

**News Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Miller kicks off Local Products Challenge**

School cafeterias challenged to serve more local products in meals during October



*Participating schools will offer more than 2.4 million Texas children a new opportunity to try healthy local foods in the cafeteria. (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Flickr/Creative Commons)*

AUSTIN — Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announced the return of the Texas Department of Agriculture’s (TDA) annual Local Products Challenge. Each October, school cafeterias work to earn TDA recognition for serving more local products in meals while teaching children about foods grown and raised in Texas. More than 177 school districts and charter schools have pledged participation in this year’s Local Products Challenge. Participating schools will offer more than 2.4 million Texas children a new opportunity to try healthy local foods in the cafeteria.

“The Local Products Challenge helps schools teach kids lessons about good nutrition and Texas agriculture that will stay with them for years to come,” Commissioner Miller said. “To meet the challenge, cafeterias will serve locally produced food on their menus and not just fruits and vegetables. Schools will be working to serve an entire menu of local foods including Texas grains, beans, dairy products and lean meats. When kids look back in years to come, I want to make sure they remember Texas agriculture as part of their cafeteria experience.”

The annual Local Products Challenge supports TDA’s goal of connecting federal nutrition programs with foods from Texas producers. Millions of school meals are served in Texas each school day, and this is a great opportunity to connect children with the bounty of our state’s agriculture industry. Thanks to the Local Products Challenge, many schools continue to purchase local foods year round.

Every year, schools participating in the Local Products Challenge get access to TDA resources that encourage students to try local foods and make connections with local farmers and ranchers. Now in its fifth year, participation in the challenge has increased more than 400 percent. This translates to more Texas students enjoying nutritious school meals made with Texas products, while developing healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

The Local Products Challenge is just one example of how TDA supports local economies and efforts to grow strong young leaders for the Lone Star State. For more information, visit [SquareMeals.org/LocalProductsChallenge](http://SquareMeals.org/LocalProductsChallenge).

–Texas Department of Agriculture  
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