

# How Maryland Schools Purchase Local Food

## What is a farm-to-institution profile?

Institutions such as hospitals, universities, K–12 schools, government facilities serve large number of people on a daily basis, and their cafeteria budgets are significant. A farm-to-institution profile is a snapshot that shows us what portion of an institution’s food budget goes toward the purchase of local products. As institutions begin to pay attention to purchasing local products, which boosts the local economy, it is important to understand how food-sourcing can act as a lever for change—for Maryland’s economy, environment, and public health.

## Why is this farm-to-school profile important?

Everyday thousands of children attend schools where they learn, socialize, and eat. With increasing concerns over Americans’ health, especially young Americans, it is crucial to understand the potential of schools to facilitate change.

**The National Farm to School program has become increasingly prominent** as it helps children enjoy and learn about the benefits of local foods. Through this program, schools are making it a priority to source more local options. This profile will help provide a context for how Maryland schools, through food sourcing, may benefit their students and local economies.

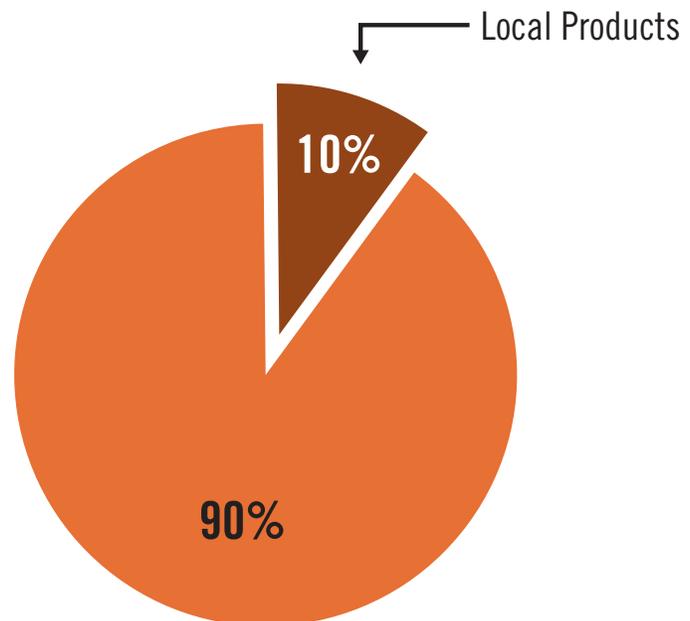
## Survey Data

*These data were collected through USDA Farm to School Census and Maryland Department of Education for the school year 2011-2012.*

Maryland Public K12 Districts	Summed Total
Number of schools (n=24)	1,441
Enrolled students (n=24)	856,742
Annual Breakfasts (n=24)	30,257,613
Annual Lunches (n=24)	70,655,837
% students eligible for FARMS* (n=24)	41.16%
Amount spent on food (n=20)	\$105,500,000
Amount spent on local food (n=20)	\$10,681,000.00

\*Free and reduced meals

## Percentage of total food budget spent on local products



# Farm to Institution Profiles

## {K-12 Schools}

### Local food sourcing challenges for public schools

For every school and district, infrastructure affects sourcing practices. For example, without a warehouse, a district may have to rely on its distributors to make frequent deliveries. For the sake of efficiency, districts may designate “drop sites” to eliminate the need for the distributor to visit each school. Even with drop sites, purchasing directly from local farms requires distributors to deliver their produce to an unreasonable number of schools. **School districts that own their own warehouse may have more flexibility in sourcing directly from local farmers** or smaller, local manufacturers. When deciding on local sourcing practices, it’s best to first assess each location’s capacity.

By purchasing local food, schools could put millions of dollars back into the local economy.

#### If all 24 K-12 school districts in Maryland spent...

3% is spent on local	\$ 3,150,000
5% is spent on local	\$ 5,250,000
10% is spent on local	\$ 10,500,000
20% is spent on local	\$ 21,000,000
25% is spent on local	\$ 26,250,000

...would be put back into the local economy.

### Findings

- Almost 70% of all meals bought in Maryland schools were free/ reduced priced meals during the 2011-2012 school year.
- 15 school districts indicated that apples were their top local product purchased.
- It is estimated that all 24 school districts in Maryland spend approximately \$114,950,000 on food.

### Data Sources

The data shown in the Maryland K12 profiles has been collected through secondary sources listed below:

- USDA Farm to School Census, 2013 (school year 2011-2012)
- School district specific websites, Approved Budgets
- Maryland Department of Education, Free and Reduced Price Meal Data (school year 2011-2012)
- Maryland Department of Education, The Fact Book, 2011-2012

VISIT: <http://mdfoodsystemmap.org/farm-to-institution/> TO READ MORE ABOUT METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

Meals served in Maryland Schools	Number of Meals	% of Total Meals
Total meals	100,913,450	
Free breakfasts	21,072,754	20.88%
Reduced-price breakfasts	2,629,723	2.61%
Free lunches	40,277,071	39.91%
Reduced-price lunches	6,243,636	6.19%
<b>Total Free meals</b>	<b>61,349,825</b>	<b>60.79%</b>
<b>Total Reduced-price meals</b>	<b>8,873,359</b>	<b>8.79%</b>
<b>Total free and reduced meals</b>	<b>70,223,184</b>	<b>69.59%</b>