

# 10 CENTS A MEAL PILOT: 2018–2019 EVALUATION RESULTS



## Influence of 10 Cents on Farms and Food Suppliers

In the May year-end survey, participating school food service directors (FSDs) were asked to provide open-ended feedback to the question “In what ways has the 10 Cents pilot influenced farms, distributors, processors or other food businesses or service providers to better meet your district’s food service needs?” Of the 56 FSDs who responded to this monthly survey, 44 wrote in responses to this question and 12 provided no response at all. Below are the majority of the responses, grouped by themes. One respondent indicated being unsure about the program’s influence on suppliers.

### General feedback

*“They know it’s helping our community at the same time and getting people excited about school lunches.”*

*“I think they have received an increase in business for sure.”*

*“We have more money to spend and can make the increased cost of purchasing locally.”*

*“[They] increased local sales.”*

*“...there is an increase in demand for local foods.”*

*“Purchasing power is enhanced with vendors.”*

*“[10 Cents] provided a network that makes it easier to purchase local.”*

*“We have more access through the connections with the 10 Cents pilot.”*

*“Local interest has increased as a result of receiving the grant.”*

*“We are using more products from Michigan.”*

### Challenges

*“Adjusting how we can purchase from them has been a challenge, however we are committed*

*to building the relationship to buy local.”*

*“We didn’t work on a personal level with any farmers.”*

*“It was hard to serve fresh produce other than apples and radishes during the winter months.”*

*“We have had great difficulty getting local products after October each year since we are rural and remote.”*

*“Distributors are not readily accessible.”*

**“It was hard to serve fresh produce other than apples and radishes during the winter months.”**

### Relationship development

*“It has opened ideas in finding mutually beneficial partnerships that we can build on for the future.”*

*“They prepare for the business in the fall when schools are up and running and produce is plentiful.”*

*“We have built relationships with local farmers.”*

*“We have formed relationships with three local farms.”*

*“They are more willing to deliver and want to connect with the food service department.”*

*“We had a local farm approach us about providing local produce to our schools.”*

*“[We] introduced farmers to the program.”*

*“We have been approached by local farmers to offer their products.”*

*“[They are] more receptive to having the conversation with us.”*

*"It has helped us build relationships with local farmers, distributors, and the like."*

## Communication

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*"They are helpful and willing to work with our schedule."*

*"Keeping in touch with our farm suppliers is easy and efficient."*

*"We are building closer relationships with local and setting up a process to get local into schools."*

*"They are better with following up on requests when you tell them you have grant funds to spend."*

*"They communicate weekly and go out of their way to accommodate."*

**"They (food suppliers) have become more creative with their items and processing certain things to help the schools use them with less prep time needed. They have blended more greens too."**

## Product availability

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*"We are offered better variety every year. (This statement, or similar, was reported four times.)"*

*"Farms and distributors have been able to grow more stock to keep up with the rising demand. (This statement was reported three times.)"*

*"Letting the farmers know what we will be purchasing on a weekly basis allows them to make sure there is product for us to use."*

*"Some farmers have planted more of certain items that the schools in the area are requesting and have run out in previous school years."*

*"They make sure to have adequate amounts available for us to purchase."*

*"They have become more creative with their items and processing certain things to help the schools use them with less prep time needed. They have blended more greens too."*

*"They are trying to meet our quantity demand for a large district."*

*"[They have] more fresh produce available."*

*"Our local farmer partner now plans his crops and harvesting with us and our needs in mind."*

*"[We] did not run into a shortage of any kind."*

## Vendor-specific feedback

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*"Our local orchard is very interested in providing the apples that we need."*

*"[I was] happy that we were able to get Michigan produce from [Michigan] Farm to Freezer and set up delivery from them directly to our school."*

*"Our partnership with Cherry Capital [Foods] allowed us to secure a certain case [quantity] weekly of artisan lettuces."*

*"Cherry Capital Foods have been very good to work with."*

*"Cherry Capital [Foods] found a way to get me on their delivery route even though we are off the beaten path."*

*"We are now getting a weekly delivery from Cherry Capital [versus] a bi-weekly (delivery)."*

*"Cherry Capital [Foods] did not deliver to us until this pilot."*