



The Mechanics of Organics – An Opportunity for School Nutrition Programs

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Las Vegas, Nevada

An Opportunity for School Nutrition Programs



Where Do We Begin to Explore this Complex Topic/Issue?



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Nutrient Density/Functional Foods

Nutrient Density - Describes the quantity of nutrients in relation to the caloric density.

Functional Nutrition – Foods contain specific nutrients that support important metabolic functions. Added Bonus!

Goal: HIGH Nutrient Density/
LOW Caloric Density



Background and Questions

- ✓ Food Trends Impact Our Health and Food Choices
- ✓ Ask Why Should Schools Consider Organics
- ✓ What are the Driving Forces for Change
- ✓ Considerations for Initiating and Incorporating Organics
- ✓ How to Get Started
- ✓ Advantages/Disadvantages



US Organic Food Certification Program



Implemented in 2002, The United States National Organic Program (NOP) develops, implements, and administers national production, handling and labeling standards for organic agricultural program. This agency also accredits the agents that certify and inspect production and handling operations to be sure they meet USDA standards.

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?navid=ORGANIC_CERTIFICATIO&navtype=RT&parentnav=AGRICULTURE

Canadian Organic Certification Labeling



As of December 2008, it has been mandatory for all Canadian organic products to be certified for domestic and international trade.

<http://www.organicguide.com/canada/organic-certification-and-labelling-in-canada/>

Imports from all International sources exceeded 1 Billion in 2008.



Why Did We Decide to Introduce Organic Menu Items?

✓ **Market Trends** - The trend and opportunity to offer quality locally produced organic foods in our school nutrition programs was important, feasible and timely.

✓ **Health Concerns** - We support the growing concern for environmental toxins in our nation's food supply and potential biomedical linkage to associated health issues, (i.e. pesticides, genetically modified, irradiated foods and food additives, etc.)



Why Did We Decide to Introduce Organic Menu Items?

- ✓ **Sustainable Agriculture** – Our plan to increase student awareness and support for local agriculture increased our voice to help communicate sustainable agricultural practices through organically produced foods.
- ✓ **Vegetarian/Organic** - We developed an expanded pathway to offer more vegetarian menu choices that meet both criteria.
- ✓ **Student/Parent Interest** - Interest in Farm to School Resources continues to grow through support for nutrient dense vs. caloric dense and organic foods.



Terms to Know

- ▶ **100% Organic:** The product must contain only organically produced ingredients.
- ▶ **Organic** – The product must contain at least 95% organically produced ingredients. The other 5% must appear on an approved list.
- ▶ **Made with Organic Ingredients** – Processed foods may bear this label if they contain at least 70% organic ingredients – for example entrees, that contain organic vegetables, etc.
- ▶ **Natural** – The term has no regulation except for meat and poultry. Other foods labeled natural are not subject to government controls and are beyond the USDA codes that apply to all foods.

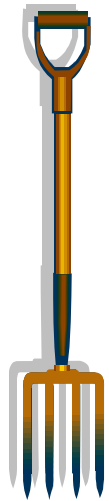
Contact Your State Farm to School Organization

Massachusetts Farm to School Project

400 Amity St. Suite 2 Amherst MA 01002

Contact Information: 413-253-3844

Kelly Erwin, kelerwin@localnet.com or Anne Cody, cupfish@msn.com



Local Farmers



What was our Focus

- ✓ Menu – What was feasible
- ✓ Price – How much could the SN program afford
- ✓ Quality - Was there consistent quality availability
- ✓ Availability - How much was available, and for how long?
- ✓ Certified Growers - USDA certified organic growers, HACCP Servsafe Certified, Proximity/Location
- ✓ Delivery – Volume restrictions/time/day of the week
- ✓ Insurance – Liability Insurance
- ✓ Site Visits - Periodic site visits



Menu Recommendations

Fruit and Vegetables

- ▶ Based upon seasonality and region of the country this will vary.

Northeast

Root Crops – Carrots, Beets, Onions, Garlic, Potatoes, etc.

Row Crops – Broccoli, Corn, Green Beans, Squash, Peppers, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, etc.

Fruits – Berries, Apples, Melons, Peaches, Pears, etc.

Herbs and Greens

- ▶ Most regions of the country have extended growing seasons for this category.

- ▶ Mesclun Greens
- Varietal Salad Greens
- Herbs – Basil, Chive, Cilantro, Parsley, Rosemary, Mint, etc.
- A Great Place to Start!



Additional Menu Recommendations

Consider other food category areas that add controlled costs, but adds a value added quality to your menu mix.

- Salad Dressings
- Sauces
- Beverages – Milk, juice, soy beverages
- Vegetarian entrée components
- Beans and Grains – Dried Beans, Barley, Rice, Lentils, for soups and salads

Advantages

- ▶ Menu Branding
- ▶ Educational Opportunities
- ▶ Influences Food Suppliers and Growers
- ▶ Better Children's Health
- ▶ Less is More!

Disadvantages

- ▶ More Lead Time Needed
- ▶ Greater Investment
 - Time
 - Money
- ▶ Menu/Recipe Development
- ▶ Purchasing Specifications



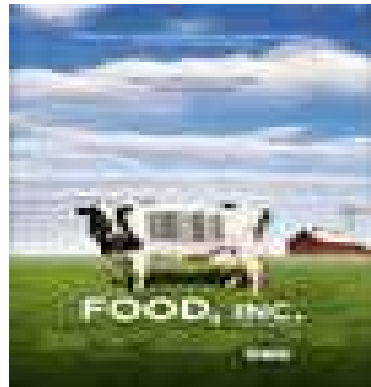
Timeline for Planning

- ▶ Select Vendors/Visit Vendor Farms
- ▶ Meet with Vendor Farmers
- ▶ Contract for price, quality standards, and delivery procedures
- ▶ Obtain Certification
 - USDA Organic Certification
 - HACCP
 - Servsafe Certificate
- ▶ Plan periodic reviews with Vendors



Consumer Media Impacts Our School Nutrition Programs

Food, Inc. - Released on June 12, 2009 in LA, NYC, and San Francisco.



Hungry for Change is an organization advocating for healthy foods in schools.

<http://www.foodincmovie.com/trailer-and-photos.php>

Consumer Food Trends

Organic and Natural Foods are key food categories that are driving consumer trends.

- ❖ Perceived to promote health and well being.
- ❖ Perceived to prevent risks for disease.
- ❖ Growing practices help protect the environment.



Summary

- Organic Foods - A growing market trend
- Supports the community, local agriculture
- Important for the environment and our health
- Important to children's nutrition
- Can be affordable

Start with small changes!



Our Leaders at USDA

**Thomas Vilsack - USDA
Secretary of Agriculture
confirmed January 20, 2009**



Secretary Vilsack was Keynote
Speak at SNA LAC 2009. Previous
Governor of Iowa.

**Kathleen Merrigan - USDA
Deputy Secretary
confirmed April 6, 2009**



- ▶ *Co-author of the Original National Organic Program (NOP). Recent position - Tuft University, MA Director of the Agriculture, Food, and Environment Program .*



Leaders at USDA – A Voice for Children

**USDA Deputy Undersecretary of
Food, Nutrition and Consumer
Sciences - April 1, 2009**



**Past SNA President Dr. Janey Thornton,
PhD, SNS served as President of our
Association during 2006-2007 She has
led the SNA Foundation, and had an
active role in the Global Child Nutrition
Foundation**

Quick Resources

<http://www.ota.com/index.html> Organic Trade Association Web Accessed 6/9/09.

<http://organicconsumers.org> Consumer Website for Organic News and Views. Web Accessed 6/9/09.

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?parentnav=LAWS_REGS&navid=ORGANIC_CERTIFICATION&navtype=RT USDA Website for the US National Organic Program Standards. Website Accessed 6/9/09.

http://www.agmrc.org/markets_industries/food/organic_food_trends.cfm Agricultural Marketing Resource Center. Website Accessed 6/9/09.

Books: The Art of Simple Food by Alice Waters
The Organic Food Shopper's Guide by Jeff Cox
Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan
In Defense of Food, An Eater's Manifesto by Michael Pollan



Begin Today - Add Organics!



Your Children will Benefit!