



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

Farm to School



USDA Farm to School, F2S

- Formally established in 2010 with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
- Local foods are purchased, promoted and served in the cafeteria
- Students gain access to healthy, local foods while strengthening the local economy



Challenges for MS Schools:

- Food Safety certifications for small farms
- MS crop production/selection
- Summer growing season
- Success of Farmers Markets and Farm to Table



Partnership between MS Dept of Education & MS Dept of Agriculture and Commerce

- Established in School Year 2001-2002
- Utilizes USDA Fresh entitlement funds
- Encourages the serving of locally grown produce
- Provides more fresh produce to schools
- Supports local and state economy



MDE operates the largest school purchasing program in the nation

- **Centralized system for planning food purchases, including F2S**
- **Existing distribution network that is used to lower delivery costs**
- **All MS schools can participate in MS F2S**
- **Economies of scale that allow MDE/MDAC to involve farmers statewide**



MDAC coordinates farmer participation

- Grants and training for safety certifications
- Over 100 MS farmers are involved and benefit
- Farming Co-Ops
- Family farms



- **Up to 1 year in advance, MDAC identifies potential products**
- **MDE surveys schools to determine items schools want and in what quantities**
- **Farmers are able to plant crops based on school demand**
- **MDE and MDAC coordinate shipments to contracted distributors and deliveries to schools**



- Fresh and frozen MS produce to schools
- SY 2014-2015
 - Approx \$1 million ordered
 - \$887,000 in MS produce delivered to schools
 - 19 items, including:
Strawberries, sweet potatoes, turnip greens, grape tomatoes, green beans, yellow squash, cucumbers, blueberries, butterbeans, etc.

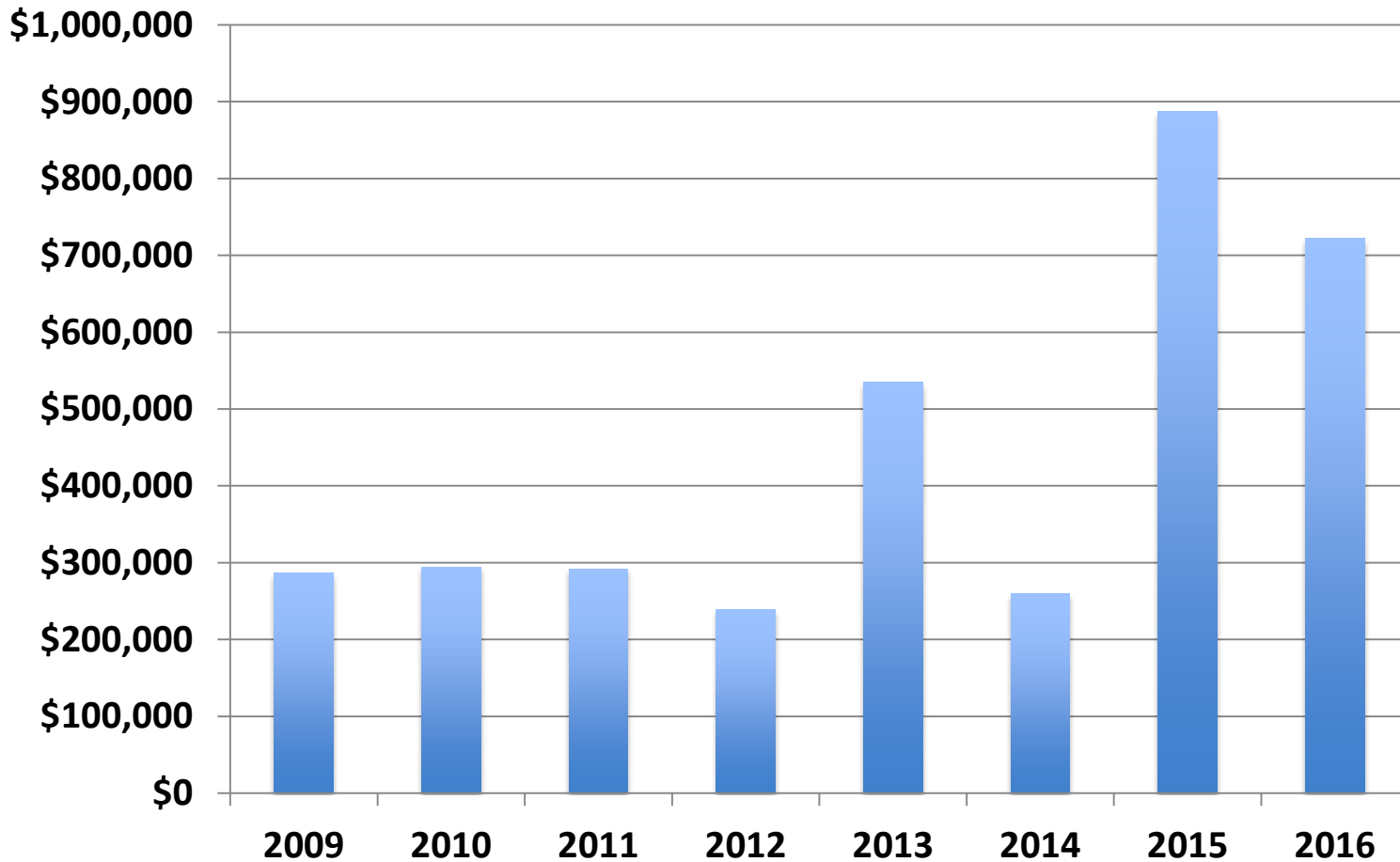


New items for School Year 2015-2016

- Broccoli crowns
- Cantaloupes
- Watermelons
- Leaf Lettuce



Purchases by School Year



- Fresh, local produce from MS farms
- MS F2S resources
- MS F2SWeek events
- (1st full week Oct)
 - Visits from local farmers to classrooms
 - Taste testings
 - Positive media events



Mississippi Farm to School
Mississippi Grown. Mississippi Good.

Strawberries are an excellent way to eat healthy!
Strawberries are packed with nutrients and antioxidants to boost the immune system, reduce the risk of cancer, and help skin look younger. They are also a good source for heart health, the digestive system, and maintaining a healthy weight.

FUN FACTS

- On average, there are about 200 seeds in each strawberry.
- The American Indians were already eating strawberries when the Colonists arrived. The crushed berries were mixed with cornmeal and baked into strawberry bread. After trying this bread, Colonists developed their own version of the recipe and Strawberry Shortcake was created.
- Ounce for ounce, strawberries have more vitamin C than citrus fruit.

Strawberries are grown in Mississippi on family farms like that of Allen & Janice Eubanks from Lucedale, MS.

As a member of the rose family, strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside rather than the inside.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE, CINDY HEYDE-SMITH, COMMISSIONER • WWW.FARMTOSCHOOLWEEK.ORG • WWW.MDAC.MS.GOV

- **2015, USDA no longer allowed Fresh entitlement funds to be used for any processing or storage for frozen items**
- **“Fresh to frozen” produce represents approximately 45% of MS F2S purchases**
- ***Blueberries, butterbeans, peas, collards, turnips, corn cobbettes, green beans***



- **Grant to replace USDA funds**
- **2015-2016, less than \$10,000 secured
\$323,373 in local produce for MS schools**
- **Funding allows for expansion of MS F2S**



Farm to School Census

- **Only 68% of MS Public School Districts responded**
- **<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/ind-your-school-district/mississippi>**





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