

# Standard Operating Procedure

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## Direct Purchase of Food Products from Grower or Producer by K-12 School Districts

### **Policy:**

Food shall be purchased only from approved growers and producers to ensure the safety of food served to students in the child nutrition program. Many students fall within the at risk population categories, thus due diligence by the buyer should be conducted for products without formal inspection requirements. It is the responsibility of the procurement agent to understand child nutrition program regulations for food products purchased directly from the grower or producer. Buyers should also comply with the district's requirements for vendor selection and food purchasing.

### **Procedure Fresh Produce (minimally washed and trimmed; not processed):**

1. Fresh uncut or unprocessed produce may be purchased directly from local growers as there is no inspection process for these non-potentially hazardous foods (with exception of sliced melons, cut tomatoes, and fresh alfalfa sprouts).
2. Agree to purchase food products only from growers or producers who adhere to practices which minimize food safety risks and/or allow customer access to the production site. Practices should include but are not limited to the proper management of potable water, pests, product handling, product transportation, production facilities, and worker health and hygiene. Use *Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Produce Extension PM 2046A* as a guide or ask grower to provide documentation that training in GAPs has been received. This may require direct observation of the operation, a signed checklist, or other documentation from the producer. Upon initial grower/producer approval, request a signed and dated written letter or completed checklist from producer/grower that indicates they know and follow good production practices and/or conduct an onsite audit of production site. If a site audit is conducted, ensure that documentation from annual water testing is available and ask about soil history or past use of land.
3. Develop communications for prospective growers to understand school foodservice needs with regards to ordering process (time frame; method of placing; etc); delivery process (when, where and how foods will be delivered); and payment process (when and how). Coordinate delivery or pickup times with growers/producers to ensure that deliveries and pickups are made when they can be stored immediately. Schedule receiving times when product quantity and quality can be checked, including product temperatures.
4. Buyers with federal food programs, such as CACFP or NSLP/SBP, should follow USDA geographic preference for the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products guidelines to maintain free and open competition in purchasing.
5. Develop, implement, and update written product specifications to ensure products purchased consistently meet expectations of the school foodservice. Specifications are detailed descriptions of the product to be purchased and delivered to the foodservice. Specific details may include size, quantity, quality, color, labeling, delivery temperature, and type of packaging material. Provide updated written product specifications to the grower or producer as needed.

Policy last revised on: \_\_\_\_\_



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6. Conduct quarterly reviews of order and delivery information to ensure orders and product specifications are being met.

## Procedure Processed Produce:

1. Any fresh produce item purchased that has received processing beyond minimal steps of washing and trimming of non-edible portions *should have been treated in a licensed processing facility*. Fresh produce items may receive additional processing, such as washing, chopping, shredding, slicing, etc. in the foodservice establishment.
2. Produce that has received significant processing such as freezing, canning, or pickling, should be done in a licensed facility. Check with your local inspector for requirements in your area.

## Procedure Meat, Poultry, Eggs, and Dairy:

1. Meat and fresh shell eggs may be purchased from local licensed producers, **but** because these foods **are** considered potentially hazardous, *inspection by state or federal authority must occur*.
  - a. An inspection shield should be on the package. **Beef or pork** that is processed in a state inspected locker and has been inspected may be purchased by a district of that state (Note - facility and food are inspected).
  - b. **Poultry** must also be processed in an inspected state locker or facility.
  - c. State inspection is sufficient if the food is purchased by a foodservice establishment within that state.
2. Meat processing facilities are required to have HACCP plans in place. In many states, inspection standards are more stringent than USDA regulations.
3. **Dairy products** must be pasteurized and processed in a licensed facility.
4. Purchase of these local items must meet USDA purchasing guidelines for NSLP/SBP.

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