

USDA Reports Benefits Of Farm-To-School Alliances

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The USDA recently issued a report on "How Local Farmers and School Food Service Buyers Are Building Alliances."

The report summarizes the discussions and findings of the USDA-sponsored Small Farm/School Meals Initiative Southeast Regional Workshop, conducted May 1 in Georgetown, Ky. The report can be viewed at USDA's

Agricultural Marketing Service Website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/mta/publications.htm>.

The report notes that 94 percent of all farms in the U.S. can be categorized as small or limited-resource farms, grossing less than \$250,000 annually. To enhance the earning potential of these farms, AMS has taken steps to facilitate direct market-

ing between small and limited-resource agricultural producers and local school districts.

The report addresses the importance and benefits of farm-to-workshop marketing, product preferences of the school food service buyer, factors that influence a school food service buyer's choice of vendor, potential barriers faced by the small producer, recommended approaches for

farm-to-school marketing initiatives. While the report's focus is on the experience of small farmers and school food service directors in Kentucky, North Carolina, the Florida Panhandle, and Southern California, many of their experiences may apply to other regions for the country.

Copies of the report may be requested from Debra Tropp, AMS transportation and Marketing Programs, USDA STOP 0266, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20250-0266, (202) 720-2704, fax (202) 690-4948, or e-mail Debra.Tropp@usda.gov.

breaking into the school food service market, and case studies of successful



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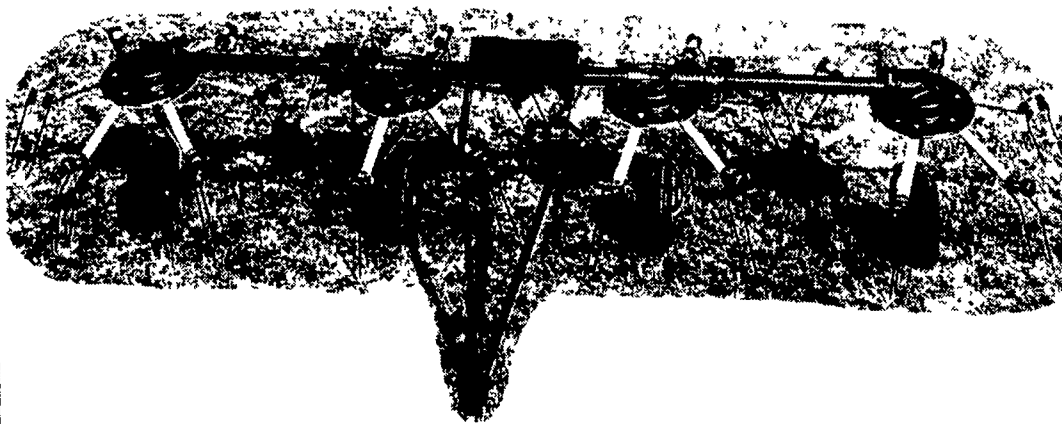
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