



# FARM TO SUMMER: GETTING STARTED

Summer Feeding Programs can reap in local summer produce by visiting a farm stand or farmers market to source fresh fruit and vegetables. And increasing number of sites operating USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) are capitalizing on the many opportunities that summer brings to offer fresh, local foods and outdoor activities that help children develop healthy habits.

## Farm to Summer Benefits Everyone

There are numerous benefits to "bringing the farm" to summer feeding sites:

- Sponsors can increase participation by improving the quality and appeal of meals.
- Engaging kids in farm to summer activities can increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Local produce is abundant during the warm summer months: sponsors can source a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that may not be available during the school year.
- Schools can get started with efforts to source locally during the summer months, testing out recipes using local foods and creating menus that kids will love.

## Freezing & Storing Summer Produce

To take advantage of the abundance of fresh produce, it may be frozen and stored for use during the school year. Find information on how to freeze produce for k-12 schools in the document [Frozen Local: Strategies for Freezing Locally Grown Produce for the K-12 Marketplace](#).

## Sourcing Summer's Harvest

Sponsors can find fresh, seasonal fruits and vegetables through a variety of sources. Sponsors may purchase direct from farmers, at farmers markets, through food hubs, distributors, food management companies.

Sponsors may search for farms on the Alabama Farm to School Program **farmer database**. Search the desired fruit or vegetable to find farmers growing it in your area.

Unsure of how to make a local purchase? Sponsors may refer to the Purchasing Alabama Fruits and Vegetables Handbook for Child and Adult Nutrition Programs, found on the Alabama Farm to School Program website at [farmtoschool.alabama.gov](http://farmtoschool.alabama.gov).

# FARM TO SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Sponsors can help children and teens stay healthy during summer months not only with the nutritious meals they provide, but also with hands-on activities that create positive learning environments while school is out.

## Grow or Visit an Edible Garden

Kids can get their hands dirt and learn about where their food comes from by building or maintaining gardens. Gardens are also a great way to involve parents and guardians, who can volunteer to do garden maintenance or participate in educational events in the garden.

## Hold a Taste Test or Cooking Demonstration

The summer months can be a perfect time to try a new recipe or update an old one. Summer feeding sites can also be used to hold taste tests of new recipes or new fruit and vegetable items. Use the micro purchase method to test new products and build a relationship with a farmer.

## Take a Farm Field Trip or Host a Farmer Visit

Trips to the farm, farmers market, or community garden can strengthen sponsors relationships with farmers, teach kids about where their food comes from, and introduce them to the field of agricultural production.

## SUMMER IS ALABAMA'S PEAK HARVEST SEASON

**Summer is a time of agricultural abundance:** plump stone fruits hang heavy on trees, juicy melons and tomatoes explode from their vines and beans begin to dry in their pods.



Sponsors can find out what is in season with Alabama's Harvest Season Calendar, available on the Alabama Farm to School Program website at [farmtoschool.alabama.gov](http://farmtoschool.alabama.gov).



Summer Season Lunch Tray

## Links to Resources

[Procuring Alabama Fruits and Vegetables for Child and Adult Nutrition Programs](#)  
[Alabama Harvest Season Calendar](#)  
[Alabama Farmer Database](#)

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