Feeding Futures:

Information for B.C. food and beverage businesses interested in selling to school food programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12

What is Feeding Futures?

Feeding Futures is a historic Provincial government commitment of $214 million over three years for school districts to create new, or expand existing, school food programs. The funds will be used for purchasing food and hiring dedicated staff to co-ordinate the provision of meals and snacks for students who need them.

How is B.C food being included in Feeding Futures?

Feeding Future's goals are to provide stigma-free, nutritious, and local, B.C. foods. To build opportunities for local, B.C. foods, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Child Care to integrate Feed BC in K-12 schools into Feeding Futures.

Feed BC will support school districts to work towards 30% B.C. food expenditures over time, connect with B.C. food producers and processors, and enhance local food literacy.

How do K-12 schools source and use food and beverage products?

The approach being used by B.C.'s 60 school districts to provide meals and snacks varies widely. Some districts have well developed, coordinated food programs and food supplier relationships. Others are still building capacity to deliver and expand programs through Feeding Futures.

Many different models are being used to deliver school food programs including 'grab-and-go' programs, assemble-and-serve meals, cooked-from-scratch cafeteria meals, vending, and culinary arts programs. Food services may be managed directly by district or school staff or through agreements with private foodservice companies, non-profit organizations. Food service preparation may take place on-site at schools, at restaurants or caterers, or shared use facilities like community facilities or Food Hubs.

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How can B.C. food producers and processors prepare for opportunities to sell to K-12 schools?

While many school districts are in the early stages of developing their school food programs, here are some steps interested businesses can take to prepare for future opportunities in this market:

1. **Consider how your products can appeal to school food programs:**
   - How does your product suit the school food environment?
     - What solutions does your product and business provide schools?
     - Is your product priced appropriately, are you able to scale to demand, or is your business ready to sell to a school or food provider?
     - How can your business help school districts meet Feeding Future's goals of providing stigma-free, nutritious, and local/B.C. foods?
     - How can your product and business support schools in creating healthy food environments?

   Note: *The Ministry of Health is developing new tools and resources to support district and school staff with meal planning and food purchasing that create healthy school food environments. Resources will include suggestions for vending and school stores. A link to the resources will be made available once the resources are launched.*

2. **Conduct market research on your target school district's food needs:**
   - Develop an understanding of current school food programs through searching district and school websites and speaking with existing school food suppliers.
   - Connect with your target school district to identify their School Food Coordinator or other district staff focusing on food procurement.

3. **List your business and products on the Feed BC Directory**
   - Create free listings on the Feed BC Directory to make it easier for school districts and schools to identify your products as local B.C. products.
   - Check out the Feed BC Directory's business resources page for more information about how to prepare to sell products to B.C. institutions including schools.
   - As a business listed on the Feed BC Directory, you will receive periodic e-newsletters with information about funding programs and services available to B.C. food producers and processors, including Feed BC opportunities with K-12 schools.

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