Economic Feasibility of Local Procurement to Schools: A Qualitative Analysis

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Outline

I. Childhood obesity- Farm to school as a strategy for reduction
II. Wisconsin’s plan for improving the food system
III. Past farm to school evaluations
IV. Study methods
V. Results
VI. Limitations
VII. Future implications
Childhood Obesity and Farm to School

• Currently about 1/3 of children are overweight or obese

• Children eat up to 50% of their calories in school

• Farm to School is a Center for Disease Control recommended strategy increasing access to healthy food in school meals

• WI Farm to School goals are…

"...to promote children's health, strengthen children’s and communities’ knowledge and attitudes surrounding agriculture and nutrition, and strengthen local economies by expanding markets for Wisconsin producers.”
Comprehensive Farm to School

Farm to School

Nutrition Education

School Gardens
**WISCONSIN SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT LOGIC MODEL**

### Inputs
- Schools
  - Program
  - Producer
- Public
  - Policy Makers
- Policy
  - Evaluation
  - Community Economic Development

### Outputs
- Build Grassroots Base
  - Existing sites
  - NPAO coalitions
  - Other partners
- Continue Eval. of AmeriCorps Sites
- F2S Policy Agenda
- Make F2S Happen website
- State Meal Reimbursement
- Communicate to target audience

### Outcomes -- Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST 2012-2013</th>
<th>IT 2013-2015</th>
<th>LT 2016</th>
<th>LT ~ 10 yrs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TA to Schools/Resources</td>
<td>↑ Grassroots support</td>
<td>↑ Public Awareness</td>
<td>↑ FV Consumption</td>
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<tr>
<td>↑ % of school districts with F2S</td>
<td>↑ Policy Maker awareness</td>
<td>↑Access FV</td>
<td>↓ HED Foods</td>
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<tr>
<td>↑ % of WI school food service budgets spend on locally produced foods</td>
<td>↑ GPR Funding: Grants/Coord.</td>
<td>↑ # of WI farms selling to schools</td>
<td>Reduce Obesity</td>
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<td>↑ Understanding of Economic Development</td>
<td>↑ Aggregation</td>
<td>↑ Pricing</td>
<td>↑ Diversity, Production, and Markets of WI Farms</td>
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<tr>
<td>↑ Processing</td>
<td>↑ Distribution</td>
<td>↑ Sales of WI products</td>
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<td>↑ Distribution</td>
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<td>Work with existing industry</td>
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<td>↑ % of WI farms selling to schools</td>
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**F2S Policy Agenda**
- Conduct Feasibility Study
- Economic Modeling
- Communicate to target audience

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**Assessment**
Conduct feasibility study

Communicate to target audience

Outcomes - Impacts:
- Increase percentage of Wisconsin products served in school meals
- Increase understanding of economic development
Barriers to Local Procurement

• Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program conducted pre and post evaluations of 9 farm to school sites in 2010 and 2011
  • Demand for local food
  • Barriers for local procurement
    • Price
    • Contract negotiations
    • Distribution
    • Volume
  • Most of the local healthy items were served once or twice a month
Methods

- Development of research questions
- Recruitment
- Key Informant Interviews (n=15)
- Coding
  - Constant comparative analysis method
- Analysis
Results

Shared Themes

• Product aggregation
  • Increases volume available
• Matchmaking between schools and producer
• School and producer relationships
• Difficulty Balancing supply and demand
  • Aggregation alleviated this barrier
• Second wave produce

“"The biggest success of our program is the growers working together and working with the Co-op and food management company. Businesses can actually push for good things in the local food movement”

-Farm to School AmeriCorps Member
Limitations

• Lack of quantitative data

• No response from prime vendors
  • (made several attempts and utilized industry partners)

• Comprehensive farm to school programming
Future Implications

• Quantitative analysis
• Support infrastructure for aggregation, light processing and distribution of local food
• Facilitate matchmaking between school and producers
• Future research to support second wave produce
• Communication and dissemination to stakeholders
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QUESTIONS?
Supply Chain Intermediary Themes

- Product Liability
  - Especially important when purchasing local food from a prime vendor
  - High costs for liability insurance

- Food service constraints
  - School budget constraints
  - Lack of menu flexibility
Producer Themes

- **Marketing**
  - Farm to school is a good marketing strategy for producers
  - Increases in revenue due to HOM activities

- **Market Scale**
  - Farm to school small portion, but growing

- **Capacity**
  - Limited processing and growing capacity to expand

- **Diversification**
  - Diversification spread farm’s risk
Recruitment

- Sent recruitment emails bi-weekly
- Chose participants from conversations at DHS and with collaborators
- Tried to get participants from urban, rural, and with varied free and reduced meal rates
Participant profile

- Milwaukee (urban- 80% free and reduced)
- Lacrosse (urban)
- Ashland/Bayfield (rural- 80% free and reduced)
- Viroqua/ Vernon (rural)