



# Farm to Summer Challenge Toolkit



# Introduction

Summer meals are critical in the lives of millions of our nation's youth. Since children and teens lose access to school meals, risk for hunger and food insecurity increases during the summer months. High quality summer meals provide daily energy and help make sure children are healthy and ready to learn when they return to school in the fall.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) School Nutrition Unit has put together a toolkit with guidance about how to take part in the Farm to Summer Challenge. We divided resources into three main categories: taste, teach, and connect.

## Why Farm to Summer?

There are numerous benefits to “bringing the farm” to summer sites:

- Sponsors can boost participation by enhancing the quality and appeal of meals, as well as keeping kids involved with engaging, hands-on activities.
- Summer is a great time to try the variety of local products available and test new recipes.
- School food service operators already sourcing local during the school year can expand their current efforts to create a year-round farm to school network.

## Farm to Summer Challenge

[Pledge to participate](#) in the Farm to Summer Challenge, happening July 11-17, 2021! During this week, sponsors will pledge to serve at least one local product, provide at least one nutrition or agricultural education activity, and share their efforts on social media.

Participating in this challenge is an opportunity to celebrate local ingredients and receive local and national recognition for the high-quality meals being served. Sponsors play an important role in helping youth connect to nutrition and their local food systems – take time to celebrate the impact you have on future generations!

## New to Farm to School or Summer? Here are some places to start:

- Colorado Department of Education’s [Farm to School and Summer Resources](#)
- [The USDA Farm to Child Nutrition Programs Planning Guide](#)
- [The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit](#)
- [How to Start a School Garden: Your Complete Guide](#)

Taste  Teach  Connect

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Taste:

## Incorporate Local Products

Here are some resources for delivering high quality summer meals to children using local products. You can incorporate these recipes into your menu or even host a taste test. Use the procurement resources to source seasonal, local products and the culinary resources provide preparation tips.

### Recipe inspiration:

- Colorado Farm to School Taskforce: [The Colorado Farm to School Cookbook](#)
- The Lunch Box: [School Recipes](#)
- Colorado Department of Agriculture [Recipes of the Month](#)
- Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association [Produce Recipes](#)
- Colorado Beef [Recipes](#)
- Colorado San Luis Valley Potatoes [Recipes](#)
- [Child Nutrition Recipe Box: Institute of Child Nutrition](#)
- [New School Cuisine Cookbook: Vermont Feed](#)
- [School Garden Cookbook: Captain Planet Foundation](#)

\*Review recipes to ensure they meet all applicable meal pattern requirements.

### Procurement resources:

- Informal purchasing is the easiest procurement method for local purchasing
  - Sponsors can use the micro-purchase method (individual transactions must be <\$10,000 (or the sponsor's threshold), must spread the wealth among qualified vendors)
  - Sponsor can use the small purchase method (request quotes or prices from local vendors, document responses)
- Nourish Colorado [Local Procurement](#) (LoProCO)
- Colorado Department of Education's [Methods of Procurement](#)
- [Colorado Proud](#)
- USDA [Finding, Buying and Service Local Foods: Informal Procurement Method Webinar](#)
- USDA [Procuring Local Foods](#)
- [Colorado Produce Calendar](#)
- [Colorado Grown Produce](#)

### Culinary skills & taste testing:

- [Nourish Colorado Local Procurement Monthly Calls](#)
- [Culinary Skills for produce in school meals](#)
- [Farm to School Taste Tests](#)
- [Taste Test Guide](#)

## Teach: Provide Nutrition and Agricultural Education

Here are some resources on how you can engage children in hands-on activities that provide a positive learning atmosphere while school is out. Children can take part in agricultural, food, health, and nutrition-related educational events.

### Curriculum & activities:

- Purdue University's [Agriculture Classroom Resources](#) for all grade levels
- [3rd-4th grade Garden Detective Adventure](#)
- [5th-6th grade Dig In! Teacher's Guide](#)
- [USDA F2S Curriculum Integration Webinar](#)
- [Center for Ecoliteracy](#)
- Foodcorps [Resources to Support Remote Education](#)
- The Edible Schoolyard Project [Resource Library](#)
- [School Garden Lesson Plans](#)
- Cooking Matters [Kids Activity Handouts](#)
- [True Food TV](#) food fact videos
- Growing Minds: [Farm to School Lesson Plans](#)
- [CDE F2S Passport & Bingo](#)

### Colorado Organizations:

Reach out to these statewide organizations to see if they can help provide nutrition education!

- [Colorado Cooking Matters](#)
- CSU Extension [4-H](#)
- DUG (Denver Urban Garden) [Youth Programs & Resources](#)
- Colorado Future Farmers of America [Plant and Animal Science Curriculum](#)

### Ideas from the [National Farm to School Network](#):

- Use arts and crafts such as coloring, painting, cutting and pasting or other creative projects to reinforce excitement for fruits and vegetables.
- Read books together about food, nutrition or agriculture. Check your school or local library to see what's available.
- Get moving with physical activity games. Try a relay race to collect fruits and vegetables and sort them by color.

**Take a tour:** Take a virtual farm tour by clicking [here](#) with this tour of a Colorado dairy farm with interactive 360 video, schedule a field trip to a farm or farmers market, or visit edible gardens in your area. If you cannot get to a farm, ask the farmer to come to your summer site for a visit!

# CONNECT: Share Stories On Social Media

Spread the word about all the wonderful things you are doing! Social media channels are a direct line to your community. Sharing your successes and initiatives is a great opportunity to build awareness, encourage engagement and offer nutrition education. Below are some resources to help you share your achievements with the community.

Creating a communications plan involves a few simple steps:

- Identify your audiences and the platforms that will reach them
  - Use Facebook to broadcast updates and alerts, stream live events
  - Use Twitter as a message board
  - Use Instagram for digital story telling or sharing photos
- Determine goals and objectives
- Create a call to action, key messages, and content
- Establish timelines and frequency for posts
- Measure success

**Marketing and media resources:**

- Farm to School [Social Media Plan](#)
- [School Nutrition Outreach Toolkit](#) – Farm to School examples and templates that can be adapted for your program

**Connect with us:**

Connect with CDE and let us help you share your story! Be sure to tag us in your social media posts or send us a note about what you did for the Farm to Summer Week Challenge.

Email: [summermealprogram@cde.state.co.us](mailto:summermealprogram@cde.state.co.us)

Follow CDE on Twitter and Facebook at @codepted

**Use a creative or Colorado-specific hashtag:**

#ItsThymetoTurniptheBeet!

#Seedingourfuture

#SeedingSuccess

#FarmtoSummerChampions2021

#COFarm2SummerChallenge

#edcolo

**Turnip the Beet Award**

Share your Farm to Summer success stories for the opportunity to be nominated for the Turnip the Beet Award! This national award recognizes outstanding summer meal program sponsors that are dedicated to offering high quality meals to children that are appetizing, appealing, and nutritious. Sponsors may self-nominate, nominate another sponsor, or be nominated by CDE School Nutrition. For additional information and the nomination form, visit USDA's [Turnip the Beet](#) webpage. Nominations are due to CDE School Nutrition by August 31, 2021.