



State of Arizona
Department of Education

Tom Horne
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

CN# NSLP 16-11
CN# SFSP 04-11
USDA SP# 32-2009

MEMORANDUM

To: School Health & Nutrition Program Sponsors
Food Distribution Program Sponsors

From: Mary Szafranski, Deputy Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services

Original Signed

Lynn Ladd, Director
Arizona Department of Education, School Health and Nutrition Programs

Jessica Creed-Capsel, Director
Arizona Department of Education, Food Distribution Program

Date: December 22, 2010

RE: Revision to School Gardens CN Memo #05-10

This memorandum provides revised guidance regarding the operation of school gardens in a question and answer format. The following issues are based on responses from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Arizona Department of Education (ADE).

Q: Can the school food service use funds from the nonprofit school food service account to purchase seeds for a school garden?

A: Yes, with the understanding that the garden is used within the context of the program, e.g. selling the food or providing food in the classroom as part of an educational lesson provided the food is not cleaned, processed or prepared in the area designated under the jurisdiction of the local health department (e.g. school kitchens, caterer's kitchens, etc.).

Q: Can the school food service use funds from the nonprofit school food service account to purchase items for the school garden such as fertilizer, watering cans, rakes, etc.?

A: Yes, as long as the items are used for the purpose of starting and maintaining the garden.

Q: Can a school use or sell food grown in their school garden that was funded using the nonprofit school food service account?

A: Yes, schools can use the produce as a part of nutrition education, science curriculum, agricultural education program, etc. Schools may sell food grown in their school garden to parents, PTA members, at a roadside stand, etc. as long as the revenue from the sale of the food accrues back to the nonprofit school food service account.

Q: Are there health/safety issues involved with school gardens?

A: Yes. In Arizona, produce grown in school gardens is not considered an approved food source and, therefore, cannot be cleaned, processed or prepared in the area designated under the jurisdiction of the local health department (e.g. school kitchens, caterer's kitchens, etc.).

Q: Can the school food service purchase produce from another school organization that is maintaining and managing the garden, such as Future Farmers of America (FFA)?

A: Yes, the school food service may purchase produce from a garden run by a school organization such as FFA, which is an agricultural education program for students, as long as the food is not cleaned, processed or prepared in the area designated under the jurisdiction of the local health department (e.g. school kitchens, caterer's kitchens, etc.).

Q: Can funds received through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) be used to purchase seeds/tools/equipment for a school garden?

A: No. FFVP funds may not be used for the purchase of any materials for school gardens.

Q: What if there is excess produce from the garden left over at the end of the school year?

A: The school could try selling the food (the profit must accrue back to the nonprofit school food service account) or donate it to local food banks, families of enrolled students, emergency shelters etc. in accordance with State and local health/safety regulations.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this memo, please contact the Food Distribution Program at (602) 542-8700.