**­­­­­** **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)**

**Instructions:** This information form provides product needs and information regarding **[County Name]***’s* school nutrition program and requests information from potential vendors. **[School Division Name]***’s*nutrition program will use this information to develop the division’s annual procurement plan. School food authorities (SFAs) will enter their information on this form, including products and quantities desired and provide it to potential vendors. Vendors will return the RFI to the school division with the products that they can provide for the school division. Vendors may be asked to bid on all or some of the products. Vendors, please return this RFI via email or USPS to**[School Nutrition Director/Proxy Email Address]** by **[date]**. For questions, please contact **[name]** at **[email address]** *or call* **[phone number]**.*You can expect an email confirming receipt of the information and next steps within two weeks of mailing. Thank you for your interest in selling to this school division.*

**School Point of Contact Name:**

**School Division Name:**

**Mailing Address:**

**Address Line 2:**

**City, State, Zip:**

**Email Address:**

**Contact Phone:**

**Number of Schools:**

**Number of Meals Served Daily:**

**Percentage of Free and Reduced Eligibility in School Division:**

**Buyer’s Preferred Delivery Day:**

**Farm/Vendor Name:**

**Farm/Vendor Primary Contact:**

**Address:**

**City, State, Zip:**

**Email:**

**Phone:**

1. **Acreage in Production:**
2. **Do you have a written food safety plan?** Yes  No
3. **Are you Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified?** Yes  No
4. **Do you hold product liability insurance?**  Yes  No

**If yes, what amount?** $

1. **Can you provide one student field trip per school year?** Yes  No
2. **Can you provide one school visit per school year?** Yes  No
3. **Will you permit site visits by school nutrition directors or their designees?** Yes  No
4. **Provide a brief description of your farm operation.**
5. **What kind of farming practices do you use, i.e., conventional growing methods, conservation tillage, hydroponics, GMO-free, certified organic, integrated pest management (IPM), etc.?**
6. **Where do you currently sell your products?**

Check all that apply. Answering this question is not mandatory, but it could assist in developing a product distribution plan.

Food Service Company:

Food Hub:

Farmer Cooperative:

Farmers Markets:

School divisions:

Produce Auction:

Other:

1. **Do you have a delivery truck or van?** Yes  No

**If yes, is it refrigerated?** Yes  No

**Note:** Children are a high-risk population, and food safety is critical for school sales. Follow all USDA, Department of Health, and Department of Agriculture food safety guidelines for product handling and transport.

See USDA-ARS Handbook Number 66, Commercial Storage of Fruits, Vegetables, and Florist and Nursery Stocks for more information on proper storage temperatures and optimal humidity rates. See also University of Kansas’ resource entitled “Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Produce: Storage of Fresh Produce” for a chart of optimal storage temperatures and relative humidity.

1. **Number of schools per week you could deliver to:**
2. **Preferred delivery days:**
3. **Case Minimum for Delivery:**
4. **Can you accept net 30 payment?** Yes  No
5. **Required terms of payment (Note: Schools typically have a net 30 payment policy):**

## Chart Instructions

This chart describes typical pack sizes and product specifications for Virginia’s Farm to School Harvest of the Month Program and other specific products desired by school nutrition programs. The product’s featured month is in parenthesis.

## SFAs

1. Enter estimated product needs including the number of pounds or cases needed per week or month, and the duration the product will be needed. If quantities change during summer months, please indicate that.
2. Edit product specifications as needed.
3. Enter the preferred pack size(s).
4. Provide this RFI to potential vendors and specify the deadline to return the form.

## Potential Vendors

Vendors will:

1. Enter wholesale price per pack size,
2. The window of availability, and
3. The total projected supply available for this school division.

You may enter a different pack size in the pack size column if typical pack sizes vary from what is listed. If vendors are sourcing from other growers, please indicate whether the farm of origin will provided on invoicing. The farm of origin will help school divisions and summer food sponsors market the products in their meals.

| **[School Division] Product Needs** | **Product Description & Specifications** | **School Preferred Pack Size/ Description** | **Wholesale Price per Pack Size or Vendor No.** | **Product Availability** | **Projected Supply** | **Farm of Origin** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Notes:**  Includes the product and month needed. | **Notes:**  This column contains school needs.  **SFAs:** Edit the product specs to meet your needs. | **Notes:**  **SFAs:** Edit to meet your needs.  **Vendors:** Include your pack size if different. | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert price per pack size or vendor number | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert typical number of months and weeks available. | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert weekly and total supply projections. | **Notes:**  Provided at ordering and on invoice.  Indicate if filled in by vendor by checking yes/no. |
| ***Example:***  ***Sweet Potato***  *School division requests 200 lbs. per month*  *October-January* | *Use baked or mashed. Firm and good internal quality; mature but not overly large; wiped free of dirt and no decay; cosmetic or shape imperfections okay; large and medium size preferred.* | *40# carton, 20# carton, or 10# carton*  ***Vendor****: We also pack in bushels, $28/per bushel* | *$18.00 per 40# carton; $17.00 per carton for bulk pallet delivery* | *October – January*  *12 weeks* | *10 cartons per week*  *Total:120 cartons,*  *approx. 4,800#* | *Yes*  ***Vendor:*** *We grow all the produce listed & provide invoices with our farm name.* |
| **(January)**  **Sweet Potato**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use baked or mashed. Firm and good internal quality; mature but not overly large; wiped free of dirt and no decay; cosmetic or shape imperfections okay; large and medium size preferred. | 40# carton, 20# carton, or 10# carton | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(February)**  **Squash, Butternut**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use roasted, mashed, in soups. Firm and good internal quality; mature; hard rinds, solid external color; flesh is orange with fine moist texture; slight stem attached; cosmetic or shape imperfections okay; wiped free of dirt and debris; no decay; large size preferred but variety of sizes considered. | 40# carton, 20# carton, or 10# carton | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(March)**  **Kale**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh or cooked. Fresh and full leaves, bunch or loose leaf; dry and free of dirt, decay, damage, insects, and injury; varieties acceptable. Fully washed, partly trimmed, with stem. | 5# case or  10# case | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(April)**  **Lettuce**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh on salad bar & in chef salads. All varieties; fresh; fairly tender; well-trimmed; not bitter. characteristic color/no discoloration; root intact. | Carton bulk packed, 18-24 heads or 10# case. Root intact, no clamshells | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(April)**  **Lettuce**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh on salad bar, in chef salads, on sandwiches. Insect free. All types and varieties; fresh; fairly tender; well-trimmed; characteristic color/no discoloration; not bitter. Fully washed and trimmed. | Carton packed, 24 heads or 10# case | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(May)**  **Strawberries**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh whole, sliced, and in smoothies. Can freeze bulk deliveries for later use. Quarts preferred; firm; fairly uniform red color and shape; mature but not overripe nor underdeveloped; cap attached; field packed, dry; at least 3/4-inch diameter; free of dirt, decay, damage and injury. | 8-quart flat or 12-quart crate (approx. 18#) | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(June**)  **Cucumbers**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh sliced or diced. Firm, glossy, crisp and dark green; free from decay, damage, and injury; fairly well formed; not overgrown; 1-2 ½ inch diameter. Fully washed. | 1+1/9 Bushel Waxed Box or Carton. (approx. 28 #) or 10# box | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(July)**  **Zucchini**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use sliced, diced, or spears, fresh and cooked. Mostly straight. Firm on the outside; tender on the inside; fully green; stems or portion of stem attached; fairly well formed; free of dirt, damage and injury | 10# box or 20# box | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(August)**  **Tomatoes, cherry**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use whole on salad bar and in chef salads. Varieties acceptable; firm; fairly uniform and smooth; shiny color characteristic of variety; not overripe or soft; free of dirt, decay damage, injury. | 8 pints/flat or 12 pints/flat | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(August)**  **Tomatoes, slicing**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Used fresh, sliced or diced. Medium (2 ¼”) to large 2 ½” diameter) preferred. Varieties acceptable; firm; fairly uniform and smooth; shiny color characteristic of variety; not overripe or soft; free of dirt, decay damage, injury. ¾ ripe to fully ripe. | 20# case or 10# case | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(September)**  **Peppers, sweet ripe bell**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh, sliced or diced and cooked. Medium or Large preferred. All varieties; firm flesh, sweet flavor; no shrivel or pitting; 3+ inch diameter preferred; large size (but not woody) and slightly misshapen or cosmetic issues acceptable; free of dirt, decay, damage and injury. ¾ ripe to fully ripe for red, orange, and yellow peppers. | 10# carton or 15# carton | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(October)**  **Apples, eating**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Small apple (125-138ct); minor cosmetic imperfections (i.e., minor flyspeck) acceptable. Sweet, crisp, tart; unique varieties preferred (i.e., Winesap, Stayman). No Red Delicious or Golden Delicious. | Loose pack case, 125-138 count | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(November)**  **Cabbage, green**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use shredded in slaw and cooked. Untrimmed, whole. Solid, well-formed heads: free from dirt and decay; cosmetic or shape imperfections okay; minor soil deposits allowable on outer leaves only. | 20# case  10# case | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(November)**  **Cabbage, red**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use shredded in slaw. Untrimmed whole. Solid, well-formed heads: free from dirt and decay; cosmetic or shape imperfections okay; minor soil deposits allowable on outer leaves only. | Flat crate (1.75 bushels, 50-60#) or carton (53#) | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **(December)**  **Spinach**  **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | Use fresh on salad bar or in salads. Bunches, loose packed or baby; fresh; fairly tender; triple washed & cleaned with potable water; free of dirt, decay, damage and injury. | Case (approx. 10#). Fresh, partly trimmed, fully washed. Bunches, loose pack, or baby. | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |

## Other Products Needed by School Division:

| **[School Division] Product Needs** | **Product Description & Specifications** | **School Preferred Pack Size/ Description** | **Wholesale Price per Pack Size or Vendor No.** | **Product Availability** | **Projected Supply** | **Farm of Origin** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Notes:**  SFAs should insert specific needs in this column: Total lbs., frequency, duration, weekly or monthly delivery forecast | **Notes:**  **SFAs:** Insert specifications | **Notes:**  **SFAs:** Insert desired pack size  **Vendor:** Insert standard pack size if different | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert cost per pack size | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert months and number of weeks available. | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert weekly and total supply projections. | **Notes:**  Provided at ordering and on invoice.  Indicate if filled in by vendor by checking yes/no. |
| **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[SFA desired pack size or vendor standard, if different]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[SFA desired pack size or vendor standard, if different]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[SFA desired pack size or vendor standard, if different]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **[No. lbs., frequency, duration]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[SFA desired pack size or vendor standard, if different]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |

## Other Products Available from Vendor

| **[School Division] Product Needs** | **Product Description & Specifications** | **School Preferred Pack Size/ Description** | **Wholesale Price per Pack Size or Vendor No.** | **Product Availability** | **Projected Supply** | **Farm of Origin** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Describe product | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert specifications | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert standard pack size | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert cost per pack size | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert typical number of months and weeks available. | **Notes:**  **Vendor:** Insert weekly and total supply projections. | **Notes:**  Provided at ordering and on invoice.  Indicate if filled in by vendor by checking yes/no. |
| **[Product description]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[Standard pack size]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **[Product description]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[Standard pack size]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **[Product description]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[Standard pack size]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |
| **[Product description]** | **[Product specifications]** | **[Standard pack size]** | **[Cost per pack size]** | **[Typical no. months and weeks available]** | **[No. cases/# available per week and total cases/#]** | Yes  No |

## Resources

USDA-ARS Handbook Number 66, Commercial Storage of Fruits, Vegetables, and Florist and Nursery Stocks for more information. Web access 4/4/19: <https://www.ars.usda.gov/ARSUserFiles/oc/np/CommercialStorage/CommercialStorage.pdf>

University of Kansas’ resource entitled “Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Produce: Storage of Fresh Produce” for a chart of optimal storage temperatures and relative humidity. Web access 4/4/19: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/produce/guidance/docs/Storage_of_Fresh_Produce.pdf>

Minneapolis Public Schools Farm to School Toolkit. May 2016. Web access 4/4/19: <https://nutritionservices.mpls.k12.mn.us/uploads/2016_mps_farm_to_school_toolkit.pdf>

Oxford Public Schools’ Request for Information: Web access 4/4/19: <https://www.oxfordsd.org/Page/7461>

Vermont-FEED Harvest of the Month Specifications, developed for VDOE, 3/14/19.