The School Farm Share Toolkit

A resource for regional farmers and schools or educational organizations
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this resource was made possible by contributions of time, knowledge, and expertise from the following partners:

Good Flavor Farm is a small-scale, Certified Naturally Grown farm located in Clermont, NY specializing in mixed vegetables and kid-friendly programming.

Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is a regional nonprofit with offices in Hudson, NY whose mission is to enhance agricultural viability in the Hudson Valley. HVADC works in many ways to achieve this goal. One relevant here is offering individualized technical assistance to new and existing farm businesses in meeting the increasing demand for local food.

Just Food empowers and supports community leaders in their efforts to increase access to locally grown food, especially in underserved New York City neighborhoods. Just Food provides training and technical assistance to community members to help them launch projects like farmers’ markets and CSAs, provide education in fundamental culinary and urban agriculture skills for their neighbors, and advocate to make their corner of New York City a healthier place to live and eat.

Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture is on a mission to create a healthy and sustainable food system that benefits us all. On 80 acres in Westchester County, just 25 miles north of New York City, we operate a highly diversified, four-season farm and an education center that hosts over a 100,000 visitors each year. As a nonprofit, we are working to change the way America eats and farms by inspiring people, engaging leaders and the public, developing practices in resilient agriculture and driving choices that benefit human health and environment.
Introduction: Why and How to Join a School CSA

What is a CSA?

CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture and is a progressive purchasing model whereby community members have access to fresh, seasonal food of the highest quality while providing increased market opportunities for local farms. When you become a member of a CSA, you purchase a ‘share’ of sustainably grown vegetables (and/or other products) grown and/or raised by local farmers. A share generally consists of 7-12 different items per week that reflect the character and seasonality of the region. Consumers will pay for shares in advance of the growing season enabling the farmer to purchase seed, hire farmworker labor, fix equipment, and other costs associated with the new farm season. The cost of a CSA share depends on the duration of the season and the variety and quantity of products. A CSA typically operates on a weekly basis for a 20-24 week period during the height of the growing season (June-October). Distribution locations can include pick-up on the farm or other designated locations convenient to your home or workplace such as churches, schools and community gardens. When available, some farmers offer opportunities to purchase additional value added or specialty farm products to your share such as fruit, eggs, jam, cheese, honey, or meat. Many farmers also encourage social activities for their members such as tours and farm dinners. Farm visits create rich experiences for members to see where their food is grown and further strengthens the connection between farmer and consumer.

What are the Benefits of Joining a CSA?

For the Farmer: Purchasing a CSA share helps local farms stay afloat! Farmers receive payments early in advance which enables them to plan for the upcoming season and helps to offset the cost of seed purchasing, equipment repairs, and more. CSA members share the risk and the reward of the harvest with the farmer for the season. CSAs are also volunteer-run, so everyone contributes time to help make the model thrive. This allows the farmers to focus efforts on good land stewardship and growing the highest quality food for their members.

For the Member: Opportunities for the member include access to the freshest and most nutritious produce and exposure to new vegetables and recipes. Shareholders gain knowledge and understanding about how their food is grown and form direct connections to the farmers who are growing the food. Many farmers even encourage shareholders to visit the farm. CSAs also help form healthy eating habits for children and adults by exposing them to fresh, nutritious, tasty produce. Hudson Valley farmers are known for their strong commitment to growing clean food without the use of harmful chemicals.

For the Environment: Shareholders have the opportunity to support farmers who take care of their land by using growing methods that contribute to soil health and our natural surroundings. Also, by purchasing locally, you are reducing the distance your food is traveling and thus lessening the carbon footprint of your family and the farm.
THE NEED FOR A SCHOOL-BASED APPROACH TO CSA

Schools have the opportunity to play a vital role in establishing a safe and informative environment for students to learn about and practice healthy eating, exercise, and also serve as an access point to locally sourced vegetables. The cafeteria is not the only venue for increasing healthy food choices, changing the local food system and helping the local food economy by supporting local farms. School-based farm shares can help all members of the school community in establishing a holistic approach to feeding school communities rooted in inclusivity and education.

There have already been a number of farm-to-school initiatives in the Hudson Valley and New York City, which is great news for local farms. However, adopting a rigorous farm to school program is a complicated and arduous process that requires supplemental programming in order to encourage healthy behavior in students and achieve lasting impacts. Challenges to effective farm-to-school work are observed on many levels including the affordability of locally grown/made products, the short duration of the Northeast growing season, prohibitive institutional food safety requirements, outdated procurement policies, school and institutional bureaucracy, and more.

Recently, regional organizations and state-wide partnerships have made dramatic efforts to weaken systemic barriers to serving local food in private and public institutions. This is especially true for school settings where there is a clear demand for fresh, healthy food. Forty-four percent of public school districts across the country have reported having an existing farm-to-school program in place, with another 13 percent of school districts committed to launching a farm to school program in the near future.¹

¹ http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school
INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL-BASED FARM SHARES

What is a Farm Share? A Farm Share is a direct market relationship between the farm/s and the school/s and is characterized by its educational value to all involved. Members purchase a share of the season’s harvest and in return receive a weekly supply of produce from the farmer for the agreed upon duration of the program.

School Based Farm Shares build upon the traditional CSA model with two key differences. School Based Farm Shares have a strong emphasis on student engagement and education. The Farm Share is meant to supplement classroom activities that focus on health, nutrition and food and provide an opportunity for families to practice these lessons at home.

How does it work? School Based Farm Shares conform to the school calendar (typically September-November)—rather than the regular farm season. This is a convenient way for school communities to participate in a CSA as the shortened season is more affordable for families and the fall season is often the most bountiful time of the year for the farmer. Participants make a financial commitment to the farm in exchange for a share of the season’s bounty. The price of the share enables the farmers to cover the necessary costs of growing food such as seed, fertilizer, labor, equipment and more. Each week, the farmer/s delivers the shares to the school where parents/guardians can conveniently collect them when they come to pick up the student, or shares can be sent home with the student if feasible. Direct access to fresh and nutritious vegetables encourage healthy eating habits in school families and introduce students to new and exciting flavors. Farmers, students and teachers can work together to provide recipes and cooking recommendations for Farm Share participants, which can be a fun activity for students and help them gain a stronger appreciation for fresh fruit and vegetables.

There are many benefits for farmers, students and family members, environment, and school staff and faculty...
### Benefits for Farmers

CSA farmers typically benefit from the financial commitments of their shareholders which offset the dramatic costs of growing food. In the School Based Farm Share model, both new and established growers are encouraged to participate and both groups have the potential to reap individual benefits. For the young or relatively inexperienced grower, a School Based Farm Share offers the beginner a change to grow for a shorter season, with fewer distribution dates, and lower over-all costs required in production. The educational environment can reduce the stress load of a new venture for young growers who are essentially students themselves. For the more experienced grower, the School Base Farm Share presents an opportunity to move more produce at a time of year when growing is typically at its easiest, and avoid costly winter storage options. Connecting with a school community also offer the experienced grower a sense of greater purpose, knowing that their efforts in the field will make a lasting impression on the young people involved. Other benefits to the farmer include the opportunity to build a reliable, predictable group of customers and receive a larger percentage of the food dollar going to the farm. Farm Shares encourage and enable farmers to be creative in the foods they grow and lessen the amount of food waste associated with farming.

### Benefits for Students and Families

By participating in a School Based Farm Share program, students and their families have direct access to fresh and nutritious local vegetables and the opportunity to eat seasonally. School Based Farm Shares encourage healthy eating habits in school communities and introduce students to new varieties of produce and exciting and unfamiliar flavors. Farmers often provide recipes and cooking recommendations which can be a fun and fulfilling activity for students to engage in at home. School Based Farm Shares empower communities by providing a way to use food dollars to vote for a healthy food system and participants generally receive a better value for their food dollar. Overall, School Based Farm Shares foster a stronger and more profound appreciation for the taste and nutritional benefits of fresh, local produce.

### Benefits for the Environment

Farm Share programs benefit the surrounding environment as participants are supporting farmers who employ safe and conscious growing practices that contribute to soil health and natural ecosystems. Farm Share vegetables are generally unpackaged, eliminating plastic and cardboard waste. By partnering with a local farm, you are reducing the distance that your food travels—lessening the carbon footprint of your family and the farm.

### Benefits for School Staff and Faculty

Farm Shares reinforce nutrition and wellness lessons and can make existing farm to school programming more effective. Additionally, the sight of fresh food in the school setting each week may encourage school food service directors to explore increased local procurement and follow a seasonal purchasing plan. Staff and faculty also have access to the farm’s offerings which may inspire food-related classroom activities and field trips to the farm.
School Based Farm Shares for Farmers

HOW SCHOOL FARM SHARES ARE DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL CSA

Traditionally, the CSA model (community supported agriculture) was intended in large part, to provide a financial safety net for farmers. In the traditional model, community members are expected to provide money before the harvest season begins and be willing to accept certain limitations on product received due to adverse climatic events that might prevent a farmer from providing the “typical” bounty during the season. In the School Farm Share model the focus of the relationship between the farm/s and the school/s is one characterized by its educational value to all involved, rather than a financial partnership. Furthermore, the School Farm Share conforms, at least somewhat, to the school calendar—rather than the farm season. At first this may seem like an undue burden to the grower. However, there are many benefits to an alternative schedule outlined below.

BENEFITS FOR THE FARM AND FOR THE SCHOOL

The School Farm Share presents an interesting opportunity at two different phases of a career in farming. As a young or relatively inexperienced grower a School Farm Share might offer the beginner a chance to grow for a shorter season, with fewer distribution dates, and lower over-all costs required in production. Although a shorter season obviously can mean less gross income it can also require lower capitalization than a 24 week season commitment. Furthermore, it might provide a working example to the school community that the grower is in effect a student as well, that we all make mistakes and keep going. And, that the students are not the only ones being exposed to something new. The educational environment can reduce the stress load of a new venture for young growers. For the more experienced grower with established outlets the School Farm Share presents an opportunity to move more produce at a time of the year (particularly in the Northeast) when growing is typically at its easiest due to reduced weed and insect pressure. Connecting with a school community can offer the experienced grower a sense of greater purpose, knowing that their efforts in the field will make a lasting impression on the young people involved. To some extent the benefit of a School Farm Share to schools depends on the magnification of the project beyond the scope of the farm share. Hopefully, the school community is energized by the connection with a farmer and inspired to dig more deeply into issues of environmental and food justice. Ideally, the School Farm Share presents a tangible approach to learning about nutrition and the health of all living creatures.
1. **Size and Variety of Shares** The size and variety of the School Farm Share should be designed to meet the needs of the school community and the farmer/s. In many cases the size of the share may be determined by the price point the school community feels is appropriate. Because the School Farm Share is intended to be youth-friendly it may be particularly beneficial to include a lot of varieties of vegetables that are more familiar, at least at first, rather than focusing on the quantity of different varieties offered. In other words, it might be preferable to give out orange carrots at three different distributions in a 10 week distribution season, rather than providing kohlrabi, rutabagas, and purple carrots as it might be advantageous to do for a largely adult community.

2. **Share Variation** Although it is important with a School Farm Share to choose varieties that are enticing to young people it is equally important to provide vegetables rich in vitamins and minerals. For this reason, the inclusion of at least one dark, leafy green in every distribution is advisable. In addition to the nutritional merit of the produce, there is often an opportunity for a cultural component as well. Try and engage the school community in identifying one or two culturally significant varieties of produce adapted to the farm’s growing region.

3. **Quality Expectations** Youth can be the pickiest community to appeal to when it comes to fresh, produce. Win them over! Not necessarily with the most perfect produce, but with vegetables that taste great.

   1. **Dirt** – Products should be as clean as possible for the school environment, unless distribution is held out-of-doors so that the custodial crew is not overly-burdened.

   2. **Consider removing “extras” (such as carrot tops)** when serving an urban population who might have limited kitchen space. Feel free to bring an example of a fully-intact plant for educational purposes, but don’t obligate members to take vegetables on the vine, stalk, etc.

4. **Additional Shares and Products (e.g. fruit, meat, etc.)** There are many additional items such as eggs, honey, fruit, etc. that can be added to the share to attract more interest or make the distributions of produce more of a “one stop shop”. However, it is important to keep in mind that in most instances the greatest goal of a School Farm Share is creating an opportunity to connect with a farm while learning more about healthy eating choices that are good for the environment as well. Although it can be attractive to offer many different types of farm-raised products to school community members sometimes keeping things simple (and affordable!) has a value greater than the number (or price) of its moving parts.

5. **Packaging** Several options exist including bagging or boxing shares on the farm, or offering a bulk display for members to select their own share on site at the school. It is also possible to allow students, especially those in middle or high school to prepare shares as needed at the school site, or assist
members in packaging their own shares. Being able to identify produce and even rehearse answers to the question of *how do I prepare this vegetable* can be rewarding and educational.

6. **Collecting Money and Sign Ups** Finding a core group of members within the school community to host the School Farm Share can make the job of recruitment much more effective. Whether it’s a parent-teacher association, or several teachers, members of the administration or even students themselves it’s very helpful to have a core group of people that can take responsibility for outreach and (if it’s appropriate) the collection of share fees. Some farms have on-line methods for collecting payment, and in this case hosts can simply direct interest towards that website. For farms that do not use an on-line method it is advisable that the host make use of an existing bank account, or open one specifically for the purpose of collecting money for the School Farm Share. In this scenario the host would collect money for individual shares and pay the farmer in one or several lump sum payment/s. Farmers and hosts need to work together to determine best options for payment schedules. Staggered payments may be acceptable, or not. One scenario involves the sale of a certain minimum number of shares to be paid out-right and up-front before the start of the season while offering more flexible payment plans, such as pay-as-you-go (which enables members to use SNAP benefits) within the maximum number of shares possible. The federal program SNAP (formally known as food stamps) does allow farmers to go through an application process in order to receive authorization to accept SNAP payments for CSA style distribution. However, SNAP requires that sales be made/processed only one week in advance of the receipt of the products. This means that you cannot require/accept SNAP payments for the full cost of the share. The farmer/s can only charge SNAP participants for two distributions at one time (assuming a weekly distribution). To clarify, the farmer/s cannot accept full payment from members using SNAP in anticipation of a 10 or 15 week distribution season. In each of these different scenarios it is strongly worth considering requiring a cash deposit from all members (including SNAP participants) in order to secure a share, unless full payment is possible/required at the time of sign-up. (For more information on accepting SNAP, please see Additional Resources).

7. **Drop off and Distribution** Allowing and encouraging students to be a part of the drop of and distribution of produce can be fun for students and helpful for the farmer/s if there is enough adult supervision to ensure the highest safety measures are in place. In densely populated urban areas with busy vehicle and foot traffic it can be challenging to secure parking and dangerous to allow students to assist with unloading. The selection of distribution sites on school property should be a process that includes both the farmer, the hosts and a representative of the custodial crew, as well as any on-site safety officers/security guards serving the school population. Important questions to guide a discussion and selection of a site include, such as: the existence/rules regarding usage of school elevators, inclement weather concerns, light availability, policies regarding the invitation of visitors onto school property (especially important to consider when inviting members of the non-school population to join the School Farm Share), etc. The selection of a meaningful location for produce distribution can increase the value of the experience. For example: holding the produce distribution in a school garden, or school cafeteria.

8. **Suggested Requirements for Partner Farms**

   1. Understand are committed to the School Farm Share concepts and goals
2. Are experienced in growing and marketing for CSA or in diversified vegetable production

3. Have maintained a leadership position with an established CSA; OR completed a full season apprenticeship program (i.e. Stone Barns, Hawthorne Valley, Glynwood, etc.)

4. Will communicate regularly with their Farm Share group (being open to and enjoying regular communication), especially being upfront when there is a problem

5. Can be flexible, see Farm Share as a learning process, and will adapt to changing circumstances

6. Will be flexible for low-income members in a mutually beneficial partnership

7. Will provide a growing environment that the farmer is proud of and is safe for children and families to visit

School Based Farm Shares for School Organizers

What a school needs to start a Farm Share:

1. **Interest from school community:** The school hosts will help identify interest in being a member of the farm. The school hosts might survey parents, teachers and students to gauge interest. General announcements or targeted promotion that makes use of student artwork can be a successful and educational way to get the word out. Confirmed interest is needed to start a site.

2. **Support from administration:** School hosts must obtain approval from the principal of the school to start a School Farm Share.

3. **School hosts to help organize:** Hosts will have to devote time to handling some administrative tasks related to running a Farm Share. Such tasks might include: performing outreach, recruiting members, possibly maintaining member records, coordinating and running distribution, responding to Farm Share inquiries, communicating regularly with the farm, setting School Farm Share rules, enlisting volunteers as needed, possibly handling treasury, planning educational events, arranging a food donation connection for left over produce.
4. **Distribution location:** Choosing a site, like a school garden or the school cafeteria can add extra meaning to the farm share distribution. It is important to select a site where members can feel comfortable and welcome and produce will not be exposed to prolonged/excessive heat.

5. **Recruit Support Staff:** It is helpful to begin considering who in the school community can help the coordinator with various tasks. Some potential support staff could be school janitors, students, teachers, PTA members, and other school volunteers.

6. **What to do about missed shares:** This is also a good time to think about a plan for vegetables that do not get picked up. Are there local community partners who could benefit from donated shares like a food pantry or church? Can the school use extras in the classroom or in the cafeteria? Are there families in need that can be offered extras after pickup.

These steps take time, but do not be discouraged if it means taking another school season to plan and prep. Every school has different levels of capacity to start additional projects. We offer a suggested timeline later in the toolkit to give some tips to keep on track!

**Timeline for Farm Share Organizing Activities: 1st Year**

- **January:** Survey student families and staff to gauge interest.
- **February:** Initiate contact with the farm regarding interest in hosting School Farm Share. Obtain permission from school administration to launch School Farm Share.
- **March:** Hold initial farmer/school host meeting to discuss details such as: length of season, share sizes/prices/payment options, delivery options, distribution locations, insurance, security or facility requirements.
- **April:** Finalize details with farmer and develop member agreement forms. Reach consensus among school host as to roles for communicating with farm, collecting member applications, answering member inquires, handling payments, tracking information, coordinating distribution, recruiting volunteers, and hosting events.
- **May/June:** Conduct outreach to school community, recruit members and collect payments.
- **Aug/Sept:** Finalize recruitment. Launch School Farm Share distribution.
- **October:** Plan farm visit (transportation, dates, activities).
- **Nov/Dec:** Review successes, identify deltas and begin planning for next year!

**Getting Set Up at Your School**

Obtaining the support and approval of the principal is an essential first step in establishing a School Farm Share. Before speaking with the administration, try and establish a few talking points about why there is interest in this type of program. Consider the unique needs of your school, the student populations and
surrounding neighborhood to develop compelling points to share. This will differ from school to school and might include: student health and well-being, an existing curricular focus on food and farming, increasing environmental awareness, or social justice issues related to food sovereignty.

Additional Tips:

- **Dismissal** Older students, such as those in middle and high school typically self-dismiss, this means that students have to be willing participants if their families are interested in receiving a farm share. Alternatively, school hosts might focus their outreach efforts on the families of elementary and younger students who are more likely to be picked up by an adult, or responsible older sibling after school.

- **School Staff Turnaround** The enthusiasm and institutional support from the school could potentially shift if there is staff turnover. An important question to consider is could the model last if there was a change in leadership or if the school coordinator left?

- **School Commitment to the model** Is the school going to be just a distribution site or is there capacity to integrate further in the curriculum or other school activities?

- **Member and student participation** The farm share offers a great opportunity for students and adult members to share enthusiasm and knowledge about plants and people. In some schools farm shares are run entirely by students. In other schools the share might be accompanied by a student run newsletter including recipes from family members, interviews with the farmer, research on beneficial insects, etc. Depending on the location of the distribution the farm share might help call attention to a feature of the school that offers another avenue for involvement, such as a school garden or cafeteria. A farm to school connection might also include visits to the farm, or a targeted role in the curriculum.

- **Working with existing school groups** Starting a school farm share is a lot easier if an existing school group is motivated to get involved. A family or parent teacher association, a student-run and faculty-advised environmental club, or a wellness policy committee are all examples of great avenues for hosting a school farm share. As an added bonus, a few dollars can be added to the weekly cost of the share, at the discretion of the host group, as a fundraiser. Although an individual might be driven to bring a farm share to a school the time commitment required to build a successful program will likely be overwhelming for one person working alone.

- **Who is picking up the share?** Older students, such as those in middle and high school typically self-dismiss or many students do not go directly home (i.e. babysitters, off-site after school programs, extracurricular activities, library, etc). Alternatively, school hosts might focus their outreach efforts on the families of elementary and younger students who are more likely to be picked up by an adult, or responsible older sibling after school. Families interested in receiving a farm share must consider who in the family is going to pick up the share and bring it home during the season. It may also be helpful to plan a backup—a neighbor, friend, or another family member, just in case.
What are the ABC’s of CSA and Farm Share?

Let’s review the basics of the CSA and Farm Share models. Below is a template to help you make sure you know the basics of the model and help prepare to explain to the school community in order to gauge interest from staff, parents, and also get approval from school leadership.

1. **Model**- Which model do you want to start at your school?

2. **How the school farm share works**- The School Farm Share is part of a bigger effort to create a farm-to-school connection. It’s important for young people and their families to have access to fresh, affordable, locally grown food. By purchasing a School Farm Share, you will receive a variety of produce delivered right to the school directly from the farm each week from September through October.

3. **Share size**- A typical full share includes 7-9 seasonal and just picked produce items from a local farm. Some farms and groups will offer half-share (either pickup a share every other week instead of weekly or ½ of a weekly share). This will also cut the cost of the share to half of the full. The farmer decides what goes in the share based on what is fresh and ready to harvest. There is no picking what you get!

4. **Member commitment**- Members who sign up for a share pay in advance of the season in order to local in the lowest price for the freshest vegetables. It is helpful to remind folks to consider while they pay in full in advance, they are in fact saving over the course of the season. Share price/number of weeks = price of locally grown vegetables.

5. **Flexible payment options**- There are multiple strategies that a group can implement in order to make the share more affordable and accessible to families. Some examples are payment plans, accepting SNAP, sliding scale are popular options.

6. **Community Building**- There are many ways to get involved and help out with recruitment, food distribution, organizing events, and more!

7. **Farm connections**- Most farmers are happy to discuss ways to engage with members such as farm visits, “Meet Your Farmer” events are such potential options.

8. **Missed share pickup**- If you need to miss a distribution date, feel free to have a friend or relative pick up for you, or you can donate your share to a member of the school community.

9. **Price and season duration**- Prices are created by the farmer. It is ok to have some details not finalized until the match with the farmer is confirmed. Feel free to estimate a range based on the model your group plans to start. The beginning and end of the season is also up to the farmer, typically it will start in September, and run through November or December.
Farm Share Outreach

See the end of this document for sample materials!

Promotional materials: this is a great opportunity for students to get involved by creating and distributing information about the school farm share. Hosts might consider conducting a poster contest and offering a free share/one pick-up to the winner.

Outreach events: spring time school events are a wonderful way to introduce the farmer to the school community. Activities might include planting a seed to take home, a demonstration bee hive, etc.

- Back to School Nights can also pose a last-chance opportunity to promote a fall farm share.

Spin-Off Activities

1. **Cooking Demonstrations** can help members learn new skills as needed to make use of all the vegetables in a share. However, it is also important not to assume that the school community is unfamiliar with the use of fresh produce. In some cases the school community may have a long-standing cultural awareness of preparing meals with a variety of different vegetables. Celebrating this knowledge can be an asset to the program, the students and the farmer. One way to celebrate this knowledge is to hold a Farm to School Dinner, in which the entire school community can be invited to participate using produce from the farm that is typically included in the school farm share.

2. **School Food Assessments** can be conducted to bring greater awareness to the food that is currently available during the school day, and identify possibly pathways for change, such as the inclusion of a salad bar, more vegetarian options, etc.

3. **School Gardens** depending on space and capacity for building or expanding the scope of a garden program school communities might consider planting perennial herbs and flowers to offer as an add-on to the vegetable share.
CONNECTING WITH A FARMER

After a school and farmer are identified an initial meeting will be held to meet and determine whether they are a good match, and if so – begin to work out the details of offering a School Farm Share.

Image source: nebeginningfarmers.org / Kelly Nichols

School Farm Share Farmer Criteria

1. **Size and Variety of Shares** Unlike a more traditional CSA the School Farm Share will probably have most if not all of the distributions during the school calendar. Members must expect a selection of produce that may not include popular summertime items. And, the size of the share should take into account the lifestyles, and the desired price point of the school farm share hosts.

2. **Other products** TBD

3. **Farm Partner Options** Every School Farm Share is going to be different, just as every farm is different. There are at least three different options for hosting a farm share distribution at a school.

   a) **Working directly with one specific farmer:** This model can allow for the deepest sense of connection with a particular farm, especially if school trips are a part of the experience. However, this model can be limiting in terms of the maximum number of shares available.

   b) **Working with several farmers to arrange the share:** This model can impart a sense of the breadth of local farms, especially if the farms are located in different geographies. However, this model requires more coordination and communication either on the farmers' end, the school hosts', or both, to run smoothly.

   c) **Working with a larger organization that delivers CSA shares to Schools:** such as the Corbin Hill Food Project in NYC, or Field Goods, Upstate. This option is a good choice when the number of shareholders exceeds the capacity of a small, individual farm. However, the personal connection
with the farmer will be lost. A phased approach may work in which a school connects directly with
a smaller farmer at the start of their project. But, if demand exceeds capacity at the some point,
the school can always opt to bring in more farmers, or work with a distributor.

4. **Working with the Farmer** It is important to keep in mind that planning for the fall share typically begins
in December or January, seeding in February or March and field work in April through November! A lot
goes into being able to provide a school with a variety of produce for a balanced, affordable, delicious
farm share. It is advisable to select one person to communicate with the farmer and to keep those lines
of communication open, clear and focused. It’s also important for both the farmer and the school host
to be respectful of the time and hard work required on both ends in order to make the farm share
program successful.

5. **Signing Up Members / Options for Payment** There are no rules about how a farmer and school hosts
decide to structure their program. However, the following are a few recommendations or guidelines:

1. Creating a school farm share that weds the growing season with the school calendar is likely to
yield a program with fewer distribution dates. However, this means lower over-all cost, a shorter
time commitment required and less produce to process and prepare at home than a typical 24
week CSA.

2. Setting a minimum number of participants upfront can prevent costly over-production for the
farmer, and helps the host be realistic about the extent of outreach required to meet those
minimum numbers.

3. Setting a maximum number of participants upfront can enable the creation of a school farm share
waiting list. The creation of a waiting list can be useful in the event that a member needs to drop
out due to illness, relocation, or dire financial circumstances.

4. Rewarding early-bird payments with a reduced share cost can be advantageous for assuring the
minimum number of participants is met before the beginning of the season.

5. Simply reducing the cost of the share, or offering subsidized shares, and even accepting SNAP may
not be the only avenues required to design a share that is accessible to all. Other barriers to entry
include: transportation issues, the time/day of distribution, the language use choices for
information forms, etc.
The Role of HVADC with existing Farm to School Efforts

1. **Farm to School Grant Project** HVADC partnered with Poughkeepsie City School District, Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress and the Poughkeepsie Farm Project to develop and secure an USDA Farm to School grant for 2012-2014. HVADC provided overall project management and grant administration duties and assisted in the identification and procurement of local sources of produce. Poughkeepsie City School District responded exceptionally well to the program by developing a series of new menu items to highlight local produce. Students were educated in the preparation, uses, and nutritional benefits of different vegetables such as dark leafy greens and winter squash and the project team facilitated farm visits for hundreds of students; promoting community education and participation in the practice of eating locally produced food.

2. **NYC School-Based Farm Share Project** HVADC staff has partnered with several Hudson Valley farms and specialty producers to supply a NYC school with a diverse farm share opportunity. The school will be entering into its third season this fall and has built its membership base to over 100 members. HVADC has played a key role as a liaison between farmers and the administrative team and has assisted with coordination efforts, matchmaking and sourcing, and distribution logistics. The program has now been expanded to include two additional schools and six farmers and specialty producers.
MORE SITES, LINKS AND INFORMATION

For general questions related to local farm-to-school, contact Miriam at Good Flavor Farms: miriam@goodflavorfarm.com

For specific questions related to SNAP and CSA farms, contact Maria Schamberger – FNS agent for NYS at: Maria.Schamberger@FNS.USDA.gov

Cornell Cooperative Extension: http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu/


NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets: www.agriculture.ny.gov./F2S/index.html

Farm Fresh Workplaces: https://sustainableconnections.org/bizdev/workplace-csas

Sample Materials on the following pages:

1. Sample informational flyers (Spanish/English)
2. Sample agreement forms
3. Sample feedback surveys
Farm Share at School
Agricultura sostenida por la comunidad

Quienes Somos: En Good Flavor Farm ofrecemos productos frescos y naturales, cultivados en un terreno pequeño en el condado de Columbia, Nueva York. Cosechamos por el calendario escolar y hacemos 10 distribuciones de verduras en Wheels en Washington Heights desde Septiembre a Noviembre. Nuestro objetivo con este programa es conectar niños a comida saludable, y al lugar donde se crece esta comida. Aceptamos los beneficios de SNAP y ofrecemos un plan de pago a largo plazo para mantener un bajo costo.

Que Reciben: Crecemos tomates, zanahorias, lechuga, vegetales para cocinar, calabaza, papas, chiles, cebolla, melones, molondrones y mucho más...

Nunca usamos químicos y nuestro tamaño pequeño = calidad mejor.

Una distribución típica en el otoño incluye: 2 libras de zanahorias, 1 libra de verdes para cocinar, 2 pepinos, un media libra de habichuelas verdes, una cabeza de ajo, 1 lechuga, 1 melon, chilies, y 2 libros de tomates.

Una distribución típica en el invierno incluye:

2 libras de papas, 2 libras de betabel, 1 media libra de frijoles secas, un libro de verdes para cocinar, 2 calabaza, 1 cabeza de ajo, y 2 libras de cebolla.

Cuanto Cuesta? $25 para distribución.

Como reciben su comida? Los estudiantes pueden tomar su distribución antes de salir de la escuela una vez por semana desde Septiembre hasta el final de Noviembre. Pedimos que cada estudiante tome un turno en ayudar con la distribución de la comida para que todos reciban su parte justa.

Visitando el Rancho: Vamos a organizar una gira del rancho para estudiantes y padres en el Otoño.

Preguntas? Envíe un correo electrónico a miriam@goodflavorfarm.com
Farm Share at School
Community Supported Agriculture

Who we are: At Good Flavor Farm we offer certified naturally grown produce from our small plot of land in Columbia County, NY. We harvest for the school calendar, and make 10 deliveries of vegetables to WHEELS from September through November. Our goal with this school-based program is to connect kids to healthy food, as well as the people and place where that food is grown. Our short season keeps costs low and we are proud to accept SNAP benefits.

What you get: We grow tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, greens, squash, potatoes, sweet and hot peppers, radish, beans, melons and so much more! We never use chemicals and our small scale = higher quality.

A typical Pick-Up in the early fall might include:

- 2 lbs of carrots, 1 bunch of collard greens, 2 or 3 cucumbers, 1/2 lb of green beans, 1 head of garlic, 1 head of lettuce, 1 melon, several hot peppers, and 3 lbs of tomatoes.

A typical Pick-Up in the early winter might include:

- 2 lbs of parsnips, 2 lbs of beets, 1/2 lb of dried beans, 1 lb turnip greens, 1 or 2 wintersquash, 1 head of garlic, and 2 lbs of onions.

How much does it cost: $25 per Pick-Up.

How do you get your food: Student members can grab their produce before leaving school once a week from Sept. - Nov. We ask that students take a turn helping us weigh out produce so everybody gets a fair share.

Questions: Please contact the farm by email: miriam@goodflavorfarm.com
Farm Share Agreement for 2014

Good Flavor Farm
PO Box 72, Tivoli, NY 12583
miriam@goodflavorfarm.com

Our Growing Practices
The farm is Certified Naturally Grown. No: synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or GMO seeds, just like organic farms. However, Certified Naturally Grown is an independent program not affiliated with the USDA National Organic Program. We are a grassroots organization run by farmers for farmers.

Harvest for 2014
We are growing Asian Greens, Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Celery Root, Chard, Collards, Cucumbers, Garlic, Green Beans, Kale, Lettuce, Onions, Sweet and Hot Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkins, Radish, Spinach, Sugar Snap Peas, Summer and Winter Squash, Tomatoes, and Turnips.

Payment
The cost of the share is $250 per season. We offer two different payment options:

The Perennial Share: Pay $125 when you sign up to secure your spot. The remaining balance of $125 is due at the first Pick-Up. There is a $50 penalty for ALL bounced checks.

The Annual Share (for SNAP participants only!): Pay $50 cash to secure your spot. Pay-As-You-Go $25 at each Pick-Up using SNAP or CASH. Pick-up all ten shares, we refund your entire deposit in cash at the end of the season. Miss one pick-up, we refund $25 in cash at the end of the season. Miss two pick-ups, we refund nothing. If you miss three or more pick-ups we refund nothing and we revoke your membership for the entire season.

By signing below, you agree to purchase (circle one): ☓Perennial Share ☓Annual Share

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________

Name (please print): ____________________________________________

Contact (email and/or #): ___________________________________________

Farm Share Pick-Up
You will generally receive between one and two grocery bags worth of produce at each pick-up. Farm shares will be available for pick-up at WHEELS Expeditionary Learning Charter School every Wednesday.