



What is Farm to Summer Feeding?

Why source locally for summer feeding?

Local food boosts summer meal participation, and local food celebrations can add an educational component to summer feeding. Schools providing summer meals can test out new recipes and veggies within a smaller audience or in a select location. Summer is also the best time to buy seasonally!

Summer Education and Celebrations

Build school or community garden tie-ins with growing or harvesting lessons in the garden. Set up a mini summer Farmers Market experience at lunch. Send home recipe cards for a featured food item and a brochure from your local summer market. Build a relationship with your farmers market and coordinate to send home veggie coupons and SNAP info.



Do you receive food from a vendor?

Ask your food provider to source locally through the summer for your feeding program. Share procurement tips from our website: IllinoisFarmtoSchool.org.

Share search engines to locate local food:

- **USDA Local Food Directory**
- **LocalHarvest Family Farms**
- **IL Farmers Market Association**

Can't get local on the plate? Build beneficial partnerships:

- Ask your grocery or produce market to donate local summer veggies for taste tests.
- Use local veggies from a community or school garden for taste tests.

Do you buy foods for summer meals?

Look for local foods in a variety of places:

- A school or community garden
- A local farmer's market
- Area farms and urban farms
- Your broadline & area produce distributors
- Food hubs & aggregators
- Your local grocery outlets

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Plant the seed for acceptance of healthy, fresh foods!

- Get local gardeners involved and share a lesson on how your featured veggie grows.
- Share the secret powers of super veggies! **UI EXT educators are great partners!**
- Use Harvest of the Month recipes as a tool by sending a “What’s Hot?” seasonal recipe home with kids to encourage families to try these foods at home.
- Make inexpensive **Living Necklaces**.
- Educate kids with a “Plant the Seed!” day using herbs, lettuce, radish, hot peppers or other window friendly seeds planted in an inexpensive take home paper cup or in recycled water bottles.

Harvest of the Month

Our **Harvest of the Month** program is a great way to amp up your nutrition programs throughout the year and can be especially advantageous during summer feeding when local produce is at its peak!

Tips for utilizing Farm to Summer Feeding:

- Experiment with new menus and recipes! Summer is the perfect time to try out new menus with those reduced participation numbers during summer feeding.
- Buying local produce, dairy and grains during the summer provide the perfect opportunity to choose and develop relationships with potential new, local vendors.
- We all know the difference between a home-grown tomato and a store-bought tomato. The taste difference during the height of the season can be eye-opening for young eaters! If you have an opportunity to purchase locally during the summer your kids will taste local produce when it is best.
- Orchestrate an ingredient processing day in mid-August. Creating a “fifth season” by processing veggies at the peak of the harvest can be an affordable option for local ingredients in your entrees during our long, Midwest winters!
- Summer garden programs have an opportunity to tie what they’re producing to Harvest of the Month and utilize lessons and activities.

Want to register your summer program?

HarvestIllinois.org

Stay Connected & Join the Network:    

The Illinois Farm to School Network is a program of Seven Generations Ahead and a Core Partner of the National Farm to School Network.