



Harvest of the Month:

Encouraging Kids and Families to Eat More Wisconsin-Grown Fruits and Vegetables

Challenge

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is important for healthy child growth and development and can reduce the risk of chronic health conditions later in life. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, half of children aged one to five years don't eat a vegetable daily, and one in three don't eat a daily fruit. Schools play a key role in improving access to healthy foods and introducing children to new fruits and vegetables.

Approach

To increase fruit and vegetable consumption among Wisconsin students, the Health and Well-Being (HWB) Institute launched the **Wisconsin Harvest of the Month (HOM)** campaign in 2020. Each month, the campaign highlights a seasonal, Wisconsin-grown fruit or vegetable in school meal programs, supports healthy eating education, and strengthens connections with Wisconsin farmers. HOM encourages kids and families to eat more Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables and promotes local food purchases in schools.

HOM provides schools with materials that feature 20 Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables in English and Spanish, including cafeteria promotions, classroom education, and family resources. HWB educators bring HOM fruits and vegetables into classrooms for nutrition lessons and taste tests. Extension also partners with schools to incorporate HOM produce into meals and snacks, creating lasting changes in school cafeterias.

To reinforce these efforts, **FoodWise** launched a HOM social media campaign in 2021–24 for parents and caregivers of

elementary students. The campaign used Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat ads to encourage families to eat more seasonal, Wisconsin-grown produce and directed them to a website for more information.



Results

In 2024, the HOM campaign reached 194 unique sites across 46 Wisconsin counties, engaging over 101,311 individuals. Schools featured an average of nine fruits and vegetables each year and 66 percent of the produce came from local Wisconsin farms. Taste tests, classroom activities, and family engagement, supported by local Health and Well-Being Institute FoodWise educators, helped expand access to fresh produce, particularly in schools serving families with limited income.

Between 2021 and 2024, 30 percent of food service staff reported increased knowledge of sourcing Wisconsin-grown produce, and 36 percent said they expanded their use of local produce in schools. Additionally, 66 percent of schools reported that students were more willing to try new fruits and vegetables and 57 percent said students ate more fruits and vegetables during school meals because of HOM.

In 2024, the social media campaign reached 103,303 people on Facebook, 83,577 on Instagram, and 70,497 on Snapchat. Of those surveyed, half said they are somewhat or very likely to add Wisconsin-grown fruits or vegetables into their meals because of HOM.



HOM connects students, schools, and families with Wisconsin fruits and vegetables and encourages healthy food choices and healthy families.



Said students were more willing to **try new** fruits and vegetables



Said students **ate more** fruits and vegetables during school meals



97,013 locations + **46** WI counties



101,311+ individuals engaged