

Executive Summary

The Power of Public Procurement:

*An Action Plan for
Healthier Farms and People in New Mexico*

September 2014



Cover: Seed Art Mural, Bernalillo County Youth Detention Center

Photo Courtesy of: Jade Leyva, Curator for SEEDS:A Collective Voice Multimedia

Exhibits, Community Seed Mural Projects Co-Artist & Coordinator

Funding for this report was provided by the Thornburg Foundation, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Managing Editor:

Emily Piltch, MPH

PhD Candidate, Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

Research and contributing authors:

Farm to Table:

Pam Roy, Executive Director and co-founder

Alena Paisano, Farm to Cafeteria & Policy Programs Coordinator

Clark de Schweinitz, J.D., Advisor

Shauna Woodworth, Farm to Market and Cafeteria Director

Nina Yozell-Epstein, Farm to Restaurant Program Director

...with enormous support from

Le Adams, Farm to School Program Director and co-founder

Nelsy Dominguez, Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer

Tawnya Laveta, Programs Director

Helen Henry, Administrative Support

New Mexico State University:

Dr. Michael Patrick, Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business and Extension Community Resource & Economic Development Specialist

Dr. Mark Uchanski, Associate Professor, Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences

John Garlisch, Extension Agriculture Agent, Bernalillo County

Lynda Garvin, Extension Agriculture Agent, Sandoval County

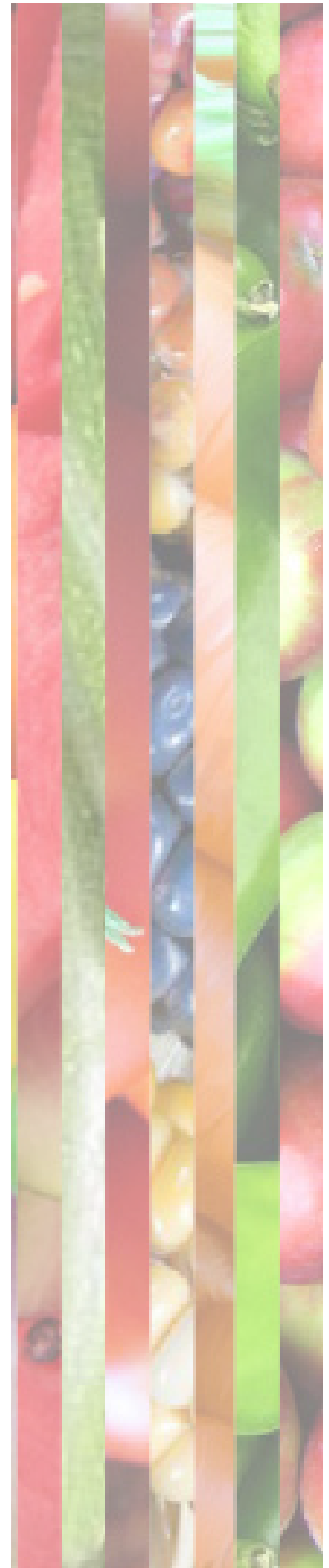
Bonnie Hopkins, Extension Agriculture Agent, San Juan County

Don Martinez, Extension Agriculture Agent, Rio Arriba County

Newt McCarty, Extension Agriculture Agent, Valencia County

Gene Winn, Extension Agriculture Agent, Torrance County

Short stories: Mark Winne, Writer and Food System Consultant



Acknowledgements

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to everyone who gave of their time to share stories, perspectives, and challenges in linking New Mexico producers and meal programs at publicly funded institutions throughout the state.

Thank you to the Thornburg Foundation for their commitment to improve farm to market connections in New Mexico and for funding this research report. Also, a special thank you goes to Jan Poppendieck, Nicholas Freudenberg, and the Public Plate Working Group whose leadership in New York City and generation of “The Public Plate in New York City: A Guide to Institutional Meals” provided invaluable insight into our investigations in New Mexico.

Regulatory Section

Former general counsel to the NM General Services Department

Former lead procurement counsel at the New Mexico Department of Health and general counsel to the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration

Information Technology & Complex Procurement Bureau Chief, NM General Services Department

Lead of procurement for a local municipality

Advocate and governmental relations director for a major business organization

Schools Section

Albuquerque Public Schools (Bernalillo County)

Aztec Municipal Schools (San Juan County)

Bloomfield Municipal Schools (San Juan County)

Carlsbad Municipal Schools (Eddy County)

Clovis Municipal Schools (Curry County)

Dexter Consolidated Schools (Chavez County)

Española Public Schools (Rio Arriba County)

Farmington Municipal Schools (San Juan County)

Los Alamos Public Schools (Los Alamos County)

Los Lunas Public Schools (Valencia County)

Magdalena Municipal Schools (Socorro County)

Roswell Independent School District (Chavez County)

Santa Fe Public Schools (Santa Fe County)

Santa Rosa Consolidated Schools (Guadalupe County)

Socorro Consolidated Schools (Socorro County)

Taos Municipal Schools (Taos County)

Zuni Public Schools (McKinley County)

Corrections Section

Matthew A. Elwell, CJM Detention Director, Luna County & Chair of the New Mexico Association of Counties Corrections Facilities Affiliate

Commissioner Tom Harrell, Otero County, New Mexico

Anne Martinez, MS, MA, LMSW, Assistant Director of Administration, County of Bernalillo, Youth Services Center

Pablo Sedillo III, Director, Santa Fe County Public Safety Division Corrections Dept.

Steve Shepherd, Finance Director, Santa Fe County Public Safety Division Corrections Dept.

Mark Saiz, Bernalillo County Youth Services Center facility's food service manager

Warden James Frawner, Otero County Prison Facility

Seniors Section

Jose Campos, Older Americans Program Director, Valencia County
Alicia Edwards, Executive Director, Volunteer Center of Grant County
Mona Espinosa, Procurement Specialist, NM General Services Department
Toby Kessler, Program Manager, Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging
Barbara Rios, Executive Director, Luna County Senior Citizens Centers
Kristin Slater-Huff, Senior Services Director, Santa Fe County

Hospital Section

Terri Archibeque, Director of Food and Nutrition, Presbyterian Hospital, Albuquerque
Leigh Caswell, Community Health Manager at Presbyterian Healthcare Services
Mitch Gray, Coordinator for Healthy Kids Curry County

Production Section

Ben Etcheverry, Border Foods, Deming NM
Michelle Franklin, La Montanita Coop and Central Distribution Center, Albuquerque
Timothy McKimmie, retired NMSU library & author
Denise Miller, New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
Blake O'Hara, Bueno Foods
Joanie Quinn, NMDA Organic Program
Dr. Stephanie Walker, NMSU Extension Vegetable Specialist
Sarah Wentzel-Fisher, La Montanita Coop, Albuquerque
Cameron Weyant, La Union Vegetable Greenhouse

New Mexico State University Extension Agents and Producers

Jeff Anderson (Doña Ana County Agricultural Extension Agent) and one producer La Union, NM
Vince Hernandez (southern NM and AZ) and three producers who grow chile for Biad Chili Co.
Bonnie Hopkins (NMSU Extension, San Juan County) and three producers from San Juan County
Dr. Kevin Lombard (NMSU Ag. Science Center at Farmington) and one producer in Aztec, NM
Newt McCarthy (NMSU Extension, Valencia County) and three producers from Valencia County

Stories

Jose Campos, Valencia County Senior Nutrition Program, Older Americans Program Director
Betsy Cull, Assistant Director for Student Nutrition, Santa Fe Public Schools
Lyman Graham, Food and Nutrition Director, Roswell Independent School District
Anne Martinez, Assistant Director of Administration, Bernalillo County Youth Services Center
Barbara Rios, Executive Director, Deming/Luna County Senior Citizens Center
Mark Saiz, Food Service Manager, Bernalillo County Youth Services Center
Anthony Wagner, Wagner Farm, Corrales

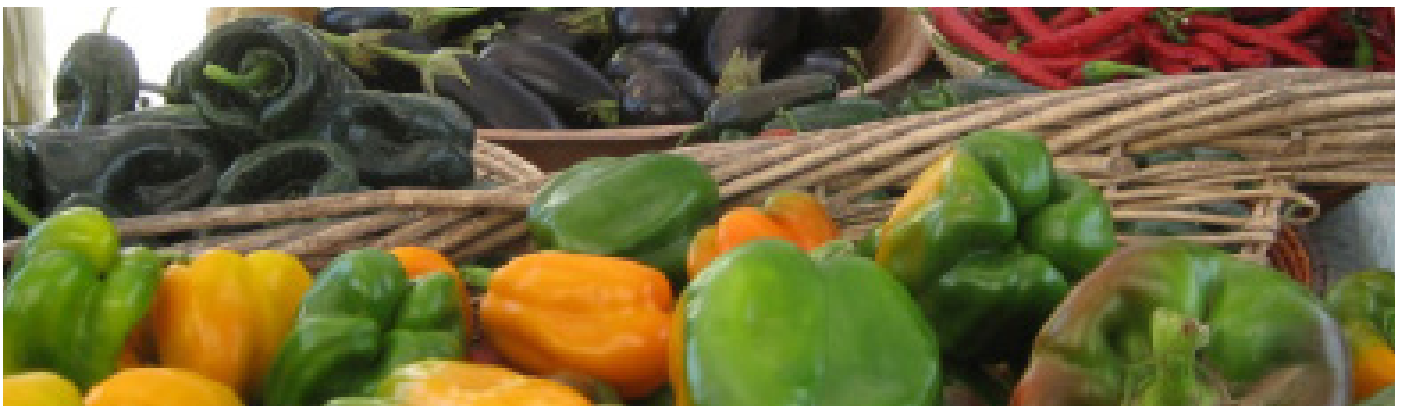
Executive Summary

New Mexico is one of the most expansive and least densely populated of the fifty United States. In spite of this, each year, over 60 million meals are served at state funded, public institutions that teach our children, support our elders and provide for incarcerated juveniles and adults. Abiding by federal and state nutrition guidelines dictate that over 102 million servings of fruits and vegetables are required for these meals and this does not even consider the needs of state run hospitals or the New Mexico Pre-K Initiative (outside the scope of this report). Coined “the public plate” by urban planner Kevin Morgan, these meals are the result of an intricate system of publically funded procurement, preparation, transportation, and food service across the state.

New Mexico faces a stark paradox: ranking close to the top of the list in food insecurity and child and senior hunger, while about one-quarter of our population suffers from obesity and numerous diet-related chronic diseases. Public meal programs are critical opportunities for addressing the health and well-being of New Mexicans and there is real promise for those fruits and vegetables to be provided by New Mexico growers. This represents a significant market that will not, because of federal funding and requirements, go or fade away.

The intent of this report is to identify and understand the potential and current barriers that New Mexico farmers and New Mexico’s public institutions face when trying to sell and purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables for their respective meal programs. The report recognizes that a potentially significant market exists for the sale of New Mexico grown produce to the State’s public institutions. This is particularly true for the school districts’ food service programs. A large, and until recently, untapped, commercial exchange may be fostered between fruit and vegetable growers and the public officials who administer the procurement systems of public institutions. Yet, practicalities and barriers currently impede the process. This report attempts to identify the realities of farm to institution challenges and offers recommendations for their eventual removal. A mutually beneficial goal is that a feasible market can be cultivated and expanded that enables local and state commercial exchanges between public institutions and vegetable and fruit growers.

There is a growing interest in sourcing locally and regionally produced food to supply this “public plate.” Over the last two decades, farmers markets in New Mexico have tripled to more than 70 with over 1,000 mostly small-scale producers. Great effort has been put into expanding *farm to institution* by focusing on purposeful meetings between farmers and school food service directors, to match supply to demand and appropriate farm products to food service budgets.



Public Entity	Meals Served Per Year
New Mexico Public Education Department School Lunch Program	45,000,000
Summer Food Service Program: Children Youth & Families Department	1,800,000
Summer Food Service Program: New Mexico Public Education Department	61,124
New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department	3,600,000
New Mexico Corrections Department	9,000,000
Total	59,461,124 Meals

The table above summarizes the public entities highlighted in this report and the number of meals they serve each year.

On the farm side of the equation, in 2012, with less than 1% of NM’s total 13.3 million acres of agricultural lands growing fruits and vegetables, our farmers still produced 58.8 million pounds of apples, peaches, and pears; 52.3 million pounds of melons; and over 544 million pounds of vegetables ranging from carrots, tomatoes, and cucumbers to lettuce, potatoes, and summer squash. These are produce items requested by schools and other institutions. The production section of the report details the untapped potential of small-scale and larger-scale growers becoming suppliers to institutions if produce orders were known before growing season, and if scale-appropriate cold storage, infrastructure, transportation, and brokering services were in place to facilitate sales and delivery of product.

Aligning support services and regulatory requirements would enhance a farmer’s ability to get high quality produce to an institutional market on a regular basis. Currently, 19 growers are selling produce to our public schools, demonstrating that farm to institution is not only possible, it is viable. Turning these local transactions into a resilient and dependable market connection, where farmers earn a fair price and risk is shared equitably among all participants is the logical next step articulated as a series of recommendations in the report.

With burgeoning institutional markets and interest by farmers to supply them, there is a need for coordination of product, additional infrastructure, aggregation facilities, refrigeration, and distribution options before this potential can be realized. Connecting the New Mexico producers of fruits and vegetables to the institutional markets is not a farmer challenge, it is a food system challenge necessitating responses and supports addressing cross-cutting policies and careful attention paid to the infrastructure and technical assistance needs outlined in the recommendations section.

Research Methods

Between January and July 2014, Farm to Table staff, New Mexico State University faculty and Cooperative Extension agents conducted the research for this report. The information presented here was gleaned through surveys and interviews with a sample of farm to institution practitioners, state and local directors of procurement and food service departments, farmers and farmers marketing organizations, and other relevant state and county agencies. While this report is a summary of the current local produce procurement needs, challenges, and innovative practices learned through this short research process, the report is by no means comprehensive or generalizable to all state funded institutions.

A hospital case study and overview of summer meal programs for children were also included in this report, topically, to illustrate current innovations in the field and potential market demand for fruits and vegetables. On the supply side, farmers of small and large acreage were interviewed to determine whether or not they currently sell to state institutions and possible future interest, capacity, and challenges in selling their produce to institutional markets. In addition to surveys and interviews, information was included from publically available documents like annual reports. Additionally, data from the 2012 Census of Agriculture were used to determine the prospect of NM farms being able to supply a greater portion of produce to institutional markets.



Procurement Report Recommendations

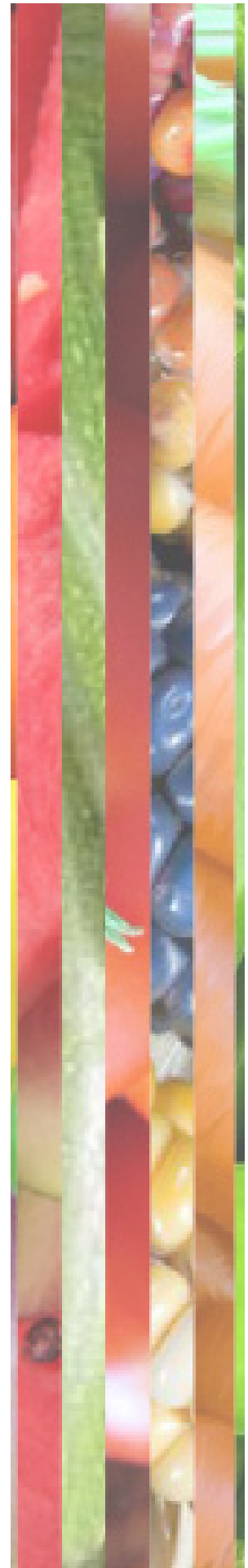
Throughout the course of researching New Mexico's farm to institution landscape, it has become obvious that there are both significant challenges and opportunities for making locally grown food a more common part of the state's public plate. Farmers, though not in sufficient numbers yet, are willing and able to produce more food than they are now for public institutions. To do so, however, requires that regulations, invoicing, and other business requirements not be overly burdensome for farmers to comply with. In addition, appropriate training and technical assistance needs to be available to farmers.

Production, packing, processing, and delivery systems need to be readapted, and in some cases new systems need to be created in order to accommodate smaller, diverse, locally-marketing farmers. Infrastructure – effectively everything that makes up the supply chain from land and water to processing and storage to handling and delivery – should be re-oriented from a highly centralized supply chain to support a more vigorous New Mexico farm to institution response.

On the buyer side of the marketplace, a variety of school cafeteria, senior center, and correctional facility personnel are either buying locally grown food now, or have demonstrated a keen interest in doing so. These “early adaptors” are developing the skills that are necessary to take them out of the box of highly standardized forms of food purchasing and preparation to more flexible and innovative forms that can draw on the quality, freshness, and nutrition of local food. To support these innovators and replicate their “lessons learned” to a much wider audience of food service practitioners, as well as interested new growers, New Mexico must develop a more robust training and technical assistance program.

Farmer and buyer trainings are needed to successfully navigate local food procurement processes and continually upgrade them. Regulations and administrative systems need to be streamlined to allow a more localized marketplace to function properly in our centralized and cumbersome procurement systems. But none of these approaches will succeed without a working partnership of engaged stakeholders. To that end, it is imperative that public and private partnerships – comprised of appropriate state agencies, non-profit, and for-profit groups – be established to coordinate an expanded public procurement effort. Some partnerships can be local and ad hoc, while others must operate at a statewide level in order to ensure that goals and methods are clearly shared, and that their implementation is well coordinated.

It is with the above fundamental components in mind that we make the following recommendations that, if implemented, will lead to an expanded and considerably strengthened farm to institution connection for New Mexico.



NM Farm to Institution: Sites for Transformative Action

Coordinate Infrastructure, Distribution, & People to serve Farm to Institution connections locally & statewide	Upgrade Procurement Processes to serve Farm to Institution connections locally & statewide	Align Farmer Development Activities, Land & Water Resources to Serve Local Public Food Needs
<p>-Establish and activate <i>Joint Use policies</i> to cooperatively use equipment and facilities (among agencies & entities) that enable Farm to Institution storage, packing, minimal processing, and deliveries, locally, regionally, statewide. Address collective risks and liabilities with equitable measures per agency/entity.</p> <p>-Identify, coordinate, and fully utilize publicly funded facilities/equipment for food storage, minimal processing, preparation, and distribution locally, regionally, statewide to serve Farm to Institution connections.</p> <p>-Prioritize and align publicly funded facilities' food inventory tracking systems, order/fulfillment systems to have adjunct capacity to efficiently store, process, move local produce from farms to institutional buyers as part of their service to public meal programs.</p> <p>-Prioritize existing and future food service professional development programs and funds to fully utilize equipment and infrastructure for serving local produce. Ongoing trainings by and for food service directors and staff that would enhance their ability to integrate local produce into their meal programs, topics: how to use kitchen equipment for preparing raw produce, how to expedite approval of menus & substitutions to accommodate</p>	<p>-Adjust procurement protocols from the state level to local level to be in alignment with the seasonal realities of locally grown food, production planning commitments from buyers to farmers during winter months or one year in advance, and timely reimbursements from federal and state funding sources to Food Service Directors/Meal Providers and thereby to farmers to alleviate current cash flow barriers.</p> <p>-Simplify state level procurement process for locally grown produce that is purchased by public institutions and remove bureaucratic stipulations related to bidding that are not relevant to oversight and accountability of fresh produce purchases by institutions.</p> <p>-Encourage/empower institutional FSDs to conduct production planning with local farmers per region in winter and/or develop forward contracting with local farmers, one year in advance.</p> <p>-Modify Bidding systems to be responsive and effective for FSDs' local food needs, local farmers capacity/ seasonality, and local/state procurement/budgetary accountability (qualify farm vendors for multiple years, include multiple vendors per term of award, include ability to "piggyback" on qualifying bids with other local institutions, if Bid is awarded to a FSMC, require that a minimum % of produce must be sourced locally, include timely payments to farm vendors upon delivery)</p> <p>-Activate an institution's ability to use small purchase thresholds (align state and local purchasing thresholds and requirements) to be able to make timely and repetitive purchases of local produce as it becomes available.</p>	<p>-Prioritize and invest in sustainable agriculture programs at public institutions of higher education that meet Farm to Institution's produce needs: crop diversity, produce quality, quantity and frequency.</p> <p>-Prioritize and invest in farmer professional development trainings (by private or public entities and mentors) that empower new/existing farmers to implement sustainable farming practices and meet product specifications, comply with food safety requirements, meet vendor requirements and successfully fulfill purchase orders and/or bid awards.</p> <p>-Prioritize Workforce Development funding to address the needs of farmer development programs and mentorships.</p> <p>-Acknowledge the true cost of sustainably grown produce and compensate farmers and farm workers justly for their high quality product being sold to institutions. Farmers and farm workers are entitled to livable earnings in order to be sustainable enterprises.</p> <p>- Prioritize land use and planning, locally and statewide, for sustainable farming activities that provide produce to institutional meal programs while constantly improving soil quality.</p> <p>- Prioritize water use (quality and quantity) and water planning,</p>

NM Farm to Institution: Sites for Transformative Action

Coordinate Infrastructure, Distribution, & People to serve Farm to Institution connections locally & statewide	Upgrade Procurement Processes to serve Farm to Institution connections locally & statewide	Align Farmer Development Activities, Land & Water Resources to Serve Local Public Food Needs
<p>season availability of produce via software and internal systems, how to enhance food preparation skills to incorporate local produce, how to improve ordering, fulfillment, payment systems that meet FSD and Farmer needs and current capacity.</p> <p>-Create ways for farmers to access or acquire <i>sorting, packing, minimal processing, and cold/dry storage equipment</i> that is scale-appropriate, energy efficient, and affordable to ensure product quality and food safety compliance in Farm to Institution produce sales.</p> <p>-Prioritize distributor or FSMC bid awards to meet a minimum % of locally grown produce being <i>transported</i> to institutional point of purchase as an adjunct service in their food service contract.</p>	<p>-Encourage & align <i>piggybacking</i> within and across institutions: when purchasing through POs, include ability of any local institution to piggyback on qualified farm vendors through other institutions.</p> <p>-Reimburse institutional food service providers and local food purchases in a timely way (less than 30days) from state, federal, or local funding sources.</p> <p>-Remove application/qualification barriers that food service providers face when trying to apply for federal, state, and local funding sources or programs that enhance their ability to purchase and utilize local food as integral meal components to their institutional menus. (simplify applications and web-based platforms and provide timely assistance to fill out applications, announce application openings with ample lead time, qualify and award applicants in a timely fashion.</p> <p>-Fully utilize or develop institutional cooperative purchasing strategies for local food across local or regional institutions.</p> <p>-Institutions (as localized or statewide) need to determine shared and consistent criteria and develop local capacity to verify produce is locally grown, meets quality standards & specifications, and meets minimal food safety/traceability requirements</p> <p>-Institutions need to develop simple and reliable tracking systems to verify that local produce procurement met institutional purchasing goals: ie, local produce payments went to local growers or grower groups and documents amounts of varieties of produce purchased during each week/month (informs future budgetary allocations for local produce and informs growers of desired crops, amounts, and timing of delivery for crop planning.</p>	<p>locally and statewide, for farming activities that provide produce to Institutional meal programs while constantly improving water quality.</p> <p>-Dedicate arable land and water resources to farming activities at a greater ratio than residential/commercial development, locally and statewide, to be affordable, available, and “farm-ready, in perpetuity, for new/existing growers who commit to growing produce for institutional buyers as a majority of their production & marketing plan.</p>

GET ACTIVE: contact your local Food Policy Council or partner organization!

Overarching Recommendations

1. Develop a Farm to Institution Inter-Agency and Non- Governmental Task Force to further plan, coordinate, and implement farm to institution policies and programs. The authors of *The Power of Public Procurement: An Action Plan for Healthier Farms and People in New Mexico* will provide guidance and participate on the Task Force. The Task Force should seek guidance from and provide support for non-profit organizations and agencies that currently facilitate sales and coordinate partnerships between farms and institutions.
2. Monitor, and participate in the Governor’s Task Force on Procurement Reform and the relevant Legislative Interim Committees to advocate inclusion of New Mexico grown produce procurement.
3. Further investigate and address the unique assets and needs of New Mexico’s rural, frontier and Tribal communities as they relate to food procurement. Overarching regulatory requirements do not always meet the realities of these communities – access to healthy and culturally appropriate foods that are affordable.
4. Maintain support for and expand the existing NM Grown Produce for School Meals Program (i.e., \$240,000 recurring statewide and \$85,000 recurring to Albuquerque Public Schools).
5. Support new legislation advocating for a NM Farm to School education program that links in-classroom experiential learning to core curriculum and the NM grown produce in school meal programs. Involve existing farm to school educators and school health professionals to advise and support this initiative.
6. Support existing and new fruit and vegetable growers by investing in farmer professional development for “market readiness” as institutional produce demand increases. Existing non-governmental organizations, farmer businesses, and college agriculture/horticulture training programs could adapt their trainings to serve this professional development need and provide these trainings regionally and quarterly/annually as needed.
7. Support food service professionals by developing local food preparation and menu planning and “local procurement 101” training tailored to individuals at multiple levels of institutional food procurement: food service directors, food prepares and servers, thus increasing awareness of the benefits of increasing fresh, locally grown produce offered to constituents.
8. Introduction of state legislation that instructs public bodies to purchase a required amount of local produce. This should be considered again by the State Legislature. Prior to such legislation, need the following to be in place: further development of infrastructure, coordination of product ordering/delivery systems, and strategies for engaging public markets to successfully conduct local procurement.
9. Inventory and coordinate state, non-profit, and private business infrastructure that is currently servicing public meal/emergency food programs, such as underutilized facilities that could provide minimal processing, aggregation, storage, and distribution services.
10. Support joint use policies for publicly funded infrastructure to maximize the utilization and effectiveness of state investment in equipment and infrastructure that could serve farm to institution connections.

11. Expand support for public and private processing facilities that have farmer clients using their facilities to wash, aggregate, store, and distribute fresh produce (e.g., South Valley Economic Development Center, Taos County Economic Development Center, and Socorro Community Commercial Kitchen).
12. Provide support for food banks and other food distributors who are current and potential partners to fully maximize their storage, refrigeration, and delivery capacity to connect farm product to public institutional buyers.
13. Seek private, local, state, and federal resources and other strategic investments that will assist in researching the need for and cost of operating aggregation/distribution facilities that service local farms with their produce sales to public institutions. Coordinate agency resources for such initiatives.

School Recommendations at the State and Federal Levels

Policy:

1. Maintain support for the existing NM Grown Produce for School Meals Program (\$240,000 recurring statewide and \$85,000 recurring to Albuquerque Public Schools).
2. Support new legislation advocating for a NM Farm to School education program that links in-classroom experiential learning to core curriculum and the NM grown produce in school meal programs.
3. Work with the NM Public Education Department, Human Services Department and Department of Agriculture to develop an inter-agency led position dedicated to supporting, tracing, and managing Farm to School activities across the state.
4. Develop a reporting system to track local and fresh fruit and vegetable purchasing in all public institutions to establish a baseline for future increases in local/fresh purchasing.
5. Investigate further, with assistance from the State Procurement Office and New Mexico School Nutrition Association, the professional organization for school food service programs, the dual approach of using the recently enhanced \$20,000 Small Purchase provision at the state level with the federal Geographic
6. Preference option, and identify uniform and workable policies for the schools to purchase local produce.
7. Through the NMFAPC and other organizations, continue to support current state and federal school nutrition rules as set forth by the 2010 federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization “Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act” as well as the 2008 NM Competitive Foods Nutrition Rule change.

Regulatory Recommendations:

1. Work with policymakers to modify, amend or reform procurement rules to make them clearer for State and local bodies and for farmers and organizations that are focused on local food procurement activities.

2. Amend NM Department of Defense Fresh Program contract to incorporate Geographic Preference in the bi-annual solicitation to determine a DOD vendor. It is recommended that the contract highlight that the distributor must purchase a minimal percentage of fresh products from NM producers. Many local products are being sourced through this program in other states. However, in NM, our DOD vendor has requirements which are restrictive to most NM producers.

Training and Technical Assistance:

1. Continuing education and support for school food service personnel to be able to comply with state and federal school food nutrition and dietary standards.
2. Provide training on risk mitigation and quality management standards for produce to all participating and related state agencies and farmer support organizations involved with farm to institution procurement.
3. Link Farm to School education to teacher trainings at the state level (NM PED), align with common core, and encourage agency willingness to honor experiential learning as a component of the State education system.
4. Cultivate existing expertise and resources that provide essential capacity within schools for developing and sustaining farm to school programs, such as Community Health Coordinators, school nurses, school based health clinics, local food policy councils, FoodCorps, AmeriCorps, Cooking with Kids, and Kids Cook.
5. Provide support for training and technical assistance for farmers on how to develop Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) compliant, scale-appropriate food safety programs that meet institutional requirements. Farmer trainings are currently provided by NMSU Cooperative Extension, third party certifiers, and local organizations.
6. Collaborate with the NM Public Education Department and NM School Nutrition Association to organize trainings for school kitchen managers and staff on handling fresh and local products: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) requirements, recipes, menu planning, utilizing new equipment.

Infrastructure:

1. Continue support for food distribution coordination by the NM Human Services Department, Food and Nutrition Services Bureau (FANS). Increase funding and infrastructure to support statewide distribution of fresh local foods. Encourage MOU's that facilitate "piggybacking" local produce orders to other institutions.
2. Support local SFAs across the state to increase utilization of federal and state programs which could provide funding for: kitchen equipment, training and professional development for staff, and farm to school educational programs.

School Recommendations at the Local and District levels

Policy:

1. Encourage Local School Boards to develop and institutionalize policies that facilitate local food purchasing by amending procurement contract language, bidding processes, and joint-use agreements that support local purchasing.
2. Approve local produce purchases that exceed small purchase thresholds and allocate general funds to student nutrition department for the purchase of local products approved by the School Board.
3. Assist School Food Authorities with applying “geographic preference” criteria to their bidding systems in order to procure local produce from New Mexico farmers.
4. Allow forward contracting so that farmers can plan production in advance of sales to schools.
5. Plan menus to accommodate availability of seasonal products for meals.
6. Expedite farmer invoicing and payments to allow for payment within 30 days.
7. Encourage Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs) and Distributors to pilot getting local produce into their system and/or work with the SFA to require some percentage of local produce as criteria in the Invitation to Bid (ITB)-an annual or multi-year contract that School Food Authorities (SFAs) (and Senior Providers) award to FSMCs.

Summer Meal Recommendations

Policy:

1. Establish a NM fresh fruit and vegetable procurement program that meets the needs of summer feeding programs administered through CYFD. Work with CYFD Summer meal program staff to align procurement systems, develop local food purchasing requirements, and promote educational programs.
2. Establish a pilot program for New Mexico Grow Produce within 3-5 sites for SY 2015-16.
3. PED Summer meal programs fall under the regular school food requirements and procurement regulations, therefore, all local food purchasing recommendations should apply to summer meal programs.

Training and Technical Assistance:

1. Provide a training session at appropriate statewide PED, SNA, and CYFD conferences on how to coordinate local purchasing into summer meal programs.

Corrections Facilities Recommendations

Policy:

1. To introduce procurement of New Mexico grown fruits and vegetables into Corrections Facilities, begin with a pilot program at the Bernalillo Juvenile Detention Center where a horticulture education program will begin in fall 2014. There is confirmed interest from directors of the facility and meal programs to purchase locally grown produce and incorporate that produce into the horticulture program.
2. Establish agriculture and/or horticulture programs at state and county corrections institutions that have land and water rights as a way to provide produce for the facilities' meal programs or to gift produce to emergency feeding programs.

Training and Technical Assistance:

1. Provide technical assistance to juvenile detention centers interested in purchasing local food and establishing horticulture programs by organizing a one-day convening of juvenile correction facilities directors and their food service directors to discuss possible changes and innovations in their menus to include NM grown and in related education programs.
2. Provide a presentation at the 2014 Association of Counties Corrections Facilities Affiliate Conference on the procurement report findings and discuss options for correction facilities to purchase NM grown produce.
3. In partnership with the NM Association of Counties Corrections Affiliate, provide a presentation and round table discussion to learn about and organize for future opportunities to incorporate NM grown into facilities and support programs. This may include a statewide assessment of interest and could create the potential for local, county and/or state pilot projects.

Regulatory:

1. Review current state funding available through the New Mexico Grown Produce for School Meals program to see if juvenile detention centers could apply. Since they are run as schools and adhere to the federal School Nutrition Rules, juvenile detention centers may qualify for being able to request funding through the state program.

Senior Centers Recommendations

Policy:

1. Recommend to AAA and ALTSD one strategy to prioritize serving fresh and/or local food by adding language to the Request for Proposals when providers apply for four-year contracts.
2. Menus should provide substitution options for “local” produce i.e., “California Vegetable Medley” could be made with NM produce.
3. The state should invest in a registered dietitian for non-metro AAA to expedite menu and substitution approvals related to local produce availability and seasonality.
4. Support Senior Meal providers with “piggy back” ordering fresh, local produce with other nearby institutions who are ordering larger quantities of local produce.
5. Collaborate with Aging and Long Term Services to assess the availability of and access to local level data on the number of seniors served by the congregate sites and home delivered programs. Through brief surveys of senior participants, information could be gleaned on desire to have fresh, locally produced foods offered in the senior meal programs. Knowing senior local food preferences would aid menu planning and reduce plate waste.

Training and Technical Assistance:

1. Develop and provide training to senior meal program procurement directors and other food service authorities on how to use the Small Purchases option to procure local produce. It is critical that individuals in these positions know they can legally source local ingredients, as purchases under \$20,000, from vendors outside of current food service contracts with the three FSMCs.
2. Provide training to procurement directors and other food service authorities to clarify food safety plans and/or quality management systems that are appropriate to require of vendors selling local produce. For example, there are no federal food safety regulations that prevent purchasing from local growers.

Farming Recommendations

1. Prioritize Farmer Development with new and existing farmers through non-profit organizations, farmer mentors, and two-year and four-year colleges with agriculture/horticulture training programs. Develop and conduct trainings and mentoring activities that enhance the ability of New Mexico growers to meet the produce specifications, quality management standards, and vendor requirements of New Mexico institutional buyers.
2. Utilize NM Department of Workforce Solutions funding for farmer training and mentorship programs. Currently, workforce development funding cannot be used for agricultural workforce development activities.
3. Assist small, diverse farmers with accessing equipment and supplies, scale-appropriate for production and post-harvest activities (e.g., hoop houses, drip irrigation, wash stations, cold storage, boxes/labeling, food grade plastic bags)
4. Support small farmers or new farmers with accessing more irrigated land appropriate for growing fruits and vegetables that is available but currently not in production. Connect with Mid Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) LandLink resources and other local groups (farmers' markets and non-profit organizations) who are using informal LandLink communications to assist with creating land lease terms that are mutually beneficial to owner and renter. Further develop and coordinate a statewide LandLink initiative. This will require resources, yet will be beneficial to individuals and private and public entities.
5. Coordinate LandLink initiatives with municipalities such as county planning and assessment departments to support protection of agricultural land and water resources. Prioritize agricultural land and water resources to be used for New Mexico food production to meet Institutional demand and other local market demand.
6. Through NMSU's continued research of fruits and vegetable growers in NM (autumn 2014), specific New Mexico statistics will assist in clarifying produce amounts and availability for future NM institutional purchasing.