

USD 497 Farm to School Local Food Procurement Guidelines

Primary Contact: Lindsey Morgan, RD, Food Services Supervisor
Address: 1100 McDonald Drive Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: 785-832-5000 **Email:** lmorgan@usd497.org
Fax: 785-330-4808 **Website:** <http://www.usd497.org/Domain/5895>



Date effective: September 28, 2015

Background

The goals of the Farm to School program are to:

- Mobilize community support for Farm to School activities
- Catalyze policy change around school gardens and local food purchasing
- Provide experiential learning and curriculum integration for students
- Cement our district’s commitment to healthy eating through Farm to School

USD497 conducts an informal procurement process before the growing season to enhance its meal service with local foods. This set of twelve guidelines provides interested farmers with a comprehensive overview of the district’s purchasing needs and process. USD497 does not place strict limits upon our definition of local. However, when considering informal bids, USD497 will incorporate a geographic preference into our decision making and aims to provide fair prices to farmers above standard terminal wholesale rates.

As part of implementing its Farm to School Guidelines, USD497 has created a Request for Information (RFI) Application for farmers interested in selling during a given annual season. You can find online at www.usd497.org , click on the Parents and Students tab → Farm to School → Become a Vendor

USD497 will conduct pre-season planning through a farmer distribution agreement with chosen farmers who agree to adhere to the guidelines. A winter Farm to School Planning Workshop will go over the guidelines and planning. One on one meetings can be arranged, and follow up meetings as needed. If selected to sell to USD 497, a Farm to School representative will make a visit to your farm.

Farm to School Guidelines

1. Complete the 2016 Request for Information Application	2
2. Complete the USD 497 Food Safety Checklist	2
3. Submit a Vendor Letter Addressing Traceability	2
4. Attend Winter Farm to School Planning Workshop.....	3
5. Complete the Required Business Forms in the USD 497 New Vendor Packet.....	3
6. Demonstrate Minimum Liability Insurance of \$500,000	3
7. Adhere to Product Specifications	3
8. Maintain Product Traceability.....	3
9. Follow USD 497 Ordering Procedures.....	3
10. Follow USD 497 Delivery Procedures.....	4
11. Follow USD 497 Invoicing Procedures	4
12. Participate in USD 497 Farm to School Promotion and Education Opportunities.....	5



Guidelines

1. Complete the 2016 Request for Information Application

USD 497 created an application to collect information from interested farmers before the growing season about their growing practices, available products, and estimated volume and prices. This information allows the district food service department to better anticipate its needs and collaborate with local farmers to ensure that their harvest planning best aligns with menu planning.

In addition, the annual RFI deadline each winter before the next school year enables the district to coordinate among growers at the pre-season Farm to School Planning Workshop, set shared expectations in the farmer distribution agreements, and troubleshoot should any issues arise before the season.

2. Complete the USD 497 Food Safety Checklist

The health and safety of our students and their meals is a top priority of USD 497. We work with K-State Research & Extension of Douglas County to ensure that the farmers we buy from adhere to proper on-farm food safety practices and post-harvest handling, from field through delivery.

We must receive a completed food safety checklist form from every farmer interested in selling to USD 497. We have created this document with our K-State Research & Extension partners to determine if proper precautions are taking place to minimize on-farm and post-harvest food safety risks. *USD 497 reserves the right to conduct unannounced visits to any farm with which it has a purchasing relationship to verify food safety practices.*

In addition, we request each farmer report the food safety trainings he or she has received in the past three years, from Extension, the Great Plains Growers Conference, Growing Growers, or other credible technical assistance resources. (For a list of upcoming trainings, please contact K-State R&E Extension Horticulturalist Marlin Bates, batesm@ksu.edu / 785-843-7058.)

3. Submit a Vendor Letter Addressing Traceability

The Kansas State Department of Education, Child Nutrition & Wellness Division, requires that “A vendor letter should be kept in the school Food Safety (HACCP) Plan to ensure traceability of the local products.”

In adherence with this statewide policy, USD 497 requires a signed letter from each farmer or other local food vendor from whom it makes direct purchases. A template for the farmer cover letter is available as an appendix to this document and on our website, www.usd497.org under Farm to School.

For more information about KSDE Farm to School recommendations and policies, see here: http://www.kn-eat.org/F2S/F2S_Menu/F2S_Home.htm#WhatisFarmtoSchool



4. Attend Winter Farm to School Planning Workshop

All farmers who sign a farmer distribution agreement with USD 497 are required to attend a winter Farm to School Planning Workshop, where our guidelines and internal district policies will be described in greater depth and we can answer questions. This event will feature real-life examples of successful relationships and some challenges USD 497 has faced in sourcing and using local foods. We will tour a school kitchen and provide an overview of our ordering, delivery, and invoicing processes. Attendees will receive the required business forms to enter into our purchasing database and can turn-in proof of insurance, etc.

Please make every attempt to attend this training. If farmers cannot attend the workshop, USD 497 will work with them to provide an alternative training.

5. Complete the Required Business Forms in the USD 497 New Vendor Packet

At the workshop, farmers will receive a new vendor packet from the USD 497 Business Office. This packet includes all required forms the school must have on file in order to purchase from a vendor, including a W9 Taxpayer form, Vendor Information Form, and KS Sales Tax Exemption Form.

6. Demonstrate Minimum Liability Insurance of \$500,000

USD 497 requires the farmers and local food vendors it purchases from to hold a minimum farm liability insurance of \$500,000. Before USD 497 signs a farmer distribution agreement with a farmer, it must receive proof of insurance via email, fax, mail, or at the winter Farm to School Planning Workshop.

7. Adhere to Product Specifications

All products purchased by and delivered to USD 497 must follow common practices concerning sanitation, cross contamination prevention, cold chain maintenance, and commercial food handling standards. For reference, farmers should review the USDA grading standards: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards>

Please note that USD 497 is interested in purchasing cosmetically imperfect and off-size seconds as appropriate, based upon our kitchen needs for particular products. These exceptions to standard grading will be addressed at the winter Farm to School Planning Workshop.

8. Maintain Product Traceability

Every case and delivery to USD 497 must have the following information:

- Name of farmer
- Name of farm
- Farm address
- Field harvested from
- Date harvested
- Date packed

9. Follow USD 497 Ordering Procedures

At the winter Farm to School Planning Workshop, USD 497 will outline its anticipated local produce needs for the coming season. (If possible, USD 497 will post summary of this information in advance.) *Please be*



aware these are only estimates. After signing a farmer distribution agreement, USD 497 will send more detailed purchase orders to farmers no later than one week in advance of expected delivery.

To best accommodate the variability of weather and crop production, USD 497 expects that its partner farmers will remain in consistent communication throughout the season about anticipated crop harvest dates, in order to ensure proper menu planning and enable orders from our mainline distributor in the case that a crop fails or is not ready as planned.

USD 497 reserves the right to terminate a contract at any time should it experience unsatisfactory service in the delivery or fulfilling of orders.

10. Follow USD 497 Delivery Procedures

Deliveries must occur in a professional, sanitary, and efficient manner. To assist farmers selling to USD497, the district will provide washable yellow bins for use throughout the season. Upon completion of the growing season and that year's farmer distribution agreement, USD 497 will withhold final payment until all bins are received.

If another product vessel will be used, it must be approved by USD 497 in advance. USD 497 prioritizes use of new cardboard boxes or washable/reusable bins.

USD 497 will inspect all deliveries and reserves the right to refuse delivery of unacceptable products (based on quality, quantity, specifications, size, and temperature) or improper delivery procedures, for credit. USD 497 will contact farmers within 3-5 days if it would like to seek a credit.

Tobacco or e-cigarettes shall not be used at any time in or on district grounds.

Delivery location shall be determined based upon USD 497 needs and each farmer's ability and preferred delivery logistics. In general, however, deliveries are preferred from 6am to 10am Monday through Thursday. Select storage crops, such as apples, may be able to have alternative arrangements.

11. Follow USD 497 Invoicing Procedures

Farmers must include two copies of each invoice upon delivery, for the receiving district employee to sign off on. Electronic copies can additionally be sent to porzulak@usd497.org and lmorgan@usd497.org.

Invoices must include the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Business Name (if different than farm or personal name)
- Product type, quantity, total

As a public purchaser, all sales to USD 497 are exempt from tax. Farmers will receive the district's tax exempt information when an approved vendor packet is completed and accepted by USD 497.

Timing of payments to farmers depends upon the promptness with which USD 497 receives an invoice from farmers. In general, USD 497 processes invoices on the first and third Monday of the month. *Farmers should expect payment within two weeks to a month.*



12. Participate in USD 497 Farm to School Promotion and Education Opportunities

Farm to School for USD 497 means linking classroom, garden, and lunchroom to foster a comprehensive and enriching experience for our students that supports health and learning. We welcome the opportunity to work with the farmers we buy from to enhance the food, farming, and nutritional education of our students.

As part of the district’s various media and educational communications about Farm to School, USD 497 reserves the right to feature the farmers it purchases local foods, and expects farmer participation in media engagement from time to time. For example, including the name and a logo or photo on the serving line for students to see or mentioning farmers in a press release—including outputs from partnering organizations like LiveWell Lawrence.

To these ends, USD 497 requests the following:

- A high-quality digital copy of a farm’s logo
- Photos of the farms and farmers we work with, including some close-ups that show the farmers’ faces

Finally, we hope to engage with our farmers in more ways than just purchasing products. This could include field trips to visit your farm, in-school visits, creation of lessons or cafeteria posters/signs, etc. The Farmer Information Form offers farmers the chance to indicate if he or she would like to fulfill one of these supplemental roles.

You can learn more about Farm to School educational programming at USD 497 here:

<http://www.usd497.org//site/Default.aspx?PageID=7076>