

Farm Fresh Challenge

PROGRAM YEAR 2026



PROCURING LOCAL FOODS

Fruits and vegetables are a great place to start thinking about purchasing from local growers, but dairy, meat, poultry, and grains may be sourced locally as well. Purchasing local foods during their peak season is a great way to support local agriculture, introduce new foods at their peak freshness, and obtain products at a competitive price. Local ingredients can be purchased from 1) direct sources -farmers, farmers markets, producer food hubs/co-ops, or gardens, or 2) indirect sources - food distributors, food retailers, food banks, meal vendors, or food service management companies *as long as all procurement principles and regulations are followed.*

WHERE TO START:

- What's ALREADY local on your menu?
 - Look at your records or ask your distributor or meal vendor for a report on items you purchase that meet your definition of local.
- What COULD be local?
 - Conduct a menu audit. Can any menu items be easily replaced by local items? Check out [Taste AZ](#) for inspiration!
- Use the Good Food Finder when menu planning.
 - The [Farm to School: Good Food Finder](#) has many resources to use for procuring local foods when menu planning.
- Take advantage of the [Try It Local Guidebook](#) for insight on procurement methods and helpful tools available to you!

TASTE CHALLENGE:

- The copper tier is awarded to sites that can procure **three** "easy to reach" local items (milk, fruit or vegetable). Fruits and vegetables can be counted more than once if more than one variety is served.
- The silver tier is awarded to those who accomplished the copper tier and **one** additional "hard to reach" local item (whole grain or meat/meat alternate).
- The gold tier is awarded to those who accomplished the copper tier and **two** additional "hard to reach" local items

