

# Fact Sheet: Using DoD Fresh to purchase local produce

The Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh) allows schools to use their **USDA Foods** entitlement dollars to buy fresh produce. The program, operated by DoD's **Defense Logistics Agency**, began in school year (SY) 1994-1995 as a pilot in eight states. As of 2013, schools in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam participate; schools are anticipated to receive more than \$100 million worth of produce through the program during SY 2012-2013.



## What are the advantages of DoD Fresh?

- *Flexibility* – States can change DoD Fresh allocations on a monthly basis, which allows them to utilize USDA Foods entitlement dollars more effectively. USDA does not impose a cap on the amount of entitlement dollars or the amount of cash reimbursement funds that a state can allocate to DoD purchases.
- *Consistency* – DoD Fresh vendors update the catalog weekly, and depending on the state, schools can receive deliveries every week, making orders timely, fresh, and responsive to market fluctuations.
- *High quality* – DoD maintains high quality standards through Produce Quality Audits, encouraging vendors to follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP), and requiring that pre-cut and packaged produce is sourced from approved suppliers.
- *Variety* – DoD Fresh vendors offer as many as 50 different types of produce, available in multiple forms (whole, pre-cut, and a variety of pack sizes) and from multiple locales (local and non local items are routinely offered).
- *Easy ordering and funds tracking* – Schools place orders via the web-based **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Order/Receipt System** (FFAVORS). The prices listed in the FFAVORS catalog reflect the prices that schools will be billed for the product. FFAVORS tracks schools' entitlement fund balances and total order costs. DoD manages vendor payment and reconciliation.

## Purchasing local foods through DoD Fresh

DoD vendors are encouraged to purchase local products, and about 15 to 20 percent of the produce DoD provides to schools is currently designated as local. Products are designated as local by the produce vendors and are marked with a local tag in the FFAVORS catalog. Currently, for most vendors, local denotes that the produce is sourced from within the state of service or adjacent states. In all cases, local or regionally sourced products must meet the quantity and quality requirements necessary for the contract and be priced competitively.

## What should states and school districts do if they want to source local foods through DoD Fresh?



1. States and schools looking to purchase local foods through DoD Fresh should start by looking for products already marked as local in the FFAVORS catalog. States or schools can also contact their DoD Fresh produce vendor to find out which local products the vendor expects to carry throughout the year.
2. States or schools should determine what additional products they would like to buy locally and make those desires known to their DoD Fresh produce vendor.
3. Finally, states and schools should consider connecting their state departments of agriculture, or other farm to school contacts, with the DoD Fresh vendor in their area. These contacts may have suggestions for producers the vendor can source from, or may be able to provide information about what products schools want to see on their cafeteria trays.

## How does it work?

The Defense Logistics Agency manages more than 45 contracts with produce vendors across the country who in turn contract with growers to supply their designated region. Approximately 85% of these produce vendors are small businesses. Each produce vendor lists its offerings using the online ordering system FFAVORS, where schools can view the catalog for the produce vendor in their area. DoD analyzes the product prices and the vendor updates the catalog on a weekly basis. In addition, most vendors send a weekly newsletter with product information.

**Available Items:**  
*(Items already in your shopping cart will not appear on this screen.)*

Case Quantity	Item Code	Description	Case Contents	Case Price	Fund Source
<input type="text"/>	14P01	APPLE ANY TYPE USF/XF 100-113 1/40 LB CS *** LOCAL GROWN ***	40 LB	\$35.35	<input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Snack <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fed
<input type="text"/>	18B41	CAULIFLOWER MULTI-COLOR 6-8 CT 8 LB CS	8 LB	\$19.38	<input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Snack <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fed
<input type="text"/>	15N95	ORANGE CARA PINK 80 CT 1/35 LB	35 LB	\$29.87	<input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Snack <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fed
<input type="text"/>	15P16	POTATOE SWT LOCAL 40LBCS (CO-OP) *** LOCAL GROWN ***	40 LB	\$14.96	<input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Snack <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fed
<input type="text"/>	14P23	STARFRUIT 20-30 CT 1/8 LB CS	8 LB	\$26.31	<input type="radio"/> State <input type="radio"/> Snack <input checked="" type="radio"/> Fed

This screen shot from the FFAVORS catalog shows how foods grown locally are identified.

## How produce is ordered

In most states, individual schools place orders directly via the FFAVORS catalog for their area. In some states, districts place orders with input from each school. Minnesota, for example, uses both models: some districts enter orders on behalf of all schools in the district, while other districts have the individual recipient enter orders. In a few states, state administrators take into account student preferences and enter orders on behalf of schools.

## How produce is delivered

In some states, such as Michigan and New Jersey, deliveries are made to central warehouses. In other states, like Florida and Virginia, deliveries are made directly to schools or districts. Some states use both models in different areas of the state. Massachusetts even has produce delivered to a central kitchen for distribution to Boston Public Schools. Delivery models affect the amount of time that DoD Fresh purchases take to reach schools.

## How is the program funded?

Within the FFAVORS system, schools can choose from three funding sources:

- *USDA Foods Entitlement Dollars* – The 2008 Farm Bill required that at least \$50 million in commodity entitlement funds be used each year to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for distribution to schools and service institutions through the DoD Fresh program. Since there is no cap, USDA accommodates all requests for additional entitlement allocations to DoD Fresh throughout the school year.
- *Cash Reimbursements* – School lunch operators have the authority to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables directly from DoD Fresh with both special and general assistance funds.
- *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Funds* – The **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)** provides children in eligible elementary schools with the highest free and reduced price National School Lunch Program participation a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. Schools can use FFVP funds to order produce through the DoD Fresh program to serve in the FFVP. The FFAVORS catalog lists this fund source as “snack.”



## Learn more

The Defense Logistics Agency website provides background information about DoD and links to each vendor’s contract.

<http://www.troopsupport.dla.mil/subs/produce/school/index.asp>

Patricia Scott; [patricia.scott@dla.mil](mailto:patricia.scott@dla.mil); 215-737-3601

The Food and Nutrition Service website provides contact information for farm to school personnel in your area, and a helpful history of the DoD Fresh program.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/dod/default.htm>

Christina Conell; [christina.conell@fns.usda.gov](mailto:christina.conell@fns.usda.gov); 703-305-2743

For more information about the USDA Farm to School Program, and to sign up for our e-letter, please visit [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/f2s). Questions? Email us at [farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov](mailto:farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov).

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.