



RESOURCES

SOURCING “LESS MEAT, BETTER MEAT” THROUGH FOODSERVICE CONTRACTS



FARMFORWARD



INTRODUCTION

Choosing a foodservice company is one of the most important sustainability decisions that a school, university, or business makes. Requests for proposals (RFPs) and contracts can be used to articulate expectations and ingrain your institution's sustainable sourcing goals into your foodservice partnerships. Foodservice RFPs and contracts can create accountability to food procurement standards and drive meaningful change.

To address the environmental, social, and animal welfare impacts of producing meat, poultry, and dairy, Farm Forward encourages institutions to source “less and better” meat by reducing the amount of animal products that they buy and serve (“less”), and sourcing those products from certified higher-welfare farmers (“better”). This document introduces ways to integrate “less and better” sourcing strategies into foodservice RFPs and contracts, which can set expectations, provide transparency, and create accountability with foodservice management companies or food providers.

WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE CONTRACTS

Foodservice management companies establish supply chains with food companies to get the products they offer. Most foodservice companies—including Sodexo, Aramark, and Compass Group—rely on large meat and poultry vendors to supply them with animal products.

These large meat and poultry companies are often the vendors of choice for two reasons. First, they produce large quantities of meat and poultry, and so are single-handedly able to meet the demands of the largest foodservice companies, which serve millions of meals per day. Second, large companies often offer rebates to foodservice companies that sell their products.¹ That gives foodservice companies a financial incentive to source products from companies that offer the largest rebates. As a result, institutions typically offer animal products from the largest food animal companies.

Unfortunately, 99 percent of all animals raised for food are raised on industrial-scale farms that do not have meaningful animal welfare or sustainability standards. In order for schools, universities, and companies to increase their purchases of more sustainably and humanely raised food, these institutions must motivate foodservice companies to source from the growing segment of farms that raise animals in higher-welfare conditions. RFPs and contracts allow institutions to formalize a set of sourcing standards that are transparent and easy to evaluate.

Below are strategies and recommended language that institutions can integrate into foodservice RFPs and contracts to establish a “less meat, better meat” framework. The examples can be adapted for RFP sections on food policy,

¹ Fitch C, Santo R. Instituting Change: An Overview of Institutional Food Procurement and Recommendations for Change. A Report by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. February 2016. Accessed January 22, 2018 from https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/_pdf/research/Instituting-change.pdf.

procurement, and engagement—components that are essential for articulating values and establishing a plan of action.”

FOOD POLICY

Food policies articulate an institution’s values and goals for contributing to a sustainable food system. Institutional food policies take a variety of forms: some align with programs like the Real Food Challenge, AASHE STARS, or Leadership Circle while others describe an independent vision and commitment—for example, a commitment to “plant-forward dining” in order to reduce the environmental impact of dining operations and provide more vegetarian or vegan options.

Below are strategies and recommended language that institutions can integrate into foodservice RFPs and contracts to establish a “less meat, better meat” framework. The examples can be adapted for RFP sections on food policy, procurement, and engagement—components that are essential for articulating values and establishing a plan of action.

EXAMPLE 1

“Vendor will manage and support the University’s Real Food Challenge Commitment, committing the University to purchase a minimum of 20% of “Real Food” by 2020. Vendor agrees to meet the following milestones for incorporation of “Real Food” into the University’s Food Services:

On or before June 30, 2018: Real Food purchases = 15 percent of total food purchases

On or before June 30, 2019: Real Food purchases = 17.5 percent of total food purchases

On or before June 30, 2020: Real Food purchases = 20 percent of total food purchases”

EXAMPLE 2

“Vendor will manage and support the University’s commitment to the Leadership Circle, committing the University to purchase 100 percent of at least one of our meat or poultry categories (chicken, beef, pork, or eggs) from certified higher-welfare sources by June 30, 2020. This policy aligns with the University’s Real Food Challenge Commitment and will contribute toward that goal.”

EXAMPLE 3

In addition, Vendor shall support the University's commitment to plant-forward dining by reducing the volume of meat and poultry purchases by 30%—using 2015 purchases as a baseline—on or before June 30, 2020. As Vendor makes reductions in meat and poultry offerings, Vendor agrees to increase its offerings of plant-based meals and/or meals with less than 3 ounces of meat or poultry per serving.

PROCUREMENT

An institution can set a clear path for compliance with its food policy by including a procurement section in any RFPs or contracts. A procurement section should describe specific sourcing standards, certifications, and timelines that vendors are required to meet. Below is an example of a specific procurement requirement that an institution may include in its RFPs or contracts:

EXAMPLE

"Vendor shall source meat, poultry and dairy products that meet the following criteria:

- a. Certified for humane treatment of animals. Products must be certified by [list of accepted certifications—see table 1 below for recommended certifications]
- b. Preference should be given to meat, poultry, and dairy products produced regionally (within 500 miles) by independently and/or cooperatively owned farms.
- c. Preference should be given to meat, poultry, and dairy products produced using certified regenerative practices.

As part of the Annual Strategic Action Plan, Vendor and the University shall mutually agree to a sourcing goal for these products with the expectation that Vendor will make year-over-year improvement to source a higher percentage of products from sources that meet the above standards. If Vendor is unable to meet annual sourcing targets, a financial penalty may be levied."



TABLE 1. RECOMMENDED CERTIFICATIONS

HIGHER-WELFARE PRODUCTS MUST CARRY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CERTIFICATIONS:

BEEF	CHICKEN	EGGS	PORK
Global Animal Partnership Step 4 or above	Global Animal Partnership Step 2 or above	Global Animal Partnership Step 2 or above	Global Animal Partnership Step 1 or above
Animal Welfare Approved	Certified Humane	Certified Humane	Certified Humane
	Animal Welfare Approved	Animal Welfare Approved	Animal Welfare Approved

ENGAGEMENT

A contract should include a plan for regular engagement between the institution and the foodservice management company. This can take the form of annual or bi-annual meetings or an ongoing Food System Working Group where all stakeholders can meet to evaluate sourcing, discuss challenges, and formulate plans to address challenges.

Foodservice and dining staff should produce an annual report that describes progress on any commitments or initiatives described in the foodservice contract. Other stakeholders—including students, staff, and/or faculty of the institution—can review and discuss this report with the foodservice management company and dining staff at annual meetings (or more frequently). A regular meeting between the foodservice management company and the institution presents an opportunity for both parties to discuss progress and develop an action plan to make progress on goals and commitments set by the institution.

EXAMPLE

"By February 1 of each year, an annual expectation meeting will be conducted with University leadership (administrators), sustainability staff, directors of dining, an appointed foodservice advisory committee, and other food systems professionals or stakeholders within the institution as appropriate to discuss Vendor's annual report and set expectations for the following year. A strategic action plan will be produced by June 30 to report on this meeting and describe expectations. The plan will include:

- i. Real Food Challenge report
- ii. Leadership Circle report
- iii. Plant-forward dining report

CONCLUSION

RFPs and contracts provide a valuable opportunity for institutions to establish and articulate their food sustainability policies and sourcing goals. The final contract between a foodservice management company and an institution is one of the most effective ways to ensure an institution's commitments and goals will be met. For more information, or to connect with an institution that has incorporated food sustainability into its foodservice contract, please email us at leadershipcircle@farmforward.com.

