



AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF FARM TO INSTITUTION RESEARCH IN MICHIGAN

ABBY HARPER & COLLEEN MATTS, MSU CENTER FOR REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

OCTOBER 2015

Farm to Institution work in Michigan centers on efforts to increase the amount of local foods purchased and used in food service programs at schools, early childhood programs, hospitals, colleges, and other institutions. The following annotated bibliography serves to provide a comprehensive overview of research to date on Farm to Institution in Michigan.

Abatekassa, G., Conner, D.S., and Matts, C. (2008). Fostering farm-to-MSU efforts: Research to guide closer ties with Michigan agriculture. Retrieved from http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/fostering_farm_to_msu_efforts_research_to_guide_closer_ties_with_mi_ag

This report summarizes interviews with Michigan State University's (MSU) Food and Dining Services staff and suppliers. The authors measured current local food purchasing practices and identified opportunities for and obstacles to increasing MSU's local food purchasing.

Buckley, J., Conner, D.S., Matts, C., and Hamm, M.W. (2013). Social relationships and farm-to-institution initiatives: Complexity and scale in local food systems. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 8(4), 397-412. doi: 10.1080/19320248.2013.816988ⁱ

This article describes findings from interviews examining relationship features in farm to institution programs in Michigan. The study showed that trust is an essential component of successful relationships, and that these relationships often foster creative problem solving.

Colasanti, K., and Matts, C. (2013). Farm to institution in Michigan: A summary of research on local food purchasing by institutions. Retrieved from <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/uploads/files/fti-summary.pdf>

This brief synthesizes research from six surveys administered to understand the landscape and trends of farm to institution efforts in Michigan. Results show that local food purchasing is increasing at institutions, and that there is interest from vegetable farmers in selling to schools, hospitals, and colleges or universities.

Colasanti, K., Matts, C., and Hamm, M.W. (2012). Results from the 2009 Michigan farm to school survey: Participation grows from 2004. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 44(4), 343-349. doi: 10.1016/j.jneb.2011.12.003ⁱⁱ

This article summarizes results from a 2009 survey of K-12 school food service providers in Michigan, including motivating factors, concerns, and barriers to purchasing local foods for school meals. Participation in farm to school was found to be three times higher than in 2004, and 77% of school food service directors who responded reported having taken at least one step to connect students with local food.

Izumi, B.T., Alaimo, K., and Hamm, M.W. (2010). Farm to school programs: Perspectives of school food service professionals. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 42(2), 83-91. doi: 10.1079/PHN2000108

This article explains findings from case study interviews conducted with school food service professionals,





farmers, and food distributors throughout the Upper Midwest and Northeast. Interviews probed reasons for participating in farm to school programs and opportunities and challenges regarding local school food procurement. The three main motivators for school food service directors to buy local food were student preference, lower prices, and supporting local economies.

Izumi, B.T., Rostant, O.S., Moss, M.J., and Hamm, M.W. (2006). Results from the 2004 Michigan farm to school survey. *Journal of School Health*, 76(5), 169-174. doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2006.00090ⁱⁱ

This article describes results from a 2004 survey of Michigan K-12 school food service directors about local food purchasing and use in school meals. Primary motivators included supporting the local economy and local community, access to fresher food, and access to higher quality food. Cost, reliable supply, and seasonality of Michigan fruits and vegetables were identified as concerns.

Izumi, B.T., Wright, D.W., and Hamm, M.W. (2010). Farm to school programs: Exploring the role of regionally-based food distributors in alternative agrifood networks. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 27(3), 335-350. doi: 10.1007/s10460-009-9221-x

Four case studies illustrate perspectives of Upper Midwest and Northeast regionally-based food distributors on farm to school programs. Themes suggest that these distributors could be key actors in institutionalizing farm to school programs.

Izumi, B.T., Wright, D.W., and Hamm, M.W. (2010). Market diversification and social benefits: Motivations of farmers participating in farm to school programs. *Journal of Rural Studies* 26, 374-382. doi: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2010.02.002

This article presents findings from an empirical analysis of farmers' perspectives of farm to school programs using interview data from farmers in the Upper Midwest and Northeast United States. The two primary reasons farmers in this study sold products to schools were to diversify their markets and contribute to social benefits through direct action.

Matts, C. (2013). Farm to school in early childcare in Michigan: Opportunity for local food access and awareness. Retrieved from <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/fts-early-childcare>

This report summarizes results of a 2012 survey of Michigan Great Start program staff which assessed fresh fruit and vegetable provision, school garden activity, and involvement in farm to school, as well as motivators and barriers for local food purchasing. The majority of respondents were not yet involved in farm to school activities in the previous school year but were interested in connecting with local farmers.

Matts, C., Conner, D.S., Fisher, C., Tyler, S., and Hamm, M.W. (2014). Farmer perspectives of farm to institution in Michigan: 2012 survey results of vegetable farmers. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, Jan 2015. doi: 10.1017/S1742170514000465

This article describes findings from a 2012 survey administered to Michigan vegetable farmers, using a representative farmer sample. Although few respondents had previously sold to institutions, half of farmer respondents were interested in selling to institutions, driven largely by social values.

Matts, C. and Colasanti, K. (2013). Local food interest by institutions in southeast Michigan: A report for Eastern Market Corporation. Retrieved from <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/fti-se-mi>

This report summarizes data from a 2012 survey of institutions in southeast Michigan exploring local food purchasing and food preparation methods. Roughly 77% of respondents had purchased local foods in the





last year, mostly through a full-service (broadline) distributor. Supporting the local economy was the top motivator for purchasing local food, while lack of a distribution method was the top logistical challenge.

Matts, C. and Smalley, S.B. (2013). Farm to school in Michigan: 2012 survey shows interest in purchasing local foods continues to grow. Retrieved from <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/fts-2012-survey>ⁱⁱ

This report summarizes findings from a 2012 survey of Michigan school food service directors regarding patterns and interest in local food purchasing. Motivators and barriers to local food purchasing were similar to surveys conducted in 2004 and 2009, with “supporting local economy” as the top motivator. Seasonality, food safety, and budget constraints were the top barriers.

Matts, C. and Smalley, S.B. (2014). Farm to school in Michigan: Still going strong. Retrieved from <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/mi-fts-going-strong>ⁱⁱ

This report presents findings from a 2013 survey of Michigan school food service directors documenting current practices in local food purchasing as well as interest, motivators and barriers. The report showed increased activity from the previous survey and high interest in purchasing local foods.

Matts, C. and Smalley, S.B. (2014). Michigan farm to school focus groups. Retrieved from <http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/mi-fts-focus-groups>

This report describes findings from three regional focus groups convened in Detroit, Grand Rapids and Battle Creek in 2013. The focus groups included farmers, school food service professionals, Extension educators, and community organization staff. Findings show different stages of farm to school activity along with both common themes and unique factors to each region’s efforts.

Thompson, M. and Matts, C. (2015). Farm to school in Michigan: Statewide response shows widespread activity. Retrieved from http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/2014_megs_survey_brief

This brief presents results from a two-part question added to the Michigan Electronic Grant System Plus (MEGS+) application on local food purchasing activity and food sources for schools and districts in Michigan participating in the National School Lunch Program. More than half of the applicants responded that they had purchased local foods in the previous school year, 80% doing so through their full-service (broadline) distributor.

ⁱ DOI, or digital object identifier, is a unique string of letters and numbers assigned to specific content, like a journal article. To find an article by its doi, just copy and paste the string of letters and numbers starting with “doi” into an Internet search engine.

ⁱⁱ These reports and articles describe results from a series of similar surveys of Michigan school food service directors conducted between 2004 – 2013 to track trends and changes in participation and interest in local food purchasing as well as barriers and challenges.

