

# Agenda for farm to school summit

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Introduction

Farm to school presentation - Johanna

Question / answer

Open discussion

# Farm to School Program

[http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag\\_FTS.htm](http://dnr.alaska.gov/ag/ag_FTS.htm)



Johanna Herron

Program Coordinator

Department of Natural Resources,

Division of Agriculture

# Overview

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- **My background**
- Program goals
- Alaskan schools
- MEALS project
- Game plan for 2011
- Closing remarks

# Background

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## Restaurants

- 10 + years in the food service industry

## Fairbanks wellness committee

- Volunteered on the Fairbanks Wellness Committee

## Research: Obesity-related health issues in rural communities

- 5 years at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR)
- Experience in data collection, data management, quality control, confidentiality issues, and community based participatory research.

## Education

- BS in Anthropology
- MS in Community Nutrition underway

## Project MEALS

- **Statewide survey of food service professionals perspectives on interest, barriers and challenges, current practices, and future needs for incorporating Alaskan foods into the school meal program.**

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# Basic goals of the program

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## School Nutrition Programs

- To meet the diverse needs in an efficient manner
- To increase youth exposure to Alaskan foods

## Local Food Systems

- To strengthen local food systems by supporting regional and local food producers
- To promote sustainable agriculture and fishing

## Education

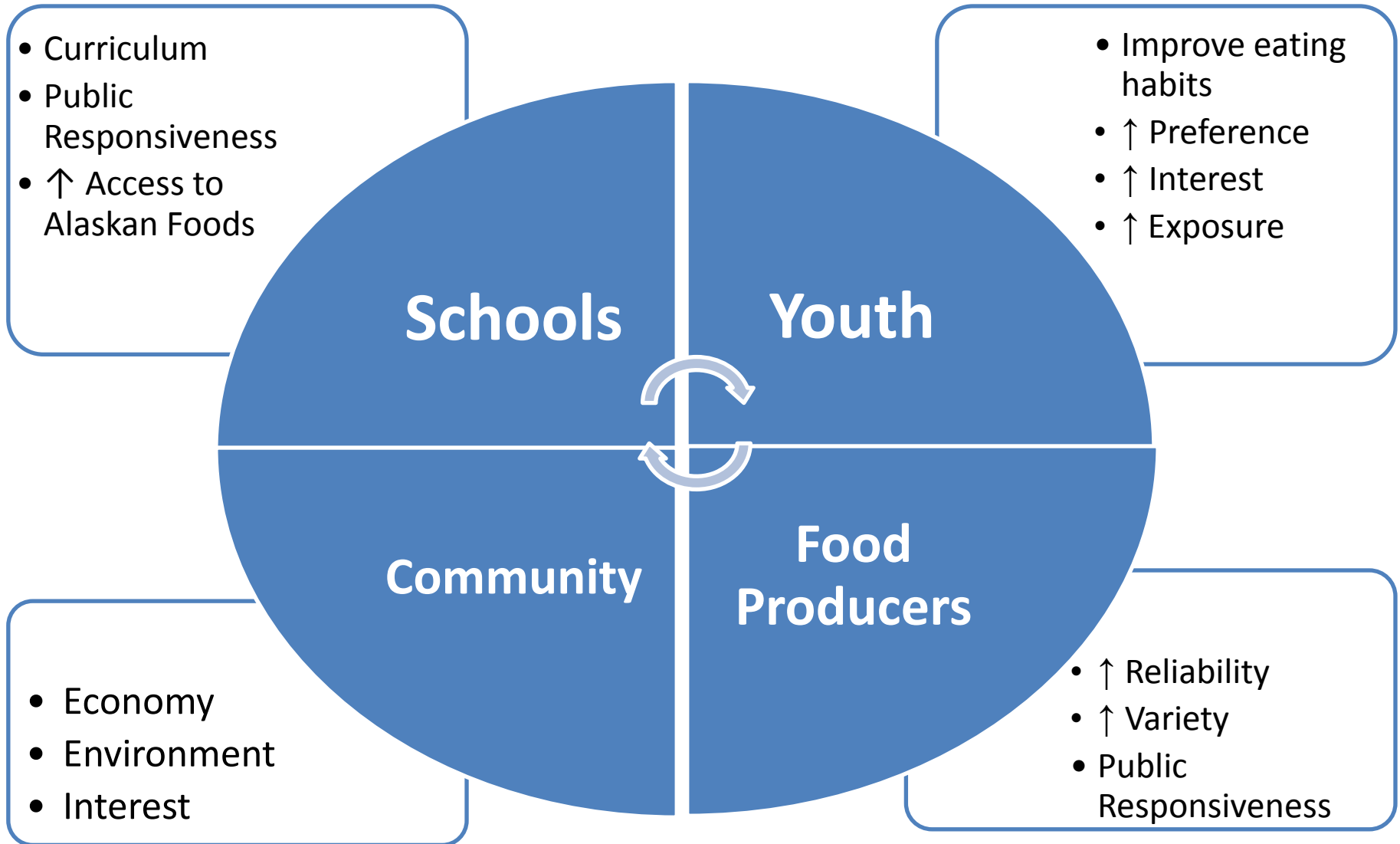
- To provide support for health and nutrition education
- To increase youth understanding of how food gets to their plate

Children's Health, Habits, and Happiness



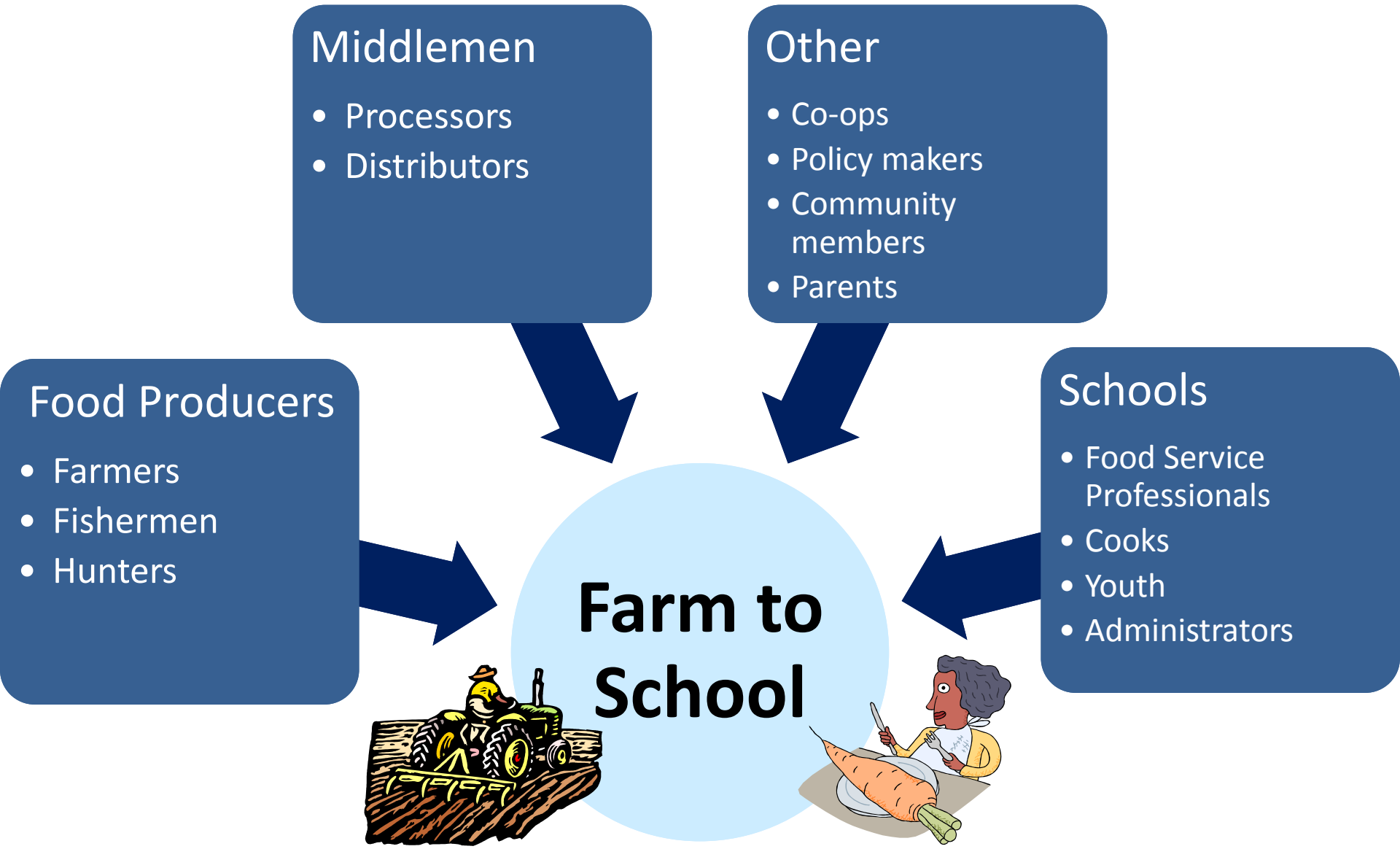
# How do we achieve these goals?

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# Key players: Who is involved?

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# Shaping and communicating goals

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## Public Forums

- Community input
- Bringing key players together

## Youth Leadership

- Input
- Energy
- Connections

## Farm to School

## Newsletters

- Food Service
- Food Producers
- Kids / Families

## Advisory Group

- Key Players
- Policy Makers

# Where do you start?

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**Start small**

**Build a network**

**Consider logistics**

**Market**

**Educate**

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# Potential market with schools

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## # of school districts

- 53 school districts

## # of schools

- About 550, this includes charter, correspondence, and state-operated schools

## District enrollment 2009-2010

- Kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade; 129,187
- Pre-kindergarten – 12<sup>th</sup> grade; 131,662

# Meals served 2005

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## National School Lunch Data

- 8,495,528 meals served

## National School Breakfast Data

- 11,625 meals served

## Child and Adult Care Food Program

- 399,763 meals served

## Summer Food Service Program

- 105,062 meals served

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# Project MEALS

Johanna Herron  
Andrea Bersamin, PhD, advisor



MEALS



More  
Eating of  
Alaskan  
Lunches in  
School

What are  
Alaskan  
Foods?



Alaskan foods are any  
foods fished, hunted,  
harvested or grown in the  
state of Alaska.



## Alaskan Foods:

As Defined for the MEALS Project

*Any food fished, hunted, harvested,  
or grown in the state of Alaska*

# Project design

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**Develop Survey**



**Input**



**Administer & Analyze**



**Share Results**

**Recommendations**



**Food Service Professionals  
Journal Article  
Conferences**



**Food Policy Council  
Eat Smart Alaska  
Farm to School Program**



# Overall project objective

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***To increase the use of Alaskan foods in the school meal programs.***

# Specific project objectives

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- 1) To look at the interest and challenges of using Alaskan foods in the school meal program, from the school food service professional perspective.
- 2) (Guided by findings) To develop recommendations and resources to increase the use of Alaskan foods in the school meal program.

# Survey topic areas

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**Barriers / Challenges**

**Current Practices**

**Interest / Motivation**

**Future Needs**

# Survey Design

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Questions came from the literature and some of my own

Input from a group of experts


Put into survey monkey and made a hard copy version

Pilot test

# Survey Recruitment

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Got a list of food service professionals and called each one



Emailed survey invitation and mailed out hard copies



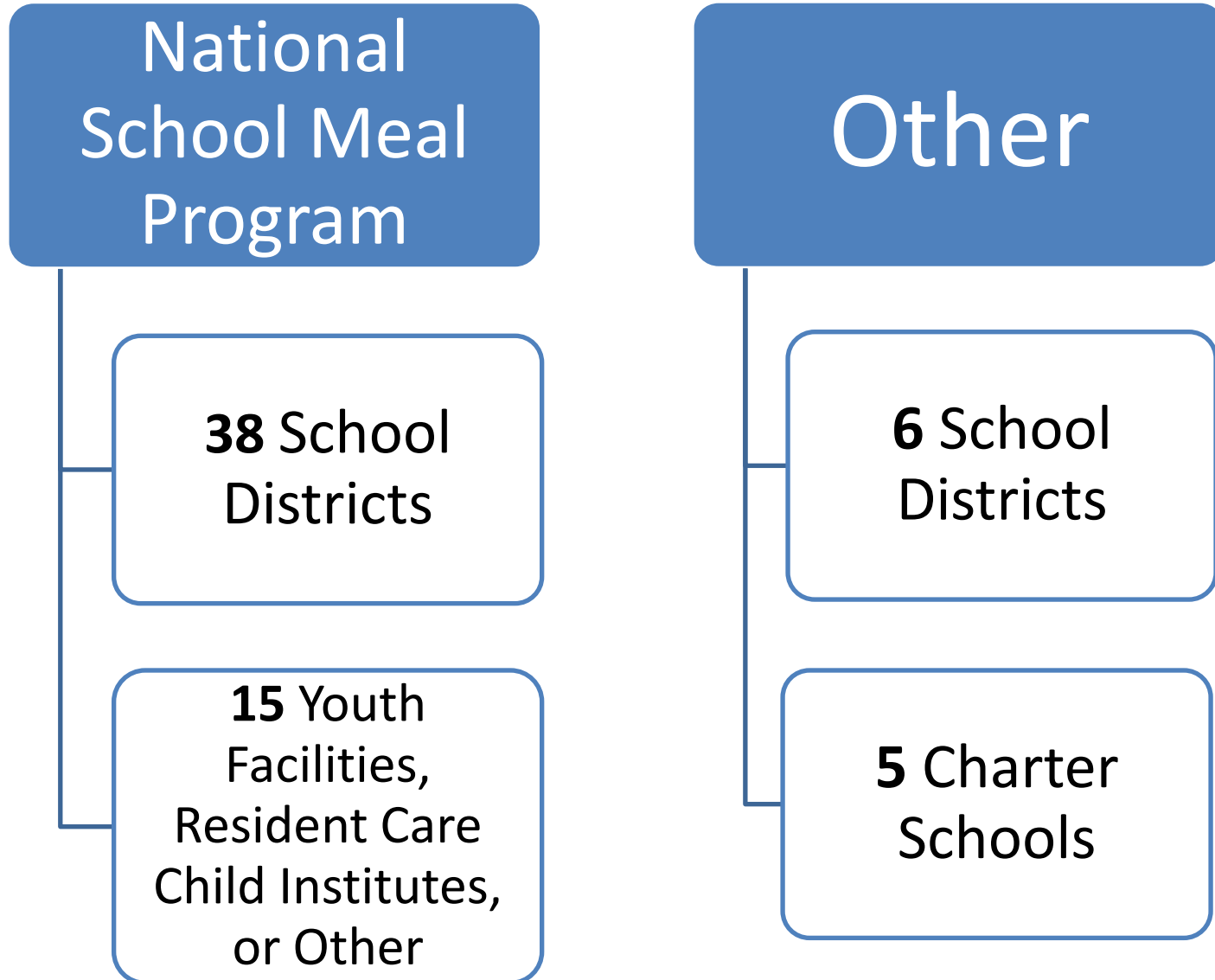
Sent a reminder (2 weeks later)



Sent final reminder (2 weeks later)

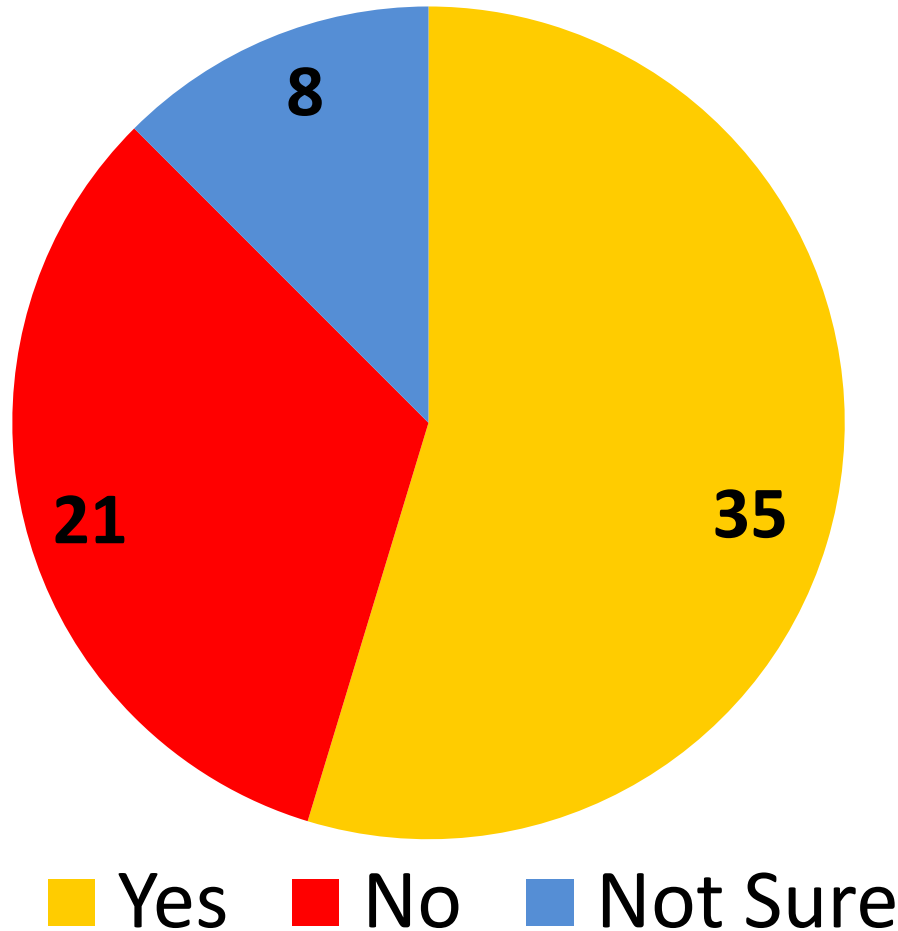
# 64 Survey participants

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# Has your district ever served Alaskan foods?

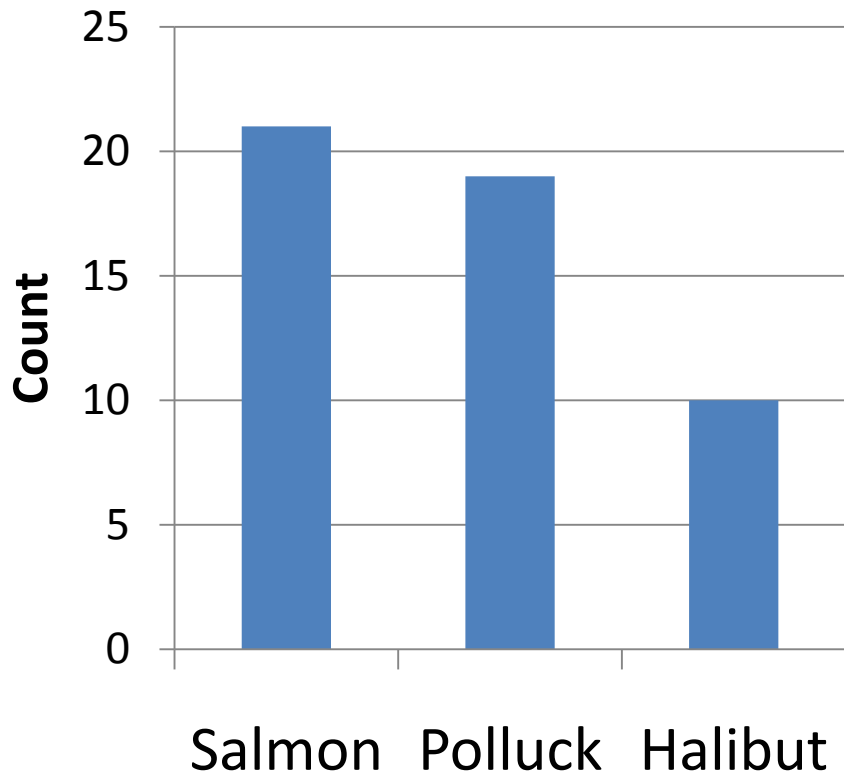
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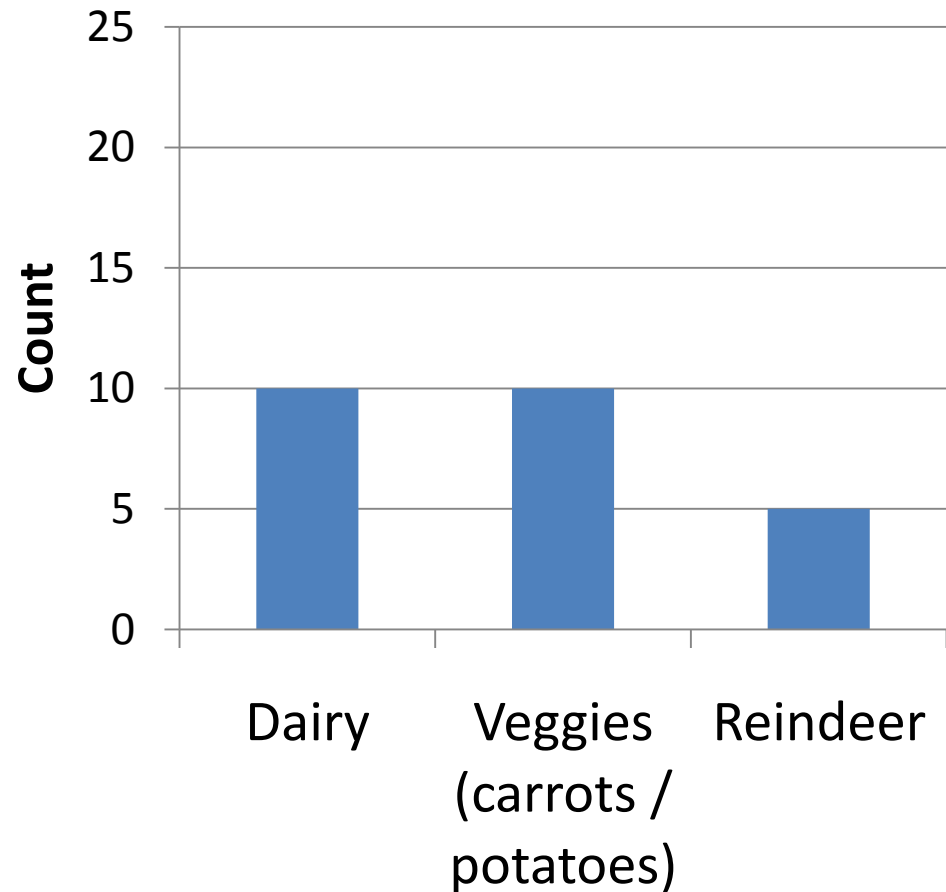
# Top purchased Alaskan foods

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## Fish

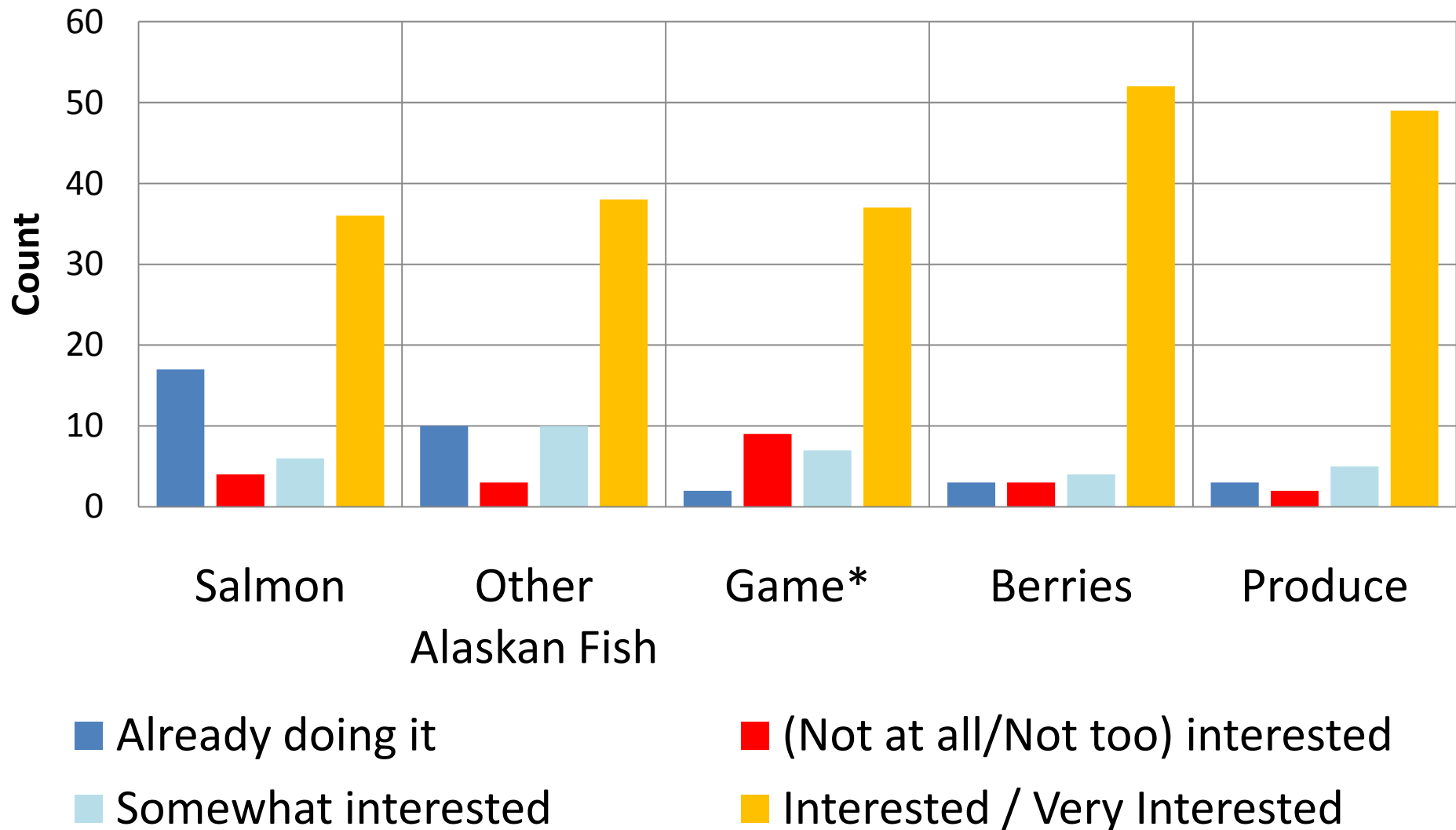


## Other





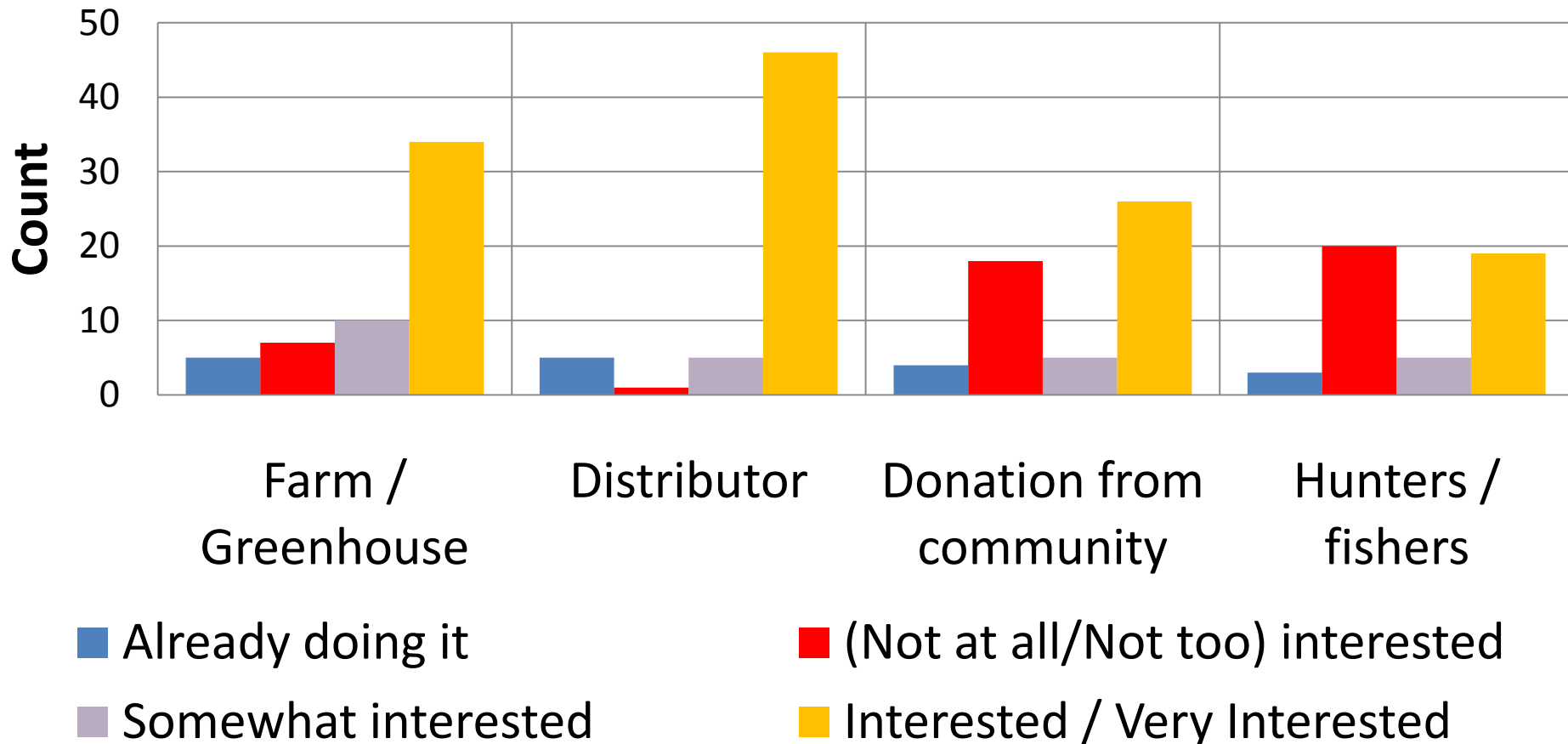
# How interested are you in incorporating the following Alaskan foods into your meal planning?



# Preferred delivery method

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How interested are you in purchasing or accepting foods from...



# Purchasing considerations

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## Most Important

**Reliable supply [58/61; 95%]**

**Cost [57/62; 92%]**

**Delivery considerations [56/62; 90%]**

**Purchasing choice consistency [53/61; 87%]**

# Purchasing considerations

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## Concerns

**Finding Alaskan producers in area from whom to purchase**

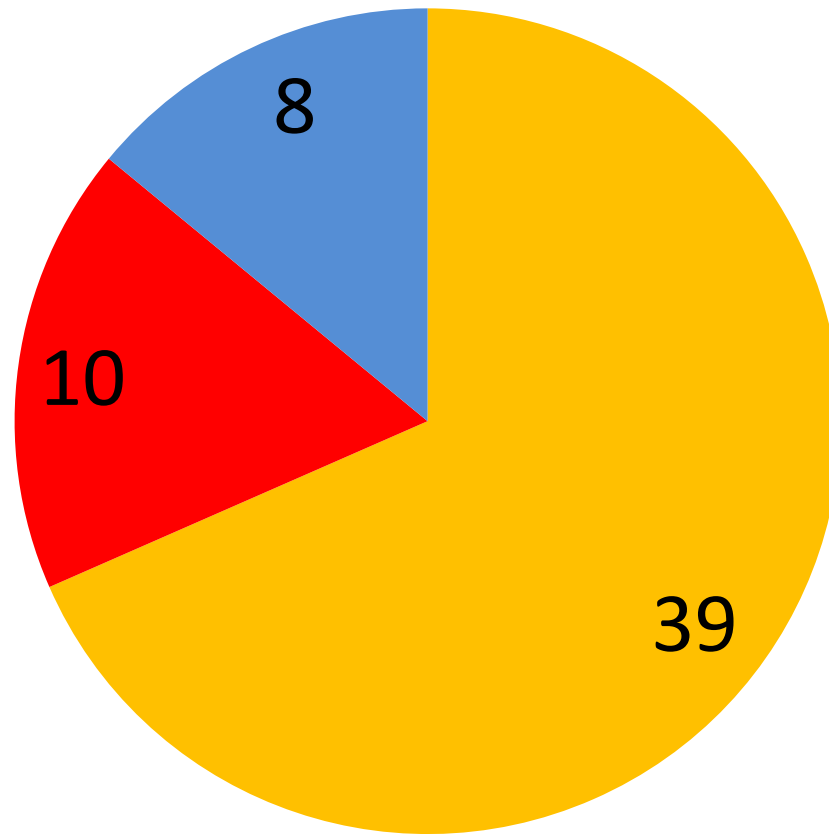
**Lack of facilities to handle fresh Alaskan foods**

**Convenience (one-stop shopping)**

**Lack of staff to prepare fresh Alaskan foods**

# Does your district have a distributor from whom you purchase the majority of your items?

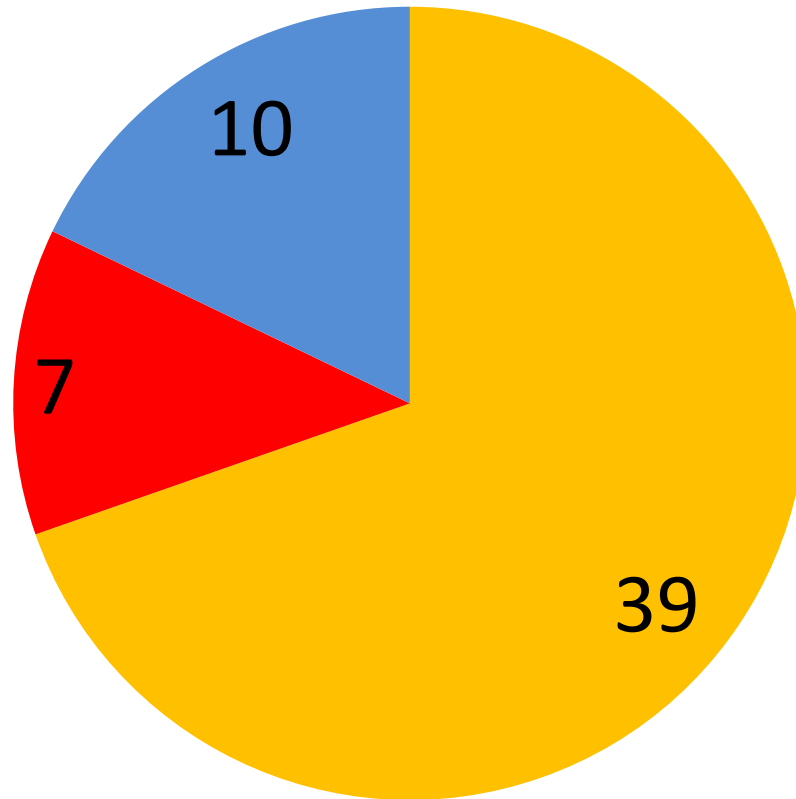
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■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

# Top 3 distributors

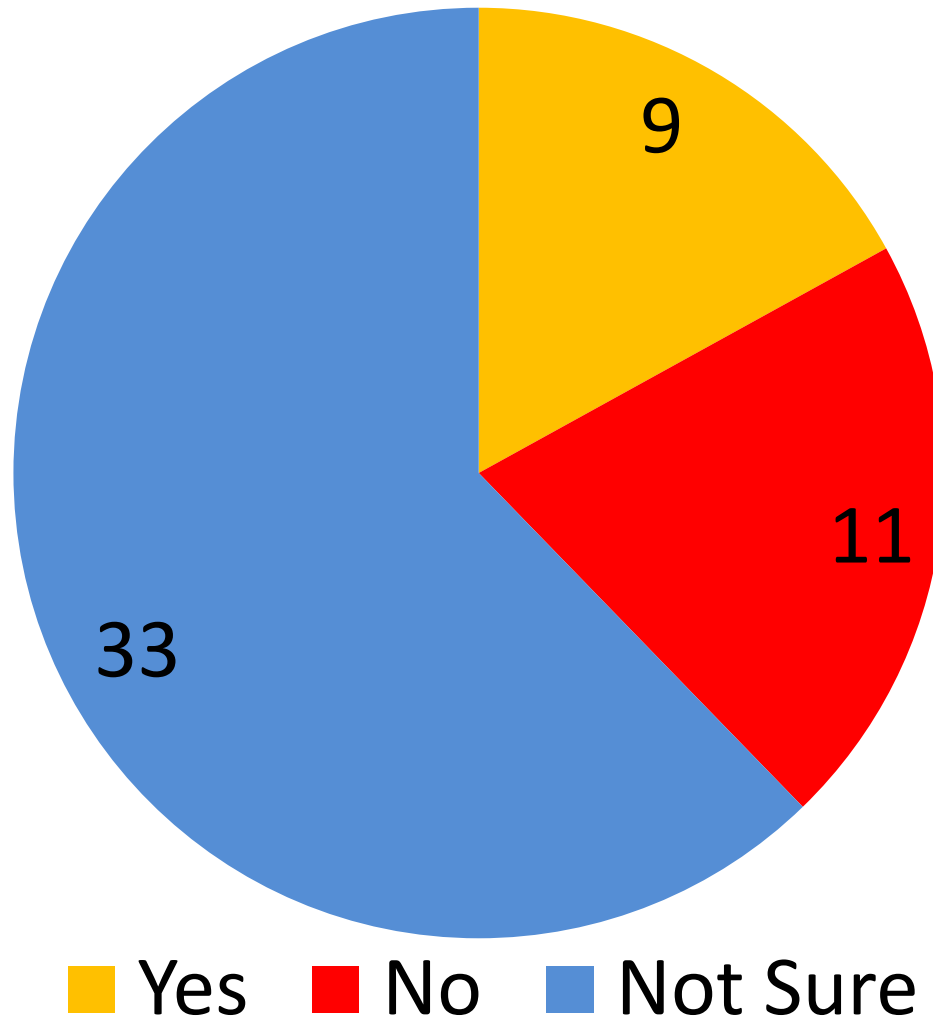
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■ Food Service of America   ■ Quality Sales   ■ Sysco

# Does your district's primary distributor offer Alaska grown produce?

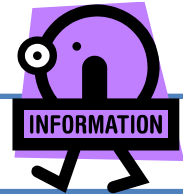
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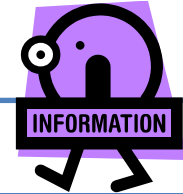
# Top 5 desired resources

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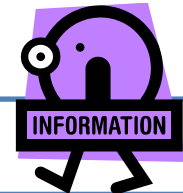
Strategies for connecting with Alaskan food producers



Cost comparisons for Alaskan and non-Alaskan menu options



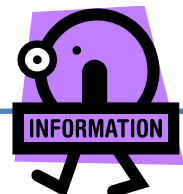
Info. on USDA purchasing regulations related to Alaskan foods



Financial support



Information on foods available and where to purchase





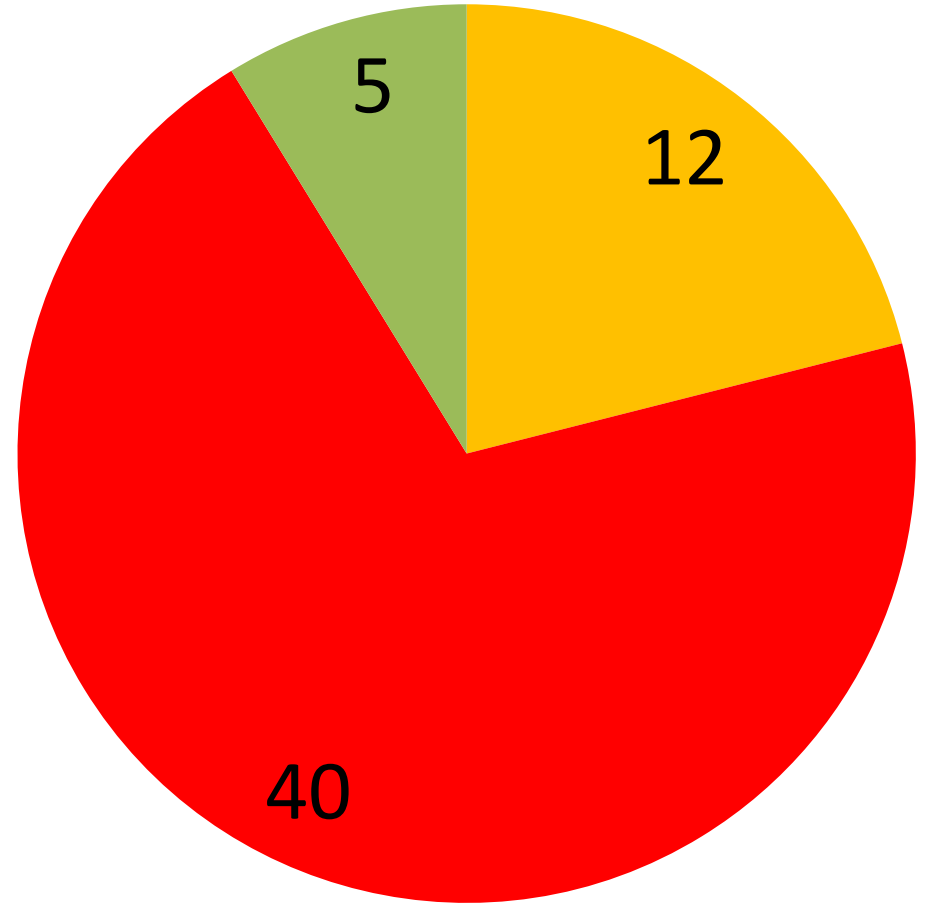
# Top 2 concerns with Alaskan foods (compared to non-Alaskan foods)

Reliable Supply

Cost

# Do any schools in your district currently have a school garden?

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■ Yes ■ No ■ Not Sure

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# 2011 game plan: HB 70

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## Policies and procedures

- Uniform procurement procedures to implement and evaluate program.
- Develop policies and standards for utilizing school garden and / or locally grown food .

## Assist communication

- Help food producers, distributors, and brokers to market Alaskan foodw to schools by informing them of opportunities and requirements.
- Help schools connect with local producers by informing them of sources, availability, and costs.

## Sales and supply

- Identify and recommend ways to increase predictability and adequacy.

# 2011 game plan (cont.): HB 70

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## Publications

- Make material available to teachers for students to see the benefits of growing, preparing, and consuming locally-grown food.
- Develop food safety fact sheets in collaboration with appropriate regulatory agencies.

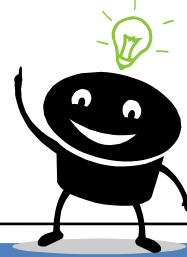
## Other farm to school extension

- Support efforts such as school gardens or farms and farm visits.
- Support curriculum development and dissemination.

## Funding

- Seek additional funds to leverage state expenditures.
- Communicate grant opportunities to appropriate parties.

# Ideas



## Use MEALS survey results to:

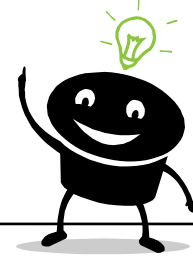
- Inform Alaskan food producers of school district needs and concerns
- Create a toolbox of resources for school food service professionals that address main concerns and questions

## Conduct a local food producer survey

Incentive programs for food producers food service professionals for participating in a farm to school effort

Start a 'Harvest of the Month' program to kick off the school year

# Ideas (cont.)



**Develop a new product; using 'salmon wraps' as a model process**

**Support youth leadership; work with 4H, ProStart, FFA, and EATinG programs**

**Work with DEC, UDSA inspectors, and CNS to develop standards, protocols, and fact sheets for:**

- Using School Garden grown food in the lunches
- Using locally grown food not handled through a wholesaler

# How can I help you?

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- I have access to a tremendous amount of resources.
- I will do everything I can to find answers to any questions you may have.
- I can link people up that could benefit each other.
- I am eager to tackle some of the challenges and help start efforts with any group who is ready.



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# Considerations

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**There is no “One size fits all” solution**

- It takes a tailored effort that draws on community strengths.

**Defining farm to school for Alaska**

- We need to define it in a manner appropriate for solutions that will work in Alaska.

**General guidelines**

- Procedures need to be general enough to work for districts as large as Anchorage and as small as Hydaburg

# Considerations (cont.)

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## Careful planning

- Need to make sure the program is set up to track progress.

## Accountability

- Need to clearly define intended impacts up front.
- Define measures and create evaluation tools early on.

## Building strong relationships

- Developing active partnerships
- Taking advantage of already existing tools

# Collaborators

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- National Farm to School Network
- Global Food Collaborative – Connect
- Home Grown Market
- Agriculture in the Classroom
- FFA
- Calypso Farms
- Taco Loco
- University of Alaska
- Child Nutrition Services
- Health and Social Services
- Department of Environmental Conservation
- Food Service Professionals from multiple school districts

Questions and input  
always welcome!

[johanna.herron@alaska.gov](mailto:johanna.herron@alaska.gov)

(907) 374-3714

**Thank you!**