# Tool: Key Stakeholder Interviews

A series of interviews were developed to understand key pieces of the farm to school program and environment in each community. It will be easiest for you to audio-record all interviews that you conduct, then transcribe them so that transcripts can be analyzed for themes that emerge. Simple digital recorders are easily available for purchase; using school or personal audio recording equipment (such as an iPod or smart phone) is also a great approach. Be sure to obtain permission to audio-record! If recording permission is not granted, take detailed notes during the interview.

Interviews guides are available for the following key stakeholders:

School Food Professional

Farmer (pre- and post-program implementation guides exist)

“Other stakeholders” School administrator (i.e., principal)

Teacher

Parent

Community member

## Farmer Interview Guide - Pre-Program Interview

I would like to talk about: 1) how farm to school marketing opportunities compare with other marketing opportunities that you have; 2) how you made decisions about working with farm to school programs; 3) what kinds of experiences you have had with farm to school programs; 4) what are the opportunities and challenges for farmers of working with farm to school programs.

I would like to audio-record our discussion if that is okay with you. It will help us to save your thoughts and ideas accurately without using your time to write them down. I will work to keep this interview to 30-45 minutes. We will not store or use your name with your comments.

May I have your permission to audio-record our discussion?

* Yes ⇒ *(Turn on recorder and continue.)*
* No ⇒ That’s fine. We will not record. I will take notes.

Do you have any questions about the interview before we begin?

* Yes ⇒ *(Find out what the questions are and answer them. Then continue.)*
* No ⇒ (Continue.)

1. Which school(s) do you partner with in F2S programming?
2. Can you tell me about your farm operation?
   1. How many acres do you farm?
   2. What do you grow?
   3. What are your growing practices:
      1. Do you use integrated pest management practices?
      2. How do you manage fertility on your farm? (green manures, compost, animal manures, chemical fertilizers, etc..)
      3. Are you certified organic?
   4. Do you have your own storage and packing facilities?
   5. Who are your customers? To whom do you sell? \*
   6. What market outlets do you use to reach your customers?
   7. Are you a member of a farm cooperative?
3. How do you get your product to each of your market outlets?
   1. What do you need to do (packing, weighing, washing, or other value-added processing) to get your product ready for market?
   2. Do you go through any intermediaries (brokers, distributors, packers)?
4. There has been recent publicity about locally grown food.
   1. How do you define “locally grown”? *Probes: same city, county, region, state, country? Within a specific mileage radius? Within a day’s drive?*
   2. How important is it for you to sell your product to your local market(s)?
5. How did you get involved in the farm to school program?
   1. What do you think the benefits will be?
   2. What do you think the drawbacks might be?
   3. What do you think the challenges might be?
6. What are your primary reasons for choosing to participate in farm to school programs?
   1. Develop ability to sell to institutions
   2. Support local school
   3. Support health of local students
   4. Increase farm’s local visibility
   5. Have a market for seconds or off size product
   6. Have a market for items I cannot sell elsewhere
   7. Interest in educational programs
   8. Other (please explain)
7. Do you anticipate that you will have to make any changes to accommodate schools?

*Probes*: production, processing, marketing, or distribution routines, price compromising, …

**\**If the farmer began participating in farm to school before the current academic year), include these questions:***

1. When did you begin selling to schools? *Year*
2. Approximately what percent of your product volume goes to farm to school programs?
   1. How does that percentage compare with your other market outlets?
   2. Has the percentage varied greatly by month? How has it changed over the course of a year?
3. Approximately what percent of your sales dollars comes from farm to school programs?
4. How does that percentage compare with your other market outlets?
5. Has the percentage varied greatly by month? How has it changed over the course of a year?
6. Have you received additional revenue due to participating in farm to school programs? If so, how much (or, by approximately what percentage have your revenues increased)?
7. How are the prices determined for the products you sell to schools?
8. Are you consistently able to meet the school’s demand?
9. Are you satisfied with the business relationship you have with the school(s) you sell to? Why or why not?

## Farmer Interview Guide – Post-Program Survey

I would like to talk about: 1) how farm to school marketing opportunities compare with other marketing opportunities that you have; 2) how you made decisions about working with farm to school programs; 3) what kinds of experiences you have had with farm to school programs; 4) what are the opportunities and challenges for farmers of working with farm to school programs.

I would like to audio-record our discussion if that is okay with you. It will help us to save your thoughts and ideas accurately without using your time to write them down. I will work to keep this interview to 30-45 minutes. We will not store or use your name with your comments.

May I have your permission to audio-record our discussion?

* Yes ⇒ *(Turn on recorder and continue.)*
* No ⇒ That’s fine. We will not record. I will take notes.

Do you have any questions about the interview before we begin?

* Yes ⇒ *(Find out what the questions are and answer them. Then continue.)*
* No ⇒ (Continue.)

1. Which school(s) do you partner with in F2S programming?
2. Has anything changed about your farming operation in the past year? *[have notes from fall to ask the most appropriate probes]*
   1. How many acres do you farm?
   2. Did you change what you grow?
   3. Did you drastically alter your growing practices?
      1. Did you begin or stop using integrated pest management practices?
      2. Did you alter how you manage fertility on your farm? (green manures, compost, animal manures, chemical fertilizers, etc..)
      3. Did you become certified organic (or did you lose your certification)?
   4. Did you add or get rid of your own storage and packing facilities?
   5. Have your customers changed? (if so, please describe)
   6. Have your market outlets changed for reaching your customers?
   7. Are you a member of a farm cooperative?
3. Have you changed how you get your products to each of your market outlets?
   1. What do you do (packing, weighing, washing, or other value-added processing) to get your product ready for market?
   2. Do you go through any intermediaries (brokers, distributors, packers)?
4. How important is it for you to sell your product to the local market?
5. When did you begin selling your product to schools? *Year*
6. Approximately what percent of your produce volume goes to farm to school programs?
   1. How does that percentage compare with your other market outlets?
   2. Does the percentage vary greatly by month? How did it change during this year?
7. Approximately what percent of your sales dollars comes from farm to school programs?
   1. How does that percentage compare with your other market outlets?
   2. Does the percentage vary greatly by month? How did it change during this year?
   3. Have you received additional revenue due to participating in farm to school programs? If so, approximately how much or by what percentage have your revenues increased?
   4. How are the prices for the products you sell to schools determined?
   5. Are you consistently able to meet the school’s demand?
8. What benefits, if any, did you experience this year by working with F2S programs?
9. What drawbacks or challenges, if any, did you experience?
   1. How did you overcome these challenges?
   2. Are there still challenges to deal with? How are you working through them?
   3. *(If drawbacks)* What kind of impact, if any, did those drawbacks have on your perceptions of F2S?
10. Has your involvement with F2S changed over the year? If so, how has it changed?
    1. Do you sell more or less to schools? How many schools total?
    2. Wider or narrower variety of produce?
    3. More centralized/decentralized?
    4. Other changes?
11. What changes, if any, have you had to make in order to accommodate schools?
    1. Have you had to make changes in terms of your production, processing, marketing, or distribution routines?
    2. Have you had to compromise your prices in order to sell to school districts?
12. What, if any, have been your experiences interacting with school food service?
    1. What are the benefits?
    2. What are the problems or challenges?
13. What, if any, have been your experiences interacting with students?
    1. What are the benefits?
    2. What are the problems or challenges?
14. Have there been any surprises, positive or negative, for you from your involvement with F2S programs?

*Probes:* jobs created? Higher visibility in, or increased interaction with, the community? Increased local sales? *[are there any negative examples we want to offer?]*

1. What do you think is the long-term potential of F2S programs? What factors would determine whether or not you continue to work with the school?
   1. Do you consider schools a reliable and stable market?
   2. Are you satisfied with the price you are receiving?
   3. Are there other factors?
2. In deciding whether to continue participating in farm to school programs:
   1. How important is price in your decision?
   2. How important is the quantity that you deliver?
   3. Are there other factors involved in your decision?
3. Do you plan to continue to do business with schools? Why or why not?
   1. Is the Farm to School program profitable for you?
   2. If not, what would it take to make the program more profitable?
   3. Do you participate in Farm to School for reasons other than profit?
4. What plans, if any, do you have to sell your product to more schools? What, if anything, limits you from selling your product to more schools (or selling more products to the same schools) in your local area?
5. At what point do you think it would make sense to have an intermediary facilitating the sale between you and the school? Would you consider becoming part of a farmer cooperative that sold product to schools?
6. What has been your experience working with the statewide F2S Coordinator this year?
   1. Were you able to gain answers to your questions and learn what you needed to know?
   2. Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the way the coordinator can serve Wisconsin farmers?
7. What has been your experience working with the F2S Toolkit this year?
   1. Were you able to learn what you needed to know?
   2. Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the Toolkit?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about with regard to the Farm to School program and its initiatives?

-In particular, stories of what worked/what didn’t that we have not yet discussed.

## Food Service Professional Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to talk with us today about the Farm to School program and how it relates to your job. We appreciate your time. I will work to keep this interview to 30-45minutes. Do you have any questions or concerns about participating in this interview?

I would like to audio-record our discussion if that is okay with you. It will help us to save your thoughts and ideas accurately without using your time to write them down. We will not store or use your name with your comments.

May I have your permission to audio-record our discussion?

* Yes ⇒ *(Turn on recorder and continue.)*
* No ⇒ That’s fine. We will not record. I will take notes.

Do you have any questions about the interview before we begin?

* Yes ⇒ *(Find out what the questions are and answer them. Then continue.)*
* No ⇒ (Continue)

The purpose of this interview is to understand farm to school programs within the context of the school food environment. We also want explore how food service professionals characterize the opportunities and challenges of farm to school programs.

1. What school are you in and what is your job title?
2. Would you please describe what your typical day is like:
   1. What are your primary job responsibilities?
      1. Are you directly involved with purchasing? If so, please describe.
   2. What kind of interaction with the students do you have?
   3. In what ways do you participate in the food preparation processes?
3. Is F2S new this year in your school?
   1. Yes
   2. No 🡪How many years has your school been participating in F2S programming?
4. What F2S initiatives have you incorporated into your cafeteria?
   1. Did you initiate this (them), or did someone else? *If someone else, who?*
   2. For each program, would you please describe how it was implemented in the cafeteria?
5. How, if at all, has introducing these programs into the cafeteria affected your job?
   1. Have your regular duties changed?
   2. Has your interaction with the students changed?
   3. Has your involvement with food preparation changed?
6. Have the farm to school initiatives impacted revenues from school meal programs? If so, how?
   1. How do the local food prices compare to similar items purchased from other food distributors?
   2. Has participation changed in any of the meal or snack programs? If so, how?
7. How, if at all, have the initiatives changed the flow and/or atmosphere in the cafeteria…
   1. for the school food service staff? (probes: food position in the serving line, food preparation time, use of a garden/salad bar, …)
   2. for the students? (probes: how quickly students move through the line, … )
8. Have the initiatives changed what foods the students eat in the cafeteria?
   1. If yes, in what ways? (what food items, frequency of offerings, …)
   2. If no, why not?
9. Have the initiatives impacted what you eat personally?
   1. If yes, in what ways?
   2. If no, why?
10. Have the initiatives impacted what your staff or other school staff eats?
    1. If yes, in what ways?
    2. If no, why do you think this is so?
11. Have the initiatives of the Farm to School program in general changed the way you feel about your job, either positively or negatively?
    1. If yes, in what ways?
    2. If no, why?
12. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest), what level of support do you feel for implementing Farm to School, particularly in the cafeteria…
    1. from the school administration? 1 2 3 4 5
    2. from teachers? 1 2 3 4 5
    3. from students? 1 2 3 4 5
    4. from parents? 1 2 3 4 5
    5. from your staff? 1 2 3 4 5
    6. from the others in the community? 1 2 3 4 5
    7. Is there anything you would like to explain about your choices?
13. Regarding your Food Service staff attitudes:
    1. For those who are positive, what do they enjoy or appreciate about F2S initiatives?
    2. For those who are negative, what are their major dissatisfactions?
14. Are there any aspects of the Farm to School program that you feel went particularly well or were very successful? If so, please describe them.
15. What barriers have you experienced to implementing Farm to School in the cafeteria?
    1. Are there more individual-level barriers (such as resistance from students or staff), or systemic barriers (such as lack of kitchen equipment, delivery problems, quality issues)?
    2. Can you please describe your efforts to overcome any of these barriers, and what worked/what didn’t?
16. Do you think you have learned how to gain access to farms, farmers, or cooperatives to continue incorporating Farm to School in your cafeteria?
    1. Have you personally interacted with local farmers during this year? If so, please describe the extent of your involvement with procuring local food.
17. Do you think it is possible to continue using local foods in your school? Which foods in particular?
18. Were the local producers able to consistently meet your needs this year?
    1. If so, do you anticipate the need continuing to be able to be met in the future?
    2. If not, was the communication open and timely so that you could adapt as necessary?
    3. What changes would make the experience better?
19. In previous years, have you typically had community or parent volunteers (other than AmeriCorps) in your cafeteria to help with food preparation or food service (tasks unrelated to student behavior supervision)? Has this changed in any way as a result of the Farm to School programming? If so, please describe the changes.
20. What has been your experience working with the statewide Farm to School Coordinator this year?
    1. Were you able to gain answers to your questions and learn what you needed to know?
    2. Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the way the coordinator can serve Wisconsin school food service directors and staff?
21. What has been your experience working with the F2S Toolkit this year?
    1. Were you able to learn what you needed to know?
    2. Do you have any suggestions for changes or improvements to the Toolkit?
22. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about with regard to the Farm to School program and its initiatives?

-In particular, stories of great success - or what worked/what didn’t – that we have not yet discussed.

## Key Stakeholder Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today about the F2S program. We appreciate your time, and I will work to keep this interview to 30-45minutes.

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May I have your permission to audio-record our discussion?

* Yes ⇒ *(Turn on recorder and continue.)*
* No ⇒ That’s fine. We will not record. I will take notes.

Do you have any questions about the interview before we begin?

* Yes ⇒ *(Find out what the questions are and answer them. Then continue.)*
* No ⇒ (Continue)

1. a) Title:

b) (if applicable) Organization through which you are affiliated with F2S:

1. Which school(s) are you involved with in F2S programming?
2. Why did you get involved in F2S? *(Use the following probes as necessary.)*
   1. Did you have interests or concerns that you thought the program could address?
      1. What were those interests or concerns?
      2. *Probe to learn whether their concerns were related to:*

* Food Quality
* Parenting
* Health care or health education
* Farming or producing food
* Local economic development
* Environment
* Other
  1. How well were you able to address your interests/concerns through participating in the F2S program?
     1. Did that change over time? If so, please explain.
  2. What benefits, if any, did you anticipate by getting involved in F2S?
     1. To what extent have you realized these benefits?
  3. At the time that you got involved with F2S at this school, were you involved in any other efforts that supported making locally grown food more available in your community?
     1. If so, what were the other efforts?

1. How did you first get involved in the F2S program? *(Use the following probes as necessary.)*
   1. How did you hear about the program?
   2. What did you hear about it?
   3. From whom did you hear?
   4. What happened *during* your first contact with the program?
      1. When did that happen? *(year)*
      2. Who were your first contacts?
      3. How would you describe your association? Were they friends, relatives, acquaintances, community leaders, other?
   5. What followed *after* your first contact?
   6. How would you describe your level of involvement with or commitment to the program when you *first got involved*? Can you give me an example?
2. How has your involvement with F2S changed over this year?
   1. Has your role with F2S changed? If so, how?
   2. Has the amount of effort you contribute changed? If so, how?
   3. Have you experienced any challenges or disadvantages related to F2S and/or your involvement with it? If so, what are they?
3. Will you still be involved with F2S after this academic year?
   * 1. If yes, how do you plan to be involved?
     2. If no, why have you chosen to stop your involvement?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest), how do you perceive the level of support for implementing Farm to School…
   1. from the school administration? 1 2 3 4 5
   2. from teachers? 1 2 3 4 5
   3. from students? 1 2 3 4 5
   4. from parents? 1 2 3 4 5
   5. from food service staff? 1 2 3 4 5
   6. from others in the community? 1 2 3 4 5
   7. Is there anything you would like to explain about your choices?
5. In your opinion, who are the key people who have been responsible for **getting the F2S program started?**

*(List the name of people and/or their positions in the community. For each person, ask:)*

1. Why was this person key?
2. What contribution did this person make to the program?
3. Who are the key people responsible for **keeping the F2S program going?**

*(If these people are different from those who got it going initially, ask:)*

* 1. Why was this person key?
  2. What contributions did this person make to the program?

1. What defining events have there been for **getting the program started?**

*(List each defining event. For each, ask:)*

* 1. Why was this a defining event?
  2. Who was involved in this event?
  3. When did it take place?
  4. Why/How did it happen?

1. Were there any defining events that have **kept the program going?**

*(List the defining event. For each, ask:)*

* 1. Why was this a defining event?
  2. Who was involved in this event?
  3. When did it take place?
  4. Why/How did it happen?

1. Has the F2S program grown beyond your school district?
   1. How did this growth come about?

*Use the following probes as appropriate and necessary:*

* 1. Did a representative from F2S or the school district make the first contact or was it someone from outside the school district who came to F2S?
  2. What has F2S done to support other farm to school programs?
  3. Have people involved with F2S attempted to reach out to more school districts to help them develop farm to school programs? How about worksites, to develop farm to worksite programs?
  4. Does F2S send representatives to conferences or other events where those pursuing changes in the availability of local food meet? Locally? Regionally? Nationally? Internationally?
  5. Do representatives of F2S ever lobby, publish or speak to groups to promote purchase and use of locally grown foods?

1. To your knowledge, has F2S made a difference for anyone in your community or for the community as a whole?
2. What differences has it made? Please describe each one.

*For each difference, ask:*

1. Was this difference positive or negative?
2. Who experienced the positive or negative difference?
3. What was the benefit or the cost?
4. Did the program face any challenges **during its early development**?
   1. If so, what were they?

*For each challenge ask:*

* 1. Was the challenge overcome? If so, how?
  2. Who were important people that helped or hindered facing the challenge?
  3. Were there organizations that were important in helping the F2S program face the challenge?

1. Did the program have any particular successes **during its early development**?
   1. If so, what were they?

*(For each success ask:)*

* 1. Who were important people that helped or hindered in bringing about this success?
  2. Were there organizations that were important in helping the F2S program achieve this?

1. What challenges does F2S face now? Who are the key people and/or organizations who are working on overcoming them?
2. In your opinion, what is the future of F2S? Why do you think so?

### Additional questions for specific stakeholders:

#### Parents

1. Did your child(ren) ask for more and/or specific fruits and vegetables, such that you can attribute this behavior to the F2S program?
2. Did your child(ren) ask for trips to the farmers market and/or farms to buy or pick fruits and vegetables, such that these trips resulted from the F2S program?
3. Did you observe your child(ren) asking for more and/or specific fruits and vegetables for snacks as a result of the F2S program? (or other consumption questions?)
4. Have you changed your family meal and/or snack habits as a result of the F2S program?

#### Teachers, School administrator, Non-parent volunteers

1. Did you observe or experience any differences in students’ classroom behavior that can be attributed to the F2S program (including eating habits)?
2. Have you changed your own meal and/or snack habits as a result of the F2S program?

Community champions**,** *e,g., community business leaders supporting F2S*

1. In your workplace, have you made any changes to health-related or food-related policies as a result of your involvement in F2S? Or do you have plans to make changes?
2. Have you experienced any changes for your workplace as a result of your involvement in F2S, such as increased community visibility and/or increased revenues?