Getting to WOW: Three Steps at a Time

1. Ask your distributor if they have local foods available to purchase in the quantities you need.

2. Phone a friend. Contact someone from your region for tips about getting started or expanding your program. Find contacts at z.umn.edu/f2scontacts.

3. Take your program to new heights by clicking over to the Minnesota Grown farmer database. Search for farmers by city or zip code, or search by specific food at www.minnesotagrown.com.

FARM TO SCHOOL

“Nothing is impossible. The word itself says I’m possible.”

Audrey Hepburn

What’s growing faster than tomatoes in August? The number of schools and districts purchasing farm fresh, local foods! 75 percent of districts surveyed (123 of 165 districts) served local foods in 2010. These districts reported a wide variety of local foods used in their schools, from apples, used in 103 districts, to bison, used in 11 districts. (Source: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minnesota School Nutrition Association)

Farm to School requires a bit more time and effort, but not as much as you might guess! Schools with active programs reap many benefits. Some schools have seen increases in their participation rates after they introduced local foods. Plus, kids are more likely to eat their fruits and veggies when they have a local connection to it. Farmers, parents and teachers love the program too!

Jumping on the Farm to School wagon may be easier than you think. Make a short list of one or two foods that you’d like to try next year like apples, melons or sweet corn. Then, read on for great ideas, resources, and steps you can take now.

GREAT IDEA

Make plans now to celebrate Farm to School Month in October! Think about inviting a farmer that you work with to a school event, holding taste tests, and featuring three or four Farm to School items in your cycle menu. Find more at www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/toolkit/promoting-food/

GREAT RESOURCE

The University of Minnesota Extension created a step-by-step guide including tips on sourcing produce, recipes, food safety, and more: www.extension.umn.edu/food/farm-to-school/toolkit/getting-started/