



## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

# Harvest of the Month Implementation Guide for Schools and Early Care and Education

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## Overview of Harvest of the Month

Wisconsin Harvest of the Month (HOM) is a statewide campaign that empowers students to eat more fruits and vegetables. Each month, schools showcase one seasonal, Wisconsin-grown fruit or vegetable and encourage students to taste, explore, and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. The overall goal of Harvest of the Month is to encourage elementary school and early care and education (ECE) children to try, select, and consume more fruits and vegetables.






















Harvest of the Month is intended primarily as a social marketing campaign complementary to Farm to School efforts. Farm to School (F2S) is an evidence-based strategy for improving the school food environment, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, and improving the local economy (County Health Rankings What Works for Health). Harvest of the Month provides a flexible framework and ready-to-use promotional materials and resources for schools. Harvest of the Month can also be used outside of Farm to School efforts to promote a healthy school environment.

Harvest of the Month is available to all schools across Wisconsin. Extension colleagues in FoodWise and Healthy Eating, Active Living can partner with schools to implement Harvest of the Month. Find your local Extension office [here](#).

If you have questions after reviewing this guide, please contact Emily Latham ([emily.latham@wisc.edu](mailto:emily.latham@wisc.edu)).

## Featured Fruits and Vegetables by Season

Harvest of the Month features 20 different fruits and vegetables that are seasonally available in Wisconsin. Five fruits and vegetables are featured each season to encourage local procurement of Wisconsin products when they are available. Materials are not branded with specific months or seasons and schools may choose to select any fruit or vegetable to feature during a given month. Some Wisconsin produce items are provided frozen and may be good options to feature during winter.

	FEATURED FRUITS & VEGGIES					
autumn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apples</li> <li>winter squash</li> <li>broccoli</li> <li>cranberries</li> <li>kale</li> </ul>					
winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carrots</li> <li>sweet potatoes</li> <li>cabbage</li> <li>potatoes</li> <li>beets</li> </ul>					
spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>greens</li> <li>asparagus</li> <li>sweet peas</li> <li>lettuce</li> <li>radish</li> </ul>					
summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>summer squash</li> <li>peppers</li> <li>tomatoes</li> <li>corn</li> <li>cucumber</li> </ul>					

# Harvest of the Month Materials

Harvest of the Month includes a full suite of materials for all 20 fruits and vegetables. Materials are available to download from the [Harvest of the Month webpage](#).

Complementary resources can be found on the [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Team Nutrition Website](#). The Nutritious, Delicious, Wisconsin Toolkit includes standardized recipes, videos, and more for apples, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, and winter squash.

Harvest of the Month resources are available in English and Spanish. If you require materials in another language, please reach out to [Emily Latham](#). Intentional co-construction of messages is central to HOM.

To request files with printer marks and bleeds for a professional printer, please contact [Emily Latham](#).

If you would like to make adaptations to these materials, please contact [Emily Latham](#).

## Outreach Flyer

- Primary user: Extension Educators and Organizations Partnering with Schools
- Primary audience: School Nutrition Staff, School Administration, Teachers
- Primary location: May be sent electronically or printed and distributed at schools
- The Harvest of the Month outreach flyer features an overview of the campaign including research benefits, participation activities, promotional materials, and featured fruits and vegetables.



## Posters

- Primary user: Extension Educators, School Nutrition Staff, School Administration, Teachers
- Primary audience: Students
- Primary location: Cafeteria, classrooms, or hallways
- Each Harvest of the Month fruit or vegetable is featured on a poster. Posters are provided in three sizes: 18"x24", 11"x17", and 8.5"x11". All posters are in English and Spanish.



## Menu Graphics

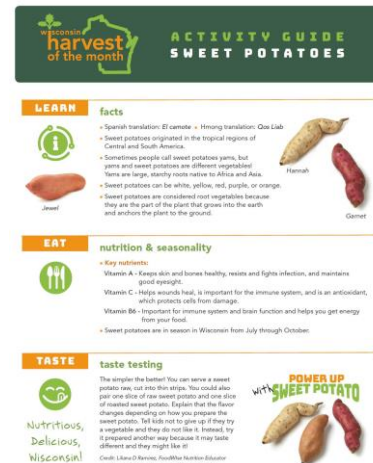
- Primary user: School Nutrition Staff
- Primary audience: Students and Families
- Primary location: Include on printed or electronic school menus
- Each Harvest of the Month fruit or vegetable is featured as a menu graphic. These can be used on school menus to indicate featured fruits and vegetables.

## Activity Guides for School and Afterschool

- Primary user: Extension Educators, Teachers
- Primary audience: Students in K-5 classrooms
- Primary location: Classroom, garden, or after school
- Harvest of the Month Activity Guides include fun facts, nutrition and seasonality information, a taste testing activity, an educational activity, book list, and planting and harvesting information.

## Facebook Posts and Social Media Toolkit

- Primary user: Extension Educators, School Nutrition Staff, School Administration, Teachers
- Primary audience: Parents and Caregivers
- Primary location: School Facebook page and/or Extension/Partner Organization Facebook pages
- The social media toolkit includes three graphics and suggested post text for each featured fruit and vegetable. Graphics are available to download separately from the website. Posts include quick and easy food preparation, kid approved recipes, family fun activities, kids in the kitchen activities, and how to select, store, and prepare the featured fruit or vegetable. All graphics and post text are in English and Spanish.



## Postcards

- Primary user: School Administration, Teachers
- Primary audience: Parents and Caregivers
- Primary location: Sent home to families
- Harvest of the Month postcards include a kid approved recipe or quick and easy food preparation suggestions and a family fun or kids in the kitchen activity. Postcards are in English and Spanish.



## Newsletter Inserts

- Primary user: Extension Educators, School Administration, Teachers
- Primary audience: Parents and Caregivers
- Primary location: For use in school newsletters
- Newsletter inserts are provided as a graphic so they can be easily inserted into a printed or electronic school newsletter. Newsletter inserts provide information about how to incorporate the featured fruit or vegetable into favorite family meals, fun facts, and how to select, store, and prepare the fruit or vegetable. Newsletter inserts are in English and Spanish.



## Participation Letter

- Primary user: School Administrators
- Primary audience: Parents and Caregivers
- Primary location: Sent home to families
- The participation letter provides a template that schools can use to share about the Harvest of the Month campaign with families.



## Early Childhood Activity Guides

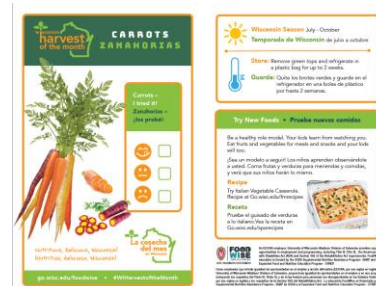
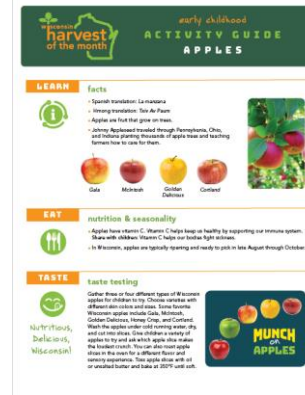
- Primary user: Extension Educators, ECE Teachers/Providers
- Primary audience: Children ages 3-5 in ECE settings
- Primary location: ECE classrooms
- Harvest of the Month Early Childhood Activity Guides include fun facts, nutrition and seasonality information, a taste testing activity, an educational activity, book list, and planting and harvesting information appropriate for young children. They are available in English and Spanish.

## Parent / Family Handouts for ECE Settings

- Primary user: ECE Teachers/Providers, Extension Educators
- Primary audience: Parents and Caregivers
- Primary location: Sent home to families, either printed or electronic
- The Parent/Family Handouts include “I Tried It!”, seasonality and storage information, and tips for trying new foods with kids. Each handout is in English and Spanish.

## Harvest of the Month Video

- Primary user: School Administration, Teachers
- Primary audience: Students in K-5 schools
- Primary location: Cafeteria or classroom
- Promotional videos are intended to be viewed in schools on TVs. Videos are in English and Spanish. Links to YouTube can be shared ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)). Alternative formats (video and PowerPoint) with and without voiceover and music are available upon request from [Udai Olivares](#).



## Suggested Implementation in Schools and ECE

Harvest of the Month is intended to be implemented as part of broader healthy eating programming in schools and ECE settings. A successful HOM campaign is a team effort and should aim to reach students in a variety of settings - cafeteria, classroom, and home. This section highlights the ways that Harvest of the Month can be integrated into activities in the cafeteria, classroom/garden/afterschool, and home environments. Implementation of HOM does not need to include all suggested strategies within each category, although comprehensive implementation of Harvest of the Month will combine strategies from all areas. Activities should be tailored to each school and can build over time. General stages of Harvest of the Month implementation are defined as follows:

**Basic implementation of Harvest of the Month:** HOM materials are used to promote fruits and vegetables that are featured in school meals or snacks.

**Intermediate implementation of Harvest of the Month:** HOM materials are used to reach students in the cafeteria, classroom, and home.

**Comprehensive implementation of HOM:** HOM materials are used in combination with cafeteria enhancements, local purchasing, education in the classroom, and information shared with families to promote consumption of featured fruits and vegetables.

## Steps and Tips to Implement Harvest of the Month

1. Review HOM materials and resources available on the website.
2. Gather support within the school. Meet with key players - teachers, child nutrition staff, administrators, school board members, school staff, students, and parents - to introduce Harvest of the Month. Share the Harvest of the Month Outreach Flyer. Engage partners and solicit ideas for planning and implementing a program in their school or district.
3. Coordinate with the school nutrition program staff. Meet with the Food Service Director to discuss and determine her or his level of participating. Share the featured fruits and vegetables. Discuss options for purchasing Wisconsin-grown produce for Harvest of the Month.
4. Identify what the Harvest of the Month featured fruits and vegetables will be each month. Refer to the seasonality chart.
5. Decide how you will highlight each featured fruit or vegetable during each month. Determine which activities the school will implement in the classroom, cafeteria, and at home (see specific strategies and activities for each area below).
6. Print and distribute materials to food service staff, teachers, and school staff and administrators.
7. Adapt the HOM Participation Letter and send home to families.
8. Feature a fruit or vegetable monthly, display promotional materials, and implement activities.

## Cafeteria

Harvest of the Month is a promotional campaign to encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables available through the school or early care meal or snack programs. Harvest of the Month can be part of a wider Healthy Schools/ECE multi-level intervention strategy. Policy, Systems, and Environmental change interventions can be incorporated into the Harvest of the Month campaign if the school is interested in assessing, planning, implementing, and sustaining these efforts with the support of UW-Madison Division of Extension.

### Suggested strategies for implementing HOM in the cafeteria:

- Serve the featured fruit or vegetable as a part of meal or snack (through the National School Lunch Program, Afterschool Snack Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, or Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program).
- Display large or medium posters in the cafeteria each month.
- Use the menu graphic on printed or electronic school/ECE menus.
- Offer taste tests of the featured monthly fruit or vegetable to help students develop a taste for new, healthy, and Wisconsin-grown food. (For more information about how to host a taste test, visit the Action for Healthy Kids [taste test webpage](#), read their [guide](#), and download the WI Team Nutrition [taste test best practices](#), [elementary school taste test survey](#), and [middle school taste test survey](#)).

### Possible Complementary PSE Change Interventions

When implementing Harvest of the Month in the school setting, there are many opportunities to also improve school nutrition policies, systems, and the environment. Potential approaches include:

- Improving menus/recipes to introduce greater variety and quality
- Improving purchasing of local foods and healthier foods
- Initiating or expanding Farm to School and use of local produce
- Improving the appeal of school meal programs to increase participation
- Improving the appeal of school meals to encourage selecting healthy options

View a recording of the [Harvest of the Month webinar](#) to learn more about HOM materials, purchasing local products for HOM, and crediting HOM fruits and vegetables within school meal programs.

## Resources

### WI Department of Public Instruction: Upgrade School Meal Appeal

DPI adapted what was formerly known as Smarter Lunchroom strategies into Upgrade School Meal Appeal. They developed training and additional materials to support School Food Authorities in assessing and making improvements to the school meal environment to support healthy choices. You can access their resources below:

- [DPI Training](#)

- [DPI Upgrade School Meal Appeal Assessment](#)

### **CDC School Health Index**

The CDC published a School Health assessment that includes assessment tools for nutrition environments. These tools can be used as a pre and post environmental assessment to guide schools in making changes to the nutrition environment as part of Harvest of the Month.

- [CDC Healthy Schools School Health Index](#)

### **Farm to School**

It is a good idea to start a plan for purchasing Wisconsin-grown produce well in advance. There are many options available to schools depending on where a school is located. Some schools work directly with local farmers to purchase Wisconsin produce. Other schools may have local options available through a purchasing coop or distributor.

- [Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection website](#)
- [DPI Farm to School](#)
- [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#)
- [National Farm to School Network](#)

### **Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI)**

WI DPI provides many helpful resources for integrating HOM fruits and vegetables into school meal programs.

- [DPI Menu Planning Webpage](#)
- [DPI Half Cup Crediting of Fruits and Vegetables:](#)
- [DPI Vegetable Subgroups Handout](#)
- [USDA Food Buying Guide](#)
- [DPI Trainings:](#)
  - [Crediting Using the Food Buying Guide Training](#)
- [DPI Let's Cook Cycle Menu](#)
- [Team Nutrition Nutritious, Delicious, Wisconsin standardized recipes](#)

## **Classroom, Garden, or Afterschool**

The Harvest of the Month Activity Guides provide information and activities for use in classrooms, school gardens, or during afterschool programs. Ideally activities will be facilitated each month to align with the featured fruit or vegetable. Activity Guides can be printed locally or shared with teachers electronically to encourage participation.

**Suggested strategies for implementing HOM in the classroom, garden, or afterschool program:**

- Display small or medium posters in the classroom.
- Utilize the Activity Guides for interesting facts and engaging activities to share with students.

- Lead a monthly taste test of the featured fruit or vegetable.
- Teachers, Extension Educators, or Farm to School AmeriCorps members lead an educational activity with the students.
- Read a book about the featured fruit or vegetable.
- Plant or harvest the featured fruit or vegetable in the school garden.

## Home

Sharing information and resources about Harvest of the Month with families is an important part of encouraging kids to consume more fruits and vegetables. Ideally HOM materials for families will be shared directly from the school district or classroom teachers.

### Suggested strategies for bringing HOM to families:

- Send the participation letter home to families so they are aware of Harvest of the Month.
- Share the Facebook graphics and suggested post text on the school Facebook page.
- Send the postcards home to families in students' backpacks or take-home folders.
- Add the newsletter insert to the school newsletter. Share via print, email, or parent portal.
- Post about Harvest of the Month on the school website.
- Use the ECE Parent/Family Handouts in classrooms during taste testing and then send home the printed copies with children. Or share an electronic version of the handout via email, parent portal, or app.
- Find creative ways to integrate HOM into back-to-school nights or family events.

## Additional Resources and Sources of Information

The following is a list of resources with additional information about Harvest of the Month featured fruits and vegetables.

### Fruit and Veggie Facts

- [Wisconsin Farmers' Market Association Food Facts](#)
- [University of Wisconsin Madison Fruit and Veggie Fact Sheets](#)
- [SNAP-Ed Seasonal Produce Guide](#)
- [Have a Plant: Fruits and Veggies for Better Health](#)
- [Spend Smart Eat Smart Produce Basics](#)
- [Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics](#)
- [Wisconsin Seasonal Availability Chart](#)
- [Montana State University Food Fact Sheets](#)

### Gardening

- [Kids Gardening](#)
- [University of Illinois Extension Watch Your Garden Grow Vegetable Directory](#)

### Resources for Specific Produce Items

- [Wisconsin Apple Growers Association](#)
- [University of Illinois Apples and More](#)
- [Wisconsin Cranberries](#)
- [Wisconsin Corn Facts](#)

### Harvest of the Month Resources from Other States

- [Oregon Harvest for Healthy Schools](#)
- [Vermont Harvest of the Month](#)
- [New Hampshire Harvest of the Month](#)
- [Montana Harvest of the Month](#)
- [Oregon Food Hero](#)



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