Changes to the Local Foods Fund have resulted in significantly more participation across the state this school year. We have seen partnerships form between vegetable and livestock farmers, creameries, fishermen, and even beekeepers! From rolled oats to shaved steak, Maine schools have taken advantage of the expanded Fund both in diversity of food bought and dollars spent. Despite challenges with supply chain availability and other pandemic-related hurdles, Maine schools have continued to support farmers and producers and offer students even more healthy, local food.

— Robin Kerber, Maine DOE Farm and Sea to School Coordinator

The Local Foods Fund has been instrumental in getting fresh, local ingredients onto the trays of students. Now that we can order these items directly from our food vendors, it makes it exponentially easier to receive farm fresh items every single week.

— Caroline Trinder, RSU 23 Food and Nutrition Services Director

Hungry kids can’t learn and grow to their full potential so we need to do all we can to make sure the meals served at school are filling and nutritious. A big part of this is helping schools connect with local farms and producers, to get fresh food on cafeteria trays.

This is a big win for schools, students and local food producers and growers.

I can’t wait to see how much more good this program can do for Maine.

— Senator Eloise Vitelli, lead sponsor of LFF bill

2006
Local Produce Fund (LPF) established — but never funded — to reimburse schools $1 for every $3 spent on local foods

2019 Legislative Session
Full Plates advocates for and passes a bill to fund LPF

2019-20 School Year
Local Produce Fund being underutilized: $38,438 reimbursed to only 30 school nutrition programs

Fall 2020
Full Plates conducts a survey of school nutrition programs to learn about the fund’s limitations

2021 Legislative Session
Building on survey learnings, Full Plates introduces and helps pass the Local Foods Fund (LFF) to replace and expand Local Produce Fund

2021-22 School Year
$66,979 in LFF funds reimbursed to 60 school nutrition programs in just 4 months (September-December)

THE NEW LOCAL FOODS FUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local Produce Fund</th>
<th>Local Foods Fund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of food</td>
<td>Produce only</td>
<td>Produce, protein, grains, value-added dairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reimbursement cap per district</td>
<td>$2,000 - $2,500</td>
<td>$5,000 - $5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing</td>
<td>Direct producers only</td>
<td>Direct producers, processors of local products, and distributors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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— Robin Kerber, Maine DOE Farm and Sea to School Coordinator

“I love the new steak & cheese subs we have at lunch and my mom told me the beef is actually from Maine!”

— Jaxson Cooney, Loranger Memorial School 6th grader

“Hungry kids can’t learn and grow to their full potential so we need to do all we can to make sure the meals served at school are filling and nutritious. A big part of this is helping schools connect with local farms and producers, to get fresh food on cafeteria trays. This is a big win for schools, students and local food producers and growers. I can’t wait to see how much more good this program can do for Maine.”

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HISTORY & EVOLUTION

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