

## Some ideas to help your school district get the most out of the Nutritional Alaskan Foods in Schools funding.

### Vegetables, Grains, Fruits, Berries and Livestock

If you are planning to purchase vegetables, grains, fruits, berries or livestock, the easiest way to know it is Alaska Grown is to look for the Alaska Grown logo on a product.



The Alaska Grown logo is registered both federally and within the State. Permitted use of the logo is only available for producers who meet the grown in Alaska criteria (see attached document).

A great resource for finding Alaska Grown products is [The Alaska Grown Sourcebook](#) is updated with new producers on a regular basis. Check back often!

Last year a number of school districts wanted to purchase reindeer sausage, or other reindeer products. As with all livestock, reindeer or caribou will be allowable only if the animal used in the product actually lived over 51% (or more) of its life in Alaska and if over 75% of the product is Alaska Grown. If it has the Alaska Grown logo, it is good to go. If it doesn't, then you will need to get written verification from the vendor or producer that the reindeer meets the criteria of being Alaska grown. That verification will need to accompany any requests for reimbursement.

### Traditional Food

Some school districts have wanted to use grant money to process traditional food donations. It has been determined that if the items are processed at a Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) certified facility and follow the [Alaska Food Code \(18 AAC 31\)](#) then the processing costs can be an allowable expense. When requesting reimbursement for this type of item, please be sure to list the facility that processed the food. If you have questions about specific food items, be sure to contact Debi Kruse at [debi.kruse@alaska.gov](mailto:debi.kruse@alaska.gov) or (907) 269-8131.

## **Fish and Shellfish**

When purchasing fish or shellfish look for packaging that states the fish or shellfish are from Alaska. If it is a frozen fish product over 75% of the item (and definitely the first ingredient listed) must state it is fish from Alaska.

Here is a wonderful link to suppliers which provide Alaska harvested finfish and shellfish: [Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute Suppliers Directory](#). Keep in mind this list may not be all inclusive and it is your responsibility to verify with your supplier that the fish purchased was caught in Alaska waters. But, once again, if fish is provided to the school district, but needs to be processed to be used, then the processing costs can be reimbursable as long as the processor is DEC certified.

## **Farmer's Markets**

It is allowable to purchase items from a Farmer's Market. But it is necessary to verify with the seller that the food is Alaska Grown. Get their names and contact information! Sometimes items being sold are made by Alaskans, but most of the ingredients come from out of state. This program is specific to items *grown* in Alaska, not *made* in Alaska.

## **Disallowed Costs**

Unfortunately, something that happened too often during FY13, was a school district would purchase items from a local store without verification of where the food actually came from. Even though the store said the food they were selling was Alaska Grown, they neglected to tell the school district where/who they purchased the food from. A number of these purchases were disallowed and the school district didn't receive reimbursement. ***This is necessary information!*** If a school district buys ground beef from a local store, the store needs to be able to identify where the meat came from and who the processor was. If they can't do that, then I suggest the district purchase the ground beef from someone who can identify their local Alaskan processors.

## **Local Producers**

There may be farmers or producers in your area who meet the qualifications for the Alaska grown program (they grow and harvest Alaska produce, but are not familiar with the certification process or have just not applied to it). Encourage them to apply! The Division of Agriculture will, within 20 days of receipt of a complete application, notify the applicant in writing of the approval or denial of the application. Just think, if they are approved, you will have another local producer to buy from!

## What is the Alaska Grown Certification Program?

The State of Alaska, Division of Agriculture launched the Alaska Grown agriculture products certification program in 1986; it is designed to highlight and promote farm products in the marketplace.

Farmers and producers are required to fill out a one-time, no cost application in order to join the program. [Apply online](#).



The Alaska Grown logo is registered both federally and within the State. Permitted use of the logo is only available for producers who fall under one of the following categories:

- (1) a vegetable or fruit grown for a minimum of 90 percent of its lifecycle in the state;
- (2) a seed harvested from a product meeting at least one of the requirements of this section;
- (3) a processed feed product with at least 75 percent of its ingredients being Alaska Grown;
- (4) livestock grown in the state for a minimum of 51 percent of its life;
- (5) an egg produced from poultry, while the poultry is in the state;
- (6) an apiculture product, such as honey, wax, comb or pollen, produced while the bees are in the state;
- (7) an animal fiber produced from Alaska Grown livestock;
- (8) an imported live woody plant grown outdoors in the state for a minimum of two years and bearing a hang-tag stating the location where the plant was acclimated and pointing out that it was not started in Alaska;
- (9) a nursery or greenhouse plant, imported into the state as a rooted cutting or propagule and grown to a saleable product with at least 50 percent of its production time being within the state;
- (10) a plant, tree, grain, or grass grown to a finished product in the state; or
- (11) a byproduct or processed product with the principal ingredient meeting at least one of the requirements of this section. Water is not considered an ingredient under this section.

The Division will, within 20 days of receipt of a complete application, notify the applicant in writing of the approval or denial of the application.