



Increasing Fruit and  
Vegetable consumption in  
CT School Food Services



## Start With Half A Cup

Find ways to encourage children to add a half a cup of fruits and vegetables to every meal!



### Put CT On Your Tray

Connecting schools and farms with fresh local produce and ideas for marketing, preparing and serving fresh local foods.



### Award Winning Ellie Project "Just Call Me Ellie!"

Follow the adventures of Ellie, the fruit and vegetable loving Black Lab as she teaches children how to try new things and add them to their plate! An interactive teaching guide with a proven record of increasing the choices children put on their plates.



### Food Processing ~ Norwich Public Schools

With the assistance of a USDA Grant, a large kitchen turns into an amazing Food Processing facility. Working with local farms and producers, fresh local Connecticut produce is processed for immediate and future meals.



### Farm To Fundraiser

Healthy choice ideas for fundraisers that replace the fundraisers of past with ideas of networking with local farms to promote healthy choices and support local business and agriculture.

### Portion Guides

Printable posters for quick reference to display in your prep area. Developed to assist schools in the proper portioning of fresh and cooked fruits and vegetables in School Nutrition Programs.

# Start with Half a Cup: Home Page

### Resources

- Portioning Guide
- Tips and Tricks
- Tuesday Tidbits
- Fun Things To Do
- DoAG Costume Loan
- Food Play
- SHACT
- MA Department of Agriculture
- Iowa Department of Agriculture



### CT On Your Tray

CT On Your Tray works with Food Service Directors to support them with ways to incorporate Local CT Produce into school programs.

#### Put CT Grown On Your Tray

"Put CT On Your Tray"  
Local farmers are our heroes! Learn how to feature your local farmers and have them greet your students as a life-sized cardboard portait in your school cafeteria. Change messages on the trays by simply printing out your message on an 8.5" x 11" paper and place in the tray area! Get creative! <Link here>



Resources  
Tuesday Tutorials  
Fun Things To Do  
DoAG Costume Loan  
Food Tray  
SNACT  
MA Department of Agriculture  
Vermont Department of Agriculture

Produce Posters <link>  
Engage your students with fun posters that are sure to make them talk about local fruits and veggies! Choose from a selection of posters with different slogans.



Sticker sheets <link>

Recipes- Using CT Produce at it's Best <link>  
Use these recipes to teach your staff step-by-step instructions on preparing local CT produce for your school meal plans.  
PowerPoint Presentation to view or print.



<link to PP>

<link to PP>

<link to PP>

Tips and Tricks <link>  
How to display your meals to get the students talking about you! <link>



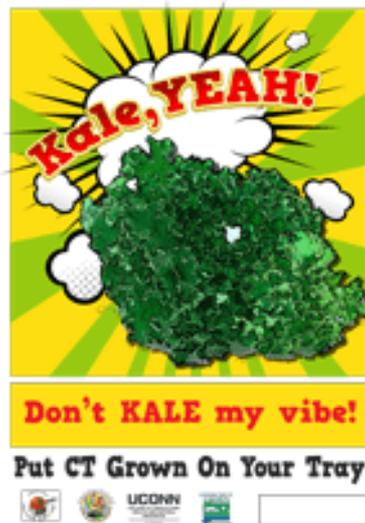
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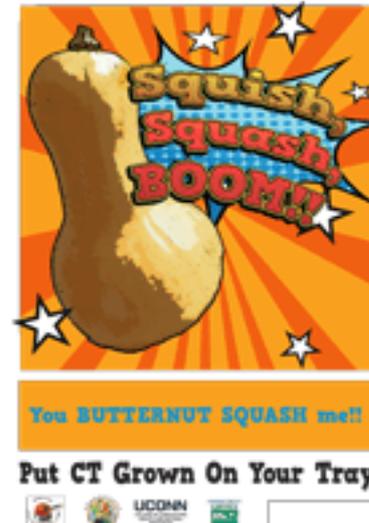
Put CT Grown On Your Tray



Put CT Grown On Your Tray



Put CT Grown On Your Tray



Put CT Grown On Your Tray



## Posters for Cafeterias



**FOR PARENTS**  
**FOR MEMBERS**  
**RECIPES**  
**EVENTS**

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#### Put CT Grown On Your Tray

"Put CT On Your Tray"  
 Local farmers are our heroes!  
 Learn how to feature your local farmers and have them greet your students as a life-sized cardboard portrait in your school cafeteria. Change messages on the tray by simply printing out your message on an 8.5" x 11" paper and place in the tray area! Get creative! <link here>



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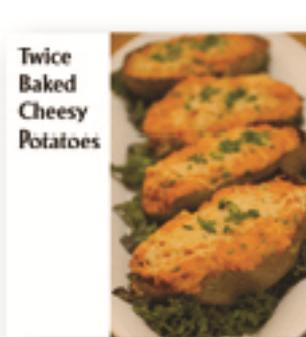


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Farmer Cut-outs

## PowerPoint Recipes





**FOR PARENTS**  
**FOR MEMBERS**  
**RECIPES**  
**EVENTS**

**RESOURCES**  
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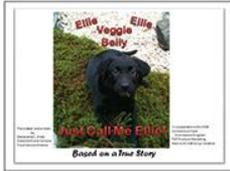
### Just Call Me Ellie!

Follow the adventures of a fruit-and-veggie loving labrador that teaches kids how to try new things!



#### PowerPoint Presentation

Step-by-step adventure of how Ellie became a fruit and veggie lover!  
 <Link here>



#### "WOW" Cards

Print outs for children to take home and tell you what new fruit and/or vegetable they have tried!

**Wow Wow Wow!**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### "WOW" Charts

Track the progress in the classroom of all the students!



#### Certificate of Achievement

Congratulate and recognize your students' success!



#### Email Notification to Parents

<link here>

#### Project Checklist

<link here>

# Award-winning Call Me Ellie Project





### Norwich Processing Center

Norwich Public Schools recieved a USDA Grant to install a state-of-the-art processing kitchen and capture the nutrients and flavors of fresh produce at it's peak.



Resources  
Tuesday Tidbits  
Fun Things To Do  
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SNACCT  
MA Department of Agriculture  
Iowa Department of Agriculture

# Norwich Processing Center



Watch us on YouTube!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRjmlaeP-IU>

#### Photo Gallery



Participating Farms  
Description



## Best Practices

Learn how Food Service Directors around the State engage their students in healthy eating practices.



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### Tips and Tricks

Avon High School  
Maggie Dreher, Director of Nutrition Services  
BEST PRACTICE:

We are serving several fresh soups that include a variety of fresh vegetables such as minestrone, chicken vegetable and chicken tortilla soup.

Avon Middle School  
Maggie Dreher, Director of Nutrition Services  
BEST PRACTICE:

We are using fresh fruit to prepare healthy snacks and desserts such as fresh apple, pear and peach crisps.

Meriden Public Schools  
Hanover Elementary School  
Shirley Arabasz / Cafeteria manager  
BEST PRACTICE:

At Hanover Elementary School, we have been successful at implementing our Go, Slow, Whoa! initiative to teach our students how to make healthy food choices. Through a grant that was awarded to Meriden Public Schools by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), we have been using a color-coded rating system that categorized foods as either green ('Go' foods to eat more often), yellow ('Slow' foods to eat occasionally), or red ('Whoa' foods to eat rarely). The Go, Slow, Whoa! program rates foods based on their nutritional value (fat, sugar, sodium, calories, vitamins/minerals, etc). We promoted the program at our Wellness Fair by creating folders containing letters to parents about the Go, Slow, Whoa! program in addition to other materials on healthy eating. Fruits and vegetables are always promoted and highlighted as 'Go' foods which we encourage our kids to eat most often. We offer a rainbow tray of fruit at lunch daily to show the students how much variety there can be when making healthy choices and always include fresh CT Grown produce when available. We encourage our cafeteria staff to promote double servings of vegetables with a sign printed above the vegetable of the day. As a Healthy Food Certified school, we make sure that all the food we serve meets and many times exceeds USDA standards. Our Go, Slow, Whoa! program can be found at our website: [http://www.meridenk12.org/Departments/Food\\_Services/Go-Slow-Whoa/](http://www.meridenk12.org/Departments/Food_Services/Go-Slow-Whoa/)  
Lunch Signs (PDF)  
Nutritional Rating System Overview and Handout (PDF)  
May Menu Elementary Lunch

New Milford  
Hill and Plain School  
Sandra Sullivan / Food Service Director  
BEST PRACTICE:

A vegetable subgroup tray is offered daily on the lunch line. It has 5 choices. The tray will contain a dark green, a red orange, a legume, a starchy and a vegetable from the other group. All vegetables are portioned in 1/2 cups. Students may take 2 if they wish. Along with the vegetables there is a fruit tray which will have 2-3 choices of fresh fruit and 2-3

# Best Practices from School Nutrition Directors And Cafeteria Directors





# Tips and Tricks



## Tips and Tricks

### Tried and True Tips to Increase School Meal Participation

#### Presentation of Menu Items

- Display like colored fruits separately on the service line for visual impact
- Use contrasting colors when displaying food. (i.e. no peaches next to mandarin oranges)
- Replace food containers when they are 1/3 full
- Cut foods into kid-friendly shapes. Example: cucumber wheels, berries in a 5.5 oz. translucent cup with a dot of non-dairy whipped topping
- Use 5.5 oz cups for cut produce so students can 'grab n go'
- Create a plate of what a complete meal looks like and display it on the line
- Use risers to elevate foods or create your own risers. What can you use to create your own risers? Blocks of wood, upside down foam bowl, anything stable to place under a container to tip the product towards the customer
- Don't leave empty wells. If you have space and enough food, repeat your meal items again in a ABC-ABC pattern
- Pair produce with its dip/dressing, like cut celery and ranch dressing
- Remove all labels of fruit before displaying
- No one likes a loose product, like the last chef salad
- Display more cartons of white milk than flavored milk
- Pull fruit from out from under the sneeze guard, put in basket and maybe near the register
- Place the healthiest entree first. These items have an 11% advantage of being selected

#### Menu

- Use cool or appealing labels to describe foods.

#### Examples:

- "Immune boosting Kale"
- "X-ray vision carrots"
- "protein-packed chick peas"
- Change item titles to match what's popular in pop culture. Ex. Breakfast includes Olaf Oatmeal and Elsa Egg Scramble (from the movie Frozen)
- Celebrate National recognition days like National Eat Your Vegetables Day. You can find these on Wikipedia
- Pay attention to how you write out menu items

Example: A chicken patty on a whole-grain bun is now an "oven baked chicken sandwich"

- Consider making magnets for your menus and doing away with paper
- Add a "QR code" to menus. High school students put them on their lockers and parents on their fridge
- Build in choice. More choices makes kids feel empowered in making the decision
- Make sure the most recent breakfast and lunch menu is on your district website

#### Cafeteria Environment

- Decorate the cafeteria.
- Hang posters, or create a theme around the school mascot, etc.
- Avoid Halo effect-when an association is made to something unrelated to another
  - o Ex. Dirty mop water in cafeteria with no lights gives the appearance the cafeteria is dirty and dingy. If the room is bright, clean and inviting, students will have decided it will taste that way

#### Parents

- Send letters home and invite parents to stop in the cafeteria
- Be open for the schools' open house
- Serve a meal at a PTO/A meeting

#### Students

- Ask students what they want in their cafeteria (colors, tables set-up)
- Ask students for menu item ideas and then name them after the student with the idea (i.e. Katie's Chicken Pot Pie", John B's Super Smoothie)
- Allow the student to be the chef by setting up a spice station. It's cheap, easy, and empowering

#### Staff

- Use these slogans with staff:

Remember: "eye appeal is buy appeal", "Eat the rainbow", "people eat with their eyes"

- Encourage the use of verbal prompts

Ex: "Take the apple for later", "Free fruit comes with that meal", "Do you want a salad with that pizza?"





## Fruit and Veggie Fridays and Farmers Market

Fruit and Veggies go right to each classroom!



### Letter to Parents



**Resources**  
Tuesday Tutorials  
Fun Things To Do  
DoAG Costume Loan  
Food Play  
SNACK  
MA Department of Agriculture  
Iowa Department of Agriculture

# Fruit and Veggie Fridays

# Farmers Market in the Classroom

### Gallery







## Resources

A list of resources for ideas and implementation



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# Additional Resources