Contacts

#### USDA Foods Expected to be Available In School - Fiscal Year 2003 For Schools and Institutional Programs

Select Food Group

FD 2000

Programs

History

Regs/Policy  
Legislation

News

Fact Sheets

Foods  
Available

Food Safety

Recipes

Specifications/  
Purchase Info

Pubs/Reports

Forms/  
OMB Circulars

Commodity  
Acceptability

Complaint  
Hotline

PCIMS

Web Accessibility  
Statement

**Table 1**

**Group A- Section 6 and 32 Type Donated Commodities  
(Meat, Fish, Poultry, Fruits, Vegetables)**

#### Meat/Fish Products

- Beef, Ground, Frozen — 40 lb. Carton
- Beef, Patties, Frozen: 100%, VPP & Lean — 40 lb. Carton
- Beef, Canned w/Natural Juices — 24/29 oz. Can (Offshore only)
- Ham, Cooked Water-added, Frozen — 4/10 lb. Hams per Carton
- Hams, Cooked, Water-added, Chilled — 4/10 lb. Hams per Carton
- Meat, Luncheon, Canned — 24/30 oz. can (Offshore Only)
- Pork, Canned w/Natural Juices — 24/29 oz. Can (Offshore Only)
- Pork, Leg Roast, Frozen — 32-40 lb Carton
- Tuna, Canned, Chunk Light in Water — 6/66.5 cans per Carton

#### Poultry/Egg Products

- Chicken, Cut-Up, Frozen (8 pieces) — 40 lb. Carton
- Chicken, Cooked, Breaded, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton
- Chicken, Diced, Frozen — 40 lb. Carton
- Chicken, Canned Boned — 12/50 oz. Carton
- Chicken Fajita Strips — 30 lb. Carton
- Eggs, Frozen, Whole — 6/5 lb., 30 lb. Carton
- Egg Mix — 4/10 lb. Bags
- Turkey, Deli Breast, Frozen — 40 lb. Container
- Turkey, Deli Breast, Smoked — 40 lb. Container
- Turkey, Hams, Frozen — 40 lb.
- Turkey, Roast, Frozen — 32-48 lb. Carton
- Turkey, Whole, Frozen — 30-60 lb. Carton
- Turkey Taco Filling — 30 lb. Container

#### Meat/Poultry/Fish Commodities for State Processing

- Beef, Coarse Ground, Frozen — 60 lb. Carton
- Beef, Special Trim, Frozen — 60 lb. Carton
- Chicken, Bulk, Chilled — Bulk Pack
- Chicken, Bulk, Leg Quarters, Legs, thighs, Drumsticks — 40 lb. Carton



- Eggs, Liquid, Bulk — Tankers
- Pork, Boneless Picnic, Frozen — 60 lb. Carton
- Turkey, Bulk, Chilled — Bulk Pack

**Meat/Poultry/Fish Available Under State  
Option Contract (SOC) Program**

- Beef, Cooked Patties, Frozen: 100% & VPP — 40 lb. Carton
- Chicken, Cut-Up IQF — 40 lb. Carton
- Chicken, Grilled Patties — 30 lb. Carton
- Chicken Nuggets — 30 lb. Carton
- Chicken Patties — 30 lb. Carton
- Turkey, Roast, Sliced, Frozen — 32-48 lb. Carton
- Carton

**Fruits/Vegetables  
(Canned, Dry, Frozen)**

**Fruits**

- Applesauce, Canned — 6/#10 Cans
- Apple Slices, Canned — 6/#10 Cans
- Apple Slices, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton
- Cherries, Water Pack, Canned — 6/#10 Cans
- Cherries, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton, IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) — 40 lb.
- Fruit Mixed, Canned — 6/#10 Cans
- Orange Juice, Concentrate Frozen — 32 oz. can, tankers & drums
- Peaches, Canned, Clingstone, Sliced/Diced — 6/#10 cans
- Peaches, Frozen — 20 lb. Carton, 96/4 oz. cups
- Pears, Canned (halves, sliced, diced) — 6/#10 cans
- Pineapple, Canned, (tidbits, chunks, crushed) — 6/#10 cans
- Strawberries, Frozen — Sliced, IQF — 30 lb. Carton

**Vegetables**

- Beans, Dry — 25 lb. Bags
- Beans, Dry, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Beans, Green, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Beans, Green, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton
- Beans, Refried, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Beans, Vegetarian, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Carrots, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Carrots, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton
- Corn, Cobbeftes, Frozen — 96 ears per case
- Corn, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton
- Corn, Liquid, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Corn, Vacuum, Canned — 6/75 oz. cans
- Peas, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Peas, Frozen — 30 lb. Carton
- Potato Rounds, Frozen — 6/5 lb. Package

- Potato Wedges, Frozen — 6/5 lb. Package
- Potatoes, Oven Type, Frozen — 6/5 lb. Package
- Salsa, Canned — 6/#10 cans
- Spaghetti Sauce (Meatless) — 6/#10 cans
- Sweet Potatoes, Frozen (mashed, random cut) — 6/5 lb. Package
- Sweet Potatoes (mashed, whole) — 6/#10 cans
- Tomato Paste — 6/#10, 55 gallon drum
- Tomatoes, Canned: Sauce/Diced/Whole — 6/#10 cans

**Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**

**Fresh Fruit**

- Apples, Fresh 37-40 lb. Carton
- Grapefruits, Fresh — 34-39 lb. Carton
- Oranges, Fresh — 34-39 lb. Carton
- Pears, Fresh, D'Anjou/Bosc — 45 lb. Carton

**Fresh Vegetables**

- Potatoes, Fresh, White/Russet — 50 lb. Carton

**Table 2**

**Group B Section 416 Type Donated Commodities  
(Grains, Cereals, Cheese, Milk, Oils, Peanut Products)**

- Bulgur — 50 lb. Bag
- Cheese, Cheddar, Reduced Fat (white, yellow) — 4/10 lb., 40 lb. Block
- Cheese, Cheddar (white, yellow) — 4/10 lb., 40 lb. Block
- Cheese, Cheddar, Shredded (white, yellow) — 6/5 lb. Bags
- Cheese Cheddar, Reduced Fat, Shredded (white, yellow) — 6/5 lb. Bags
- Cheese, Process Sliced (white, yellow) — 6/5 lb.
- Cheese, Process Loaves (yellow) — 6/5 lb.
- Cheese, Mozzarella, Low Moisture Part Skim (LMPS), Frozen 8/6 lb. Loaves
- Cheese Mozzarella, LMPS, Shredded, Frozen — 30 lb. Box
- Cheese, Mozzarella Lite, Frozen — 8/6 lb. Loaves
- Cheese, Mozzarella Lite, Shredded, Frozen — 30 lb.
- Cheese, Natural American, Barrel — 500 lb.
- Cheese, Mozzarella, LMPS, Unfrozen, Processor Pack (various pack sizes)
- Cheese Blend, American/Skim Milk, Sliced (white, yellow) — 6/5 lb.
- Cornmeal — 8/5 lb. Bags, 4/10 lb. Bags
- Grits, Corn (white/yellow) — 8/5 lb. Bags, 4/10 lb. Bags
- Flour, all types — 4/10 lb. Bags, 8/5 lb. Bags, 50 lb. Bags, 100 lb. Bulk bags
- Flour, Bakery Mix: Regular & Lowfat — 6/5 lb. Bag 35 lb. Carton
- Flour, Corn Masa — 50 lb. Bags
- Macaroni (elbow/spiral/rotini) — 20 lb. Carton
- Oats — 36 lb. And 50 lb. Bags
- Oil, Vegetable — 6/1 gallon bottles, Bulk, 8/84 oz. bottles
- Oil, Vegetable Saturated Reduced-Fat (Soybean) — 6/1 gallon bottle
- Peanut Butter, Smooth — 5 lb. Cans, 500 lb. Drum
- Peanuts, Roasted — 6/#10 cans, 4 lb. Brick Pack
- Rice, Milled — 25 lb. bags, 50 lb. Bags
- Rice, Parboiled US #1 Long Grain — 25 lb. Bags, 50 lb. Bags
- Rice, Brown — 25 lb. Bags
- Salad Dressing, Reduced-Calorie/Regular — 4/1 gallon bottle
- Shortening, Vegetable — 12/3 lb. Can, 50 lb. Cube
- Shortening, Liquid Vegetable — 6/1 gallon bottle
- Spaghetti — 20 lb. Carton

**Table 3. USDA Bonus Commodities  
Schools/Institutions**

1. **Group A Bonus Products (Section 32 Type Commodities):** Based on preliminary information, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is NOT planning to offer any Group A bonus commodities at this time for SY/FY 2003.

2. **Group B Bonus Products (Section 416 Type Commodities):**

- Milk, NDM, Instantized — 6/4 lb., 12/25.6 oz., 25 KG Bags
- Milk, NDM, Nonfortified — 12/2 lb., 25 KG Bags

Based on preliminary information, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) will provide NDM as a bonus product for SY/FY 2003. CCC will continue to make assessments on a commodity-by-commodity basis and will notify USDA/FNS should other commodities become available as bonus products later. Nonfortified NDM in the 2 lb. pack size is only available through September 30, 2002 due to the age of the product.

**\*NOTE:** This list is an estimate. The availability of these commodities depends on market conditions. In addition, other commodities may become available during SY/FY 2003. Some local school districts may be unable to order a particular commodity or packaging size because State Agencies will be required to order these foods in truck lot quantities. Each school district should check with its State distributing agency to ensure the availability of a certain commodity. Allocation for Group A foods designate specific availability, outlet, and entitlement or bonus status.

[Back to Top](#) | [Foods Available Home](#) | [FD Home](#)

Last Updated: 04/23/02

# APPENDIX B- COMMODITY FOOD SYSTEM

Type B Order Form, June 2002. Donated Food Section, OEO

## APPENDIX B- COMMODITY FOOD SYSTEM

Type B Order Form, June 2002. Donated Food Section, OEO

June 2002

### FOOD ORDER FOR SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

FOOD ITEM	UNIT OF ISSUE	ESTI-MATED COST	AMOUNT ON HAND	AMOUNT REQUESTED FOR SEPT.	AMOUNT REQUESTED FOR OCT.	AMOUNT REQUESTED FOR NOV.
CHEESE, CHEDDAR SHRED.	6/5# b/case	58.65				
CHEESE, PROC AMER SLC.	6/5# case	43.05				
CORNMEAL	4/10# b/baler	5.16				
FLOUR, ALL PURPOSE	4/10# b/baler	5.62				
FLOUR, BREAD	4/10# b/baler	5.81				
FLOUR, BAKERSHARDWHEAT	50# bag	6.41				
MACARONI	20# case	4.38				
MILK, NON FAT DRY	12/2# case	BONUS				
PEANUT BUTTER	6/5# c/case	25.23				
PEANUTS, ROASTED	6/#10 c/case	23.51				
RICE, WHITE, PARBOILED	25# bag	4.15				
ROLLED OATS	12/3# b/baler	13.11				
ROTINI	20# case	4.71				
SHORTENING	12/3# c/case	16.47				
SPAGHETTI	20# case	4.86				
VEGETABLE OIL	6/1 gal./case	13.56				
EGGS, WHOLE, FRZ.	6/5# case	14.37				
EGG MIX	4/10# b/case	BONUS				
CHERRIES, IQ FRZ.	40# case	BONUS				
RAISINS	144/1.33oz cs.	BONUS				
TRAIL MIX	5/5# b/case	BONUS				

SCHOOL/CHILD CARE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED BY JULY 3, 2002. PLEASE KEEP ONE FOR YOUR FILES.



# APPENDIX B- COMMODITY FOOD SYSTEM

Type A Order Acknowledgement, March 2002.

Harwood Union High School

## APPENDIX B- COMMODITY FOOD SYSTEM

Type A Order Acknowledgement, March 2002.

Harwood Union High School

BILL NO. 10134

SHIP NO. 10134

BILL TO. HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL  
458 VT RT 100  
DUXBURY VT 05660

SHIP TO. HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL  
458 VT RT 100  
DUXBURY VT 05660

DATE	CUSTOMER PO	WAREHOUSE	PROGRAM	ORDER NO.	INVOICE NO.
03/08/02		001	1	8512.00	

ORDERED	QUANTITY SHIPPED	BKORDER	PRODUCT NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT. PRICE	EXTEND PRICE
5.00	5.00		A174	POTATO WEDGES 6/5#	9.12	45.60
4.00	4.00		A350	APPLESAUCE 6/#10	10.27	41.08
4.00	4.00		A433	PEARS, SLICED 6/#10	17.85	71.41
3.00	3.00		A516	CHICKEN, BRD, FRZ 30#	40.30	120.92
3.00	3.00		A548	TURKEY HAMS, FRZ4/10#	34.81	104.43
1.00	1.00		A364	CHERRIES, IQF 40#	0.00	0.00
3.00	3.00		A504	RAISINS 144/1.33 OZ.	0.00	0.00
1.00	1.00		A261	TRAIL MIX 5/5#	0.00	0.00

OR CHANGES RESPOND BY 3/25/02  
AVAILABLE FOR RELEASE STARTING 4/1/02

TOTAL 383.44





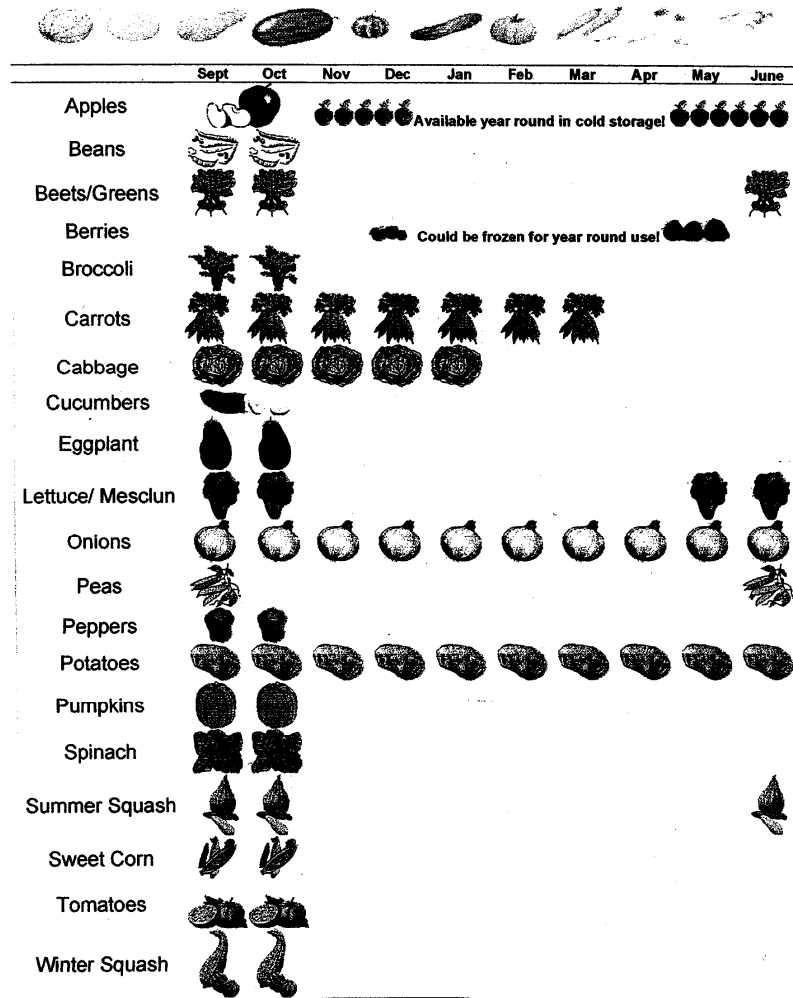
# APPENDIX C- LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

## Draft of Harvest Calendar

### APPENDIX C- LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

#### Draft of Harvest Calendar

## Vermont School Year Harvest Calendar





## APPENDIX C- LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

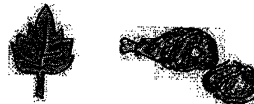
Sample Page from Directory of Vermont Products

### APPENDIX C- LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

Sample Page from Directory of Vermont Products

#### MEAT / MAPLE SYRUP

Adams Turkey Farm (Dave & Judy Adams)  
1192 Old Stage Road Westford VT 05494  
Phone 802-878-4726 Fax 802-893-1814



**Product:** Growers and Processors of Vermont poultry products. "Hand raised in small flocks, our poultry is nourished on all natural grains, containing no animal by-products and clean fresh water."

- Whole turkey ---- Full range of sizes available
- Whole chicken (retail packaged)
- Whole chicken (bulk packaged) (3 to 5 lb. avg. wt.)
- Maple syrup - 1 gallon container
- Maple cream - 1/2 lb. & 1 lb. containers

**Delivery:** We deliver in northern Vermont.

**Available:** Year-round turkey and chicken products. Maple products sometimes limited.

#### EGGS

Shadow Cross Farm (Dick or Rich Paquette)  
Colchester VT 05446  
Phone: 802-655-0444 Fax: 802-655-8972



**Product:**

- Jumbo through medium Grade A fresh eggs

**Notes/Details:** Family business since 1940, delivering Grade A Farm Fresh eggs to your restaurant or store.

**Delivery:** Shadow Cross delivers from St. Albans to Northfield - a half-case minimum is requested for delivery.

#### PRODUCE

Lewis Creek Farm (Hank & Cecilia Bissell)  
Starksboro VT 05487  
Phone: 802-453-4591 Fax: 802-453-4591



Email: [lcfarm@together.net](mailto:lcfarm@together.net) website: <http://www.together.net/~lcfarm>

**Product Description:** Farm Fresh Vegetables; in season; Wholesale & Retail: over 50 varieties from arugula to zucchini.  
**Notes/Details:** Since 1981 Lewis Creek Farm has been growing 25 acres of over 40 different vegetable varieties delivered to stores, restaurants and wholesale distributors.

**Delivery:** Both Burlington & Middlebury on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Call with questions or to discuss delivery options. Picking up from the farm is always an option.



# APPENDIX D- LOCAL SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

## Fairfield Town School District

### FAIRFIELD TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT Fairfield, Vermont

#### FOOD POLICY

CODE: G 9

#### Responsibilities

The Board of Education recognizes the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. The Board also recognizes the school's role, as part of the larger community, to promote family health, sustainable agriculture and environmental restoration.

The Board of Education recognizes that the sharing of food is a fundamental experience for all peoples, a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity, and an excellent bridge for building friendships and inter-generational bonds.

#### Mission

The educational mission is to improve the health of the entire community by teaching students and families ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. The mission shall be accomplished through nutrition education, garden experiences, the food served in schools and core academic content in the classroom.

#### Goals

1. Ensure that no student in Fairfield is hungry.
2. Ensure that a healthy and nutritious breakfast, lunch and after-school snack is available to every student so that students are prepared to learn at their fullest potential.
3. Ensure that all qualified families eligible for free or reduced meals are notified.
4. Investigate nutrient-based planning (as set forth under USDA guidelines) to allow for more flexible food selection.
5. Ensure that the nutritional value of the food served significantly improves upon USDA Dietary Guidelines by providing nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food, whenever possible.
6. Ensure that the food served shall be organic to the maximum extent possible.
7. Ensure that the food served be free of food additives and processes, such as bovine growth hormones, irradiation and genetically modified foods to maximum extent possible.
8. Serve meals in a pleasant environment with sufficient time for eating, while fostering good manners and respect for fellow students.
9. Maximize the reduction of waste by recycling, reusing, composting and purchasing recycled products whenever possible.
10. The school shall have a recycling program.

#### Strategies

- A. An Integration into the Curriculum
  1. Integrate eating experiences, gardens and nutrition education into the curriculum for math, science, social studies and language arts at all grade levels.
  2. Establish a school garden. Give students the opportunity to plant, harvest, prepare, cook and eat the food they have grown.
  3. Establish relationships with local farms. Encourage farmers and farm workers to come to the school classrooms and arrange for students to visit farms.

**B. Student Participation**

1. Solicit student preferences in planning menus and snacks through annual focus groups, surveys and taste tests of new foods and recipes.
2. Ensure that students are represented on the Food Service Advisory Committee.

**C. Waste Reduction**

Ensure that the cafeteria is part of the environmental education of students and staff through reducing waste, composting, recycling and purchasing recycled material.

**D. Sustainable Agriculture**

Purchase food from school gardens and local farmers as a first priority, based on availability and acceptability. Fairfield Food Services will coordinate its menus with school garden production and provide to garden coordinators a list of the produce it wishes to purchase.

**E. Nutrition Education and Professional Development**

1. Provide regular professional development to enable the Food Services Staff to become full-partners in providing excellent food for our students.
2. Provide regular training, at least annually, to teachers and the Food Service Staff on basic nutrition, nutrition education and the benefits of organic and sustainable agriculture.

**F. Public Information**

1. Each year in March, Fairfield Food Services shall prepare an annual Report for the Board of Education, which will include:

- a) description of the level of service and level of participation;
- b) profit and Loss Statement for the past fiscal year;
- c) outreach and Promotion Marketing Plan (with assistance from the Advisory Committee);
- d) budget for the future year;
- e) report on the progress in meeting food policy goals;
- f) nutritional quality of food being served;
- g) inventory of Equipment;
- h) budget for maintenance and replacement equipment.

2. The Fairfield School District's Food Policy, the Annual Report, Monthly Menus, Food Advisory Committee Minutes and food policy information shall be available in the office.

**G. Establishment of a Fairfield Food Advisory Committee**

1. Fairfield Food Advisory Committee shall be established to discuss food-related topics of concern to the school community and help make policy recommendations to the Board of Education.

2. The members of the Fairfield Food Advisory Committee shall include:

- a) Community/Parent representatives appointed by the principal
- b) The Director of Fairfield Food Services Provider
- c) Employees appointed by the principal
- d) Staff members appointed by the principal
- e) Principal
- f) Students appointed by student government

3. The Advisory Committee shall meet at least 3 times per year at hours convenient for public participation.

4. The Duties and Responsibilities shall be as follows:

Present to the Board of Education an Annual Report in April of each year on the status of meeting the food policy goals. The report shall contain:

- 1) Minutes
- 2) Recommendations for improving the delivery of food services.

H. **Maintenance and Repair of Equipment**

The Board of Education instructs the Maintenance Supervisory to include kitchen facilities, food preparation and storage of equipment as high priority in its comprehensive maintenance policy.

I. **Community Use of School District Property**

District facilities, including school kitchens, shall be available to community based groups for their use and enjoyment under terms established by the Board of Education.

First Reading: 6/11/01  
Second Reading: 6/25/01  
Third Reading: 7/9/01  
Warn Date: 7/11/01  
Hearing Date: 8/13/01  
Adopted Date: 8/13/01

**FAIRFIELD FOOD SERVICE CONTRACT**  
**SIDE LETTER OF AGREEMENT**

**REGARDING USE OF LOCAL PRODUCE**


**GENERAL**

The Abbey Catering Group encourages the purchase of locally grown produce by its kitchen manager at the Fairfield School. Menus and recipes will be adapted, when feasible, to accommodate the seasonal availability of locally grown produce. The Abbey Catering Group agrees to pay wholesale prices for the produce delivered.

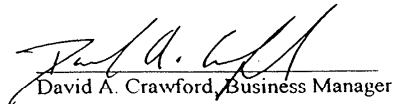
The details of ordering and delivery of produce to be worked out between the Fairfield kitchen staff and representatives of the Fairfield Garden Project.

**MAPLE SYRUP**

Pure maple syrup (Grade A) will be used of the Fairfield lunch program. The Abbey agrees to purchase one gallon for each gallon donated. At the beginning of the school year the best price available will be established and paid for the year. It is anticipated that 30 gallons will be used.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Underwood, President  
Abbey Catering Group

8/10/99  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David A. Crawford, Business Manager

8/10/99  
Date