**Overview**

Farm to School is a potentially significant institutional market for local producers across the nation. To get started, schools will want to know basic information about the farm and the products you are selling. Before meeting with a potential buyer, it will be good for you to have thought through the following things so you'll be ready for a conversation with the school buyer.

* What products and volume of product are you interested in selling?
* Do you have a minimum amount, volume or dollar value for orders?
* How frequently and what method do you prefer customers place orders with you?
* Can you provide an invoice? What payment methods work for you? (Cash-on-demand? Payment within 15 days, 30 days, 60 days?)
* Do you deliver? And if so, do you have a maximum distance you are willing to travel? Would you consider a delivery charge?
* Do you allow pick-up directly from the farm?
* How will products be packaged and are you willing to accommodate the needs of the school buyer?
* Do you have a policy if the product does not meet customer needs?
* Are you interested in providing a tour of your farm, hosting students for a field trip, or visiting the school to talk about your farming experience?

Additionally, food safety is the number one concern schools have about buying locally. Food safety starts on the farm. Without adequate safety practices, human pathogens can easily find their way to fresh produce in the field. Pathogens are difficult to eradicate once present, and can multiply to dangerous levels or contaminate other produce during transportation or prior to service. Producers who want to sell to schools must have a food safety plan. To learn more click on RISK MANAGEMENT & FOOD SAFETY.

**risk management and food safety**

Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) are an important concept for producers of fresh fruits and vegetables to understand in order to assure the microbial safety of produce. GAP is an international certification focusing on food safety principles used to improve on-farm production and post-production processes. These principles evaluate chemical, microbiological, and physical hazards while advocating producers to take proactive, preventative controls to reduce the opportunity for hazards to affect the safety of the product. GAP focuses on four primary components of production and processing: soil, water, hands and surfaces.

Becoming GAP certified is voluntary. Complying with and receiving the certification is usually worth the time and money for farmers who want to work with schools and other large buyers. Currently, three Nevada farms have become GAP certified, High Desert Farming Institute, Nevada Onion, and Nevada Agriculture while five farms and three school gardens are in the process of changing their practices to achieve GAP audit requirements. NDA is working to make GAP certifications more feasible through the Farmer’s Assistance Program. This program works to help farmers offset costs in becoming GAP certified. This includes covering certification costs as well as water and soil testing. To learn more click on RESOURCES and visit the informational links for more detailed information.

**resources**

1. Click on Q&A For Farmers & Producers for a basic introduction to Farm to School (pdf)
2. High Desert Farming Institute is one of Reno’s GAP certified farms that serves as a model for Farm to School by working with University of Nevada Reno food services : <http://highdesertfarming.org/gap/>
3. Healthy Farms, Healthy People Coalition is a broad-based collaboration of organizations, anchored in the public health and agricultural sectors. There website has several informative Web Forum on Farm to School Safety.

<http://hfhpcoalition.org/2013/11/04/farm-to-school-food-safety-web-forums-archive/>

1. Click on USDA GAP Audit Verification Checklist to preview the audit requirements.

http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5091326