

# OVERVIEW OF FARM TO SCHOOL IN CONNECTICUT



**UConn**  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE,  
HEALTH AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES

ZWICK CENTER FOR FOOD AND  
RESOURCE POLICY

**READ THE FULL REPORT HERE!**

**A Connecticut Farm to School (FTS) study was conducted to determine how CT School Food Authorities (SFA) procure local food products and what challenges they face.**

**149 SFA directors completed a survey on their experiences buying and serving local food. 19 directors also participated in one-hour interviews.**

## What we found



101 SFAs have procured local food in the last year



The primary motivation of SFA directors implementing local procurement is to provide fresh, high-quality produce that students enjoy



Districts with access to supplemental produce funding or organizations such as Put Local on Your Tray are more likely to procure directly from producers



Primary challenges to local procurement included expense, availability, and staff time

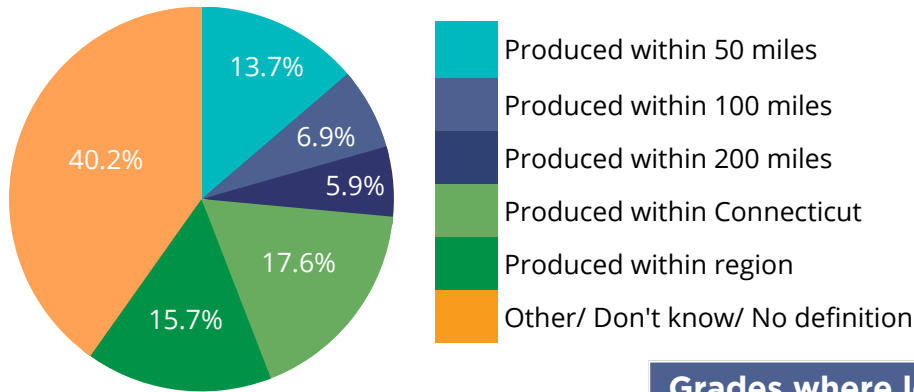


83% of SFAs that bought local had purchased from CT sources

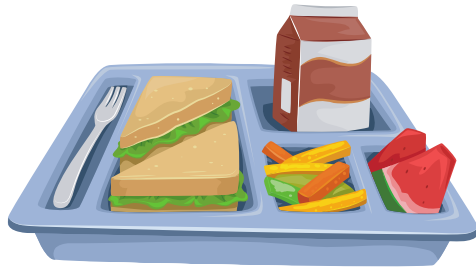


Only 30% of those that buy local spend more than 10% of their local funding on CT Grown

## WHAT IS CONSIDERED LOCAL?



Local food is being served to an increasing number of grades



Grades where local served	In 2019	Currently
Pre-K and younger	19%	29%
Kindergarten-5th grade	64%	69%
6th grade-8th grade	52%	72%
9th grade-12th grade	47%	67%

## INTEREST IN PURCHASING LOCAL PRODUCTS

- 97% of directors intend to maintain or increase their procurement levels in the next year
- 30% of directors indicated farmers were a top source of local food

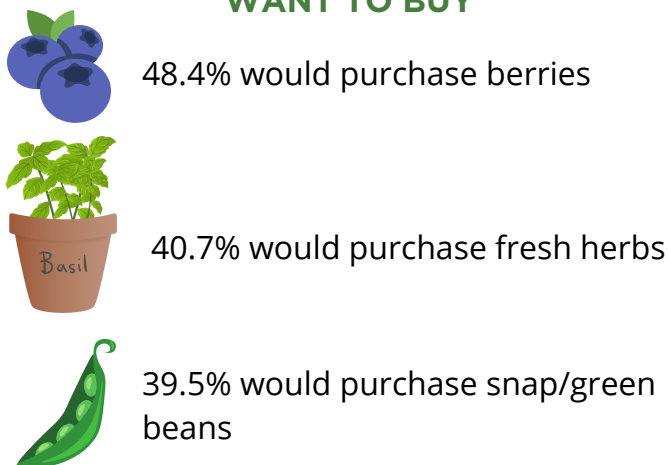


The CT Department of Agriculture's CT Grown program highlights agricultural products grown in Connecticut.

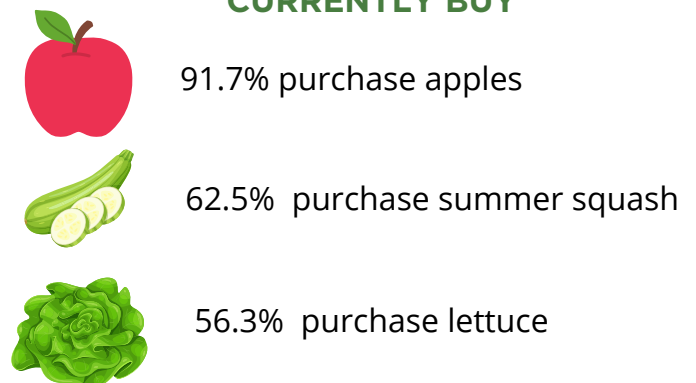
Here's what SFA directors said about this program:

- **92%** are familiar with the CT Grown label
- **97%** are willing to incorporate new CT Grown menu items
- **55%** currently request products grown in CT from their vendor
- **100%** are willing to request CT Grown products

### TOP 3 CT GROWN PRODUCTS SFAS WANT TO BUY



### TOP 3 CT GROWN PRODUCTS SFAS CURRENTLY BUY



Over 40% of SFAs also purchased CT Grown green beans, sweet corn, winter squash, and berries

## CHALLENGES TO SERVING LOCAL FOOD

SFA directors across Connecticut expressed enthusiasm for serving local food. However, they face significant barriers.

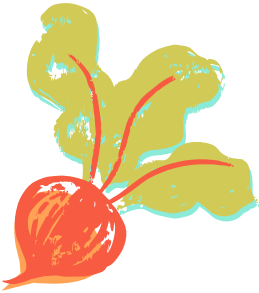
### Top Challenges Include

#### For local procurement:

- Cost
- Lack of availability from primary vendors
- Lack of staff

#### For buying directly from farmers:

- Identifying producers
- Delivery
- Confusion about correct procurement processes



## DIRECTORS SAID THE FOLLOWING WOULD FACILITATE LOCAL PROCUREMENT

- Contact information and price lists of farms interested in selling to schools
- Improved information from current food distributors on which of their products are local
- Delivery to their sites
- Funding for local food purchases

Approximately half of SFAs participated in Farm to School networks or had policies supporting Farm to School

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on study findings, the following recommendations could help grow local food procurement in Connecticut K-12 schools:



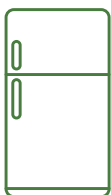
Improve informational resources regarding local food



Expand the number of districts receiving logistical support



Conduct outreach to current broadline and produce distributors



Provide equipment aid



Continue universal meals for all



Implement local food incentives