

Fresh From the Farm... And Into the Classroom



A Los Angeles Unified School District Pilot Project

Conducted by
Tierra Miguel Farm Foundation,
Center for Food and Justice,
and the LAUSD Nutrition Network



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The **Urban & Environmental Policy Institute** (UEPI) is a community-oriented research and advocacy organization based at Occidental College in Los Angeles. It serves as the umbrella for a variety of affiliated programs addressing work and industry, food and nutrition, housing, transportation, regional and community development, land use, and urban environmental issues. Common to all programs and centers of UEPI is the goal of a just, livable, and democratic region. <http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/>

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Farm to School programs connect the childhood obesity epidemic with the farm crisis to improve school food with fresher, lower-mileage, more nutritious local foods. This can also benefit local farmers through local sales, increased pride, and a closer connection to the surrounding community. <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

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For more information about connecting schools and local agriculture, please email cfj@oxy.edu.

Table of Contents

Introduction: A Snapshot of the Program	1
Why Farm to Classroom?	3
The Genesis of the Program	6
How the Program Works	9
Evaluating the Program: Teacher Feedback for Hands-On Nutrition Education	11
Opportunities and Challenges	15
Attachment A: Teacher Commentaries	20

**Introduction:
A Snapshot of the Project**



During the 2002-2003 school year, thousands of students in more than 990 classrooms at 41 different Los Angeles Unified School District school sites had the opportunity to taste and learn about farm fresh produce grown in Southern California and brought directly into the classroom. These activities were part of an educational program seeking to integrate health and nutrition, agriculture and the environment. Utilizing a model called Community Supported Agriculture that ties consumers directly to a local or regional farm, this LAUSD program, entitled the "Fresh From the Farm Pilot Project," has been able to establish a direct connection between the classroom and a Southern California organic farm. The result is a unique, hands-on learning experience for the students, as well as increased income for local, organic agriculture.

The project partners in the Fresh From the Farm pilot each had distinctive though parallel goals in pursuing the program. The project was facilitated by the Center for Food and Justice (CFJ), which is a division of the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI), housed at Occidental College in Los Angeles. UEPI is a community-oriented research and advocacy organization that serves as the umbrella for a variety of affiliated programs addressing work and industry, food and nutrition, housing, transportation, regional and community development, land use, and urban environmental issues. The pilot project is directly related to CFJ's objectives-- namely to improve access to fresh and healthy foods and to facilitate environmental, health promotion, community development, social justice, and land use

strategies that empower local communities and strengthen the capacity of local and regional farmers.

The participating farm involved in the pilot was the Tierra Miguel Foundation (TMF). Tierra Miguel leases 87 acres of certified organic farmland in the Pauma Valley in North San Diego County. Its activities have a dual purpose: the production of organic food and the enhancement and conservation of the soil. Since September of 2000, the farm has operated a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which produce is distributed to an average of 290 subscribers in San Diego, Riverside, Los Angeles and Orange counties. Subscribers, also known as shareholders, purchase a share of the farm produce for a predetermined price, which they pay in advance. Each week the shareholder receives a box full of seasonal, certified organic produce. The CSA model of food distribution enables consumers to partner with the farmers who produce their food, sharing in the risks and rewards of food production, and learning (through a weekly newsletter) about the importance of healthy soils in producing nutritious foods. Although most of the farm's produce is distributed through the CSA program, the farm also sells at farmers' markets, a farm stand at the farm, and to local health food stores and restaurants.

The third party in the program, the Los Angeles Unified School District Nutrition Network (LAUSD NN), was the key player in enabling the program to be established. The LAUSD NN, supported by federal nutrition education funds provided through the California Department of Health Services, supports collaborative nutrition education efforts between teachers, food service professionals, school nurses, parents, administrators, community members and students. Its goal is to encourage nutrition education for children so they have the desire and information needed to make healthy, positive nutritional choices.

The LAUSD NN funds nutrition education programs in about 200 low-income schools in the district. In discussions with CFJ, the LAUSD NN expressed interest in establishing a CSA in the classroom-type initiative. These discussions led to initiation of the pilot program. LAUSD NN had both the framework (through its participating schools) and the funding to support the pilot.

Why Farm to Classroom?



The interest for the three collaborators in developing a CSA-type program for classrooms stemmed from a number of issues that each of the partners sought to address. These include, among others, the health and educational performance of students and the changing nature of food availability and food preparation in schools and in the home. In addition, CFJ and TMF are focused on the loss of farmland at the urban edge and consequent problems of sprawl while providing new opportunities for local and regional farmers to increase their viability.

The crucial issue framing current efforts and debates about nutrition education and food choice is the alarming increase in the prevalence of overweight among American children. The number of overweight school age children tripled from 5% in 1980 to 15% in 2000.¹ United States Surgeon General Richard Carmona has called obesity America's single biggest health problem, as the evidence of the relationship between obesity and a number of

¹ Ogden C., Flegal K., Carroll M., and Johnson C. Prevalence and trends in overweight among US children and adolescents, 1999-2000 *JAMA* 2002; 288: 1728-32

chronic illnesses such as type 2 diabetes has become increasingly clear.² Although diet and food choice are not the only factors influencing this trend, they have become a visible and significant focus for intervention. Schools are one key arena for action. The lunch (and breakfast) programs provided in the school cafeteria, the sodas and junk food items offered in vending machines and student stores, and the choices available in food outlets (primarily fast food) surrounding schools constitute the types of food choices students make during the course of the day. Similarly, there has been a significant change in the number and types of meals and food offered in the home. While meals prepared at home accounted for slightly less than 20 hours a week in the 1950s, that number decreased to less than 10 hours a week in 1998/1999.³ Eating out, moreover, has come to mean eating large, supersized portions of food and beverages. For example, when McDonald's first developed its outlets in the 1950s it would typically offer a 7-ounce soda, while today choices range from a 12-ounce "child size" to a 42 ounce supersized soda.⁴

Schools also have experienced changes in menus and format as well students' perceptions of diet and nutritional issues. The loss of kitchens at individual school sites, the reduction of time available for lunch, the increasing focus on providing fast food-type items as part of the lunch menu, and the growing availability

² Pi-Sunyer X (2003). A clinical view of the obesity problem. *Science*, 299(7): 859-860; Neisner J., Histon T., Goeldner J., and Moon C. Background paper on the prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity *Kaiser Permanente Institute for Health Policy*, Prepared for the Roundtable "Prevention and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity: Toward a Roadmap for Advocacy and Action August 14 & 15, 3002.

³ French SA, Story M, and Jeffery RW Environmental influences on eating and physical activity. *Annual Review of Public Health* 2001; 22: 309-35.

⁴ Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (Houghton Mifflin: New York, 2001), p. 241.

of sodas and junk food in vending machines, all send clear signals to students that food choice is not integrated into the educational experience. Nutrition education is perceived as an abstract topic, not related to a student's understanding of where food comes from or what fresh and unprocessed foods might taste like. Students (and families) have also lost or are losing food preparation skills.

And while more research is needed to evaluate the impact of diet on behavior, including access to large portioned high sugar, high fat, and high salt foods, the influence of dietary factors on a student's capacity to learn is an important starting point.

The focus on an "obesity epidemic" has led to a series of interventions, particularly focused on food available in vending machines and student stores. The recent actions by the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education to replace sodas and "junk food" with drinks and foods lower in sugar and fat content is indicative of these concerns. Most interventions, however, have focused on what not to eat or drink rather than what healthy or healthier alternatives might be available. At the same time, students, divorced from any direct experience with food growing and preparation, have lost any deeper and richer understanding of food issues. That in turn tends to further remove nutrition education from any direct, real world experience.

Farmland preservation is another potential benefit of the farm-school connections exemplified by this pilot program. The Tierra Miguel Foundation is a bright spot in a Southern California farm community that is shrinking from the relentless march of sprawl. Between 1992 and 2000, San Diego County, where the TMF farm is located, lost over 3 percent of its important farmlands (6,206 acres). The County's farm population shrunk by 13.7 percent over the same decade (this while the overall population grew by 13.5

percent.)⁵ Today, only 0.25 percent of San Diego County residents live on farms, and remaining important farmlands represent just 8.9 percent of the County.⁶ The Fresh From the Farm Pilot Project and other farm to school linkages can help small farms on the metropolitan edge capture the natural advantage of their proximity to millions of urban consumers. The payments to the Tierra Miguel Foundation represent an obvious, immediate impact. But farm-school connections offer broader benefits down the road. Farms that participate in these kinds of programs may be able to strike up a longer-term relationship with schools and other public institutions that purchase large quantities of food. And, of course, the next generation of consumers are learning to value and differentiate local, fresh produce.

The Genesis of this Program

Part of the interest in a CSA in the classroom type program was to reorient students regarding food growing, food preparation, and what fresh food tastes like. For the past six years, the Center for Food and Justice has sought to help develop “farm fresh” programs in LAUSD to provide healthy choices for students in order to promote good nutrition and curb obesity rates, as well as to support and create additional markets for local agriculture. Efforts to develop a “salad bar” for the lunch program have been partially successful, but a lack of awareness and understanding of



⁵ California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

the value of "farm fresh" or direct farm-to-school connections persists. CFJ has also focused on programs and strategies that address the need to support local farms as key environmental, land use and community food security goals. At the same time, the LAUSD Nutrition Network adopted an interest in the farm fresh concept, particularly if it could be developed as part of its classroom-based nutrition education framework. The Network had funds available in 2002-2003 to support a pilot program to extend its education approach by incorporating the CSA model. Based on the interest in promoting these three goals -- farm fresh access for school kids, sustaining local area farms, and developing a hands-on approach to nutrition education -- the "Fresh From the Farm"/CSA in the Classroom program was developed. A partnership was established between CFJ, LAUSD Nutrition Network, and Tierra Miguel Farm to tailor Tierra Miguel's Community Supported Agriculture program into a classroom-related activity (and source of food) for 41 schools and nearly a thousand classrooms during the second semester of the 2002-2003 school year.

CFJ was instrumental in developing the project concept as an extension of the farm to school cafeteria model. After initially exploring the project idea with the LAUSD Nutrition Network, CFJ approached Tierra Miguel to solicit its participation. Once the three project partners worked out the details, CFJ acted as liaison between the farm and the nutrition program. It also coordinated the produce delivery schedule and communicated with participating schools and teachers to facilitate the purchasing and payment process. CFJ also acted as fiscal sponsor for the project by paying the farm in advance for produce deliveries which were ultimately funded by the LAUSD Nutrition Network. Finally, CFJ developed a survey instrument to evaluate the educational value of the program and sought to assess the program's overall costs

and benefits. The results of that survey and assessment are included in this Report.

Tierra Miguel worked with CFJ and LAUSD NN to reorient the CSA concept to work within a CSA in the classroom context. The farm selected and delivered produce items that were judged to be appropriate for learning and sampling activities for school-aged children and adolescents. The farm cleaned the produce and boxed enough to enable 20 students to prepare and sample each item. There were several different seasonal fruit and vegetable items per box, such as spinach, a mix of many lettuce varieties, broccoli, carrots, oranges and strawberries.

For the Fresh From the Farm project, the LAUSD NN developed promotional materials to market the project to Nutrition Network teachers from each school. The project was promoted along with LAUSD NN's two other farm to school programs, including farmer visits to classrooms and farmers' market stands set up at schools. In the "Farmer in the Classroom" program, local farmers visit classrooms, talk with students and parents, and bring fresh produce straight from their farms. Schools may also choose to have a "Farmers' Market Stand," where a farmer will bring a variety of produce for tasting and sampling during a school nutrition event.

The teachers who were interested in the CSA program included it in their annual work plan proposals that are submitted to the LAUSD NN each year, to receive funding for their individual programs. After the granting process, the LAUSD NN worked with Tierra Miguel and the Center for Food and Justice to develop a newsletter for the participating teachers, which was included in the produce boxes on the day of delivery. The 2-page newsletter included information about the farm, nutritional information about

the produce included in the box, and related nutrition messages, such as the value of eating five fruits and vegetables a day.

How the Program Works



Similar to its CSA program for families, Tierra Miguel delivered weekly boxes of mixed, organic fruits and vegetables to classrooms at the participating low-income LAUSD Nutrition Network schools. Deliveries were made from February 2003 through June 2003. The produce was then used for both educational activities and tasting, designed in part to familiarize students with fresh produce items they might not otherwise be familiar with. During its five months of operation, the program served a total of 993 classrooms at 41 schools, reaching an estimated 19,860 students, based on an average of 20 students per class. Based on the results of the pilot project, a second year of the program has been approved and will be launched in January 2004.

The costs of the CSA boxes came to \$35,996.25, or the equivalent of \$36.25 per classroom. The cost per box included \$33.75 for planting, growing and harvesting of the produce, delivery, and \$2.50 per box to assist with administrative costs. The total amount received by Tierra Miguel Farm for participation in the program was \$33,513.75, a modest, though not insignificant amount of funding for the farm. Plans to expand the program could scale up the benefits to the farm (or additional farms that might participate) as well as the educational benefits related to the size and scope of the program. Although funding for fieldtrips to farms was not available through the Nutrition Network funds, teachers were asked whether they scheduled such a trip as a result of participating in the program. Eight classrooms

ultimately participated in visits to farms, including but not limited to Tierra Miguel.

Schools that returned at least 5 surveys, which were designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational aspect of the program, received one of the *Kids Cook Farm Fresh Food Curriculum*, produced by the California Department of Education in conjunction with CFJ. The *Kids Cook* curriculum provides a discussion of food and farming issues, along with seasonal recipes for school-age children developed in conjunction with leading fresh food oriented chefs such as Alice Waters of Chez Panisse in Berkeley.

The focus on nutrition was key to the program. Some classes were able to turn a discussion of the food pyramid into a broader discussion of the nature of the food items, questions of seasonality, and the color, texture, weight, and classification of each of the items in the box. The experience with tasting and handling the food and understanding how food was grown and where it came from became in turn part of the nutrition lesson plan. For example, several teachers commented that their students were able to make and eat an actual salad, which, for some, represented their first exposure to some of the vegetables in the box. In many cases, seasonality and freshness were also part of the lesson plan, with one class making and then comparing and evaluating two sets of fruit and vegetable salads – one from the CSA box and the second from a local store. Such issues as organics, vitamin content, and the correlation between quality, availability, and the quantity of fruits and vegetables consumed and health outcomes also came to be incorporated into lesson plans.

Part of the experience for the students also involved class sessions with the farmer and/or taking field trips that emphasized

how the food was grown, including such issues as pesticide use, seasonal crops, and irrigation, among others. The development of food preparation skills also became part of the experience. Perhaps most significantly, the actual tasting of the fruits and vegetables that were provided became a core part of the lesson itself, given the significance of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption as key to the nutrition education focus. Although the evaluation of the program focused on the teaching process, anecdotal feedback from teachers also indicated that student interest in exploring new food choices was a direct outcome of the program.

Evaluating the Program: Teacher Feedback for Hands-On Nutrition Education



In developing the pilot, the project partners decided to undertake an evaluation of the classroom experience through a detailed survey that addressed the satisfaction with the pilot as an educational program. In addition to quantitative data about program satisfaction, the survey also provided an opportunity to elaborate with comments. The surveys were primarily designed to identify the value of the program for teaching nutrition education in a classroom setting but with a direct, hands-on framework for understanding food and nutrition issues. A total of 290 evaluation surveys from 22 schools were completed, a response rate of 29%.

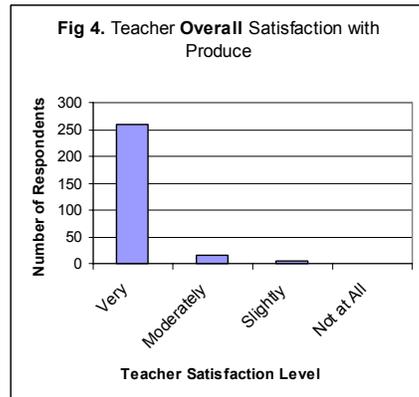
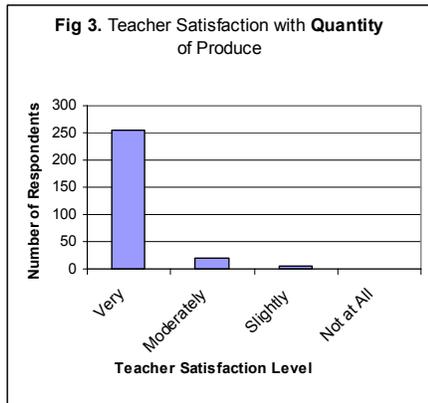
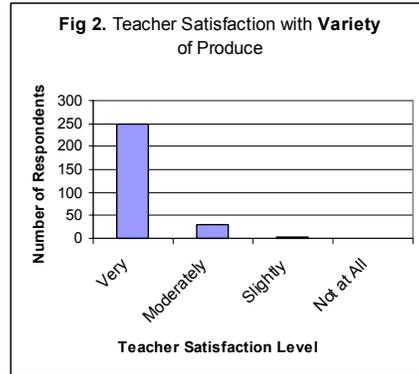
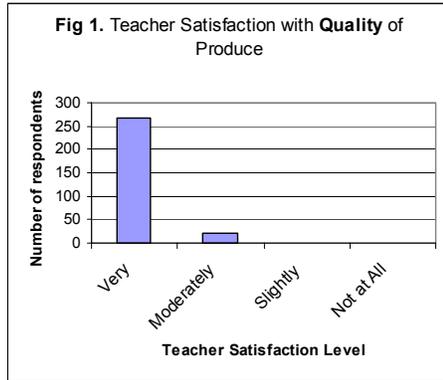
A number of questions were posed to the participating teachers with response options including *very*, *moderately*, *slightly*, and *not at all*, and space for comments after each question. These included:

- Were you happy with the contents of Tierra Miguel produce box? (Quality, Quantity, Variety, Overall)
- Were the fruits/vegetables useful in nutrition education activities?
- Were the fruits/vegetables useful for delivering the 5-A-Day message [the value of consuming five fruits and vegetables a day]?
- What topics did you cover in your activities using the produce?
- Briefly describe what activities you and your students engaged in using the box contents.
- Would you participate in the program again in the future?

Responses to the questions indicated strong support for the program. A sampling of the teacher commentaries are included in Attachment A.

- ***QUESTION: Were you happy with the contents of Tierra Miguel produce box?***

Ninety percent or greater of all responding teachers were *Very Happy* with the quality, variety, quantity, and overall aspects of the produce and usefulness for nutrition education activities of the produce received (See Figures 1-4). No respondents indicated that they were *Not At All* happy. The overwhelming majority of written comments regarding teacher and student happiness with the box contents were positive.



- **QUESTIONS:**

Were the fruits/vegetables useful in nutrition education activities?

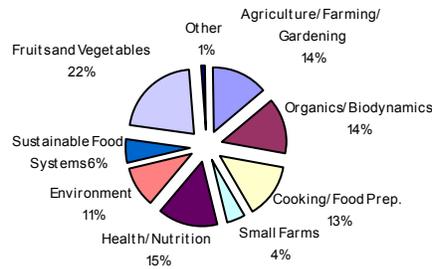
Were the fruits/vegetables useful for delivering the 5 A Day message?

Ninety two percent of the responding teachers were *Very Happy* with the usefulness of the produce in delivering nutrition education messages; 74% were *Very Happy* with the usefulness of the produce in delivering "5-A-Day" messages. Teacher comments in response to these questions indicated that teachers and students found various ways to incorporate use of the produce into nutrition education activities.

- **QUESTION: What Topics did you cover in your activities using the produce?**

Teachers were asked to indicate which of the subjects listed below were covered during the activities that were developed with the produce boxes:

Agriculture / Farming / Gardening	Health / Nutrition
Organics / Biodynamics	Environment
Cooking / Food Prep	Sustainable Food Systems
Small Farms	Fruits and Vegetables
Other: _____	

Fig 5. Topics covered in activities using the produce

All of the topics were covered by at least some teachers, with *Fruits and Vegetables*, *Cooking/Food Prep*, and *Health/Nutrition* covered most frequently (see Figure 5). Other topics included *Literature*, *Art*, *Language Arts*, *ESL*, *Plant Diversity*, *Cesar Chavez*, and *Sanitary Practices*. Additional subjects were also reflected in the comments (Attachment A).

- **QUESTION: Would you participate in the program again in the future?**

Ninety four percent (94%) of the responding teachers indicated that they would participate in the program again. Many of the comments reflected the benefits of the program (Attachment A).

Opportunities and Challenges

The evaluations received from participating teachers indicate an



overwhelming response regarding the educational value of the Fresh From the Farm program. The teacher commentaries illustrated how the farm-direct produce served as a learning tool for students in a wide variety of subject areas (Attachment A). Some of the responses also indicated that additional teacher education regarding nutrition, seasonality, sustainable agriculture, and the "5-A-Day" message would further extend the goals of the program. Teacher participation in the program and the lessons derived from such participation helped reorient the focus on teaching nutrition education and increased interest in further teacher training around the issues of food, farming, and nutrition. In response to teachers' requests for assistance in this area, the LAUSD NN has developed an additional teacher newsletter with ideas for incorporating the program into a range of curricular areas.

In reviewing the operational features of the program, a major challenge to its widespread replication is the need for the participating farm to be paid in advance of planting, a necessity for a small farm operation and central to the CSA concept. LAUSD NN purchases, including the produce for this program, have to be made through the school district purchasing system. This system does not allow for payment to the vendor (the farm) until the goods are actually received. Once the goods are received, the vendor must invoice the district, and then payment is made from several weeks to several months after the invoice is received. To enable a farm to participate in the program, CFJ agreed to pay the farm once each month for the coming month's deliveries. CFJ then invoiced the school district twice a month for the deliveries that were made that month. Under this system, CFJ received reimbursements from the school district one to six months after invoicing the district. Ideally the farm would have been paid several months prior to first box deliveries, before planting for the project began. However, CFJ only had the resources to pay the

farm for one month's worth of purchases at a time, and was unable to begin paying the farm until purchase orders had been received from the participating teachers, which happened a few weeks before the first box deliveries.

The most significant issue in relation to long-term viability of a CSA type program is the need for a more permanent funding source. Nutrition Network funds, available through a federal program that requires a local match, are dependent on continuing federal nutrition education funding, part of a legislative package that periodically comes up for reauthorization. At the same time, LAUSD, which has received significant funding support for its LAUSD Nutrition Network program, is required to provide a dollar for dollar match. Finally, California's overall Nutrition Network program, currently administered through the California Department of Health Services, is dependent in part on continuing support both within the Department and from the Governor's office. Any of the three variables – federal matching funds, LAUSD's matching contribution, and the state of California's continuing to maintain the program with a new Governor about to take office – could shift or even eliminate the source of funding for the program. However, the success of the program in its first pilot year holds promise for continuing funding in the short and possibly medium term, given the growing concern about nutrition education and the problem of obesity in school age children.

Long-term support could also be developed through state or federal legislation and/or school district policies. The unit cost per classroom (\$36.25 per CSA box) is low and comparable to other low cost teaching aides available to LAUSD (and other school district) classrooms. Even though some of the costs were underfunded or subsidized in the first year (particularly the administrative, management, and evaluation tasks provided by CFJ), the unit cost might be a reasonable estimate as other costs

are likely to decrease if the program were to expand, given potential economies of scale. Aside from nutrition education funding, new farm to school legislative initiatives have either been passed or are currently being debated in Sacramento and Washington D.C. as well as a number of other states. Tailoring the program to other states with a more limited growing season than California could also work to the advantage of those school districts, since the program could operate in a shorter though more intense time frame, with additional participating farmers and classrooms. Finally, as a support program for local and regional farmers, additional support could be developed through USDA and/or state Agriculture Departments who have only recently begun to explore schools as an important institutional market for local farmers.

The most important source of support could come from the school districts themselves. An analogy could be made with the evolution of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's farmers' market fruit and vegetable salad bar program. When this farm to school initiative was introduced as a pilot in one Santa Monica school in 1997, it was managed, partially administered, and evaluated by the Center for Food and Justice through grants from the California Endowment and California Wellness Foundation. The Santa Monica Food Service Department and the principal of the pilot school were willing in part to allow the pilot to proceed, since the only costs involved were the purchase price of the produce provided by the local farmers. The positive response by the students to the farm to school salad bar and the overall increase of student participation in the lunch program convinced the food service department to extend it to all of the schools in the District and incorporate it as part of its core mission. Thus, the cost of the program no longer became dependent on grant funding, but was integrated into the ongoing program of the food service

department (which changed its name to Santa Monica-Malibu Food and *Nutrition Services*).

The success of the *educational* component of the CSA in the classroom approach provides the strongest argument for long-term district support. Learning about food, including learning through experiencing how food is grown, where it comes from, and what different foods taste like, as well as how nutrition and health issues can be understood through such learning strategies, needs to be better integrated into the overall mission of the school district. Current debates about whether to ban soda or junk food is seen as an extracurricular debate. What students do during lunch hour or what vending items they select are seen as separate from the classroom, even though teachers do worry about how diet may impact learning capacity. Some of that separation between food choice and classroom activity has been addressed through school garden programs, another important focus of the LAUSD Nutrition Network's agenda. To support programs like the "Fresh From the Farm"/CSA in the classroom or school garden projects, a school district can in effect close the loop between what students learn in the classroom and the choices they make outside the classroom when it comes to diet and health.

The Fresh From the Farm pilot program succeeded in demonstrating that a relatively low cost and effective educational program could combine with an initiative that establishes other benefits, including support for local and regional farmers and potential positive health outcomes. The decision to continue the program a second year is indicative of that success, with more than twice the number of lead teachers expressing interest in participating in the second year of the program. The challenges in institutionalizing the program and extending it to other school districts and other states remain significant. However, the issues

the program addresses remain central concerns to a wide range of agencies and constituencies. The larger challenge is for school districts, health professionals, food and agricultural agencies, and communities to find ways to change the outcomes associated with the current divorce between food choice and education.

ATTACHMENT A: TEACHER COMMENTARIES



The Fresh from the Farm Pilot Project survey solicited a wide range of comments from teachers. Many of the comments addressed specific ways the program was utilized in the classroom. A sampling of those comments are listed below.

- **QUESTION: Were you happy with the contents of Tierra Miguel produce box?**

"The produce was extremely fresh and the sweetness was outstanding."

"The students were able to learn valuable facts about the produce. They were very tasty."

"The students were able to sample lettuce they've probably never eaten. They enjoyed sampling all the produce overall."

"The students enjoyed sampling the fresh vegetables. Most wanted seconds."

"Children loved it. I had a teacher tell me her students would not eat the vegetables, she's wrong. If it's something you talk about & provide for them, they'll try."

"Fruit was very flavorful - we could taste the difference from supermarket produce."

"Our class enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the variety of fruits & vegetables as well as sample them."

- **QUESTIONS:**

Were the fruits/vegetables useful in nutrition education activities?

Were the fruits/vegetables useful for delivering the 5 A Day message?

"[It gave] the chance for students to try fruits/vegetables they wouldn't normally try."

"The food was displayed and shown in the food pyramid. We discussed color, texture, weight & classification."

"We discussed which were fruits and which were vegetables, their names in English and Spanish, and then we followed healthful recipes to create vegetable soup and salad."

"Students saw and tasted different (variety) of salad instead of the same lettuce (iceburg) salad served at school."

"Children experienced making & eating an actual salad. For some it was their first exposure to some of these vegetables."

"We talked about the virtues of organically grown foods and the importance of eating fruits and veggies."

- **QUESTION: What Topics did you cover in your activities using the produce?**

"Students enjoyed learning the history and origins of fruits"

"What are Organics? What Does a Farm Need? (clean water, sun + little or no pesticides)"

"Food preparation (clean hands, clean produce, care, using as much produce as possible) 5 A Day + Nutrition Pyramid."

"I used some of the vegetables & fruits for a variety of math lessons (fractions and measurement specifically)"

"We spoke about organic food and pesticides. We spoke about gardening & farms."

"We used the produce box to enrich our planting /farming lessons. "

"Agriculture role playing"

"Preparing a garden in school. Discussed differences between junk food and healthy food. How plants/trees help environment."

"The box contents were used in engaging the students in vocabulary development activities and farming, agriculture, gardening and small farms enrichment activities. Also, the base knowledge of the students concepts of organics, body biodynamics, health, nutrition, environment, sustainable food systems and cooking/food prep was enriched and expanded"

"Discussed farmers/agriculture, and non-profit foundations."

"Food path: from mouth to waste product. Fractions: Chopping food into 1/2, 1/4, 1/3, 1/8 (adding fractions). Nutritious food vs. Junk food debate. Chemistry: "how does food get it's color?"

"We learned about farm, tied in with migrant farm workers, and Cesar Chavez's struggle."

"Graphing Activities, vocabulary (ELD), math activities (use oranges for fractions), writing."

"Nutrition unit, RDA's, nutrients, food guide pyramid, nutrient density, calories, metabolism."

"Why organic farming is a better option for the environment but why it is more expensive and why it is so difficult to find."

"Our class as a whole discussed what impacts our carelessness has in our environment and as a result in our food source."

"Recipes & math measuring the amounts for the recipe. Environment lessons & activities. Gardening planting & growing some vegetables."

"...we had several mini-lessons on health, organic elements, and scientific terms."

- **QUESTION : Briefly describe what activities you and your students engaged in using the box contents.**

"We discussed which foods are usually eaten for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We wrote a journal about fresh foods and how they are good for us!"

"Identify names of fruits and vegetables - cleaning hands with soap and water - knowledge of where food came from (farms) - assembly of salad by students - sampled & enjoyed salad with and without dressing - wrote letters of thanks to farmers (extra sent home for families)."

"We made a minestrone soup & read Tops and Bottoms- We discussed which vegetables were "tops" and which were "bottoms". We read the book Each Orange had 8 slices and did a math lesson with the oranges - then ate them!"

"The book "Tops and Bottoms" was read to each group. We examined the box of produce carefully

and determined if the produce was indeed tops or bottoms. The children were excited about the correctness of their responses. Some had never handled fresh baby carrots with the tops before."

"I would have a couple of students with blindfold and describe the smell, taste, and feeling. Then I would ask for volunteers to bake one of the given recipes for the class. Everyone would have to calculate the exact proportions needed for a recipe for 40 students."

"We categorized the vegetables into group, flower, stem, and leaves. We wrote on the board our recipe for a taco salad. We prepared the salad in the class. Pictures were taken and tomorrow we are writing about them and making a display board."

"We had descriptions of fruits and vegetables using the 5 senses. We also came up with different recipes using the produce."

- **QUESTION: Would you participate in the program again in the future?**

"I like exposing children to healthy foods rather than the junk students + parents bring for special events"

"This was the most exciting program because the students could see the farm where their vegetables were grown. The students were so enthusiastic"

"It was interesting to know that the produce was grown for us. I wish the farmer could have come by to introduce him/herself!"

"It cheered up the class and opened up many subjects."

"Starting to see a connection of the 5 a day produce from the farms to us. Can be integrated into all academic areas."

"I believe attitudes and interest in healthy produce were positively encouraged and healthy choices were made and more likely to be made in the future."

"Yes this is a great program to integrate math, science, social studies, health, nutrition, geography, weather, etc."