

ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 337

Introduced by Brandt, 32.

PURPOSE: It has been ten years since Legislative Resolution 42 (2009) first explored the statewide economic and educational potential of a "farm to school" program in Nebraska. In the intervening decade, notable progress has been made in instituting the methods and systems necessary to assist Nebraska producers in providing local schools with fresh and minimally processed foods for school meals and snacks. The addition of a local foods coordinator and introduction of "Nebraska Thursdays" and "Harvest of the Month" programs from the Department of Education have resulted in more school districts sourcing from local farmers and market gardeners. Interest has increased on the federal level as well, with the United States Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Grant Program receiving more requests than it has available funding, and additional federal legislation currently under consideration by Congress, the "Farm to School Act" and the "Kids Eat Local Act", both cosponsored by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry. A follow-up legislative interim study examining the status of Nebraska's farm to school activities and the needs of the stakeholders involved shall ensure that the necessary coordination and strategic planning is in place for further growth.

This interim study shall reexamine which Nebraska-grown food products can feasibly be used for school meals and snacks, including use of appropriate preservation methods of local foods by school nutrition staff for use later in the school year, and shall review existing regulations of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, and other authorities that may impact the supply of Nebraska-grown foods provided to local schools. In addition, the study shall assemble a catalog of where farm to school activities are happening in the state, along with volume

and cost totals for foods locally sourced, to provide insight into best practices as well as barriers that are impeding participation.

To reflect the interests and needs of the various stakeholders concerned with creating successful statewide farm to school opportunities, this interim study shall include input from:

(1) Producers of agricultural products marketed at Nebraska food markets, including producers of fruits and vegetables, agricultural protein products, and grains;

(2) Suppliers of agricultural products, including grocers and school suppliers;

(3) Meat processors;

(4) Food distributors;

(5) Food assistance agencies;

(6) Resource conservation and development organizations;

(7) Representatives of school food services from rural and urban public school districts;

(8) Representatives from a summer food service program and from a child and adult care food program;

(9) Tribal organizations;

(10) An agricultural education extension organization;

(11) A member-based agricultural marketing promotion and education program;

(12) Representatives from the Department of Agriculture, State Department of Education, and Department of Health and Human Services; and

(13) Any other interested parties or organizations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Agriculture Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislature.