



Chartwells School Dining Services is Committed to Serving Locally Grown Produce to the School Communities we serve!

Did you know the average bite of food travels approximately 1,400 miles before it reaches your mouth?

There is currently a growing disconnection between the food we eat and the farm it comes from. This is because much of the produce found in grocery stores is grown for durability during shipping and selling, instead of for taste and nutrition.

Did you know that buying locally grown produce has never been easier for Chartwells School Dining Services accounts in South Carolina?

As part of our overall commitment towards sustainability, Chartwells has been working on a local produce initiative since October 2007. Before the initial launch of the program, potential local farmers were first identified with different criteria considered, such as the size of the farm; number of products offered; and most critical, food safety measures currently in place. While this initiative is still in its infancy stage; to date Chartwells has purchased 12,248 pounds of cabbage, 17,850 pounds of sweet potatoes and 985 pounds of fresh broccoli florets - all of which has been served in our student's school lunch program. While most of these items are regionally grown within the state, Chartwells will continue to offer both locally and regionally grown fruits and vegetables throughout the school year as they are available. Be sure to look for locally/regionally grown items that are advertised on our monthly menus.

Benefits of eating locally grown produce:

- * Environment – by purchasing locally and regionally grown produce, less fuel is used in transporting produce from one side of the country to the other, so it's good for the environment!
- * Freshness – fruits and vegetables that are grown locally are usually sold within 24 hours after harvesting.
- * Taste – produce is grown for taste instead of for durability during transport.
- * Nutrition – harvesting takes place at the peak of ripeness and produce is properly handled to maintain the maximum amount of nutrients.
- * Community – buying local goods puts money back into the local economy and helps the disappearing family farms.

The above benefits of Chartwells local produce initiative is to bring fresh, local fruits and vegetables to our schools while showing our commitment towards sustainability, local farmers, and most importantly, the health and wellness of our students we serve.