



# NUTRITION, HEALTH AND EDUCATION!

**by partnering with Senator Sandoval and Representative Solano to create an Interagency Farm To School Task Force to improve student nutrition, health & nutrition education opportunities and providing fresh, minimally processed local agricultural products.**

Everyone should have access to healthy food, and children in particular need a better chance for a healthy start in life. Connecting school meals with local agriculture by purchasing from local farmers is a strategy that can increase the profitability of farming, improve the quality of school meals, and re-create relationships in the community among consumers, the people who grow food, and the land. This is why we are supporting SB 10-081. This program will help ensure that students have access to healthy nutritious foods, **AND IT DOES NOT COST THE STATE ANY MONEY!**

## Why Farm to School Programs

- Farms and school systems are both important parts of the community.
- School meals are an important part of the State's food system, and sourcing of foods for school meals will have a significant impact on the sustainability of local food systems in all of Colorado.
- Farm to school programs purchase locally and feature farm fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables, eggs, milk, whole grains, honey, meat and beans on the menu.
- Other programs may use these products in the classroom for education incorporating nutrition-based curriculum, and provide students experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, gardening, composting and recycling projects.
- Farm to school programs give farmer access to new markets as well as provides an opportunity to connect with the community and educate children about local food and sustainable agriculture.
- Good public relations and aiding the local economy are strong benefits of farm to school programs.
- Research indicates that farm to school programs shown that students will choose to eat more healthy foods including fruits and vegetables, if the products are fresh, locally grown, picked at the peak of their flavor, and supplemented by educational activity.
- One study of farm to school programs showed an increase in their mean weekly consumption of healthy food and a decrease in consumption of foods high in fat and salt.
- School-based programs offering more nutritious foods have been associated with having a positive psychosocial impacts such as improvement in academic performance, discipline and attentiveness, as well as in health indicators such as BMI and weight.
- Farm to school programs transforms the school food environment by providing a forum for discussion around food and health.
- The general public is increasingly increasingly interested in locally purchased food products.
- A viable agricultural sector in Colorado represents part of a secure regional food supply, which in turn lends itself to energy and economic efficiencies.
- Food dollars spent locally benefit the community – the working landscape and open land crucial to Colorado's quality of life and the environment gains through less dependence on a large transportation system.
- Locally produced animal products such as meat, poultry, eggs, or dairy products are also part of the farm to school program.
- Farm to school programs teach students that their food choices matter to their health, to the environment and to the people who grow their food.
- Knowledge about the origins of our food supply contributes to agricultural and food literacy and these young people young people in particular develop a sense of place and a connection to their community.

## SB – 081 will:

- Work to improve student's health, help address childhood hunger, and help increase academic achievement.
- Help transform the school environment to provide healthier choices.
- Provide a model for the nation to follow.



## Healthy Kids, Healthy Farmers

### Results from the 2008 Colorado Producer Survey

*In cooperation with: The Colorado Institute of Public Policy, Western SARE, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Colorado Farm Bureau and Colorado Organic Producers Association*

**P**urchasing locally grown food supports local farmers and ensures the long-term heritage of small scale agriculture in Colorado.

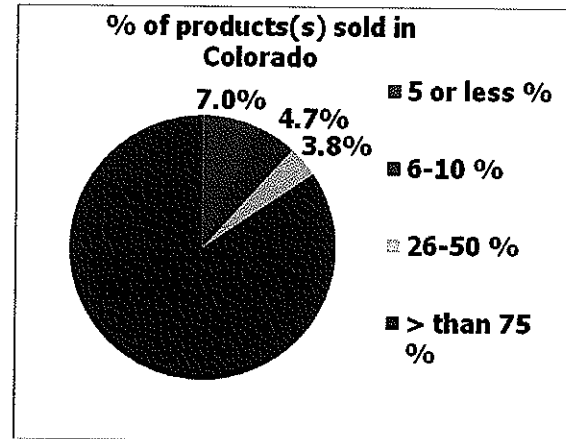
Colorado contains roughly 31 million acres of farmland, representing almost half of the total land in the state. Although Colorado is best known for its cattle country, it is one of the leading states in production of potatoes, onions, lettuce and sweet corn. Colorado is also well known for its tree fruits grown on the Western Slope

Findings from a previous survey (Singley, 2006) found that K-12 schools are interested in integrating high-quality locally-grown products into school cafeterias. Of highest interest are apples, lettuce, carrots, spinach, tomatoes, and onions – all of which are abundantly produced in Colorado.

*Our state produces quality fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy products. Creating new policies to ensure that all of our residents, particularly children, have access to healthy foods are critical to our future. - Barbara O'Brien, Lieutenant Governor*

*Key findings from the 389 Colorado producers that responded to the 2008 Colorado producer survey:*

**Products are sold in Colorado.** 85% report that more than 75% or more of their products are sold in Colorado.



**Producers are concerned about the future of agriculture.** Of highest concerns were water, fuel, and competing land uses.

**Producers are interested in selling products directly to consumers and schools.**

Would like to sell	Directly to consumers	C.S.A.'s	K-12 Schools
More	72%	31%	89%
Less	2%	1%	0%
Same	26%	7%	11%

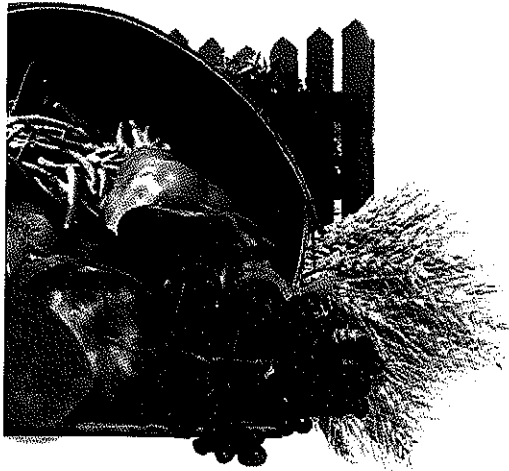
**Producers respond positively to selling products locally.** 50% report that selling locally is important. 41% strongly agreed that selling products locally is important for economic health.

**Producers are interested in selling to schools.** 5% of respondents report that they have sold some products to schools and 18% are interested in selling to schools.

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**For each county that contained a producer interested in selling to schools, there was a school or school district interested in buying local products.** The greatest interest in selling to schools was concentrated in the Front Range, Western Slope, and Southwestern regions of the state.

**Producers have a wide variety of products to sell to schools.** The top three categories included packaged meat, cool season vegetables, and dairy and eggs.

**Products are of high quality.** While only 4% of survey respondents identified their product as “certified organic”, >50% identified their product as differentiated by other qualities such as “natural”, “grass-fed” (beef), or “organic not certified”.

**Products are insured.** 56% reported having liability insurance for their products – an important factor for schools when deciding where to purchase their products.

*If we could provide as much food as possible locally for our K-12 students, they would have access to safer and more nutritional food... – Colorado Producer*

#### Recommendations

- **Coordinate efforts between schools and producers.** Many producers and schools were unaware of opportunities to purchase/sell foods locally and were also unfamiliar with the farm-to-school concept.
- **Develop tools and resources.** Provide schools and producers with information that will aid in the development of a farm-to-school program.
- **Determine a fair price.** Schools have tight budgets, which could restrict them from making local purchases. For producers to make a profit, they typically need to sell at wholesale price or above.
- **Establish statewide policies in support of farm-to-school programs.** Schools need to have access to more flexible spending so they can support alternative markets.
- **Start small.** Begin with a handful of local products and slowly scale up, allowing schools to learn more about what products are locally available.

For more information about the National Farm to School Program and Colorado projects:  
<http://www.farmtoschool.org>