

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

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Farm to School Program

What is it?

- The Farm to School (FTS) program is designed to offer expertise and support to all areas of the state to pursue farm to school activities and interests. It includes any activity that connects students, teachers, and the school food service with product grown in Alaska.
- The prevailing program goal is having product produced and/or harvested in Alaska available in the school food environment



Figure 1 May 2010 – House Bill 70 Signed into Law at Palmer High School; Representative Carl Gatto & Governor Sean Parnell

through three approaches; working with school food service staff, working with local food producers, and educating/engaging youth in any part of the food system.

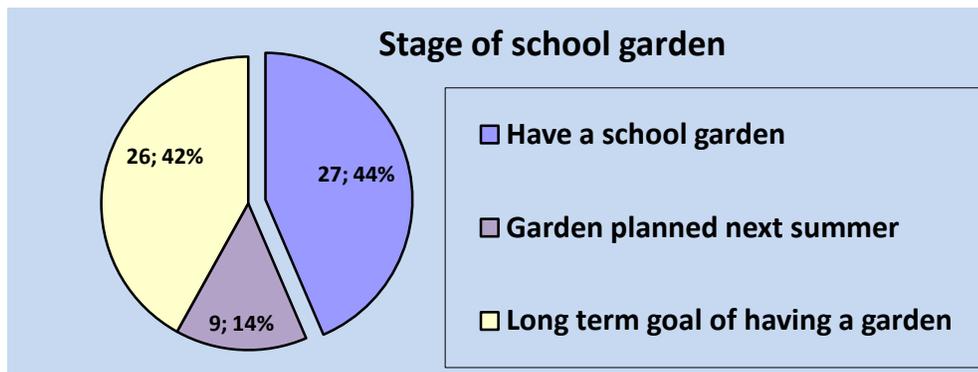
What have we accomplished?

- Created a Farm to School Grant (FTSG) program
 - The FTSG program received 24 applications and awarded funding to 17 projects, throughout Alaska. A brief description of three of the projects follows.

School/District	Alaska Gateway School District	Talkeetna Elementary / Matanuska Susitna School District	Chugiak High School / Anchorage School District
Project Description	Hosted a field trip with over 50 students visiting the Bison farm; purchased bison meat for use in the school lunch.	Launched a salad bar at school using local product; hosted a community event to raise additional funds to extend the salad bar.	Hosted a school event with local producers educating students about their product; a local wholesaler educating students about distribution; a local chef teaching preparation techniques and students preparing food for staff.

“Develop, Conserve, and Enhance Natural Resources for Present and Future Alaskans.”

- Developed the *Alaska School Garden Food Safety Guidelines*
 - Offers guidance for those managing a school garden with the intent to utilize the school garden-grown food in the school meal program; also could be referenced if you have a small farming or gardening operation that is interested in selling product to a school.
 - Guidelines have been requested and distributed to 68 schools and community partners. This represents 20 school districts (38%) and over 19,000 students, almost 15% of statewide K-12 student enrollment.
 - From the requests for the *Guidelines*, we have gathered the following data:



- We are currently collecting statewide data on current school garden numbers.
- School / Farm tours
 - The FTS Coordinator has hosted multiple tours (5+) bringing school food service staff to the farm and farmers to the food service kitchens to initiate dialogue about desired product, address perceived barriers and identify potential opportunities. These discussions have resulted in the following:

Local Product	Mat-Su SD	Fairbanks SD	Sitka SD	Alaska Gateway SD
Currently use	Carrots Milk	None	Fish	None
Beginning to use	Zucchini Broccoli**	Barley flour** Cabbage**	More fish*	Cabbage** Bison*

*Projects supported by Farm to School Program mini-grant award

**Initial stages only, product development and feasibility studies

- Product development and feasibility studies
 - The Farm to School Program, Cooperative Extension Services at UAF, and the Fairbanks Nutrition Services (FNS) have worked together to make a recipe for rolls using barley flour. The staff at FNS are very pleased with the product and the recipe is current with the new guidelines coming out for the national school lunch program.
 - Working with a small farmer in Delta and the Fairbanks Nutrition Services we looked at the feasibility of using local cabbage compared to pre-cut cabbage from the

lower 48. We accounted for distribution, labor costs, product yield, and batch needs. Factoring in labor costs and processing the cabbage, the two options can be summarized as follows:

	Yield	Labor	Total cost including labor
Local [\$1/lb]	-75%*	12 hrs	\$1150 [\$1.79/lb]
Pre-cut [\$2.32/lb]	100%	3 hrs	\$1558 [\$2.43/lb]

*850 lbs raw cabbage yields 640 lbs shredded product

- Outreach
 - Created the FTS listserv to keep interested individuals apprised of relevant information including grant announcements, contests, resources, etc.
 - Created the FTS logo to raise awareness.
 - Launched a Facebook page to raise awareness about the program.
 - The FTS Coordinator has been an invited presenter at multiple conferences both in state and nationally and has reached over 1000 people in this capacity.
 - Launched the Farm to School Challenge to engage students, parents, teachers and others and raise awareness about the program.

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