



SECTION 19

Response of Food Service Staff to Purchasing and Serving Michigan-Grown Foods Through 10 Cents

10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms (10 Cents), administered by the Michigan Department of Education, matches what participating schools, districts, and early care and education centers spend on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans with grants of up to 10 cents per meal.

This brief is part of *10 Cents a Meal 2020–2021 Evaluation Results: Expanded Eligibility Increased Impacts*.

Key Takeaways

The majority of responding grantees (86%) described an **overall positive response by their staff to the purchase and service of local foods through 10 Cents.**



9

Nine grantees indicated an **indifferent or neutral response**

6

Six grantees indicated their staff had an **overall negative response** to purchasing and serving local foods.



Grantees shared positive staff responses about using local foods:

- higher quality and improved freshness
- the creation of new menu items
- the farm to school activities conducted
- increased knowledge of local foods and farmers
- enjoyment of these foods by teachers and administrative staff

In the June evaluation survey, 101 participating food program managers (FPMs) in 10 Cents a Meal for Michigan's Kids and Farms (10 Cents) responded to the question, **“How has your staff responded to the purchase and service of local foods purchased through the 10 Cents program?”** (79% response rate for the June survey). The open-text responses from FPMs were categorized into nine different themes, and a single grantee's response could have multiple themes. Themes and the number of grantees that mentioned a specific theme are shown in Table 19.1 below.

Table 19.1. Reported Staff Response to the Purchase and Service of Local Foods through 10 Cents in 2020–2021

Themes	Number of grantees who mentioned theme
Food service staff like purchasing and serving local foods	56
All staff enjoy the higher quality produce	13
Staff are Indifferent or neutral	9
Food service staff are creating new foods from local produce	9
Local foods can take more labor	6
All staff learn more about local food and farmers	6
Teachers are enjoying local foods	6
Administration likes purchasing & serving local	3
More farm to school activities are being conducted	2

Note: $n = 101$ grantees

Only nine FPMs indicated an indifferent or neutral response, and six grantees indicated their staff had an overall negative response to purchasing and serving local foods. The majority of responding grantees (87 grantees, 86%) described an overall positive response by their staff to the purchase and service of local foods through 10 Cents.

FPMs most frequently mentioned a generally positive reception by food service/program staff towards purchasing and serving local foods (56 grantees). Grantees shared positive responses from all staff about using local foods, including:

- higher quality and improved freshness;
- the creation of new menu items;
- the farm to school activities conducted;
- increased knowledge of local food and farmers; and
- enjoyment of these foods by teachers and administrative staff.

However, five grantees indicated negative staff responses primarily related to additional labor associated with local foods, including increased preparation time required by food service staff or increased time for ordering food required by the FPM. Nine grantees' responses centered around the indifference of food service staff to the program.

Response Highlights

POSITIVE RECEPTION FROM ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, AND FOOD SERVICE STAFF



My staff noticed a better quality of vegetables, especially of the local corn and broccoli, compared to what we used to order.



Teachers loved getting the information on the products and the nutritional info to share with their students. They also enjoyed trying the products, showing the students the raw form, and encouraging them to try the prepared item. One teacher even had a student that took some of the raw items and planted them in a pot in the classroom to grow them.



Our teachers and administrators love our program. It draws them in and helps them be champions for our program.



Once our food and nutrition staff learned how to work with the items and we learned how to menu them in a way that did not put excessive pressure on our staff, they were very supportive.



They [food service staff] all LOVE our local apples. The taste and appearance are so much better than other products we were using.

NEGATIVE AND INDIFFERENT RESPONSES BY STAFF



I am working on making it a positive thing with them. All that they see is more work.



I have been happy, [but] some staff have not been because of the little more work that is needed to cook the product.



The staff did sometimes complain about the extra time it took to get the products ready for service, but they did like the fresher quality.

Evaluation of 10 Cents is led by the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS). The work presented here is part of *10 Cents a Meal 2020–2021 Evaluation Results: Expanded Eligibility Increased Impacts* by Colleen Matts and Megan McManus of CRFS and was generously funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and 10 Cents administrative funds for partner organizations.

To learn more, visit tencentsmichigan.org, foodsystems.msu.edu/10-cents-a-meal, and mifarmtoschool.msu.edu.

