



WISCONSIN APPLE GROWERS
FARM TO INSTITUTION GUIDE



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

WHAT IS FARM TO INSTITUTION?

Farm to Institution connects regional farms and local cafeterias, building viable markets for regional farmers and supply chain partners and nutritious lunch trays for eaters.

Purchasing local foods is a growing priority for campuses and cafeterias across the state, and apples are a great fit for many institutions to purchase locally. Institutional sales can provide an opportunity for Wisconsin apple growers to build consistent, stable, high-volume markets for their products.

Farm to Institution is an encompassing term that refers to local purchasing efforts at institutions including schools, early childhood programs, hospitals, colleges, business campuses, and more. One active area of Farm to Institution work is Farm to School. Farm to School not only includes efforts to serve local foods in school settings, but also includes efforts to engage in food and nutrition education in the classroom and provide experiential education including school gardens.

Here you'll find resources designed for farmers who are interested in engaging with Farm to Institution and Farm to School. You'll see below that currently available resources focus on Farm to School efforts, but you'll find that these resources provide information and tools that can be applied to other institutional sales channels too:

→ WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL TOOLKIT

This Wisconsin-specific resource provides context and tools to support Wisconsin farmers in farm to school sales. Both farmers who are new to Farm to School and farmers who are already engaged will find something helpful in this toolkit.

www.foodsystems.extension.wisc.edu/farm-to-school-toolkits ↗

→ NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK PRODUCER RESOURCES

This extensive resource collection includes readings, video trainings, producer worksheets, and more that provide an in-depth understanding of farm to school and the opportunities it can bring farmers and their communities.

www.farmtoschool.org/our-work/bringing-the-farm-to-school-producer-resources ↗

→ USDA FARM TO SCHOOL

This website provides a variety of quick fact sheets about specific Farm to School topics including grants and loans that support farm to school activities.

www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farmer-producer ↗

FIND AND CONNECT TO INSTITUTIONAL BUYERS

Similar to how each farm's operations are unique, each institutional buyer's operations are unique. Institutional food buyers span a whole range of sizes, meal service formats, and purchasing needs. Institutions engaging in local purchasing may have years of experience or they may be trying for the first time. Learning about and connecting with your local institutional buyers are important steps in understanding what opportunities exist in your local area that match your farm values and business needs. Here are some ways to connect with buyers:

→ JOIN THE GREAT APPLE CRUNCH

[The Great Apple Crunch](#) ↗ is an annual October event where schools and other institutions across the Midwest region commit to buying and crunching into local apples to celebrate [National Farm to School Month](#) ↗, local food purchasing, and nutritious eating. You can use the Crunch to access new markets and build relationships with institutional buyers. Learn more in [The Crunch Guide for Wisconsin Apple Growers](#) ↗.

→ ATTEND DATCP MARKETPLACE MEETINGS

[Marketplace Meetings](#) ↗ provide a venue where school nutrition menu planners and buyers, and Wisconsin food producers can build their networks, make procurement connections, and expand farm to school markets. Discussion is led by participants sharing their own products, services, and menu needs.

→ SELL DIRECT TO SCHOOLS AND OTHER BUYERS

Reach out to your region's schools, early care sites, or other institutional buyers with your apple price and availability list.

→ SELL THROUGH AGGREGATORS

Some schools look to purchase farm-identified foods grown in Wisconsin from their existing broadline or produce distributors. Consider sales to distributors for high-volume markets for your products if it's a good match for your business.

→ INTERESTED BUT WANT FURTHER ASSISTANCE?

Contact Cathryn Herlihey, UW-Extension Farm to Institution Specialist, at cherlihey@wisc.edu and April Yancer, DATCP Farm to School and Institution Program Specialist, at april.yancer@wisconsin.gov.

HELP INSTITUTIONS FIND YOU

We know there are many places for you to advertise online. Here are some databases that institution may go to when searching for apple growers near them:

→ **WISCONSIN APPLE GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

Crunch registrants may use the grower list to find local orchard partners near them.

www.waga.org/Member-Orchards ↗

→ **WISCONSIN FARMERS MARKET ASSOCIATION**

An online tool for Crunch buyers procuring apples at farmers markets.

www.wifarmersmarkets.org ↗

→ **WISCONSIN FARM FRESH ATLAS**

This online tool allows buyers to search by location or product.

www.farmfreshatlas.org ↗

→ **AMERICORPS FARM TO SCHOOL WISCONSIN LOCAL FOODS DATABASE**

Buyers can explore a map and directory of farmers who are selling to schools and engaging with kids.

sites.google.com/dpi.wi.gov/wilfd/find-farmers ↗

→ **SOMETHING SPECIAL FROM WISCONSIN**

Buyers can browse this listing of farmers and vendors for apple items near them.

www.somethingspecialwi.com/map ↗

