



What Foods Are Served Through 10 Cents a Meal?

10 CENTS A MEAL 2023–2024 EVALUATION RESULTS: DOUBLING INVESTMENT AND GROWING IMPACT

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan’s Kids and Farms, administered by the Michigan Department of Education, supplements funding for schools and other non-school sponsors to purchase Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans. This section is part of the [10 Cents a Meal 2023–2024 Evaluation Results: Doubling Investment and Growing Impact](#).

Throughout the 10 Cents a Meal program, food program managers (FPMs) report all of the fresh and minimally processed¹ Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans they purchased and served to children through 10 Cents a Meal.

This summary shares findings about the wide variety of Michigan-grown foods purchased and served through this program, as well as foods that are still of interest. Both represent market opportunities for Michigan farmers and food businesses.

In the 2023–2024 program, 229 of 269 grantees (85%) shared purchase information (September 2023–August 2024) for over \$5,889,000 of spending. This reported information included the types of foods, their dollar amounts, and farms of origin, when possible. Additionally, 234 grantees responded to questions in surveys about their food purchasing, such as the Michigan-grown products they tried and those they were unable to find and buy but were still interested in using.

Types of Michigan-Grown Products Purchased and Served

Altogether, a total of 20 types of Michigan-grown fruits, 40 types of vegetables, and five identifiable varieties of dry beans were purchased by 10 Cents a Meal grantees across the program year. Four more types of Michigan-grown fruits were purchased than in the prior program year (2022–2023), but two fewer types of identifiable vegetables were purchased.

- In 2023–2024, grantees purchased an average of three different types of fruits and six different types of vegetables. While the average number of vegetables purchased is consistent with the prior year, the average number of fruits went down by one from 2022–2023.

¹ The USDA geographic preference definition of minimally processed includes products that “retain their inherent character” and have not been cooked, heated, canned, or do not contain any additives or fillers. Geographic Preference Option for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs, 60 Fed. Reg. 22603-22608 (April 22, 2011). <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-042211>

- Across eligible food product types, grantees purchased an average of eight foods. The maximum number of products purchased by one grantee was 43 identifiable products, but 12% of grantees purchased just one product (typically apples), and another 12% purchased two products (27 and 28 grantees, respectively).
- Of all the grantees who reported purchases (229), 99% purchased fruits and 86% purchased vegetables.
- In dollars, fruits made up the majority (87%) of 10 Cents a Meal purchases, and over a tenth (13%) of purchases were on vegetables, similar to the previous year.
- Dry beans still represent significant potential for increased spending by grantees, in part because Michigan is a leading national producer. Fewer than 1% of 10 Cents a Meal purchases (in dollars) were for dry beans by 5% of all grantees (11 grantees).
- **The top 10 foods purchased (in rank order of total dollars spent) were apples, lettuce, tomatoes, blueberries, carrots, cucumbers, salad greens, peppers (sweet and hot), cherries, and corn.** In comparison to last year's top 10 foods, peppers and corn were added to the list this year, both lettuce and tomatoes moved up in their rankings, and peaches and pears fell off the top ten list.
- Foods that were approved but unidentifiable by product type for analysis comprised over \$56,000.

This was the third year that grantees reported purchasing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes.²

Three grantees—one childcare center and two public school districts—purchased CSA produce boxes to supply their food programs. These purchases accounted for just over 1% of total reported spending. The products in a CSA box vary seasonally, and they may include a combination of fruits, vegetables, and/or dry beans. Grantees were not required to report the specific foods sold in each CSA box, so the full extent of products is unknown. The product contents that were shared by FPMs demonstrate the diversity of products typically included in CSA boxes. These products included apples, asparagus, blueberries, carrots, bell peppers, celery, cherries, corn, cucumbers, green beans, garlic, radishes, pears, peppers (specifically green peppers and jalapeños), strawberries, summer squash, tomatoes, and watermelon.

Through participating in 10 Cents a Meal, grantees offer children familiar Michigan-grown foods but also introduce them to new local flavors.³

- Grantees who reported purchases (229) bought about 60 types of Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans through 10 Cents a Meal. See Table 1 for the full list of allowable product types purchased by grantees in 2023–2024 (excluding generally unidentifiable and ineligible products from self-reported data).
- Some of the most common Michigan-grown foods served by FPMs included apples (222 grantees), cucumbers (149 grantees), lettuce (106 grantees), peppers (101 grantees), and tomatoes (75 grantees).

2 A Community Support Agriculture produce box is a local food purchasing option in which customers pay a farm or group of farms, often up front, to access a share of their produce throughout the season. A variety of foods are typically included in CSA boxes, which can vary by farm and by the season. Some early care and education (ECE) centers participating in 10 Cents a Meal have begun purchasing CSAs for their food programs. See more Key Terms and Definitions in the [2023–2024 10 Cents a Meal Appendices](#).

3 Refer to [Why 10 Cents a Meal Matters: A Framework](#), which was developed with program stakeholders, for more information about program goals.

- Grantees spent the most by far on apples (nearly 83% of total purchases in dollars), followed by lettuce (2% of total purchases in dollars) and tomatoes (2% of total purchases in dollars).
- Some FPMs served Michigan-grown foods that may be uncommon in food programs in school and childcare settings, such as groundcherries, kiwi berries, pawpaws, saskatoon berries, leeks, parsnips, and Jerusalem artichokes (also known as sunchokes).

Table 1. Michigan-Grown Fruits, Vegetables, and Dry Beans and the Range of Grantees That Purchased Them in 2023–2024 (in rank order)

Range of Grantees that Purchased	Purchased by 40 or More Grantees	Purchased by 20–39 Grantees	Purchased by 10–19 Grantees	Purchased by Fewer than 10 Grantees
Product Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Apples — Cucumbers — Lettuce — Peppers (sweet and hot) — Tomatoes — Blueberries — Potatoes — Peaches — Asparagus — Cherries — Carrots — Corn — Summer Squash — Winter Squash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Plums — Strawberries — Cauliflower — Pears — Onions (mature and green) — Salad Greens/Mix — Green Beans — Cabbage — Melons — Watermelon — Radishes — Herbs — Shoots/Sprouts/Microgreens — Grapes — Nectarines — Celery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Kale — Broccoli — Peas — Spinach — Beets — Brussels Sprouts — Sweet Potatoes — Cranberries — Greens, Cooking — Dry Beans — Mushrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Garlic — Kohlrabi — Rhubarb — Raspberries — Leeks — Parsnips — Root Vegetables — Kiwi Berries — Eggplant — Romanesco — Saskatoon Berries — Rutabaga — Turnips — Pawpaw — Jerusalem Artichokes — Apricots — Chestnuts — Groundcherries

n=229

Michigan-Grown Fruits, Vegetables, and Dry Beans New to Food Programs in 2023–2024

In the final evaluation survey (August), the majority of responding grantees (81%, 189 out of 234) reported that 10 Cents a Meal grants allowed them to try new Michigan-grown foods that they otherwise would not have tried. This was an increase from 77% in 2022–2023.

Additionally, in all surveys during the year (January, May, and August), FPMs were asked if they served any new Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, or dry beans for the first time in their program

since the start of the year or the last survey.⁴ If they indicated “yes” to this optional question, they were asked to list up to 12 Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and/or dry beans they had tried. Throughout the year, 158 FPMs made 691 total reports of trying a Michigan-grown fruit, vegetable, or dry bean for the first time.

- FPMs reported serving an average of four new Michigan-grown foods throughout the year, an increase of one food product from the previous year.
- Together, grantees reported trying for the first time 37 types of vegetables and 17 types of fruits, when mixes and unknown types were excluded.⁵
- The top new Michigan-grown foods reported by FPMs (in rank order of the number of written responses) were apples (10% of reports), asparagus (5%), blueberries (4%), and radishes (4%). Carrots, cherries, cucumbers, dry beans, peaches, plums, potatoes, summer squash, and watermelon each had 3% of total reports of new foods used.
- FPMs made more reports of purchasing and serving Michigan-grown fruits (411 reports) than Michigan-grown vegetables (262 reports) and dry beans (18 reports).

Michigan-Grown Fruits, Vegetables, and Dry Beans of Interest in the Future

In all three evaluation surveys during the program year (January, May, and August), FPMs were asked if there were any Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, or dry beans that they wanted to use but were unable to find or buy for their food program. If FPMs responded “yes,” they were asked to list up to 12 Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and/or dry beans they wanted to use in their food program, including the product form.

Throughout the year, 100 FPMs confirmed that there were Michigan-grown products they would like to serve but were unable to find or buy.⁶ These grantees made 421 total reports of a Michigan-grown fruit, vegetable, or dry beans that they wanted to try.⁷ Duplicate responses by one grantee across the three surveys were removed before analysis, as were foods that are not grown in Michigan, such as passion fruit and avocados, and ineligible products such as linguini.

- On average, the grantees who responded to this question reported four foods of interest during the program year.
- The FPMs reported wanting to find and buy 16 different types of Michigan-grown fruits (196 reports) and 28 different types of vegetables (193 reports).
- Some desired foods reported by FPMs that may not typically be offered in food programs that serve children included edamame, both red and white carrots, purple potatoes, plumcots, and hardy kiwifruit.
- The top 10 foods FPMs reported wanting to try (in rank order of the number of responses) included strawberries, blueberries, cherries, peaches, lettuce, dry beans, asparagus, tomatoes, cucumbers, and pears. This list differed somewhat from the previous year; in 2022–2023, the top 10 foods of interest were peaches, tomatoes, cherries, asparagus, corn, green beans, blueberries, melons, strawberries, and celery.

4 Refer to [2023–2024 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report Appendix A: Technical Notes](#) to see the survey months and response rates for each.

5 Although not included in our findings, grantees purchased various types of unspecified fruits and vegetables, including mixes, blends, and medleys.

6 Refer to [2023–2024 10 Cents a Meal Evaluation Report Appendix A: Technical Notes](#) to see the survey months and response rates for each.

7 Although not included in our findings here, grantees reported interest in various types of unspecified fruits and vegetables mixes, blends, and medleys.

See the chart below for more details about Michigan-grown products of interest to FPMs, including varieties and forms when they were named.

Table 2. Top 10 Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans that FPMs wanted to use but were unable to find or buy

Product type	Number of Reports (of 421 total)	Varieties and/or Forms Mentioned (if any)
Strawberries	29	fresh (5); frozen (4)
Blueberries	28	fresh (5), frozen (3); bulk direct ship (1)
Cherries	26	fresh (5), frozen (2), dried (1); pitted, fresh or frozen (1); individually wrapped (1)
Peaches	24	fresh (2), frozen (1)
Lettuce	21	Iceberg (1), Romaine (1), spring (1), assorted (1); shredded (1), washed (1)
Dry Beans	20	pinto (2), black (1); organic (1)
Asparagus	19	fresh (2), frozen (2)
Tomatoes (cherry, grape, and slicing)	16	cherry (1)
Cucumbers	15	seedless (1); sliced (1)
Pears	15	fresh (2)

n=100

Evaluation of 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan’s Kids and Farms is led by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS). The work presented here is part of the [10 Cents a Meal 2023–2024 Evaluation Results: Doubling Investment and Growing Impact](#) by Colleen Matts, May Tsupros, Eva Nyerges, and Megan McManus, and was generously funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and 10 Cents administrative funds for partner organizations.

To learn more, visit tencentsmichigan.org, foodsystems.msu.edu, 10-cents-a-meal.msu.edu, and mifarmtoschool.msu.edu.