

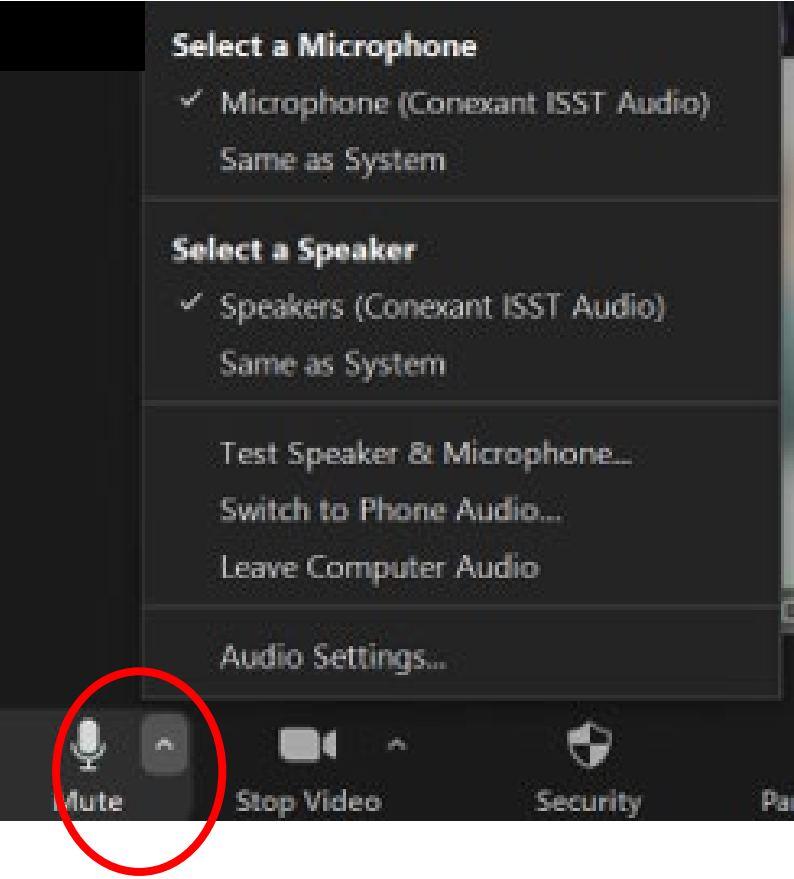


Welcome to **Track It!** How to Make Your Farm to School Efforts Count

We will begin shortly.

You can change your audio settings by clicking the up arrow next to the mute button.

This webinar will be recorded. Please send a message in the chat to the host if you need assistance.



Housekeeping

This webinar recording will be available on the USDA Farm to School website

A PDF of the slides will also be made available on our website

[Seeding Success - Farm to School Grantee Webinar Series](#)

We will provide time at the end of the presentation for questions via the chat.



Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

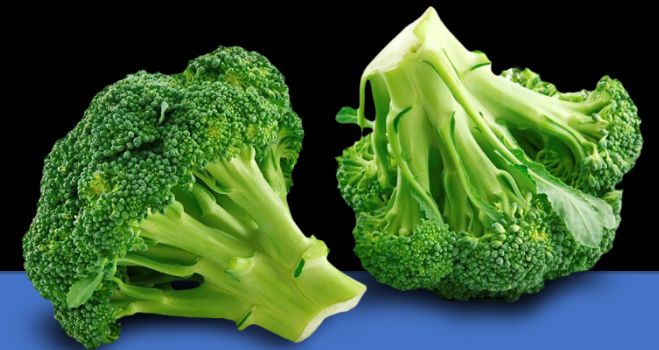
Seeding Success Webinar Series Schedule

May 5th | Let It Grow: Sowing Knowledge In Edible Gardens

May 12th | Track It! How to Make Your Farm to School Efforts Count

May 19th | Purchasing Outside the Box: Local Procurement Beyond the Apple

May 26th | Building A Culture of Farm to School





Track It! How to Make Your Farm to School Efforts Count

Sybelle VanAntwerp, Farm to School Specialist
USDA FNS Northeast Region



USDA Farm to School Grant Program

Welcome!

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
(VAAFMM)

VERMONT FARM TO SCHOOL

USDA LOCAL TRACKING PROJECT | MAY 12, 2022



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Presenters:

Trevor Lowell, Farm to Institution Program Manager, VAAFM

Helen Rortvedt, Farm to School & Local Food Access Director, NOFA-VT

Holly Fowler, Co-founder, Northbound Ventures Consulting, LLC



Agenda

- Context for VT landscape
 - How we feed Vermont kids
 - VT Farm to School census
 - VT Local Definition and incentive program
- Grant Strategies and Activities
 - Objectives and key strategies
 - Who's involved
 - Initial survey results
- Where we are now
 - Toolkit development
 - First year results of the incentive program
 - Equity – how is going to benefit different schools
 - Where else we see interest from
- Questions (10 min)



Local Food Tracking Grant

Context

Vermont Child Nutrition Programs Overview

- Federal child nutrition programs administered by the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE)
- School Food Authorities (SFAs) are at the Supervisory Union (SU) level
- 51 SFAs in Vermont
- 80,000+ students (50K+ participate in meals)
- School nutrition program food costs: \$15.5m
- 1 in 7 children are food insecure (pre-COVID)
- Universal free meals since March 2020 (COVID waivers; State now poised to pass bill to make USM permanent)
- 37.42% statewide F & R rate

7.3M LUNCHES SERVED YEARLY
FEEDING **52%** OF VERMONT STUDENTS
AT **250** PUBLIC SCHOOLS

4.1M BREAKFASTS SERVED YEARLY
FEEDING **27%** OF VERMONT STUDENTS

\$50.3M WAS SPENT BY VERMONT
SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN 2018 *

School lunches cost **\$3.81** to provide,
and students are charged **\$2.63**.

School breakfasts cost **\$2.72** to provide,
and students are charged **\$2.34****

Vermont Farm to School

Census Responses for Vermont

Total number of responding
School Food Authorities (SFAs)

44

Total number of schools in
responding SFAs

210













Total number of students in
responding SFAs

57,756

Farm to School Participation

88.6% (39)

of SFAs participating in SY2018-2019

		Percent of F2S SFAs in Program	Total F2S SFAs			Percent of F2S SFAs	Total F2S SFAs
Use local foods in NSLP ⓘ		76.9%	30	Serve local fruit at least weekly		74.4%	29
Use local foods in SBP ⓘ		77.1%	27	Serve local vegetables at least weekly		64.1%	25
Use local foods in the FFVP ⓘ		82.1%	23	Serve local milk at least weekly		48.7%	19
Use local foods in CACFP ⓘ		85%	17	Serve other local dairy at least weekly		61.5%	24
Use local foods in CACFP At-Risk ⓘ		86.4%	19	Serve local protein at least weekly		28.2%	11
Use local foods in SFSP/SSO ⓘ		80%	20	Serve local grains at least weekly		33.3%	13

Vermont Local Food Definition

DETERMINING "LOCAL" PRODUCTS FOR LOCAL FOODS INCENTIVE PROGRAM

In 2020, Act 129 changed the definition of "local" to better define Vermont foods. In order to qualify as a local product under the Agency of Education's Local Foods Incentive program, the product must meet one of the following definitions for local.

1: Raw Agricultural Product

Food in its raw or natural state, including milk, maple sap or syrup, honey, meat, eggs, apple cider, fruits or vegetables are local if it is:

- Exclusively grown or tapped in Vermont
- Animal products (aside from milk)* from an animal that was raised and lived in Vermont for much of its life
- Honey produced by Vermont colonies

*Fluid milk is currently excluded from the Local Foods Incentive program

2: Processed Food

Processed foods, products that have been canned, cooked, baked, blended etc., are considered local if the following two things are true:

- Majority of ingredients (50% of ingredients by volume, excluding water) are raw agricultural products that are "local" and
- The product was either processed in Vermont OR the food manufacturer is headquartered in Vermont

3: Unique Food Product

Unique food products are made from ingredients not regularly produced or available in sufficient quantities in Vermont. These are considered local if two or more of the following things are true:

- The majority of ingredients (50% of ingredients by volume, excluding water) are raw agricultural products that are local
- Substantial transformation of the ingredients in the product occurred in Vermont
- Headquarters of the company that manufacture the product is in Vermont

Local Food Examples

Raw Agricultural Product:

- Meat or eggs from an animal raised and harvested in Vermont
- Carrots grown in Vermont




Processed Food:

- Butter that is made from majority of local milk and was either processed in Vermont or the manufacturer is headquartered in Vermont
- Salsa processed in Vermont, or sold by a company headquartered in Vermont, where half of the raw ingredients (excluding water) are "local"

Unique Food Product:

- Muffins processed in Vermont and sold by a company headquartered in Vermont, where the main ingredients can't be sourced locally because there isn't a sufficient local supply, i.e. flour
- Guacamole processed in Vermont and sold by a company headquartered in Vermont but made from imported avocados because local avocados aren't commercially available

This informational sheet is intended to broadly introduce "local" requirements. Businesses are responsible for asserting their products meet the "local food" definition and should review specific legal requirements to ensure related compliance. Reach out to Julia Scheier with questions: Julia.Scheier@vermont.gov; 802-522-7042.



- Three categories:
 - raw agricultural product
 - processed food
 - unique food
- Exceptions for the statewide incentive:
 - foods purchased or grown, raised, or produced by the supervisory union that were used to provide catering services for which the supervisory union received compensation; and
 - fluid milk, which already comprises approximately 15% of school food costs on average and is required to be served.
- Not intended as either an enforcement or certification mechanism as part of the Local Foods Incentive

Local Foods Incentive: Requirements

Baseline Year Grant

The first year an SU/SD applies for the grant is considered the Baseline Year, in which there are four grant requirements. Achieving a specific local purchasing threshold is not required for the Baseline Year grant.

SU/SDs that elect to not participate in the Local Foods Incentive Grant during SY 21-22 will remain eligible to participate during the following school years. Whenever an SU/SD chooses to participate, they will begin in the Baseline Year.

Grant Requirements

- Develop a locally produced foods purchasing plan that describes the SU/SD's goals for purchasing locally produced foods and plan to achieve those goals.
- Designate an individual as the Food Coordinator for locally produced foods who will be responsible for implementing the locally produced foods purchasing plan.
- Develop a process for tracking local foods. (Select from two AOE pre-approved tracking methods or get approval of an alternative tracking method by AOE.)
- Provide an estimate of the cost of all locally produced foods used in the SU/SD's school lunch, breakfast, and summer meal programs during the previous school year.

Subsequent Year Grants

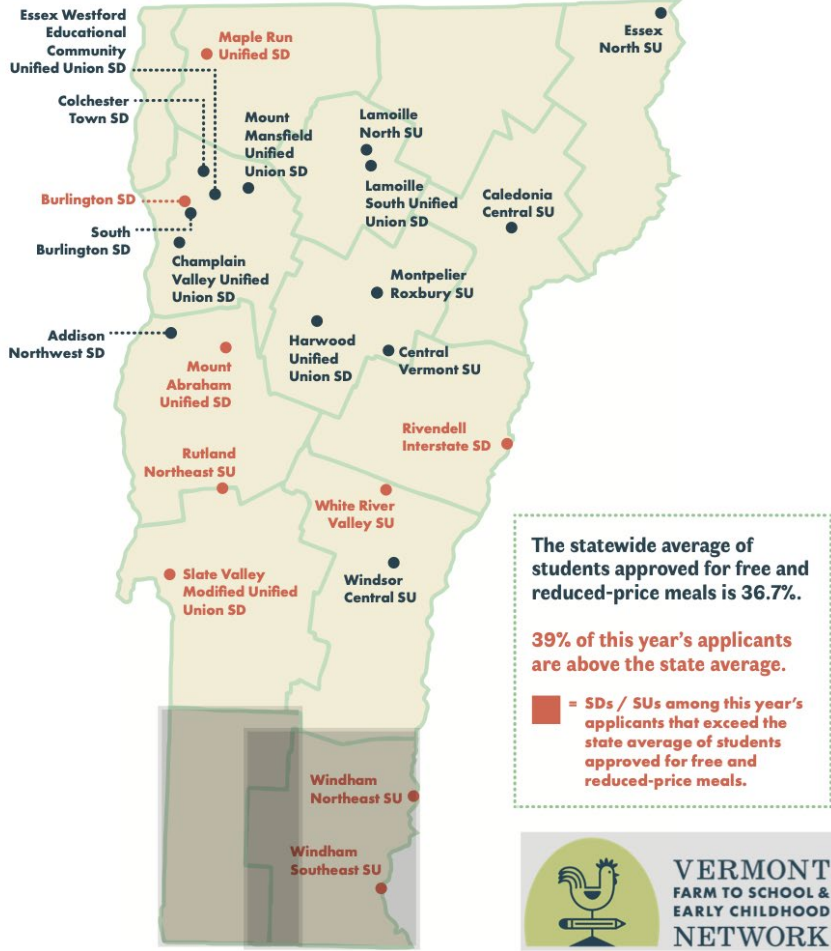
After the Baseline Year, an SU/SD may apply annually through the grant program for continued funding, contingent on continued legislative appropriation for the grant program.

SU/SDs will be required to achieve a locally produced foods percentage of at least 15% in order to receive a grant award. The locally produced foods percentage is calculated by taking the total cost of foods qualifying as local and dividing that by your total food costs.

Grant Requirements

- Tracking of the SU/SD's food purchases using the tracking method reported in the SU/SD's Baseline Year Grant will be required.
- It is important to note that schools applying for the Baseline Year grant in SY 21-22 will need to have tracked their local purchases throughout SY 21-22 if they intend to apply for a subsequent grant in SY 22-23.
- Regardless of the tracking method used, SU/SDs should keep all locally produced food receipts on file in the case of an audit. All receipts will not need to be scanned or uploaded online, but they should be easily retrievable (i.e. stored in a filing cabinet organized by date).
- Calculate the Locally Produced Foods Percentage by dividing the SU/SD's total local foods expenses by the total food budget.

2022 Vermont Local Foods Incentive School District (SD) / Supervisory Union (SU) Applicants



Learn more at vermontfarmtoschool.org • Questions? Contact Helen Rortvedt at helen@nofavt.org.

Local Food Tracking Grant

Progress and Insights

Objective and Guidance

Objective

Research, analyze and help implement key strategies designed to improve the quality and quantity of local food procurement data gathered and/or reported by Vermont schools and early childhood education (ECE) centers on behalf of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Market.

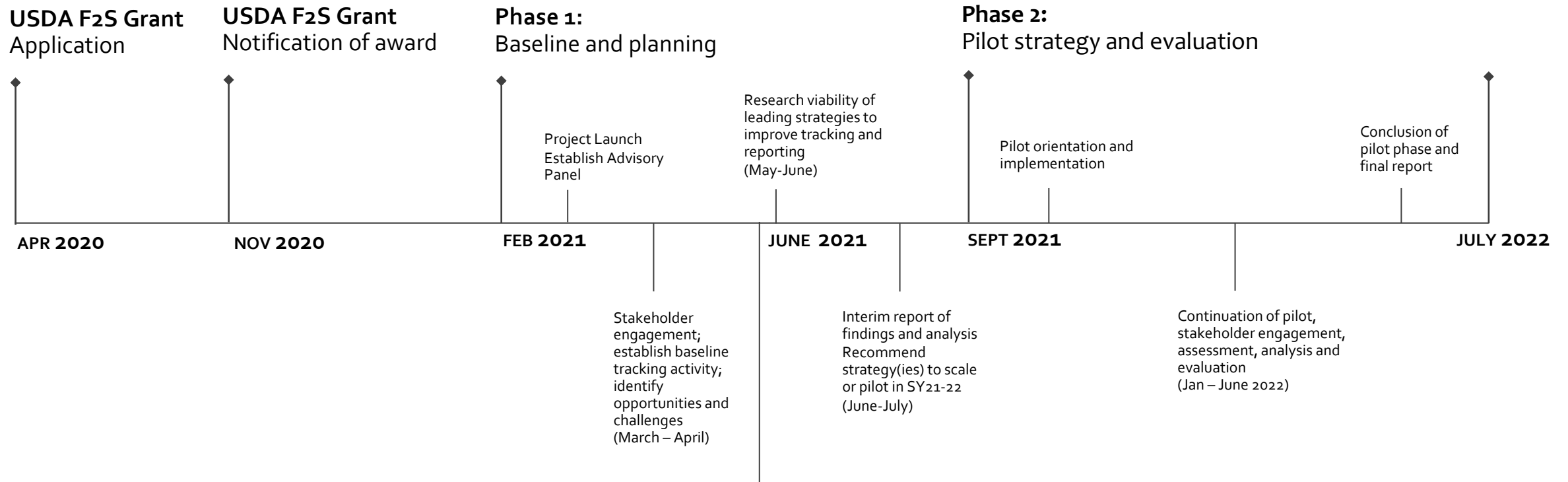
Guidance

Tools should improve **efficiency, accuracy and equity** in tracking and reporting

Key Strategies

- **Food Service Management Contracts**
 - Update contract template to include tracking requirements
- **Group Purchasing Organization Bid**
 - Include language requiring bidders to address tracking
- **Statewide License for Centralized Menu/Meal Planning Software**
- **Tracking Tool**
- **Collecting Data Directly from Food Hubs and Distributors**

Vermont Local Food Tracking Grant Timeline



★ Act 67 creates a Local Food Purchasing Incentive for Vermont schools and provides funding of \$500,000 for a pilot year of implementation in school year (SY) 2021-22

Who's Involved

Project Lead

- Trevor Lowell, Farm to Institution Program Manager, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Consultant Team

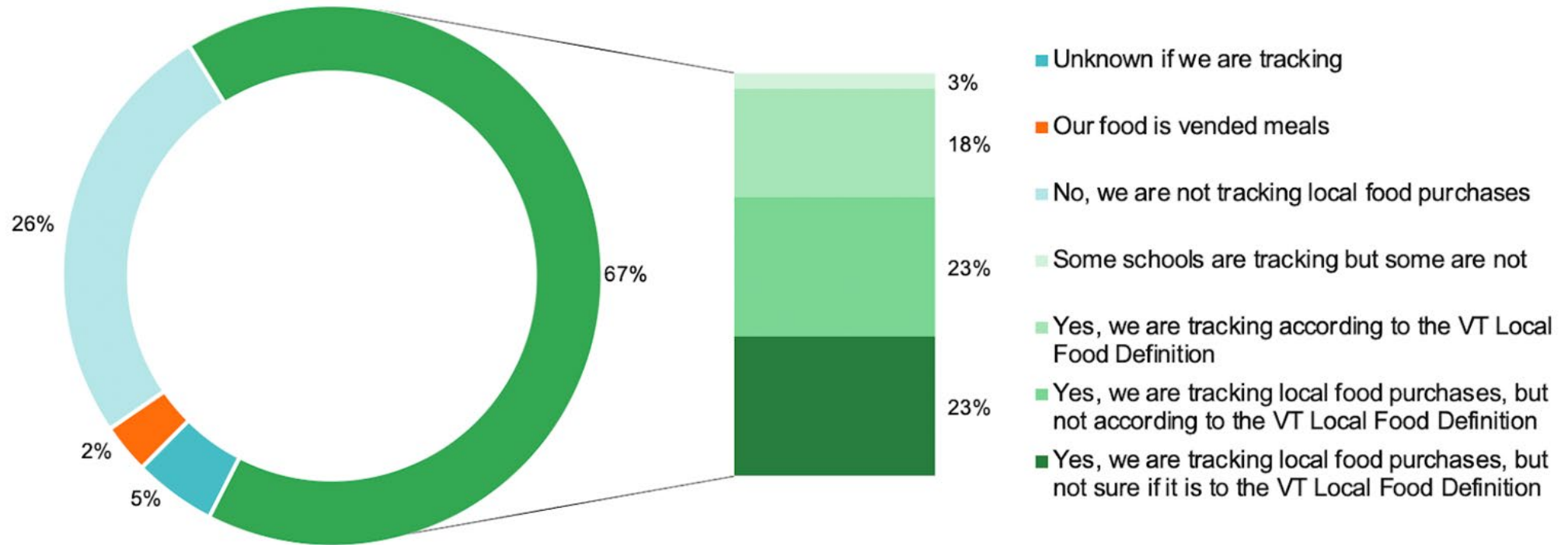
- Holly Fowler, Co-founder & CEO, Northbound Ventures Consulting
- Juli Stelmaszyk, Consultant, Northbound Ventures Consulting
- Peter Allison, Executive Director, Farm to Institution New England (FINE)
- Helen Rortvedt, Farm to School and Local Food Access Programs Director, NOFA-VT
- Hannah Leighton, Director of Research & Evaluation, Farm to Institution New England (FINE)

Advisory Panel

- Doug Davis, Director of Food Service, Burlington School Food Project
- Becca Perrin, Food Hub Accounts Manager, Green Mountain Farm-to-School
- Tom Brewton, Institutional Sales Associate, Food Connects
- Conor Floyd, Grants Manager, Agency of Education
- Harley Sterling, School Nutrition Director, Windham Northeast Supervisory Union Farm to School Cafe
- Mark Curran, Founder, Vermont Family Farms
- Nina Hansen, Vice President of Operations, Abbey Group
- Betsy Rosenbluth, VT-FEED Project Director, Shelburne Farms
- Chris Faro, Vice President of Business Development, FreshPicks Cafe

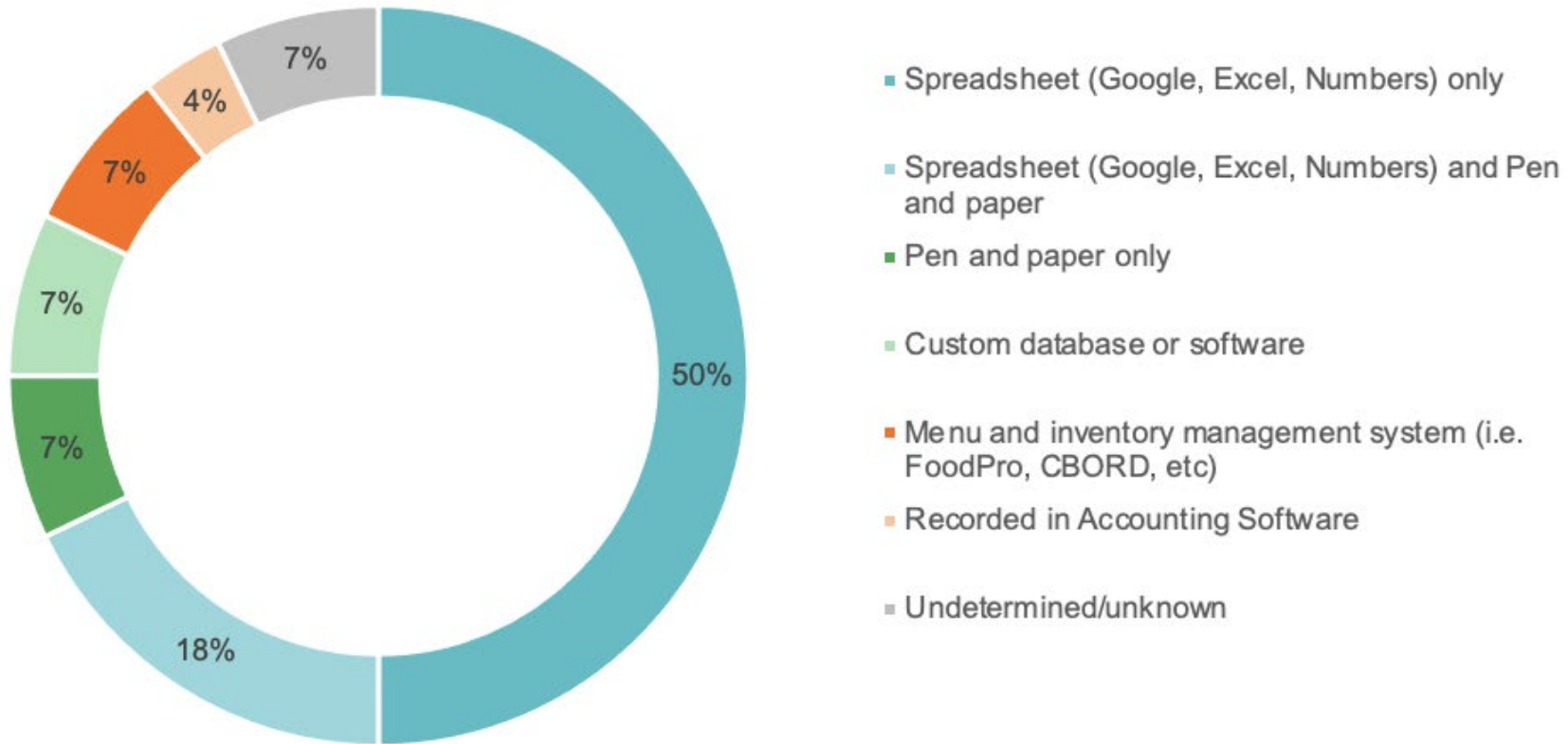
Tracking Baseline

Tracking of Local Food Spend by Definition
(n=39)



Tracking Method

What tools are used to track local food purchases?
(n=28)

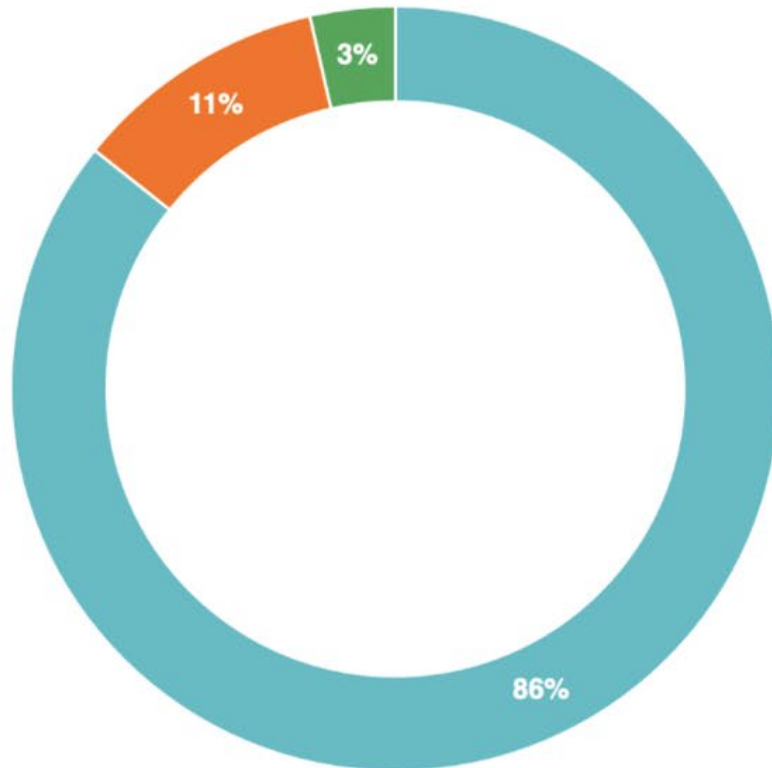


Tracking Capacity

- SUs spend between 1 and 200 hours annually tracking (avg=39 hours , median = 40 hours)

Who is primarily responsible for tracking local food purchases?

■ Food service director/manager ■ Foodservice contractor for district ■ Vendor



The 67% (28 respondents) currently tracking local food purchases, were asked to indicate which of the following resources would improve their ability to track local food purchases:

- More funding for staff time
- More transparent and/or available data from our vendors about products
- A standardized, easy to use template to report purchases to the state
- More information (i.e. public database) around specific products that do and don't meet the Vermont Local Food Definition Criteria
- Technical training for staff or myself to produce local purchasing reports according to the Vermont Local Food Definition

Incentive Highlights

- 23 (45%) of SFAs applied
- 3.2 million lunches (53% of total)
- \$489,838 (98%) of grant amount awarded
 - Remaining goes into the state general fund
 - Recommendation that remaining funds go to state match payment in the future
- Estimate of local foods purchase skews to less than 20%
- NO SFA reported over 30% (as opposed to up to 60% in 2019-20 data)
- Higher accuracy is tied to lower percentages.
- Tracking method: Excel based 56.5%, uniform chart of accounts 43.5%
- Some districts chose to not apply to reserve the opportunity to apply next year as a baseline

Tracking and Reporting YOY

2019-20

	0-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-60%	Total	%
This is a guess	10	5	1	3	19	28%
Moderately accurate	16	15	5	1	37	54%
Very Accurate	3	4	4	1	12	18%
Totals	29	24	10	5	68	100%
%	43%	35%	15%	7%	100%	

2020-21

	0-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-60%	Total	%
Moderately Accurate	1	3	1	0	5	22%
This is a guess	9	3	1	0	13	57%
Very Accurate	2	2	1	0	5	22%
Totals	12	8	3	0	23	100%
%	52%	35%	13%	0%	100%	

Toolkit Development and Resources

- Leading inquiry: *What products count?*
- VT FEED Website
- Grant Memo
- Local Food Tracker and Calculator
- Local Foods List (pending)
- Vendor Letter of Attestation Templates
- Technical Assistance
- AOE Program Manager

Vermont Local Foods Incentive Grant Resources

4th and 5th Year 2020-2021 applications have closed. Applications will open again in January 2022.

Vermont FEED is pleased to announce the second round of the Local Foods Incentive Grant program. This round of the grant is open to all eligible local food producers and processors. The grant is designed to support the production and distribution of local food products. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont.

ABOUT THE LOCAL FOODS INCENTIVE GRANT

The Local Foods Incentive Grant is a program that provides financial support to local food producers and processors. The grant is designed to support the production and distribution of local food products. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont.

Subsequent Year Grants

After the 2020-2021 grant cycle, producers and processors who have received a grant in the past two years are eligible to apply for a subsequent year grant. The grant is designed to support the production and distribution of local food products. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont.

Helpful Resources

The Local Foods Incentive Grant program is designed to support the production and distribution of local food products. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont. The grant is available to producers and processors who are currently producing and distributing local food products in Vermont.

Image: <https://vtfeed.org/vermont-local-foods-incentive-grant-resources>

Ongoing and Up Next

- Inventory of inquiries about tracking
- Outreach to school food vendors of processed and unique foods
- Interviews with food service directors
- Equity assessment in terms of access to local food sources
- Impact on existing out-of-state vendor partnerships
- Alignment for tiered regional incentive structure
- Evaluation of toolkit for SY2022-23

Farm to School Specialists



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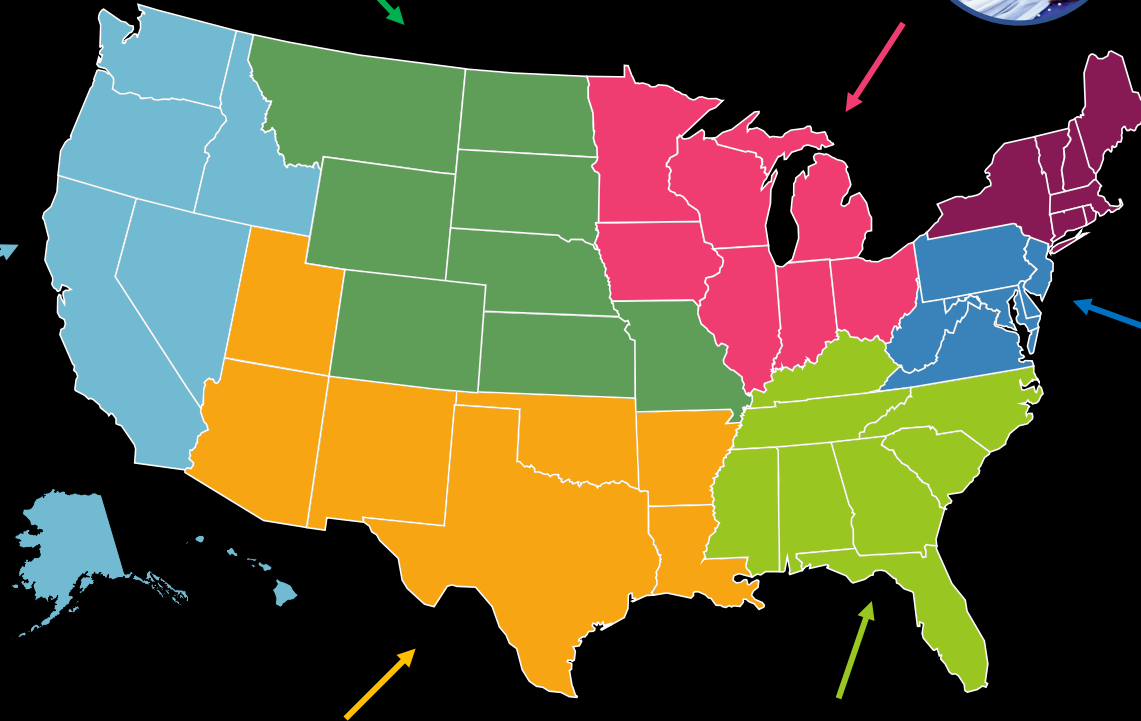
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Farm to School e-letter, The Dirt!

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The Dirt
News and Notes from FNS's Office of Community Food Systems



Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/e-letter-archive>

ICN Child Nutrition Sharing Site Resource Hub



- ✓ Access free resources from various farm to school stakeholders
- ✓ Topics: Building Your Farm to School Team, Promoting Your Farm to School Program, Resources for Producers, and more!
- ✓ Organizations can submit resources via the Farm to School Resource Submission Form

Farm to School Grantee Experience Survey

- ✓ Share your experience as a Farm to School Grantee
- ✓ If you completed the survey last year, you are welcome to complete it again this year!
- ✓ Responses are anonymous—please share your honest feedback
- ✓ Your responses will be used to improve our customer service to grantees



Local Food Tracking Grant

Questions and Discussion

Contact Information

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