Setting Goals and Establishing an Evaluation Baseline

January 28, 2016

USDA | THE FARM to SCHOOL PROGRAM

Todays Speakers

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SPARK POLICY INSTITUTE
igniting public policy and community change

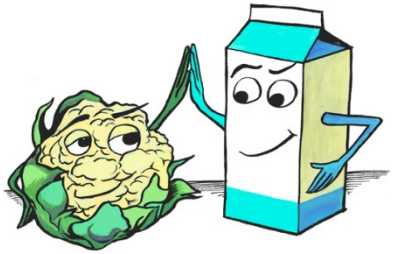
Setting Goals and Establishing an Evaluation Baseline

Dr. Lyn Kathlene

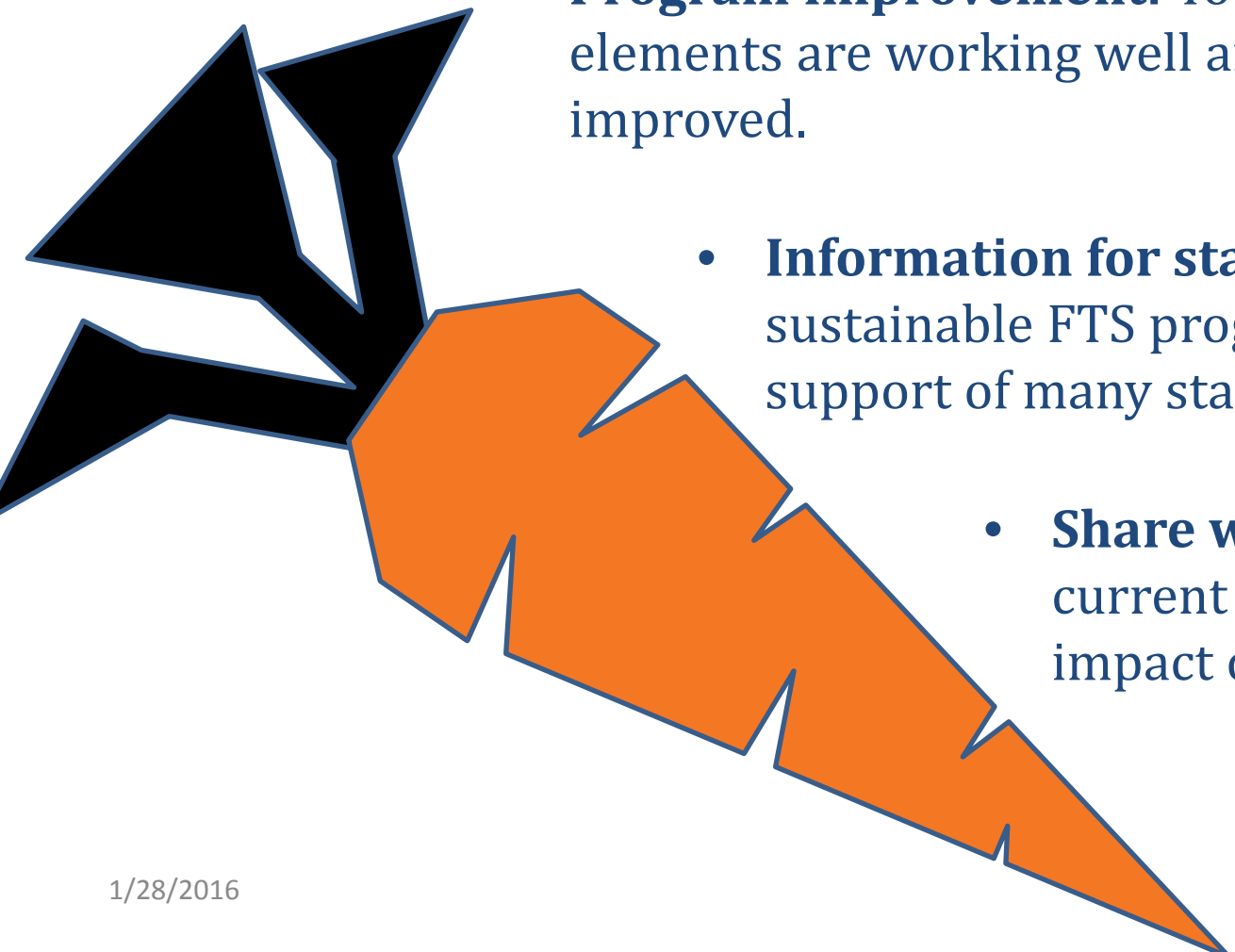
January 28, 2016

What you will learn in 30 minutes!

- Great reasons to evaluate your FTS program
- The connection between DOING activities and causing CHANGE in the world
- A logic model is your best friend
- Baseline data is fun to collect
- FTS Evaluation Toolkit was made for you
- No questions left unanswered!



Why Farm to School Evaluation?



- **Program improvement:** To understand what elements are working well and what can be improved.
- **Information for stakeholders:** Robust, sustainable FTS programs need the support of many stakeholders.
- **Share with funders:** Show a current or potential funder the impact of your program.

WHAT SHOULD I EVALUATE?

Sphere of Control

Activities
Deliverables
Milestones
Participants

What we do

Sphere of Influence

Short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes

Why we do the work we do!

Sphere of Control

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What we do

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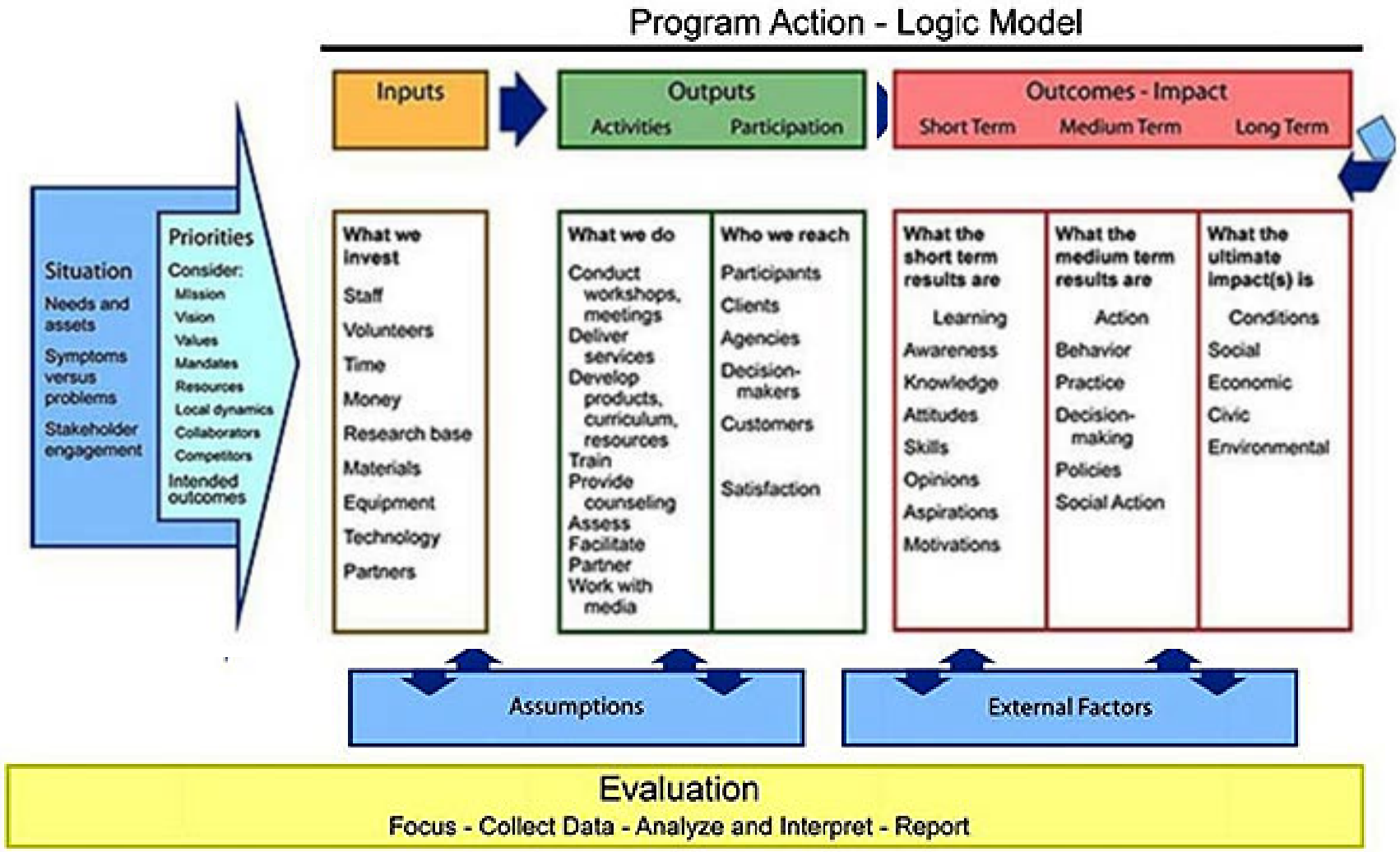
Short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes

Why we do the work we do!

LOGIC MODELS: ESTABLISHING OUTCOMES TO EVALUATE

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Planning – Implementation – Evaluation



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Logic Model: People's Garden

People's Garden Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		
	Activities	Participants	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term
Staff Research Money Materials	Workshops on nutrition and food security. Workshops on plant requirements, soil, water, etc. Hands-on garden activities such as planting, weeding, etc. Workshops on pollinators, beneficial insects, etc. Workshops on harvesting techniques, timing, etc.	Primary school students Teachers Administrators Community and parent volunteers	*Awareness and Knowledge Development* Increased awareness of nutrition and where food comes from Increased knowledge of basic plant biology and plant needs Increased knowledge of cultivating gardeners Awareness of gardens as ecosystems	Learning to grow edible plants	Appreciation of fresh food production and quality Physical Activity Appreciation for nature

Activities
Deliverables
Milestones
Participants

BASELINE DATA

Knowledge and attitudes about local food, nutrition, and agriculture

Availability and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables during school lunch meals

Participation in breakfast program and foods offered

Experiences with gardening

Sample survey questions

21. How many times in your life have you been to a farm?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 1 time
- ☐ 2 times
- ☐ 3 times
- ☐ 4 times or more

22. How do tomatoes grow? *Please check one.*

- ☐ As plants
- ☐ As animals
- ☐ As minerals
- ☐ Something else

23. What part of a plant is a carrot? *Please check one.*

- ☐ Leaf
- ☐ Root
- ☐ Stalk
- ☐ Flower

24. Where do eggs come from? *Please check one.*

- ☐ Cows
- ☐ Goats
- ☐ Chickens
- ☐ Something else

25. What is a benefit of using compost?

- ☐ Compost feeds wild animals.
- ☐ Makes farmers use more chemical fertilizers.
- ☐ Compost keeps food out of landfills.
- ☐ None of the above.

26. Do insects play an important role in growing plants?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Please tell how you feel about tasting new vegetables.

	definitely	probably	probably not	definitely not
14 Will you taste a **vegetable** if you don't know what it is?	☐	☐	☐	☐
15 Will you taste a **vegetable** if it looks strange?	☐	☐	☐	☐
16 Will you taste a **vegetable** if you have never tasted it before?	☐	☐	☐	☐

6 What did you **do** at morning break (interval) yesterday?

sit around	stand around	walk around	run around

7 Did you eat and drink anything for lunch yesterday? (What did you have?)

.....

.....

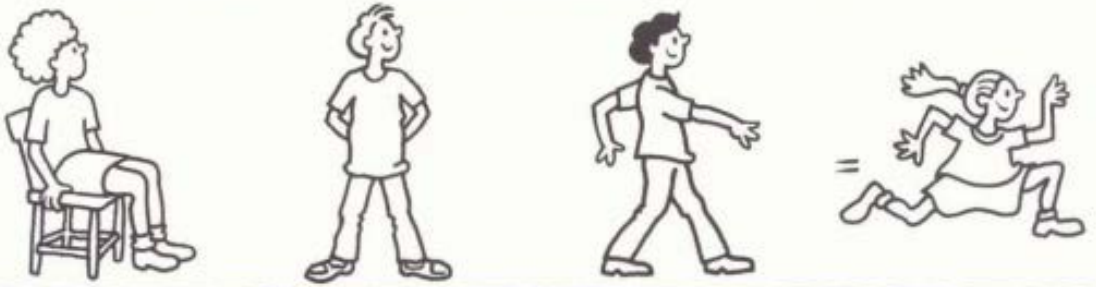
.....drink.....

My Lunch

Draw your lunch here

8 What did you **do** at lunchtime yesterday?

You can color in these activities



sit around	stand around	walk around	run around

School Environment Observational Tool

BREAKFAST OBSERVED IN THE CLASSROOM

2. Start Time: _____ **3. Classroom #:** ____ **4. Teacher:** _____ **5. End Time:** _____

6. Time provided to students for breakfast (seated/dedicated time): ☐ <10 minutes ☐ 10-15 minutes ☐ >15 minutes

HEALTH PROMOTION IN THE CLASSROOM

7. Are there any health promoting posters/items/signs in the classroom? ☐ Yes ☐ No **8.** How many total? _____

9. Describe type of health promotion. *(fill out table)* **Take photos of materials*

	Type	Location *(wall, desk)*	Keyword descriptor *(healthy eating, exercise, etc.)*
a.			
b.			
c.			
d.			
e.			

CONTENT

10. Describe what breakfast food items are available to students as part of the school meal.

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

PARTICIPATION

11. Number of students in the classroom: _____ **12.** Number of students who took a school breakfast: _____

Questions About Gardening and Farms

26. Have you ever grown food in a garden?
    __Yes __No (if no, skip to question #30)

27. Where did you garden? Please check all the answers that apply to you.

    ___At home
    ___At school
    ___A friend's house
    ___A relative's house
    ___During an after school program
    ___During a summer program
    ___Other: (please explain):

28. Did you eat any of the food that you grew in the garden?
    ___Yes ___No ___I don't remember

29. Name up to 3 foods you grew that you *liked* to eat:
    1.
    2.
    3.

30. Have you ever been to a farm?
    __Yes __No

31. If yes, which farm or farms you have visited:

USING THE TOOLKIT

Audiences for the FTS Toolkit

Non-evaluators involved in a FTS program

Community partners who help support FTS programs

Experienced evaluators working with FTS programs

What is the FTS Toolkit?

Step-by -Step Guide

Preparing for Evaluation

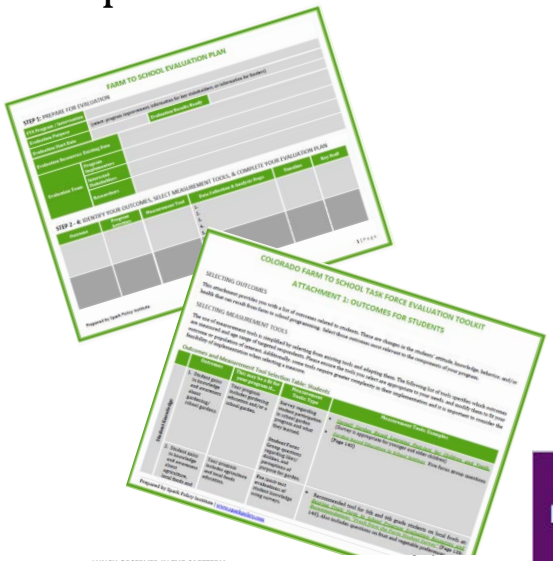
Outcomes, Indicators & Measures

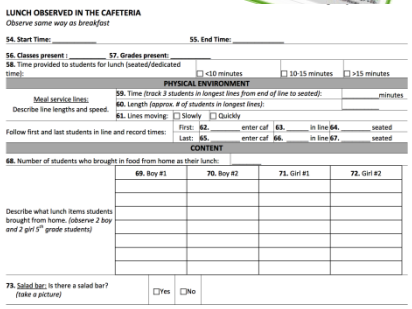
Choosing & Adapting Tools

Collecting & Analyzing Data

Reporting Results

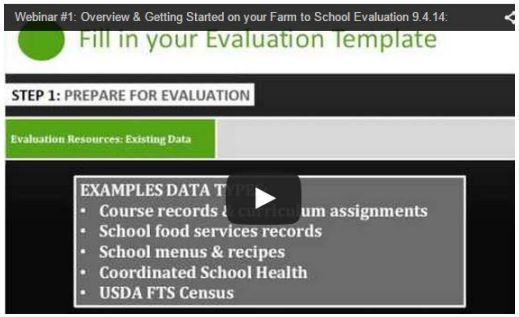
Templates and Tools





FARM TO SCHOOL EVALUATION TOOLKIT

Webinar Series & Peer Learning



FARM TO SCHOOL EVALUATION TOOLKIT

- Overview: Introducing FTS Evaluation
- Step 1: Preparing for Evaluation
- Step 2: Outcomes, Indicators & Measures
- Step 3: Choosing and Adapting Tools
- Step 4: Collecting and Analyzing Data
- Steps 5 and 6: Reporting Results
- Peer-to-Peer Learning

Step 1: Preparing for Evaluation

To successfully implement a farm to school evaluation, thoughtful planning needs to be done upfront. The first step to get started on your farm to school evaluation is to identify what you want to evaluate (not everything needs to be evaluated), the purpose of your evaluation (as this will determine the data you need to collect), when you should evaluate, where you will find existing data and resources to jump start your evaluation, and who needs to be on your evaluation team.

+ Identify the Program or Activity to Evaluate
+ Identify Your Purpose
+ When to Evaluate
+ Resources
+ Partners
+ Human Subjects Protections
+ Online Training

FARM TO SCHOOL EVALUATION PLAN

STEP 1: PREPARE FOR EVALUATION

FTS Program / Intervention			
Evaluation Purpose	(select: program improvement, information for key stakeholders, or information for funders)		
Evaluation Start Date		Evaluation Results Ready	
Evaluation Resources: Existing Data			
Evaluation Team	Program Implementers		
	Interested Stakeholders		
	Researchers		

STEP 2 - 4: IDENTIFY YOUR OUTCOMES, SELECT MEASUREMENT TOOLS, & COMPLETE YOUR EVALUATION PLAN

Outcome	Program Activities	Measurement Tool	Data Collection & Analysis Steps	Timeline	Key Staff
			1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		
			1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		

Outcomes, indicators and measures are often confusing as well as intimidating to non-evaluators, but this need not be the case. Key to a successful evaluation is determining upfront how to select and prioritize outcomes, how to determine what is realistic to measure, and how to make sure you are measuring outcomes that accurately reflect your program's impact. Logic models are a tool that will help you in this task. It is also important to pay attention to the purpose of your evaluation as that is an important determinate of what you'll want to measure.

– What You Can Measure

We certainly can measure a lot of things that do matter, but there's a lot out there that gets measured that does not matter. Keeping this advice in mind will keep you focused on what does matter and what can be measured. Let's dig deeper by considering two key concepts: The Sphere of Control and the Sphere of Influence.

The **Sphere of Control** is, as the name suggests, those things we have control over (or at least we think we do!). It is the activities of our program, the deliverables to our funders, the timeline of milestones reached, and the number of people involved in our program. These are the things we DO. These are typically the things that we measure. They tell you about the effort you put in but they don't tell you about the "why bother" of the program.

The **Sphere of Influence** is the change we hope to see occur through the farm to school programs we implement. These can be categorized into short, intermediate, and long term outcomes. For example, in a school garden program, a short term outcome might be for students to have increased awareness and knowledge about how plants grow,

+ Types of Data to Collect

+ Types of Data Collection Tools

− Benefits and Limitations of Methods

While there are many different types of data collection methods, the most common tools used in farm to school evaluations are: Observations, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Each of these methods has its advantages and challenges. The publication, "Designing Evaluation for Education Projects" provides a nice summary of each of the four methods, described below.

Purpose of Observational Tools

To gather information about how a project actually operates, particularly about the process.

Advantages	Challenges
• Can view operations of a project as they are actually occurring. • Can adapt to events as they occur.	• Can be difficult to interpret behaviors. • Observations can be difficult to categorize. • Can influence participant's behaviors. • Can be expensive to implement.

Purpose of Interviews

associated with farm to school activities. The Toolkit's seven attachments – one for each target audience – provides guidance on how to select appropriate outcomes based on the activities in your program. The attachments accompanying this toolkit will help you identify outcomes that you want to measure as part of your evaluation, related to those audiences you identified in the previous step. Below is an example of how the attachments are laid out with respect to matching activities to outcomes. Look down the column "This may be a fit for your program if…" to identify activities you are doing, then look at the Outcome column, which identifies the type of outcome you can expect to see based on the activity.

Outcomes & Activities Columns in Attachment 3

	Outcomes	This may be a fit for your program if….
Teacher Attitudes and Behavior	1. Teachers/staff model healthy eating.	Your program includes nutrition and healthy eating components, and provides opportunities for students to witness teacher/staff eating habits.
	2. Positive attitudes about integrating farm to school related information in curriculum.	Your program includes significant changes to the curriculum to include FTS components.

- Attachment 1: Outcomes for Students
- Attachment 2: Outcomes for Parents
- Attachment 3: Outcomes for Teachers
- Attachment 4: Outcomes for School Food Services
- Attachment 5: Outcomes for Producers
- Attachment 6: Outcomes for School Leadership
- Attachment 7: Outcomes for Community

+ Types of Data to Collect

+ Types of Data Collection Tools

+ Benefits and Limitations of Methods

+ Matching Audience to Method

− Matching FTS Outcomes to Tools

The Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit has seven attachments, one for each target group that farm to school programs could impact: students, parents, teachers, food services, producers, school leadership, and community. Each attachment includes evaluation outcomes relevant to that target group, the types of FTS program activities that would likely lead to that outcome, and data collection instruments appropriate for capturing data for the outcome.

Below is an example of **Attachment 1: Outcomes for Students**.

Outcome	This may be a fit for your program if...	Measurement Tools: Type	Measurement Tools: Examples
2. Student gains in knowledge and awareness about agriculture, local foods, and seasonality.	Your program includes agriculture and local foods education.	**Pre/post-test evaluations** of student knowledge using surveys.	• Recommended tool for 5th and 6th grade students on local foods at: Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations, "Fresh from the Farm Student Survey" (Page 138-140). Also includes questions on fruit and vegetable preferences. • Recommended tool for measuring 6-12 year olds' knowledge and attitudes about healthy and local foods: Wisconsin Farm to School: One-Year Evaluation Report "Wisconsin Farm to School 2010-2011 Student Survey" (Appendix D, Pages 27-37)

How Do I Use the Toolkit?

Develop an evaluation plan, select tools, collect and analyze data, share the result.

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- Steps 5 and 6: Reporting Results
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Overview: Introducing FTS Eval

Since the late 1990's, evaluation has contributed to the fa
field of Farm to School evaluation has improved over the
complete lack of formal evaluation to an increasing focus
several reasons to evaluate farm-to-school programs, ma
overarching categories: program improvement; informati
information for current and future funders. Areas of focu
specifically include program participation, outputs, and sl
outcomes, as well as longer-term outcomes that should b
baseline evaluations.

The Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit provides practical g
collection instruments. It is accompanied by a webinar tra

Resources

- Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evalua
  The need for more systematic and comprehensive eva
  National Farm to School Network (NFSN). The NFSN E

Parting Words of Advice

- Identify the purpose of your evaluation
- Focus on the short and intermediate term outcomes/goals
- Consider the different groups that you are affecting and evaluate the impact
- Don’t try to learn everything – be realistic
- AND…..

FTS Evaluation Toolkit Webinar Series

Toolkit

http://sparkpolicy.com/tools/

Contact

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Thank You! Questions?

To receive your SNA CEU certificate, email Robert.gorman@fns.usda.gov

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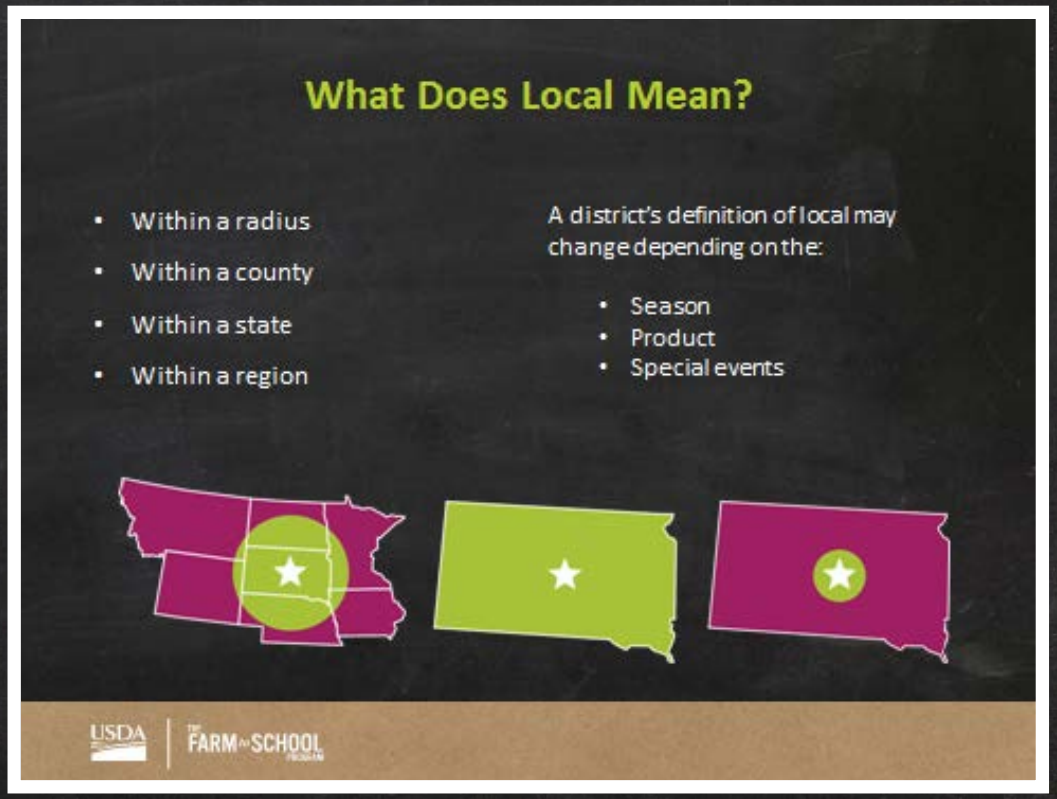
Upcoming Webinar:

Finding and Buying Local Foods:

February 4, 2:00 PM EST



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