



Encouraging farm-to-school efforts remains a priority for FNS. Farm to school initiatives play an important role in improving the economic stability of small farmers and the nutritional health of school-aged children. In an effort to assist school meal program administrators and local food advocates to identify opportunities for growth in local procurements, FNS is seeking best practice information to share with program participants. In the context of current procurement requirements, the goal of this session is to obtain feedback on this important topic. Specific areas of interest and discussion are listed below.

### **Collaboration/Support**

- ✓ What are some ways states have identified local farmers and encouraged them to submit bids?
- ✓ What are some of the effective marketing materials and media campaigns used at the state, regional, and national levels to increase momentum for Farm to School Initiatives?
- ✓ How can local food advocates assist in this process?
- ✓ How can purchasing through co-ops improve this program?
- ✓ How can nutrition education add to the program's success?
- ✓ Are there specific networking systems you have used to learn more about these opportunities?

### **Barriers/Difficulties**

- ✓ Are there any concerns about buying local foods?
- ✓ What are the major distribution/transportation barriers to purchasing locally?
- ✓ What are some other perceived barriers to purchasing local fruits and vegetables?
- ✓ How does food safety factor into program planning?

If you have additional information you would like to share with FNS please contact Lynn Rodgers-Kuperman at (703) 605-4390 or [lynn.rodgers@fns.usda.gov](mailto:lynn.rodgers@fns.usda.gov).