

# Procuring Local Foods

For Child Nutrition Programs

NJSBA Workshop | October 26, 2016



**Welcome!**



# Overview

- Defining local and where to find local foods
- Procurement methods
- Other ways to buy local products
- Geographic preference
- Resources and questions

# Defining Local and Where to Find Local Foods



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# Defining Local

- Within a radius
- Within a county
- Within a state
- Within a region

A district's definition of local may change depending on the:

- Season
- Product
- Special events



# What Does Local Mean?

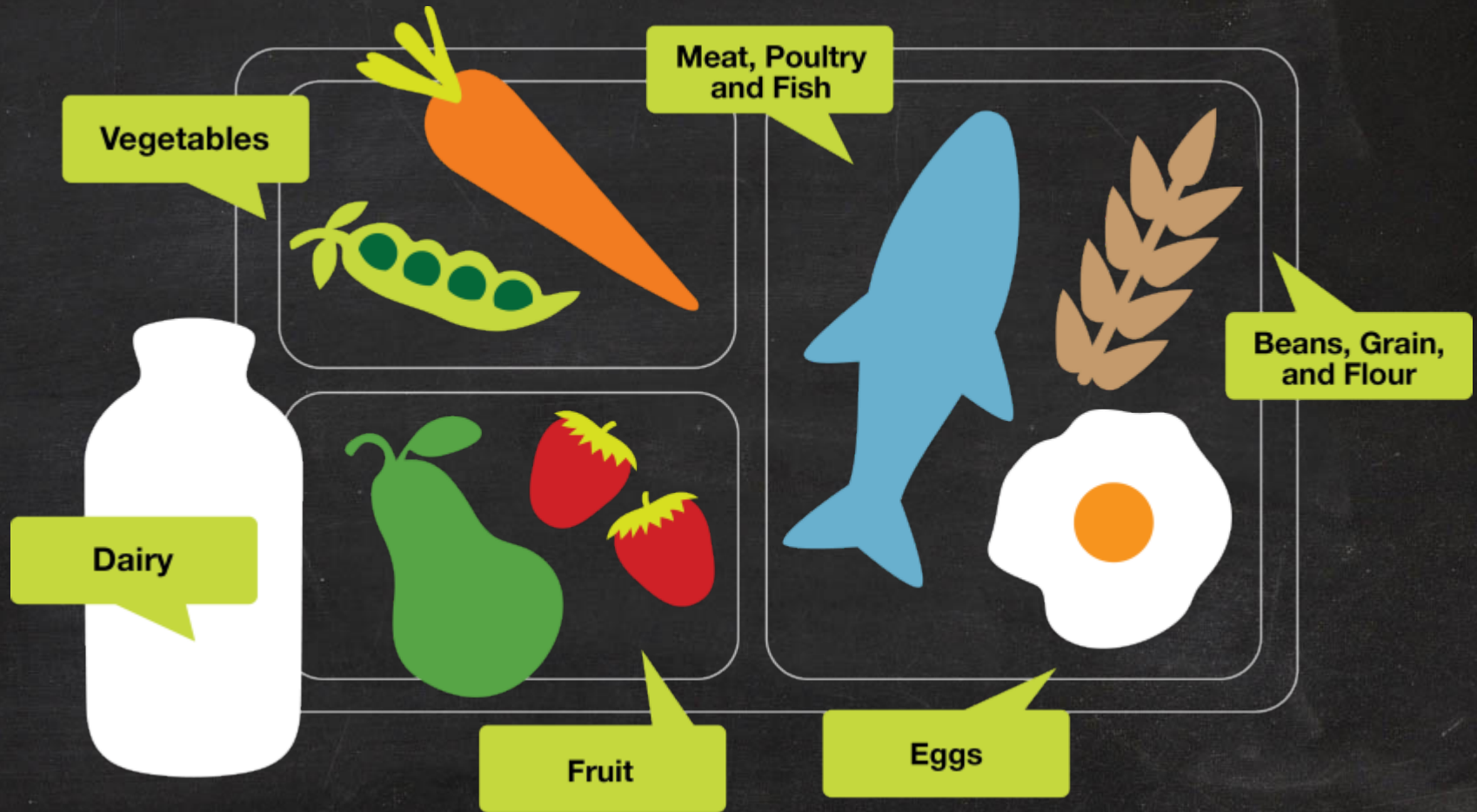
## Who defines local?

- School food authorities

## What are you trying to accomplish?

- Is there state based legislation regarding local purchasing that you'd like to be aligned with?
- Do you want to bring as many local product as possible onto the menu quickly?
- Do you want to couple local purchases with farm visits and have personal relationships with suppliers?

# What Types of Products?



# Local Production & Seasonality Resources

- Conversations with farmers and other producers
- Visits to the farmers market
- Outreach to Cooperative Extension agents
- Outreach to districts and state farm to school coordinators
- USDA Census of Agriculture
- USDA Farm to School Census
- Seasonality charts





## Examples

- **Page County Public Schools**, in Virginia, defines local using three tiers:
  - » Within the county
  - » Within the region (within 90 miles of Luray, VA)
  - » Within the state
- **Oakland Unified School District**, in California, defines local within a 250-mile radius of the city of Oakland.
- **Hinton Public Schools**, in Oklahoma, defines local as within Oklahoma.



# Where to Get Local Foods

- Through distributors
- Through food service management companies
- From food processors
- Through DoD Fresh
- From individual producers
- From producer co-ops/ food hubs
- From school gardens



# Resources for Finding Local Products

- Online Tools
- USDA Resources
- State Resources
- Producer Associations
- Food Hubs
- Farmers Markets
- Non-Profit Organizations

# USDA Resources

- Farm Service Agency
  - » County offices
  - » Listserv of producers
- Cooperative Extension
  - » State and county offices
- USDA Farm to School Census



# Requests for Information

- Survey the market to understand:
  - » Quantity available
  - » Price point
  - » Seasonal availability
  - » Willingness to work with schools
  - » Whether geographic preference is necessary
  - » Who the producers are!
- Collaborate with surrounding districts
- Work with a community partner

# What's *Already* Local on Your Menu?

- Look at your records.
- Ask your suppliers whether they purchase local products.

## What *Could* Be Local?

- Conduct a menu audit.
  - » Are there items that could easily be replaced with local products?
- Think about ways to integrate.
  - » Harvest of the Month program
  - » New recipe development
  - » Salad Bar
  - » Seasonal Cycle Menu
- Include tracking of local in future contracts.

**IMAGINARY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Purchasing Department**

123 Lane  
Not Real City, Not Real State 97215  
Phone: 971.400.1234

**RFP A9338-E**  
**Locally Grown Fresh Fruits and Raw Vegetables**

(200 mile radius from fake district,  
including Wisconsin, Iowa and North Dakota)

Due by 2:00 PM, July 20, 2009



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Purchasing Department

123 Lane  
Not Real City, Not Real State 97215  
Phone: 971.400.1234

...P A9338-E

**Locally Grown ...its and Raw Vegetabl**

**(200 mile radius ...lake district,  
including Wisconsin ... North Dakota**

Due by 2:00 PM, ... 09



## Local as a Specification

- “This RFP is restricted to producers within the state.”
- “This RFP is for Virginia grown products for Virginia grown week.”
- We are soliciting bids from producers within a 150 mile radius.
- We are soliciting bids for Washington grown products.
- Only products grown within a 300 mile radius will be accepted.





# Potential Specifications, Requirements, and Evaluation Criteria to Target Local Products

- » Particular varieties unique to the region
- » Freshness (e.g. Delivered within 48 hours)
- » Size of farm
- » Harvest techniques
- » Crop diversity
- » Origin labeling
- » Able to provide farm visits or class visits





# Other Things to Consider When Writing Solicitations to Target Local Products

- Be flexible
- Don't include unnecessary requirements
- Consider what a vendor new to the school food market might not know
  - » Condition upon receipt of product
  - » Food safety needs
  - » Size uniformity



## Additional Production Standards

- Certified Organic
- No-till
- Pesticide Free
- Grass-fed
- Cage Free



# Two Ways to Use Specifications and Requirements to Target Local Products

1. Use product specifications
2. Use additional requirements to determine vendor responsiveness





# 1

## Use Product Specifications to Target a Local Item

Consider requesting:

- A variety that is unique to the region
- Product delivery within 24 or 48 hours of harvest

A decorative border at the top of the slide features white line-art icons of farm-related items: carrots, pigs, and stalks of grain, set against a dark background.

## Example: Use Product Specifications

### Product Specification

- Granny Smith,
- US. Fancy,
- Five 185 count boxes per week for September - December





## Example: Use Product Specifications

### Product Specification

- Granny Smith or local variety,
- US. Fancy or No. 1,
- Prefer five 185 count boxes per week but willing to consider other pack sizes for September – December
- Delivered within 48 hours of harvest

# Procurement Methods



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# School Food Budget Breakdown (Food Costs)



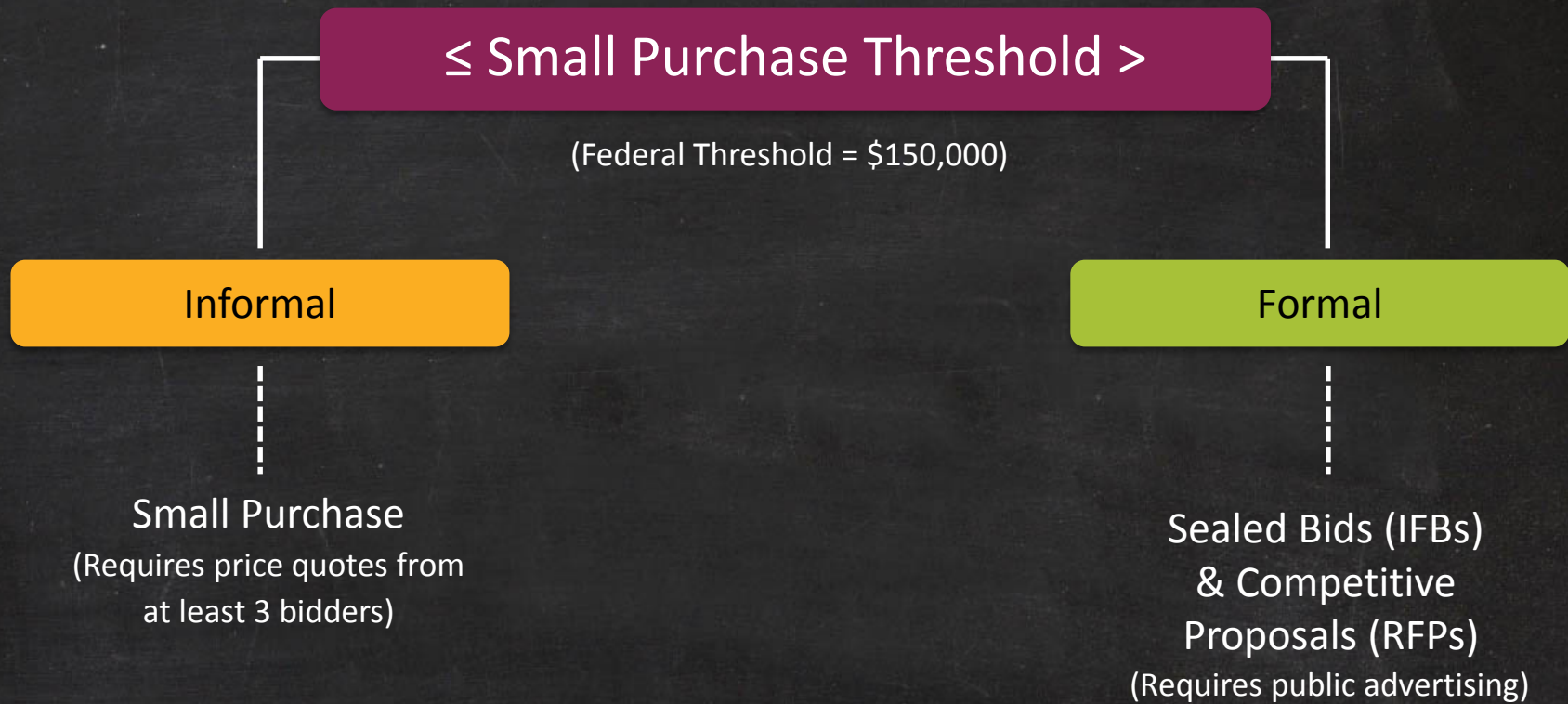
Cash Reimbursement

DoD Fresh

USDA Foods



# Procurement Methods



# The Informal Procurement Process





## Small Purchase Procedure

### Use it when:

The estimated amount of your purchase falls below your small purchase threshold. Small purchases require that schools:

- Acquire bids from at least three responsible and responsive vendors;
- Develop written specifications; and,
- Document all bids.



# What's Your Small Purchase Threshold?



# Small Purchase Thresholds

Level	Amount
Federal Small Purchase Threshold	\$150,000
State Small Purchase Threshold	\$40,000
Local Small Purchase Threshold	\$7,000



# “Three Bids and a Buy”

## Develop a Specification

- Granny Smith, US. No. 1, five 185 count boxes per week for Sept-Dec

## Solicit Bids

- Contact vendors (by phone, fax, email, in-person or via mail) and provide them with specifications (or if calling, read same information to each vendor).

## Bid Documentation

- Write down each vendor’s bid and constraints; then file it.

Vendor	Art’s Apples	Olivia’s Orchard	Apple Crunch Inc.
Price/box	\$40	\$47	\$37

# Section Summary

- Understand that there are two primary procurement methods: formal and informal.
- Know when and how to use the informal procurement method.
- Understand how to use the informal method to easily purchase local foods.
- Understand the importance of documentation.





## Include Your Desire for Local in the Introduction

- A school's interest in purchasing local products (and the broader context of its farm to school program) can be expressed in the introduction to a solicitation.
  - » Remember: a school **may not** specify that it wants only local products.
  - » A school **may** indicate its desire to serve local products and emphasize the importance of its farm to school program.

# Introduction Language

The Food Service Department (The Department) at the Cypress Creek District in Colorado works to provide the highest quality meals to its students. The Department views school meals as an essential component to student health, well-being and future success. Cypress Creek serves about 15,400 school lunches every day and the free and reduced price rate is 73%.



# Introduction Language with Local Emphasis

The Food Service Department (The Department) at the Cypress Creek District in Colorado works to provide the highest quality meals to its students. The Department views school meals as an essential component to student health, well-being and future success. Cypress Creek serves about 15,400 school lunches every day and the free and reduced price rate is 73%. The Department works to connect K-12 schools and local food producers to improve student nutrition, provide agriculture and nutrition education opportunities and support local and regional farmers.





# Use Criteria to Evaluate Vendor Proposals

- Use those same criteria mentioned before, but assign weights to evaluate in an RFP.
- The amount of weight determines how important the criterion is.
- Think about including criteria such as:
  - » Able to provide farm visits
  - » State of origin or farm origin labeling
  - » Provide products grown on a particular size farm

# Quiz:

# Procurement Basics



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**Is documentation required  
for informal procurements?**



**Do products served in the  
child nutrition programs  
need to be 100% American-  
grown?**



**Can a school require a  
vendor to provide  
references?**





**Can a school require a  
specific brand name  
product?**



**Can a school award a  
contract to a local vendor  
without conducting a  
procurement?**



**Do you know what the  
federal small purchase  
threshold is?**



**Are there other rules  
besides federal regulations  
that schools must follow?**



**Is price the only  
consideration in an IFB?**



# Other Topics



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## Who Defines Local?

“...the school food authority making the purchase or the state agency making purchases on behalf of such school food authorities has the discretion to determine the local area to which the geographic preference option will be applied.”





## What Is “Unprocessed”?

“Unprocessed” agricultural products retain their inherent character. These are the **allowed** food handling and preservation techniques:

- Cooling, refrigerating, and freezing
- Peeling, slicing, dicing, cutting, chopping, shucking, and grinding
- Forming ground products into patties
- Drying and dehydrating
- Washing, packaging, vacuum packing, and bagging
- Adding preservatives to prevent oxidation
- Butchering livestock or poultry
- Pasteurizing milk





## State Resources



**Beth Feehan and Chris Cirkus**  
**Farm to School Program Coordinators**  
[newjerseyf2s@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:newjerseyf2s@ag.state.nj.us)

[www.farmentoschool.nj.gov](http://www.farmentoschool.nj.gov)