Practical Advice for Food Service Directors:

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

START SMALL

Begin by adding one or two local items to the menu, like sweet potatoes, local eggs, or meat. This helps build relationships with farmers and tests delivery and logistics.

START TALKING

Meet with local farmers to discuss needs and constraints. Holding a pre-planting season meeting gives both parties time to plan.

USE EXISTING DISTRIBUTORS

Ask current distributors if they offer local products. The more requests they receive, the more likely they are to offer local options.

FARM TO SCHOOL FOR BREAKFAST

Locally grown fruits like peaches or watermelon can be used in breakfast dishes, as well as local grains like flour and cornmeal.

TRY STOARGE

Purchase bulk items during peak season for cost savings. Store, freeze, or process food, or ask local farmers to store it for you.

KNOW WHAT'S IN SEASON

Check the Oklahoma Grown Produce Availability Chart to learn which products are available throughout the school year.

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SHOWCASE LOCAL FOODS IN SALAD BARS

Salad bars offer students unlimited servings of fruits and vegetables, allowing for creativity like highlighting school garden produce, offering samples, or transforming the bar into a taco or potato bar seasonally.

CULINARY APPROPRIATE MENUS

Culturally appropriate menus incorporate foods and preparations that respect the traditions and preferences of diverse groups, providing a creative way to integrate farm-to-school programming.

PROMOTE YOUR PROGRAM

Successful promotion of local foods requires a school-wide effort, with support from teachers, staff, families, and administrators.

TASTE TESTS

Introducing new foods through small, pressure-free samples helps students familiarize themselves with new items and ensures they'll be well-received before adding them to the menu.