

# Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week

## 2024 Toolkit




### Introduction:

Homegrown School Lunch Week (HGSLW) is a statewide celebration of locally produced and harvested foods served in schools throughout Maryland. While many school districts prioritize local purchasing throughout the year, HGSLW is a time to highlight these efforts to students, families, teachers, and the community.

The goal of this toolkit is to provide a starting point and guidance for LEAs who experience challenges procuring locally grown foods during HGSLW or other times of year, and tools that all LEAs can use to promote their farm-to-school efforts. As you review these resources, please keep the following in mind:

- This guide is not meant to replace or disrupt any plans you already have in place for HGSLW. LEAs are free to procure and serve any local products from any appropriate source during HGSLW.
- Rather, the procurement guidance, promotional tools, and recipes for featured fruits and vegetables are intended as a starting point for LEAs who do not have well established systems for farm-to-school procurement.
- Many of the resources referenced below can be used in conjunction with other products you may be planning to serve.

This guide was produced by Maryland SNAP-Ed in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. For more information or support for your farm-to-school efforts, please contact:

<b>Maryland Department of Agriculture:</b> <i>Producer contacts</i> 	<b>MSDE Office of School Community Nutrition Programs:</b> <i>Procurement regulations, Procuring products through Local Food for Schools</i> 	<b>Maryland SNAP-Ed University of Maryland Extension:</b> <i>Farm to School Promotion and Education</i> 
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# Introducing the Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week 2024...

## Fruit of the Year Apples



## Vegetable of the Year Sweet Potatoes



### Procurement Options:

LEAs may procure apples, sweet potatoes, or any other local products through existing relationships with farmers or distributors selling locally grown foods. Consider the following options:

- **Local Food for Schools:** For a limited time, locally-grown Sweet Potatoes and Apples, as well as other local products, are available for **free** to LEAs through MSDE's Local Food for Schools grant! [Click here](#) for product specifications and information on requesting these and other local products through this program.
- **Direct Farmer Purchases:** Check out this [list of wholesale farmers](#) who may sell apples and sweet potatoes directly to schools in Maryland! Ask about their other products while you're at it.

Identify the best route for making special Homegrown School Lunch week purchases based on your county's procurement thresholds.

- Procuring a single local item to serve on the regular lunch menu may be possible through small procurement.
- Procuring a single local item for tastings or other special programs (salad bars, FFVP) may be possible through micropurchasing.
- *Always check with your county's procurement specialist to confirm local regulations.*

### Serving Suggestions

- Find recipes for apples, sweet potatoes, and other local products in the [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#). Try these:
  - [Sweet Apples and Carrots](#)
  - [Harvest Spinach and Apple Chicken Salad](#)
  - [Quick Baked Sweet Potatoes](#)
- Offering tastings reduces the quantity needed to procure and prepare.
  - Apples: Offer samples of sliced apples of two varieties, or served with and without a sprinkle of cinnamon.
  - Sweet potatoes: Offer samples of sweet potatoes cut into cubes, sticks, or planks, served roasted or baked.
- Smaller scale options for incorporating these and other local products include serving on salad bars (freestanding or on the line), at events, or to targeted schools/grades.

## Quantity Guidance

Item	Quantity for 100 ½ cup servings	Quantity for 100 tasting portions
Apples, cored and sliced*	16 lb 113 count apples (~½ case)	~5-6 lb 113 count apples (~1/6 case)
Sweet potatoes, served baked or roasted*	~40 lb raw/unprocessed sweet potatoes (1 case)  ~40 lb cubed sweet potatoes (1 case)	~10 lb raw/unprocessed sweet potatoes (1/4 case)  ~10 lb cubed sweet potatoes (1/4 case)

\*Served as a single item; the Child Nutrition Recipe Box provides purchasing guidance in the marketing guide for each recipe.

### Promotional Tools (download and self-print)

- [Harvest of the Month posters](#)
  - Apples: [8 ½" x 11"](#), [24" x 36"](#)
  - Sweet Potatoes: [8 ½" x 11"](#), [24" x 36"](#)
- [Tasting promotional poster](#) (8 ½" x 11")
- [Tasting Rules poster](#) (8 ½" x 11")
- ["Selfie signs"](#) (for writing messages for photos during tastings/social media photos)
- [Take a Bite Out of Maryland](#) (social media promotion that turns Maryland apple photos into art)
- [Family Communication Graphics](#) (for social media, email newsletters)

### Educational Tools

- [Local produce fact sheets](#)
- [Exploring Maryland Food curriculum](#) ([click here](#) for a playlist of video lessons included in the curriculum)

### Other Supports

- [SNAP-Ed tasting event guide](#)
- [What's in Season charts](#)
- [2024 Maryland Farmers Market Directory](#)
- [Ultimate Guide to Maryland Apples](#) (from Apple Promotion Board - includes list of producers)
- [University of Maryland Extension - County Office directory](#)
  - Contact your county's Agricultural Agent for connections to farmers (for procurement, school visits, etc)
  - Contact your county's SNAP-Ed educator

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