



# **Nevada Farm to School Producer Survey Report**

July 2016

Farm To School  
*Food and Nutrition Division*

## **Objective:**

The intent of this survey was to collect baseline data from Nevada food producers to increase understanding of what products are grown or raised locally, the quantity available, and producers' level of interest in Farm to School educational activities.

## **Organizational Information:**

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) is a state agency that promotes a business climate that is fair, economically viable and encourages a sustainable environment that serves to protect food, fiber, human health and safety through effective service and education. The NDA has four divisions: Food and Nutrition, Plant Industry, Animal Industry, and Consumer Equitability. The Food and Nutrition Division (FND) combines the United States Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs, Commodity Foods Distribution Program, and the Dairy Commission. The Plant Industry Division (PID) serves the public and agriculture industry through services which include quality control inspections, Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) audits, school garden inspections and producer education and certification programs. The Animal Industry Division focuses on animal disease control, livestock identification and wildlife services. The fourth division is the Consumer Equitability Division which offers marketplace protection through the Bureau of Petroleum Technology and the Bureau of Weights and Measures. To address the needs of the community the NDA participates in stakeholder meetings with Nevada producers, institutions, distributors, and educators as well as providing educational training and outreach.

## **Farm to School Background Information:**

Across the country, an increasing number of schools and school districts have begun to source more foods locally and provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming and nutrition. This nationwide movement to enrich youth's bodies and minds while supporting local economies is referred to as Farm to School. At NDA, Ashley Jeppson, an agriculturist in the PID, and Catrina Peters, the School Nutrition Services Manager in FND, work to build the bridge between farms and schools to expand efforts in Nevada. The goals of the Farm to School program at NDA are to develop new markets for local farms adding economic benefit to the state, to offer fresh, local produce in school meal programs and to increase agricultural and nutrition education in schools. Combined efforts have resulted in providing outreach, training, technical assistance and inspection services on food safety.

Nevada is part of a larger movement across the nation with support from the National Farm to School Network (NFSN) and United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Services Farm to School Program (USDA F2S). The NFSN is an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food / agriculture education into school systems and preschools. The USDA F2S Program supports Farm to School with training, technical assistance, and grants related to efforts that bring local or regionally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and the integration of food-related education into the regular, standards-based classroom curriculum.

## **Purpose of Survey:**

Based on feedback from Nevada School Food Service Directors a need was identified for information on where producers are located, what they produce, quantity available, and seasonality. This feedback came as a result of an online survey administered by NDA in 2013 as well as one on one interviews. Nevada also received a Professional Standards Grant from USDA to bring food service staff up to speed in culinary and procurement training. Part of the grant's objectives is to educate food service staff and directors on local foods to the state. In response, the NDA developed the *Nevada Farm to School Producers Survey* (Appendix A). This survey collected data to examine local producer information, product availability, and educational programming interest from Nevada producers. The intent of the survey was to increase understanding of what products are grown or raised locally, the quantity available, and producer's level of interest in Farm to School educational activities. This data is an update to the Producers' Survey in 2015 which is used to evaluate current state-wide program involvement, reflect on changes from the initial survey, and to create a platform to track future program effectiveness. This is the second Producers' Survey, so updates and farm changes can be accounted for each year.

## **Survey Methodology and Overview:**

The survey was almost identical to the original one and circulated using SurveyMonkey. Representatives from several organizations participated in a stakeholder group to help structure the survey instrument, including: Ann Louhela with Nevada Grown; Nicole and Amber Sallaberry at Great Basin Community Food Co-Operative; and, Jennifer Ott from University Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension High Desert Farming Initiative. Edits to the original survey instrument were made by Catrina Peters and Sarah Thomas of Nevada Department of Agriculture. The email list for survey distribution was compiled from several different sources including: Nevada Farm to School, NDA Producer's Certificate, Buy Nevada, Nevada Grown, and the Great Basin Community Food Co-Operative Distributors of Regional and Organic Produce and Products (GBCFC-DROPP). The survey was also publicized through the Nevada Farm to School newsletter. As an incentive to return a completed survey, the BuyNevada program donated a one year Silver membership package. Those who completed the survey were entered in a raffle and a random winner was selected. The survey was distributed to 205 Nevada producers, with 30 completed responses. The survey was distributed January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and closed for responses February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.

## **Survey Summary:**

Several general trends emerged from the data received:

- Producers do not have a relationship with food service staff, but are interested in pursuing further discussion with food service staff.
- Producers would like to discuss forward contracting and food planning with schools.
- Producers are interested in Farm to School activities such as farm field trips, farmer in the classroom or taste testing in cafeterias.

There were also new trends and changes from the 2015 survey:

- More farmers and producers are involved with schools than what was reflected in the previous survey last year.
- Less producers and farmers participated in the 2016 survey.
- There was an increase in crops; in types of produce, months available, and quantity.

### **Future Areas of Focus:**

The intent of this survey was to collect further data from Nevada food producers, a year prior to the first survey, to increase understanding of what products are grown or raised locally, the quantity available, and producer's level of interest in Farm to School educational activities, as well as to track any changes that occurred from the first survey. With a total of 30 responses, the data has highlighted areas of focus to continue Farm to School momentum in Nevada.

First, survey responses shows that a significant challenge preventing producers selling to schools is a lack of relationship with school food service staff. This presents an opportunity for communication between these groups in order to help identify each other's requirements; including, but not limited to, conducting face-to-face consultations, technical support, and training opportunities. Other limiting factors in procuring local foods for school meals are producers' difficulty guaranteeing a specific quantity on a specific date and matching seasonality of products with schools ordering schedules. These areas need more exploration to identify methods to overcome these barriers.

Another area that could be pursued further is forward contracting with schools. This presents an opportunity for training to educate school food service staff and farmers on the nuances of forwarding contracting. In addition to forward contracting, respondents expressed interest in food planning for the upcoming growing season. This suggests that producers are willing to discuss crop production that would be beneficial for school meals. Again, this indicates the need for relationship building and increased communication between school food service staff and Nevada producers.

Farm to School educational activities were of high interest amongst respondents. To incorporate more agricultural educational activities, partnerships between groups such as FFA or Nevada Agriculture in the Classroom is an area that could provide educational opportunities for students.

The biggest changes we saw between the first and second survey was that there are more farmers and producers involved with schools than what was reported in the initial survey and there is an increase in crops and produce. More farmers are becoming more involved in Farm to School activities. There could be new ways to better connect farmers and producers to more schools than reported from the first survey. Perhaps the first survey drew more interest in Farm to School in Nevada. An increase in crops reported might allow for more producers and farmers to be involved with Farm to School activities, whether it be in the lunch line or at a class field trip. If there are more crops available, it is an area that could allow more school involvement or local purchasing for school meals.

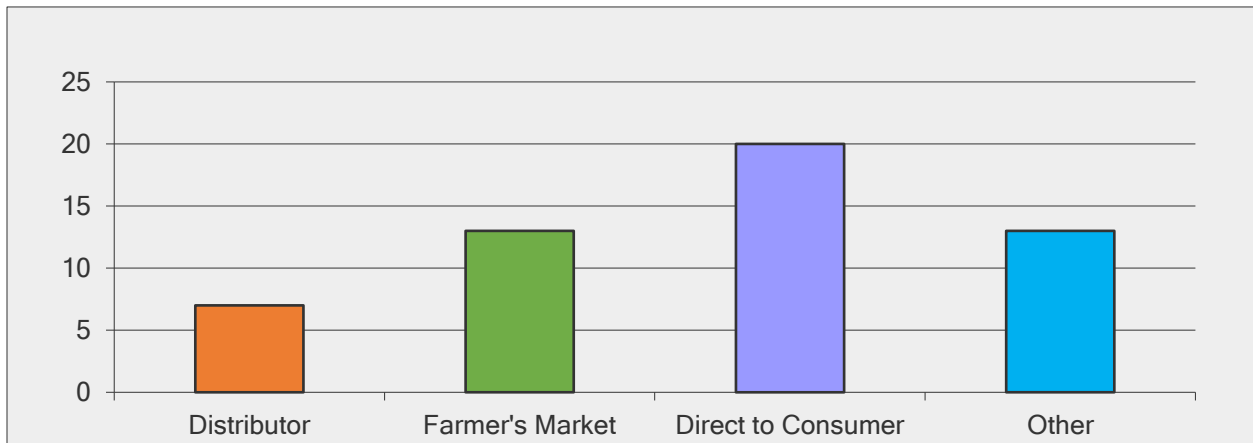
For more information on the survey, or to get involved in Farm to School activities in Nevada, please contact the Nevada Department of Agriculture at (775) 353 – 3758.

### Response Summary:

The following section shows the responses from the 11 question survey. The survey was distributed to 205 Nevada producers and 44 completed surveys were received.

1. The first question collected general contact and business information. This information is available online in an interactive map of Nevada.  
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=zqnHusniAxuM.kh-qA36MH6AU>
2. How do you sell your products? (Select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Distributor	24.1%	7
Farmer's Market	44.8%	13
Direct to Consumer	69.0%	20
Other	44.8%	13
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>29</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>1</b>



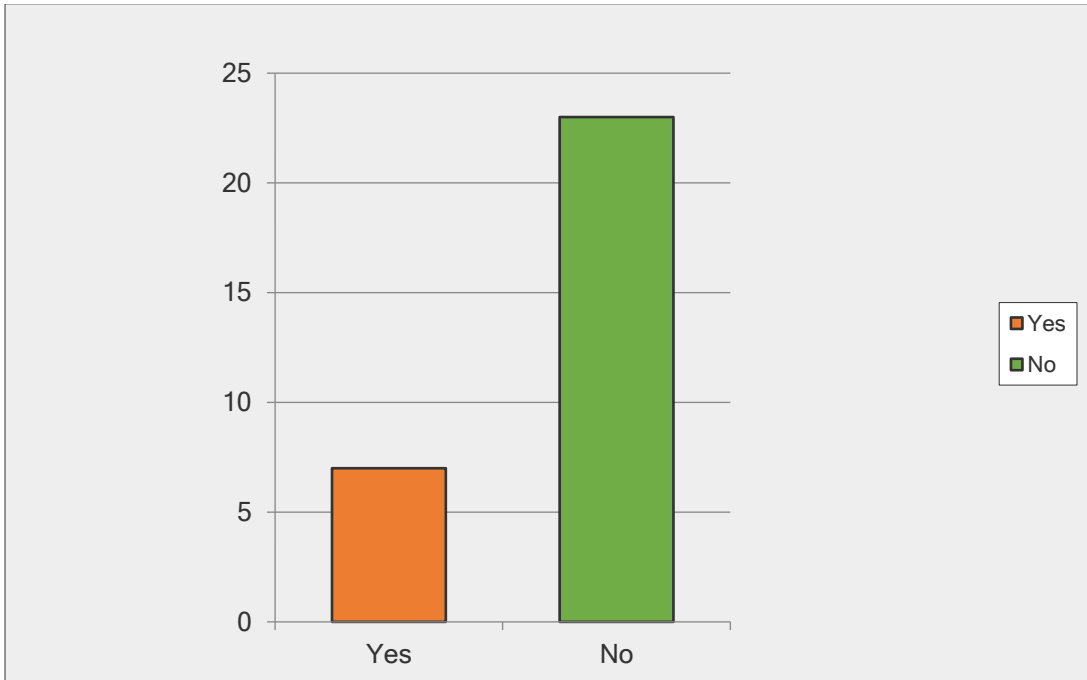
On average the majority of Nevada producers' sales are direct to consumer.

#### Other Category Responses:

- Great Basin Community Food Co-op
- Local farms
- Retail stores
- Donated
- Schools
- Restaurants
- Door to door
- Internet
- CSA

3. Have you ever sold your products to K-12 schools in the past?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	
Yes	23.3%	7	
No	76.7%	23	
	<i>answered question</i>		<b>30</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



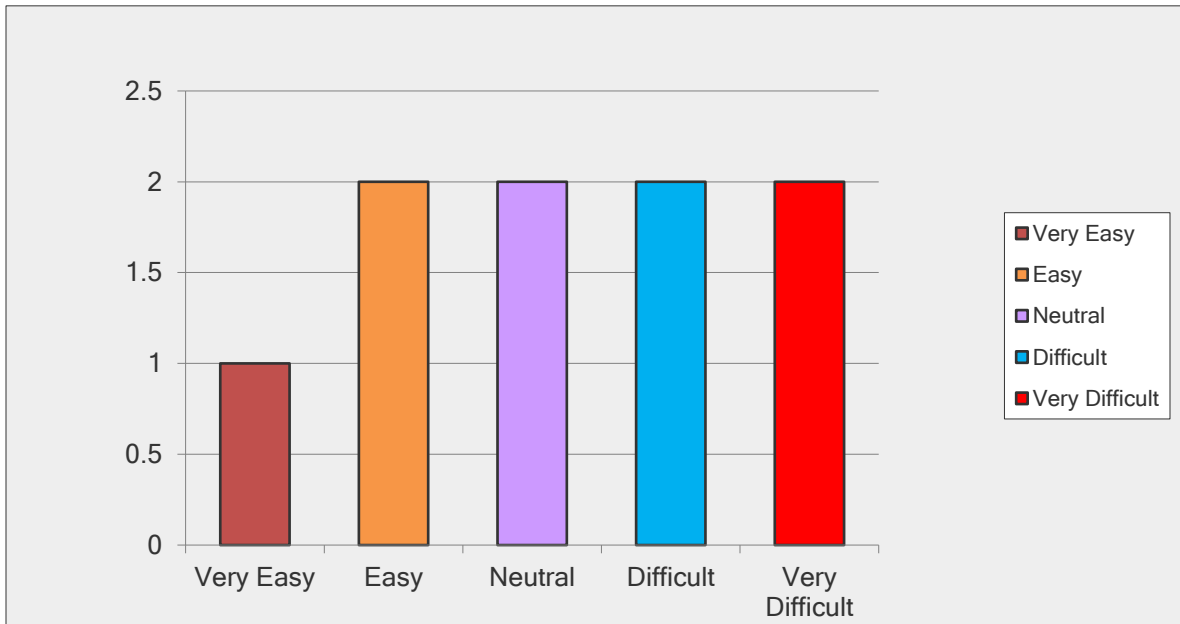
The majority of respondents have never sold to K-12 schools, which may indicate an opportunity to increase the number of Nevada's producers selling to schools.

4. If you selected YES, how easy or difficult was your experience selling products to schools:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Easy	11.1%	1
Easy	22.2%	2
Neutral	22.2%	2
Difficult	22.2%	2
Very Difficult	22.2%	2

*answered question*  
*skipped question*

9  
21



There is variation in responses from the small sample of producers who have sold to schools, but it appears there is a need to make the process easier from the majority of respondents.

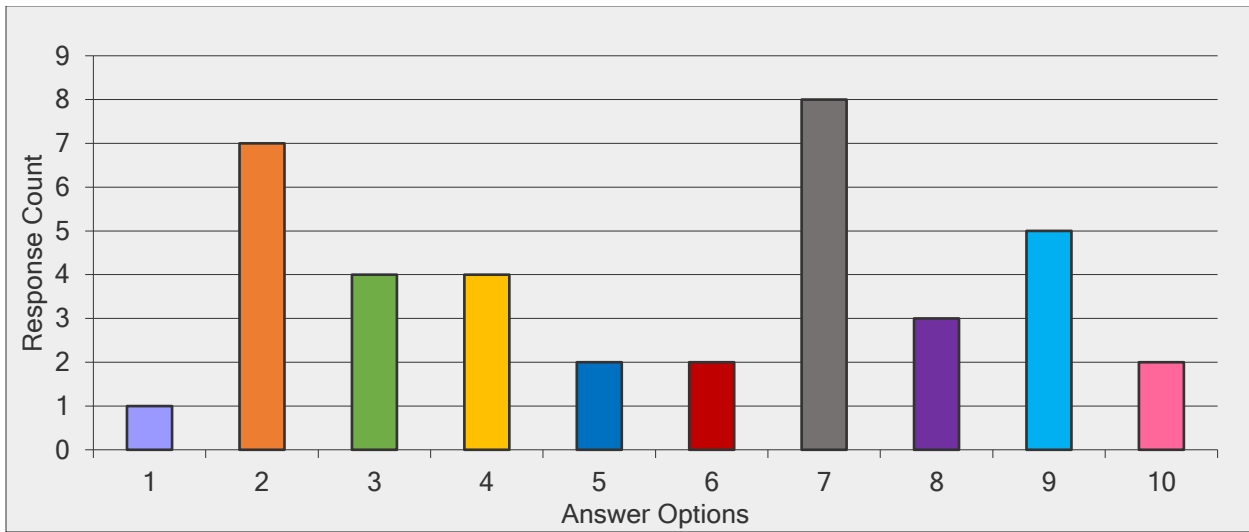
Comments by respondents:

- Contracts are made and kitchen staff are trained to serve children crap because it is easy and cheap
- We donate some produce to the CHS Culinary Program
- Since we are located at a school, it is very easy to sell produce in our school garden.
- It has been several years, but the Principal was on-board and directed pick up at the farm, or we would deliver locally only to Silver -Stage Elementary. Also had on-farm educational tours for children. The program then was through a fresh vegetable grant which the school had acquired. We did programs at the school (assemblies) and had taste sessions .
- It looks very difficult, but I've not personally attempted it because I thought the production level must be able to provide product sufficient to ALL of WCSD.
- There was no easy way to figure out how to go from absolutely nothing to growing food to sell to kids directly. The license process was a bit nebulous and no one could give me straight forward information. It was also expensive to get the appropriate licenses. I paid about \$500 so that I could sell food to kids. It seems a little crazy.
- Just in the trial/experimental phase

5. If you selected NO, what specific challenges prevented you from selling to schools? (Select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1- The schools I approached in past were not interested	5.9%	1
2- We have difficulty guaranteeing a specific quantity on a specific date	41.2%	7
3- Seasonality of my products doesn't fit with school ordering schedules	23.5%	4
4- Schools haven't been willing to pay the price I need	23.5%	4
5- Food safety regulations	11.8%	2
6- Delivering logistics/transportation	11.8%	2
7- I don't have a relationship with food service staff	47.1%	8
8- Insurance liability	17.6%	3
9- Storage Space	29.4%	5
10- School's current contract limits who it can purchase from	11.8%	2

*answered question* **17**  
*skipped question* **13**



There are several challenges that prevent farmers from selling to schools, but the most common challenge is producers do not have a relationship with food service staff. This information presents an opportunity to provide information on how to connect producers with school food service staff that make purchasing decisions.

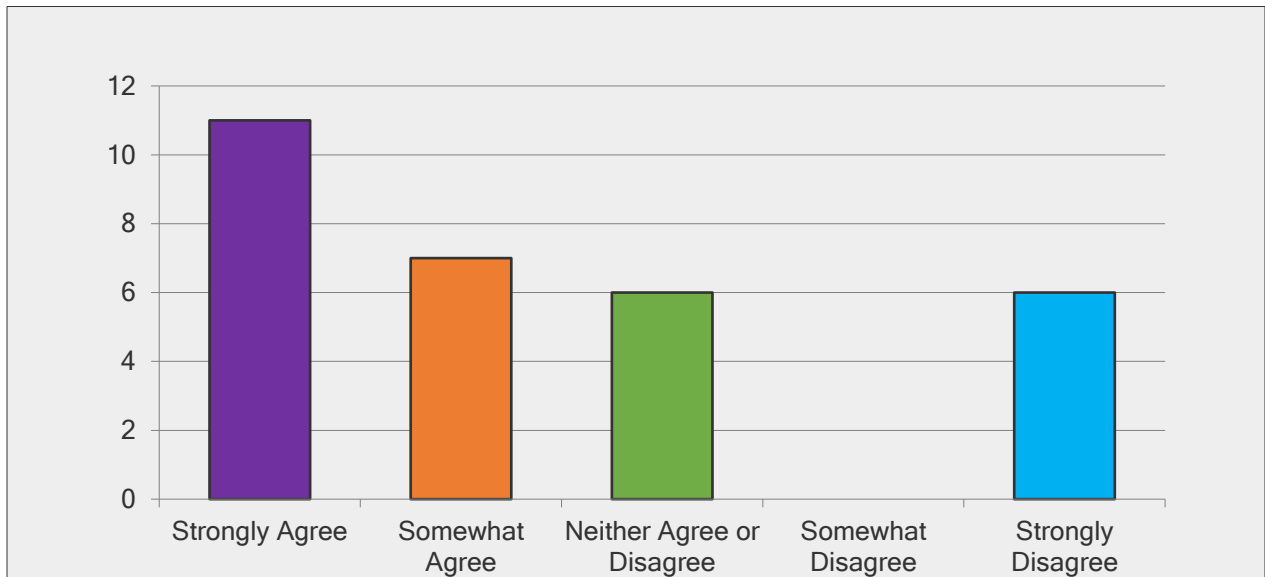
Comments by respondents:

- I haven't approached any schools for business
- We do not grow enough to sell to other schools. We sell to our community.
- We were initially met with many "no's" but with persistence and a positive change in the food service lead, we have been able to make produce from the school garden's a reality.
- We only use for the business
- Later efforts went through Lyon County, the whole process was much more difficult, did not want to pay the price we needed and they wanted larger quantities, which we could not provide.
- I would love to sell to our local schools I just need to look into the process and requirements.
- Our honey production is done on a small scale. We sell out yearly, so wouldn't have enough.
- The schools in this area seem to be part of the good ole boy network



6. I would like to discuss forward contracting with institutions (public and private organizations such as schools, universities, hospitals, and places with centralized food service operations). A forward contract is an agreement between a buyer and seller to purchase/sell an asset at a set price at a future point in time.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	
Strongly Agree	36.7%	11	
Somewhat Agree	22.5%	7	
Neither Agree or Disagree	32.5%	6	
Somewhat Disagree	2.5%	0	
Strongly Disagree	7.5%	6	
	<i>answered question</i>		<b>30</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



The majority of respondents were interested in discussing forward contracting with schools which presents an additional training opportunity.

Comments by respondents:

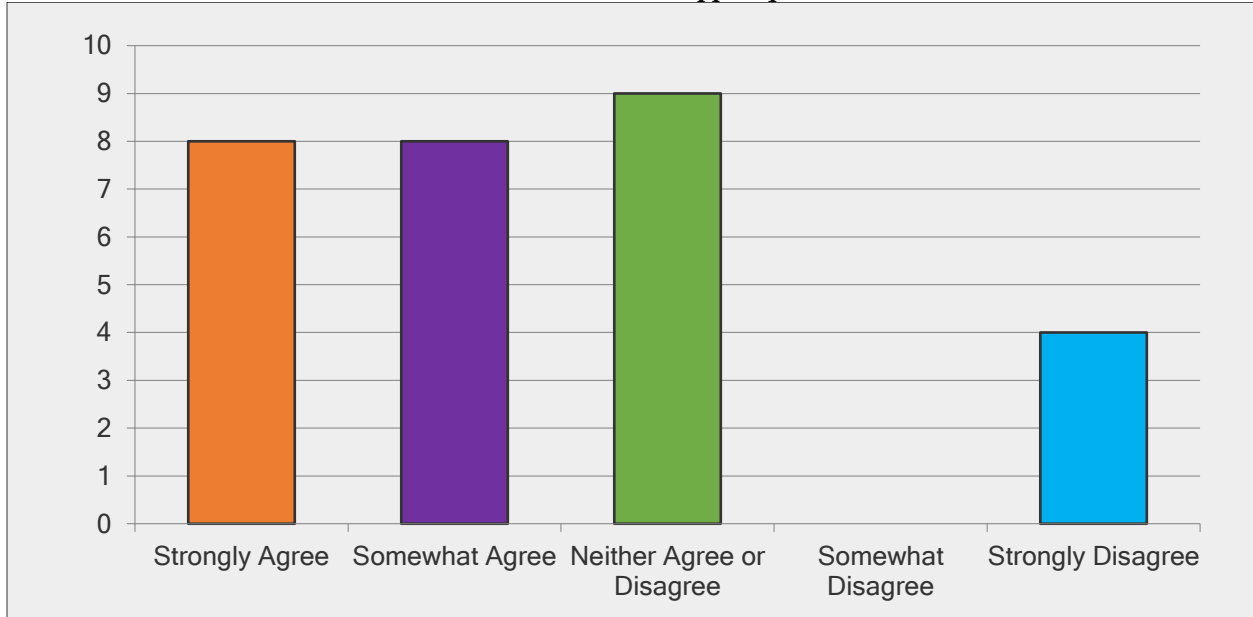
- Hospital would be a good fit.
- Dairy costs moves up and down monthly
- Thank you, I am not interested in this concept.
- I am a school!

7. I would like to meet with schools to discuss food planning for the upcoming growing season.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	27.6%	8
Somewhat Agree	27.6%	8
Neither Agree or Disagree	31.0%	9
Somewhat Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	13.8%	4
Comment		5

*answered question*  
*skipped question*

**29**  
**1**



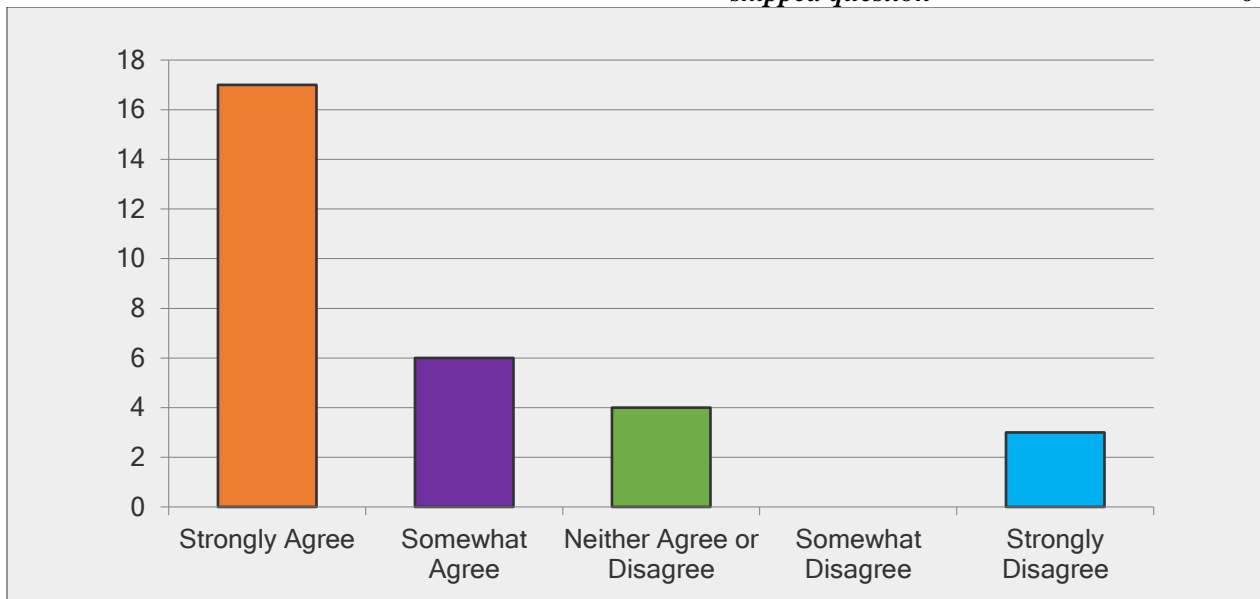
The majority of farmers are interested in discussing food planning for the upcoming season with schools.

Comments by respondents:

- I don't see schools happening. The growing season and the school season don't coincide.
- Upcoming growing season is largely planned, food planning should start in Nov of prior year
- NA
- I would like our school representative to do this.
- I am a school!

8. I would like to have visitors at my operation for school field trips, teacher workshops, or student workers/interns.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	56.7%	17
Somewhat Agree	20.0%	6
Neither Agree or Disagree	13.3%	4
Somewhat Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	10.0%	3
Comments		7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>30</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>



The majority of farmers are interested in Farm to School activities such as field trips, teacher workshops or workers/interns.

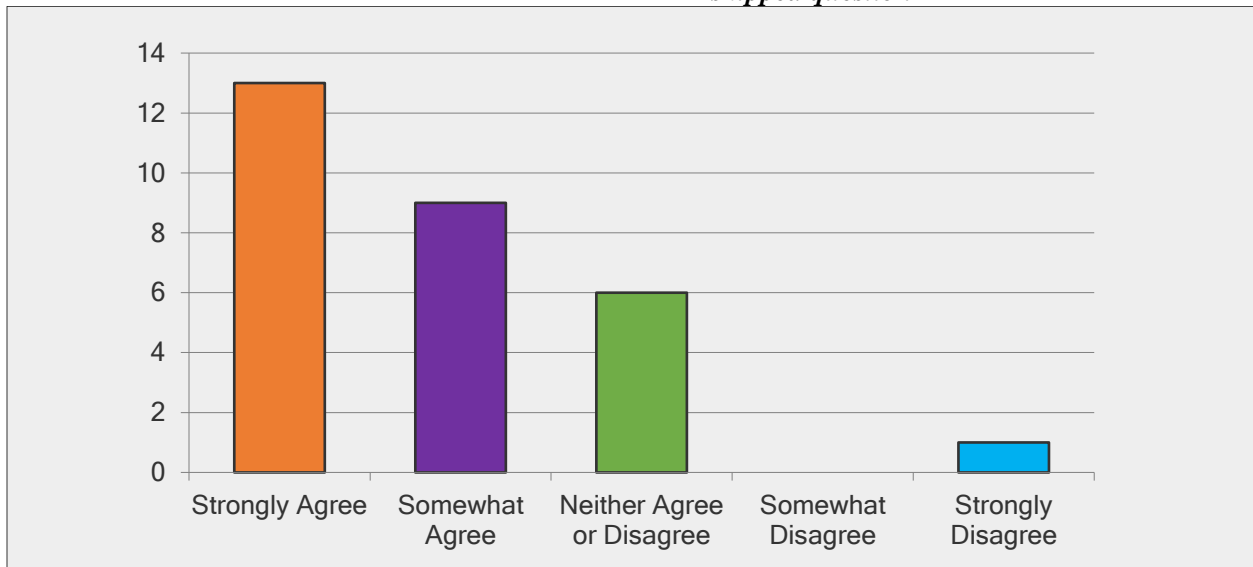
Comments by respondents:

- We work with several schools in the Carson City School District as well as private schools. We also have a few Americorps volunteers working with us.
- We currently offer the CCSD tours of our facility.
- Our staff and students utilize this space.
- Arrangements need to be made in the beginning of our calendar year, for visits from June through School Year
- I already have groups over for field trips and make presentations in the schools.
- I am a school!
- I think it's really important for people to have the connection with their food and where it actually comes from!

9. I would like to visit schools for agriculture education. Example- farmer in the classroom or taste testing in the cafeteria.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	44.8%	13
Somewhat Agree	31.0%	9
Neither Agree or Disagree	20.7%	6
Somewhat Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	3.4%	1
Comments		6

*answered question* **29**  
*skipped question* **1**



The majority of farmers are interested in Farm to School educational activities such as farmer in the classroom or cafeteria.

Comments by respondents:

- We have participated with both in the past.
- It is part of my responsibility to support agriculture education at CHS.
- NA
- I would like our school representative to do this.
- I am already involved with Ag in the Classroom presenting on the Honey Bee, honey collection and tasting.
- I am a school!

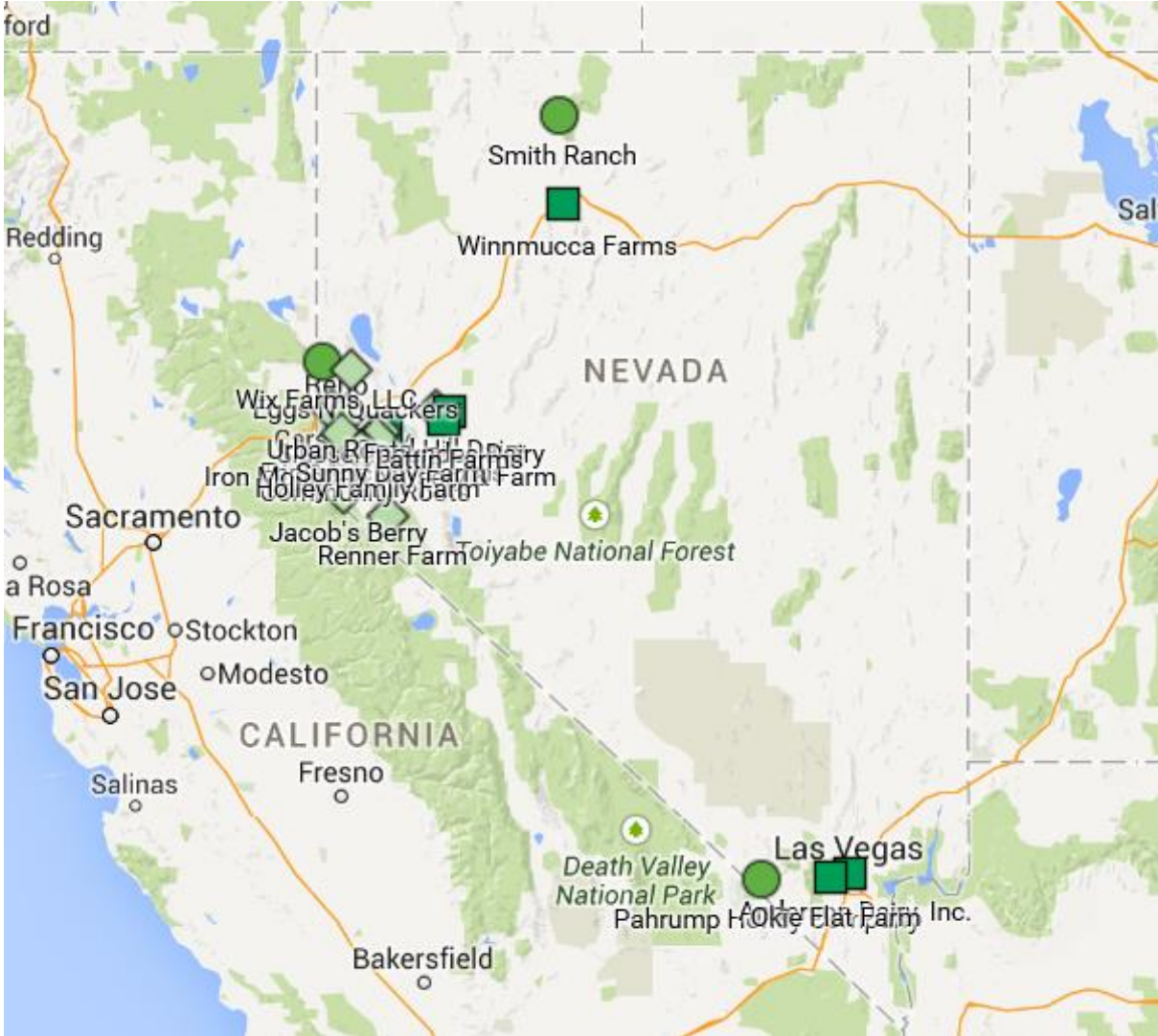
10. Please list all the products, quantity, and harvest month for all the products you grow. Make multiple entries for products that are harvested in more than one month. The following information will help us determine options for school markets.

The survey intent was to collect information on 19 products: apples, beef, berries, broccoli, carrots, chicken, corn, cucumbers, dairy products, leafy greens, milk, onions, peaches, peas, pork, potatoes, squash, tomatoes, and zucchini. Out of the 19 products, we received information on 17: apples, beef, berries, broccoli, carrots, corn, cucumbers, leafy greens, onions, peas, peaches, pork, potatoes, squash, tomatoes, and zucchini. There were no responses for chicken or dairy products. A total of 22 out of 30 respondents answered this question.

To illustrate the data received, we created a Google Map to show location of farms, which are also categorized by size. A small farm produces items in the 0-200 pound range; a medium farm produces items in the 200-600 pound range; and a large farm produces items in the 600-1,000+ pound range.

To view the interactive map, please visit:

[http://nutrition.nv.gov/Programs/Farm\\_to\\_School/Resources/](http://nutrition.nv.gov/Programs/Farm_to_School/Resources/)



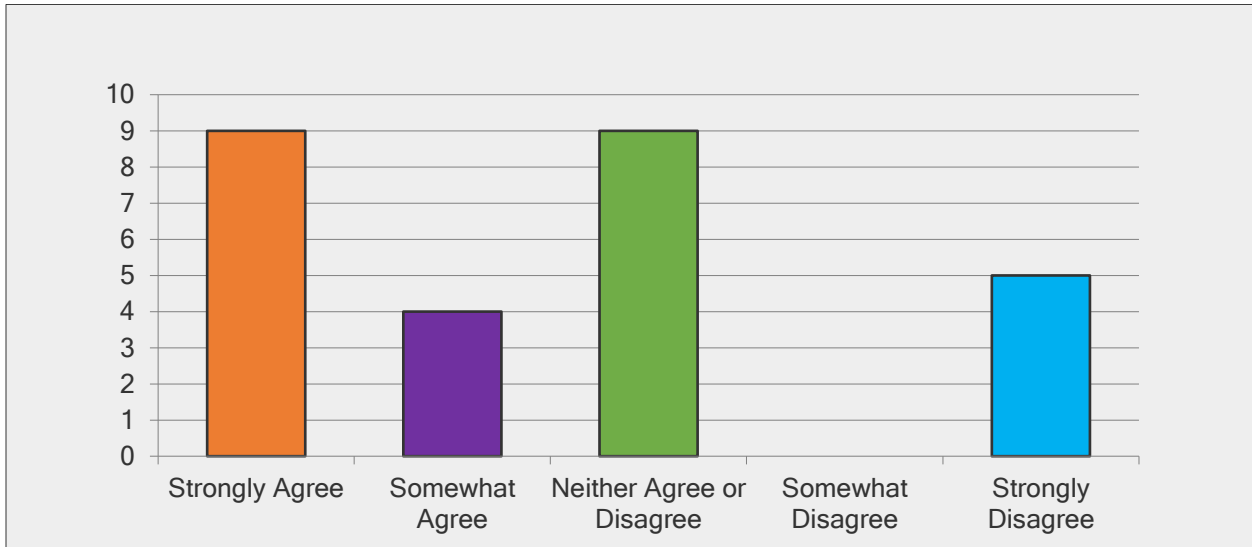
A chart was also created to illustrate quantities of items available each month of the year. An extra-small quantity is within 0-50 pound range; a small quantity is within the 50-100 pound range; a medium quantity is within the 100-200 pound range; a large amount is within the 200-600; and an extra-large amount is within the 600+ pound range.

Products	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Apples	XL							S				
Beef	XL											
Berries	XS				XS	XS		M	M			
Broccoli	XS											
Carrots		XS		XS	S		XS		M	XS		
Corn							M					
Cucumbers		S			M		M			S		
Leafy Greens	XS	S	XS		S	XS		M				XS
Milk	100+ gallons											
Onions		XS		XL			S			M		
Peaches					XS							
Peas		XS		XS				XS				
Pork	L									L		
Potatoes			XL		L				L			
Squash		S	XL				S	L			S	
Tomatoes	L					L	XL			L	M	
Zucchini			L		M		M		L		M	

Scale				
XS-Extra Small= 0-50 lbs	S-Small= 50-100 lbs	M-Medium= 100-200lbs	L-Large= 200-600 lbs	XL-Extra Large= 600+ lbs

11. I would plant more acres of products if they were to be sold to schools.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	33.3%	9
Somewhat Agree	14.8%	4
Neither Agree or Disagree	33.3%	9
Somewhat Disagree	0.0%	0
Strongly Disagree	18.5%	5
Comments		7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>27</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>



The majority of survey respondents were neutral on this question. This may be due to a variety of reasons, such as the items grown not fitting with school menus (i.e. - local ginger) and some of the products made by survey respondents may not be an ideal fit for schools (i.e. – local handmade artisan pasta sauce).

Comments by respondents:

- I think the farms would grow if the forward contract works for both parties
- Semi-retired individual. Would need extra help.
- Other schools in the area have gardens too.
- I don't plant for a honey crop. Our bees on agriculture land.
- Not applicable
- Price point issues need to be part of the discussion

**Appendix-** Below provides all the question of the survey.

Nevada Department of Agriculture Farm to School Producer Survey

1. Please enter your information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing (if different from physical address): \_\_\_\_\_

Website (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

2. How do you sell your products?

- Distributor
- Farmer's Market
- Direct to Consumer
- Other

3. Have you ever sold your products to K-12 schools in the past?

- Yes
- No

4. If you selected YES, how easy or difficult was your experience selling products to schools:

- Very Easy
- Easy
- Neutral
- Difficult
- Very Difficult

Please explain your ranking/selection: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



5. If you selected NO, what specific challenges stop you from selling to schools? (Mark all that apply)

- The schools I approached in past were not interested
- We have difficulty guaranteeing a specific quantity on a specific date
- Seasonality of my products doesn't fit with school ordering schedules
- School haven't been willing to pay the price I need
- Food safety regulations
- Delivering logistics/transportation
- I don't have a relationship with food service staff
- Insurance liability
- Storage Space
- School's current contract limits who it can purchase from
- Other

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. I would like to discuss forward contracting with schools. (A forward contract is an agreement between a buyer and seller to purchase/sell an asset at a set price at a future point in time.)

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. I would like to meet with schools to discuss food planning for the upcoming growing season.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. I would like to have visitors at my operation for school field trips, teacher workshops, or student workers/interns.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. I would like to visit schools for agriculture education. Example- farmer in the classroom or taste testing in the cafeteria.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Please list all the products, quantity, and harvest month for all the products you grow. Make multiple entries for products that are harvested in more than one month. The following information will help us determine the options for school markets.

Only list cow's milk, not any other animal milk, as schools only accept cow's milk.

Animal weight is based on "live on hoof" weight.

For quantity, the ranges are extra-small (XS), small (S), medium (M), large (L), and (XL).

XS: 0-50 lbs    S: 50-100 lbs    M: 100-200 lbs    L: 200-600 lbs    XL: 600+ lbs

Product Information	Product Month Available	Quantity Produced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apples</li><li>• Beef</li><li>• Berries</li><li>• Broccoli</li><li>• Carrots</li><li>• Chicken</li><li>• Corn</li><li>• Cucumbers</li><li>• Dairy products</li><li>• Leafy greens</li><li>• Milk</li><li>• Onions</li><li>• Peaches</li><li>• Peas</li><li>• Pork</li><li>• Potatoes</li><li>• Squash</li><li>• Tomatoes</li><li>• Zucchini</li></ul>	Jan-Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• XS: 0 – 50 lbs</li><li>• S: 50 – 100 lbs</li><li>• M: 100 – 200 lbs</li><li>• L: 200 – 600 lbs</li><li>• XL: 600+ lbs</li></ul>
Other:	<hr/>	

11. I would plant more acres of products if they were to be sold to schools.

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments: 

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## **Nevada Farm to School Contacts**

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