



What is

Farm *to* Institution?

FTI allows **farmers and ranchers** to develop new markets and sell to local institutions, such as K-12 schools, hospitals, colleges, cafeterias, and state agencies.

Growers have the opportunity to sell their goods to local institutions. This is a mutually beneficial opportunity that...

Advances the community's public health

Improves health outcomes by providing fresh, high-quality produce to hospitals, schools, and other institutions. ¹

Contributes to environmental sustainability

Creates a sustainable regional food system, cutting down on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by reducing "food miles", food waste, and long-term refrigeration. ²

Stimulates community economic development

Augments the local economy through job and income development; Creates greater market opportunities for local producers. ³

Local Policy Support: Arkansas's Farm to Institution geographic preference policy, The Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act (Local Food Act).

The Local Food Act requires **institutions** receiving at least \$25,000 annually from the state and that have a food program to set a goal that 20% of their total food budget be spent on **local food**. It also requires institutions to submit an annual form reporting on their local food procurement budget to the **Arkansas Department of Agriculture**.

Key Terms:

- **Institution:** Entity of the state, such as institutions of higher education, childcare facility, after-school programs, libraries, prisons, senior care centers, state agencies such as DHS or ADVA, etc.
- **Local Food:** Food products that are grown in Arkansas and/or packaged and processed in Arkansas.
- **Food packaging** is the enclosing of food for transport, storage, and retail sale. Ex: enclosing, bagging, etc.
- **Food processing** is the alteration of food from its natural raw state. Ex: washing, cutting, etc.

1. Harris, D., Lott, M., Lakins, V., Bowden, B., & Kimmons, J. (2012). *Farm to Institution: Creating Access to Healthy Local and Regional Foods*. *Advances in Nutrition*, 3(3), 343-349. doi:10.3945/an.111.001677

2. Baranski M, Babbie K, Pirog R. A Consumer's Guide to Local Food Systems and Greenhouse Gases. Michigan State University Extension; 2012:6. Accessed November 11, 2021. [https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/local_food_systems_and_greenhouse_gases_\(e3178\).pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/local_food_systems_and_greenhouse_gases_(e3178).pdf)

3. Bagdonis, J. M., Hinrichs, C. C., & Schafft, K. A. (2008). The emergence and framing of farm-to-school initiatives: Civic engagement, health and local agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 26(1-2), 107-119. doi:10.1007/s10460-008-9173-6

For more information:

<https://www.agriculture.arkansas.gov/arkansas-department-of-agriculture-programs/the-local-food-farms-and-jobs-act>

For a copy of this resource visit: <https://nwa.uams.edu/chr/resources/nutrition/>

Farm *to* Institution

The UAMS Northwest Community Health and Research team conducted interviews with **Arkansas Growers** to better understand motivators, barriers, facilitators, and opportunities for Farm to Institution (FTI) procurement in Arkansas. Below are the main themes that emerged.

Motivators: factors which inspire action or demand for local procurement

Provides a marketing advantage for institutions

Offers nutrition, taste, and health benefits to consumers

Increase local food sales

Supports local growers and strengthens communities

“ We want people to understand where their food comes from. That's kind of what our farm is about. We have a “you pick” here and we love for people to come on the farm and pick their own berries. That's the local food movement.

Barriers: factors which make selling local food more difficult

Poor relationships & communication

Local food is costly for distributors & institutions

Variable weather, seasonality, and limited farm capacity

“ I just question whether there are enough vegetable or fruit farmers in the state to supply each district.

Facilitators: existing avenues that facilitate local food procurement

Public desire and clear demand for local food

Some consumers prefer local food

Built infrastructure facilitates easier acquisition & distribution

Grower support for Farm to Institution

“ I think being a family farm is still something people want to contribute to.

Opportunities

Ideas for encouraging or improving capacity for local food in Farm to Institution

- Database of institutional product needs and preferences
- Facilitate new partnerships with distributors and institutions
- Develop a system of shared FTI goals, values, and processes across supply chain