

Good Food for All

Procurement Primers

Across the country, the demand for good food—food that is healthy, green, fair, and affordable—continues to grow. The Good Food for All collaborative (GFFA) recognizes local procurement policies, such as the LA Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP), as an important opportunity to bolster local and regional good food economies. As the movement for good food grows at the city and state level, we will have greater evidence and examples of success to point toward when advocating for broader policy shifts at the federal level in future Farm Bill reauthorizations and other legislative opportunities.

GFFA is well-positioned to support city- and state-wide efforts to advance good food procurement by providing an alternative narrative to the food system. One that looks at the food system through a racial equity lens, and lifts up the potential for promoting good health and economic opportunities for all.

GFFA has created a series of primers that exemplify our vision for an equitable food system by demonstrating the values of a good food system. Using the five key principles of the LA GFPP--A Strong Local Food Economy; Environmental Sustainability; A Valued Food Industry Workforce; The Humane Treatment of Animals; High Nutritional Quality—the primers demonstrate how values-led procurement policies have the potential to create transformational change in our food system towards an equitable food system.

We welcome and encourage all members of GFFA and our allies and partners in the good food movement to use these primers as starting points for conversations about the potential for institutional procurement as a leverage for food systems change.

We also recognize existing efforts that have, and continue to push the bar for institutional procurement of good food, including but not limited to: School Food Focus' learning labs; The Common Market; Healthcare Without Harm; and Real Food Generation.

For folks interested in GFFA, we encourage them to connect with Amelia Moore at the Union of Concerned Scientists on amoore@ucsusa.org.

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Good Food Procurement Primer

Strong Local Economies

INTRODUCTION

This document is part of a series intended to introduce readers to the potential for institutional procurement to advance an equitable food system. The primers follow the five pillars of the Good Food Purchasing Program, a holistic and values-based food procurement framework which was developed by the Los Angeles Food Policy Council in 2012.^[1] These pillars strive to be integrative and include: Local Economies; Environmental Sustainability; Valued Workforce; Animal Welfare; and Nutrition.

STRONG LOCAL ECONOMIES

We all benefit when local economies prosper, especially when producers, entrepreneurs and consumers of color are included. Dollars spent locally have been shown to create greater economic and social impact than dollars spent with chain, big-box stores.^[2] Food is no exception, with every \$1 spent on local activities—such as farm-to-school—resulting in over \$2 of economic activity.^[3] These dollars grow high-quality jobs, increase consumer spending, and re-invest back into our local communities. Local food is an entry point to building both healthy and equitable economies, from farmers and producers to community-owned businesses that provide fresh, sustainable food to our kitchen and cafeteria tables—especially when investments are directed to those most often excluded.

During the last 60 years, decisions about farming and food systems have been made by fewer and fewer people, with more unbalanced influence from the corporate sector.^[4] As our food system becomes more consolidated, unequal, and industrialized, we as consumers, workers, and farmers wield less and less influence over our food. Further, farmers of color have consistently faced discrimination in



Farmers markets, like this one in Harlem, NY, bring fresh local produce to city residents. Source: Amelia Moore/UCS

receiving federal aid compared to white farmers, as evident in the landmark *Pigford v. Glickman* lawsuit in 1999.^[5,6] Despite US agriculture originating from the free labor and knowledge of farmers of color, minority producers are significantly underrepresented in agriculture and constitute less than 5% of farmers.^[7]

Such inequity ripples through the entire food system and ends with public health disparities. The rising trend of diet-related diseases, such as obesity, in the U.S. has significant direct and indirect costs—exceeding \$200 billion—making “cheap” food the more expensive option in the long-run.^[8] In 2013, 1 in 8 U.S. preschool children (between the ages of 2 and 5) was obese—increasing to 1 in 5 for black children and 1 in 6 for Hispanic children.^[9] Simply, low-income communities of color, both urban and rural, are paying the price for “cheap” food. But this social injustice affects everyone.

Healthy local and regional food systems are fostered by close relationships between producers and customers. Access to fresh, nutritious food creates the foundation for long-term economic and public

health. Demand for local food is growing; in 2014 sales totaled approximately \$12 billion with industry sources estimating the market's value could hit \$20 billion by 2019.^[10] We've seen the number of farmers markets increasing by 180% since 2006 and the number of food hubs, which aggregate products from small and mid-size producers to distribute to large-volume buyers in the local region, double since 2009. Each food hub on average creates 20 jobs and generates nearly \$4 million in annual sales.^[10] In the case of Farm-to-School, the USDA estimates that schools spent nearly \$800 million on local food (2013-2014) and the future buying power of this program could result in an additional \$350 million for family farmers, with a full economic impact of \$1 billion.^[11]

Institutions—such as schools, hospitals, and universities—have the potential to improve public and environmental health and to strengthen the economic vitality of their communities. Through values-based supply chains that prioritize local, sustainable farmers and farmers of color, institutions can harness their purchasing power to contribute in growing and strengthening local and regional food economies.

CASE STUDY: In 2008, The Common Market arose from the desire to empower, strengthen and connect two vulnerable populations in the Philadelphia region: local family farmers and low income communities. Lack of infrastructure constrained local farmers' ability to reach larger, wholesale markets and limited low-income communities' access to fresh and healthy foods. The solution was to create a nonprofit local food distributor (or food hub). The Common Market has provided aggregation and distribution services from over 120 small and mid-sized family farmers to over 400 customers in the Mid-Atlantic and Georgia.

The Common Market serves a wide range of

customers but deliberately targets relationships with “anchor institutions”—schools, hospitals, colleges, etc.—that serve low-income and vulnerable populations, whose constituents are most at risk for diet-related illness.

Working with a wide variety of wholesale buyers enables The Common Market to aggregate high and consistent demand for local, regional food and keep prices profitable for farmers and affordable for customers with tighter purchasing budgets. By scaling their inclusive model of healthy food distribution, The Common Market has created a sustainable, significant intervention that builds regional economic viability. In almost eight years of operation, they have sold over \$14 million of vegetables, fruits, grains, beef, poultry, eggs, dairy and value-added products into regional food systems.

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This primer was co-created by members of the Good Food for All collaborative and is intended to be used by anyone with an interest the power of institutional procurement to transform the food system. For more information, contact amoore@ucsusa.org. October 2016.

Good Food Procurement Primer

Nutrition

INTRODUCTION

This document is part of a series intended to introduce readers to the potential for institutional procurement to advance an equitable food system. The primers follow the five pillars of the Good Food Purchasing Program, a holistic and values-based food procurement framework which was developed by the Los Angeles Food Policy Council in 2012.^[1] These pillars strive to be integrative and include: Local Economies; Environmental Sustainability; Valued Workforce; Animal Welfare; and Nutrition.

NUTRITION

The U.S. food system was built on unfair practices and labor exploitation of non-white racial and ethnic groups.^[2] Today, the food system perpetuates these inequities, which ripple through the entire food system and contributes to public health disparities. Tribal as well as low income African-American and Latino communities experience limited access to healthy food choices, and instead are surrounded by an abundance of foods high in sugar, salt, and fat--increasing their risk of diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.^[3]

Diet-related chronic diseases, such as obesity, start early on and cause problems beyond health implications well into adulthood. Children of color face the greatest risk for obesity with more than 20 percent of African-Americans and 22 percent of Latinos obese compared to 14 percent of white children.^[4] Children who are obese are more likely to miss school due to illness and have lower academic achievement, thus initiating the vicious cycle of poverty and poor health.^[5,6]

School meals present a critical opportunity to increase access to healthy foods and protect against chronic disease through good nutrition. Half of a



Children eating a nutritious meal at school. Source: USDA Flickr.

child's daily calories are consumed in school. For lower-income children, a school meal may be their only meal of the day.^[7] A recent study found that the federal Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides free fruits and vegetables to schools with highest numbers of low-income students, decreased childhood obesity rates in Arkansas elementary schools by 3 percent.^[8] Over 45 percent of black students were in high-poverty schools compared to 8% of white students.^[9] School meals can improve nutrition status and ensure all children are on an upward spiral of health and opportunity.

While school meal budgets and lunch programs are largely federally funded, schools can make commitments to good food procurement to improve the nutrition quality of the food they're serving to all students. With strategic planning, schools can leverage their purchasing power to provide nutritious food to their students, without exceeding their limited budget. School Food Focus (Focus) worked with 46 of the largest school districts in the country, leveraging their collective \$600 million purchasing power to create more than 50 nutritious products for the school food system.^[10]

Institutions such as schools, universities, and hospitals, have a vital role in improving and sustaining healthy food access within our communities. These institutions serve millions of meals annually, are among the largest employers in a community, and are often explicitly oriented toward supporting community health. Through a health and nutrition value-based approach, institutions can make a significant contribution to advancing an equitable, good food system.

CASE STUDY:

Betti Wiggins, Executive Director of the Office for Food Services at Detroit Public Schools (DPS), is a leading visionary in healthy food procurement. With the belief that food is the great equalizer, Wiggins has guided school food procurement to be truly centered around creating opportunities for all students to thrive.

In 2008, Wiggins led the transition from primarily outsourcing to in-house preparation for most of the DPS meals. This move enabled them to nearly double the district's food budget, permitting more spending on fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, Wiggins removed the deep-fat fryer and other kitchen equipment that didn't align with the commitment to healthy food.

Detroit native, Chef Kevin Frank crafted menus to meet federal nutrition standards that incorporated a cultural awareness for the diverse communities that surround each of the DPS schools. Together, these factors improved the nutritional quality for the more than 85,000 school meals served daily--thus promoting health and well-being for over 55,000 students.

According to Wiggins, DPS now spends almost 45% of its food budget on locally-sourced dairy, grain, and produce for school meals, thus encouraging a healthy local economy as well.

Detroit Public Schools district is exemplifying how institutions rooted in communities, especially schools, across the country can drive social change through school food procurement.

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This primer on Nutrition was co-created by members of the Good Food for All collaborative and is intended to be used by anyone with an interest in starting conversations about the power of institutional procurement to transform the food system. For more information, contact: amoores@ucsusa.org.

October 2016.

Good Food Procurement Primer

Environmental Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Clean air, clean water, healthy soil and diverse ecosystems are indispensable and upon which all of life depends. As the environmental impacts of human activities--from global climate change to dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico--have become more pronounced, the need to follow environmentally-sustainable practices has become more urgent.

The concept of environmental sustainability is nothing new, finding roots in nearly every culture on every continent. While many have tried to “green-wash” the term, such efforts are missing the heart of what sustainability means: addressing the needs of current and future generations to live in healthy ecosystems marked by diversity and abundance.

Food and agriculture is primary to the topic of environmental sustainability, both as a major problem and potential solution. As a nation we are losing soil to erosion at unsustainable rates precipitated by intensive farming practices.^[2] And where the soil is not lost to erosion, the ubiquitous use of synthetic fertilizers is slowly killing the very soil in which all of life depends.^[3] Diverse and abundant ecosystems produce nourishing food and increase the health and wealth of our communities.



Cover crops in an orchard nourish the soil, prevent water runoff, and create habitat for wildlife. Source: USDA

Agricultural workers, rural communities, and low income communities of color disproportionately suffer from the environmental impacts of conventional agriculture practices: increased air and water pollution, toxic chemical exposures, antibiotic resistant bacteria, climate change, and loss of biodiversity. Confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) are disproportionately located adjacent to low-income communities and communities of color, and residents “often complain of irritation to their eyes, noses, and throats, along with a decline in the quality of life.”^[4,5,6] Further, the growth of industrial farming has undermined, displaced, and discriminated against agriculture-based indigenous tribes and black farmers who, over generations, determined how to grow the food we need in the best way for sustaining our natural resources. Those most negatively impacted by industrial agriculture are systemically and politically disenfranchised.

Farmers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, and consumers have been responding by supporting the adoption of old and new practices that conserve natural resources rather than degrade them; the judicious use of antibiotics to ensure effectiveness for future

generations, prioritizing sourcing from local and minority-owned farms, and the adoption of cover crops and crop rotation to mitigate soil erosion, increase biodiversity and build soil health.

Motivated by environmental concerns and human health, consumer demand has helped drive the increased adoption of sustainable farming and business practices. Institutions, such as public schools, city governments, and hospitals have a critical role to play in addressing the structural challenges of our food system. The purchasing power of institutions represents a largely untapped tool for accelerating the adoption of environmentally sustainable farming, ranching and business practices. By supporting new ventures and values-based supply chains, institutions can help expand opportunities for healthier communities and healthier jobs.

CASE STUDY

For Native Americans, “the buffalo represented their spirit and reminded them of how their lives were once lived free and in harmony with nature.”^[8] In the 1800’s, the U.S. government sanctioned the slaughter of millions of buffalo in effort to oppress and weaken native populations.^[9] In May 2016, President Obama officially declared the American bison (i.e. buffalo) the national mammal of the United States.^[10]

Buffalo have a myriad of ecological benefits. Their grazing habits prevent overgrowth from depleting the soil. Buffalo manure and urine recycle nutrients that enrich the soil and promote plant health. Buffalo also stimulate animal diversity: the clearing of certain plants enables other animals, such as prairie dogs, to feed--who in turn provides food for other predators. In the rainy season, wetland species thrive in shallow pools created by the wallowing (rolling in the dirt) by buffalo.^[11]

Today, the InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC)

works across 19 states and 62 tribes to reestablish buffalo on Native American land in effort to promote ecological restoration and cultural enhancement for present and future generations.^[8] Through a Farm-to-School grant, ITBC worked with 13 South Dakota schools to leverage procurement dollars to invest in tribal-raised buffalo for the school lunch menu. Not only is buffalo an environmentally-sustainable alternative to beef, it also excels as a more nutritious option. Buffalo is a lean source of protein, rich in omega 3’s, iron, and Vitamin E.^[8] The program also enables students to learn about tribal culture and traditions related to the buffalo.

Buffalo represent an opportunity to promote and invest in environmentally-sustainable protein while also acknowledging, respecting, and protecting cultural traditions of Native Americans.

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October 2016

Good Food Procurement Primer

Valued Workforce

INTRODUCTION

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VALUED WORKFORCE

For too long, U.S. workers throughout the food system (production, processing, distribution, retail, and food service industries) have faced substandard wages and poor working conditions. The harsh and unfair treatment of workers along the food chain, particularly those of color, constitutes serious human rights violations.^{[2][3]} Food workers cite health, safety, and employment law violations ranging from pesticide exposure, wage theft, child labor, long work hours with few breaks, and lack of access to health benefits with greater frequency than other sectors in the economy.

In addition to feeding the nation, the U.S. food system is a large and growing segment of the national economy and an increasing contributor to the U.S. workforce. The food system employs approximately 20 million individuals, one-sixth of the nation's entire workforce.^[4] Despite their substantial impact on the economy, five of the eight lowest-paying jobs in the country are in the food system^[5] with more than 86 percent of food system workers earning low or poverty wages. Research at the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United shows that people of color are most often impacted: African-Americans and workers of Asian and Latino heritage are more



Daniel Blackwood, Gold Star Driver. Source: Small Planet Institute.

likely to hold “Back of the House” restaurant positions than white workers, and nearly 70% of these positions earn below the minimum wage.^[6] Ironically, along with being more likely to face economic hardship, food chain workers often suffer the most from food insecurity--the lack of reliable access to affordable, nutritious food.^[7]

This disparity is also present in the fields, whether it be farmworkers picking grapes in California or pulling shrimp from the Gulf of Mexico. Often backbreaking and brutal work, these workers, mostly immigrants of color, agree to low wage jobs and poor working conditions out of necessity. Complicating the matter, those who are undocumented are subject to even greater employer abuses that in many cases have met the definition of slavery under federal law.

Fundamental to the respect of workers in the food system is the right to Freedom of Association as granted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, these rights are often denied to workers in the food system. Section 7 of the National

Labor Relations Act, which guarantees employees the right to form, join, or assist labor organizations, by design excludes agricultural workers.

A food system based on an exploited workforce comprised disproportionately of immigrants of color is unjust and unsustainable. It is indisputable that food is a human right, and the human rights of those who produce our food, from farm to fork, must be respected as well.

Food procurement by public institutions—including schools, hospitals, and universities—plays a major role in driving change in our industrialized food system. We must prioritize our workers if we are to reverse the low-cost, high volume output approach that fuels low wages and substandard working conditions. The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) is a tool in building and implementing procurement standards that support a healthy and sustainable food system and protects the health and well-being of food chain workers and producers, from production to consumption.

CASE STUDY

In 2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the largest in the nation, adopted the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) and has since developed a food procurement strategy that promotes a more equitable food system.

The adoption of GFPP by the school district has served as a catalyst for the way its vendors do business, incentivizing them to adopt values into their practices that promote and strengthen the rights of workers so they can demonstrate to customers that they, too, are committed to building a more just food system.

Gold Star Foods is food distributor in LA, that currently serves over 380 school districts. Because

they supply to LAUSD, the GFPP Standards are applied to their supply chain.

Since GFPP implementation, Good Star has created 65 new full-time living wage jobs. These new positions come with comprehensive benefits including full medical, dental, and vision coverage, as well as eligibility for 401K investment plans with employer match.

Furthermore, Gold Star has a productive working relationship with Teamsters Local 63—the union that represents their drivers—and recently they worked together to agree on a long-term contract to ensure living wages and a voice in the workplace for their transportation workers. There are now 160 unionized truck drivers who have significantly better wages and working conditions.^[8]

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This primer on Valued Workforce was co-created by members of the Good Food for All collaborative and partners and is intended to be used by anyone with an interest in starting conversations about the power of institutional procurement to transform the food system. For more information, contact: amoore@ucsusa.org

October 2016.

Good Food Procurement Primer

Animal Welfare

INTRODUCTION

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ANIMAL WELFARE

Currently, over 99% of land* animals raised for meat, dairy and eggs in this country are raised in factory farms: livestock rearing in confined, intensive, controlled conditions.^[2] Some issues are ubiquitous in these systems no matter the animal species. The foremost issue is scale. In 2015 alone approximately 9.2 billion land animals were slaughtered in the United States for their meat.^[3,4] This figure does not include the numerous animals who were raised for meat, dairy or eggs but condemned at slaughter (their meat rejected for use in the food system) or died before slaughter.

Meanwhile, the number of individual farms in America is the lowest it has ever been.^[5] Thus, as flocks and herd sizes increase to thousands of cattle or hundreds of thousands of chickens on a single farm, *individual* animal welfare becomes difficult to maintain. Animals (pigs, cows, chickens) are subject to removal of body parts without anesthesia (tails, testicles, teeth) to prevent stressed animals from injuring each other. Many are also severely confined. A mother pig lives her whole adult life in a series of crates so small she cannot walk, turn, or tend to her piglets once born.



Pasture raised sheep. Source: hschmider via Pixabay.

Relatedly, because massive numbers of animals are kept under constant stress of unnatural and crowded environments, animals are routinely fed non-therapeutic doses of antibiotics and other additives. These drugs do not treat illness but rather maintain a higher rate of growth in the animal despite the conditions in which they live. This practice is permitted by law, even for antibiotics that are used in human medicine.

Blatant disregard for livestock parallels the inhumane treatment of food workers. Intensive animal rearing creates problems for workers who operate the farms – from the danger of machine accidents to injuries caused by highly stressed animals. Confined animal feeding operations also emit pollutants, like hydrogen sulfide and ammonia, which can have negative impact on the surrounding environment. Humane treatment of animals not only benefits the animals in question, but also the environment, food workers, and nearby communities.

There is essentially no regulation of the treatment of animals on the farm. Federal regulations (aside from those covering USDA Organic animals) only cover transport and slaughter, and even then, these laws do

not apply to birds, which make up over 98% of land animals raised and slaughtered. Additionally, many states' animal cruelty laws specifically exempt "standard" farming practices. Thus, perhaps more than in any other area, it is by adopting good food policy values that purchasers can make a positive impact in the lives of animals raised for food.

Public institutions such as schools, hospitals, universities and local governments play critical roles in shaping local and regional food systems. These institutions are ingrained in their communities and purchase large quantities of food for their dining services. By creating market demand for more humanely-raised animal products, institutions can help expand opportunities for farmers and ranchers who raise livestock using better welfare practices. Existing models such as the Good Food Purchasing Program are tools in harnessing institutional purchasing power to drive values-based transformation in our food supply chains.

CASE STUDY

Good animal welfare benefits animals *and* businesses. A stellar example is [Niman Ranch](#), a network of over 725 family farmers and ranchers across 28 states raising cattle, pigs, and sheep. Niman Ranch, deemed a "pioneer in improving animal treatment standards" by Business Insider^[6], raises animals in extensive systems rather than the cramped, indoor spaces that have come to dominate commercial food animal production.

Niman Ranch works with "the nation's largest network of family farmers and ranchers"^[7] and plays an instrumental role in supporting America's farmers by allowing rural farms and ranches to access a national marketplace.

Niman Ranch was acquired by Perdue in 2015, and has since demonstrated a commitment^[8] to not compromise its high standards of animal welfare: in

August 2016, Niman Ranch [announced](#) its achievement of the Certified Humane label. Certified Humane is a leading independent auditing and certification program operated by non-profit Humane Farm Animal Care.

Marketplace demand for farm animal welfare is high. Certified Humane-labeled products are sold in all 50 states, including through major chains like Safeway, which in 2012 [announced a cage-free egg partnership with Certified Humane](#).

Niman Ranch has demonstrated that not only can farm animals be raised with high welfare (and without routine dosing of antibiotics or hormones) but that there is large and growing demand for this sort of farming. The company sells into markets across the country, including Chipotle, for which it was, as of 2015, the top pork supplier.^[9]

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October 2016.

*Many more animals, including fish and other marine species, are used for various animal food products. Concerns around animal welfare arise in those industries as well.