

# THE BIG PICTURE

## FARM TO INSTITUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

In order to better understand local food buying practices and the system we're trying to change, FINE and our partners have gathered data from K-12 schools, colleges, and hospitals across the six New England states. We have also surveyed producers and distributors about their sales to New England institutions. This report summarizes key findings across these various farm to institution groups.

All data presented comes from surveys, is self-reported and may conflict with other data sources.



**34,877**  
farms in New England

### NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTIONS



**4,628**  
K-12 Schools



**210**  
Colleges & Universities  
with dining services



**256**  
Hospitals

The following data comes from survey responses and may not represent the full population.

### NUMBER OF MEALS SERVED

**65**  
million  
meals at  
colleges

**31**  
million  
meals at  
hospitals



### DEFINITION OF LOCAL FOOD

These are the most common definitions of "local food" for K-12 schools, colleges, and hospitals:

within  
**THE STATE**

within a  
**250-MILE  
RADIUS**

within  
**THE REGION**

### AVERAGE PERCENT OF FOOD BUDGET SPENT ON LOCAL FOOD

**15% LOCAL**  
Hospitals

**16% LOCAL**  
K-12 Schools

**21% LOCAL**  
Colleges & Universities

### TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT ON LOCAL FOOD

**K-12 Schools**  
(2015 USDA census)

**\$25 MILLION**

**Colleges**  
(2015 FINE Survey)

**\$57 MILLION**

**Hospitals**  
(2017 HCWH survey)

**\$42 MILLION**



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### TOP SIX LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS

For colleges, schools, and food distributors

The following products were listed with the highest frequency by those surveyed, when they were asked to list the top local products sold / purchased by institutions:



### FEATURED FOOD

Apples were listed among the top locally sourced products by:

**91%** of K-12 schools  
**47%** of colleges  
**43%** of distributors

### ANIMAL PROTEINS

**26%**

of food distributors listed meat as one of their top five local products sold to institutions

**24%**

of food distributors also listed meat as one of the top five local products where demand is greater than supply (some specified chicken)

Percentage of colleges that said the following products were difficult to source:

**43%** local poultry  
**39%** local meat  
**26%** local eggs



### TOP BARRIERS TO SOURCING LOCAL FOOD

**For Colleges & K-12 Schools**

1. Year-round availability of items
2. Higher price point of local food
3. Availability and sufficient volume
4. Variety and quality of product

**For Food Distributors**

1. Year-round availability of items
2. Higher price point of local food
3. Food safety
4. Distribution inefficiencies with local producers



*Other barriers mentioned include: food processing and packaging; lack of institutional support for local food; weak engagement of students and teachers or faculty; and marketing local food products.*

### DESIRE TO BUY MORE LOCAL FOOD



**70%**

of school districts said they will buy more local food in the future



**98%**

of colleges said they will increase local food buying over the next three years



**75%**

of farmers that don't sell directly to institutions are interested in doing so\*



**88%**

of distributors believe their sales of local food to institutions will increase

\*Surveyed farmers were self-selected and may have been more interested in institutional markets than other farmers.

### ABOUT US

Farm to Institution New England (FINE) is a six-state network of non-profit, public, and private entities working to mobilize the power of New England institutions to transform our food system. Institutions provide farmers and food suppliers with a diversified and stable market, and an estimated 3.7 people spend time in New England institutions everyday. When these institutions purchase healthy, regionally-

grown food, they support more viable food and farm businesses, good jobs and a strong agricultural economy, robust regional supply chain infrastructure, a greater amount and variety of products grown in New England, and consistent access to affordable, healthy regionally-grown food in their dining facilities.

Learn more: [www.farmtoinst.org](http://www.farmtoinst.org)

### EXPLORE MORE AT [DASHBOARD.FARMTOINSTITUTION.ORG](http://DASHBOARD.FARMTOINSTITUTION.ORG)

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**Response Rates**  
Data by this report was gathered through surveys conducted by the USDA, FINE, and HCWH between 2013 and 2017, with response rates that varied between 50% and 67%.

**Funders**



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**Data Sources**  
Schools: 2015 USDA Farm to School Census; Colleges: 2015 FINE campus dining survey; Hospitals: Health Care Without Harm 2017 survey of hospitals participating in their Healthy Food in Health Care program; Food Production: 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017 FINE producer survey; Food Distribution: 2015 FINE distributor survey. More info: <http://dashboard.farmtoinstitution.org/data-sources>