

Snap for Snap Peas!



## Evaluation of the 2019 Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign

October 2019

Results compiled by Chelsea Krist, Farm to School Program Coordinator  
ISU Extension and Outreach Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development Program

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach

**Farm, Food and Enterprise Development**

## Introduction

In 2018, ISU Extension and Outreach Local Foods, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), the Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) and FoodCorps Iowa launched a collaborative farm to summer campaign called “Root for Radishes!” to explore the needs and opportunities around local food promotion and education through summer meal sites. With the success of this first campaign, these partnering organizations committed to launching a 2019 summer campaign.

The 2019 campaign theme of “Snap for Snap Peas!” grew from a planning session with FoodCorps Iowa service members. With funding from the Agricultural Marketing Research Center (AgMRC), partners collaborated to develop and promote the campaign across the state. Nathan Spalding of FoodCorps Iowa served as the project’s graphic designer, Tammy Stotts of IDALS printed and mailed all promotional materials, Stephanie Dross of IDOE supported campaign promotion directly to meal site hosts, and Chelsea Krist with ISU Extension and Outreach FFED coordinated the grant funding, timeline, and site-based communication.

## Methods

### *Promotion*

To promote the “Snap for Snap Peas” campaign, IDOE hosted a farm to summer-themed webinar in early spring, announcing the opportunity to all summer meal site hosts. They shared the parameters of the campaign, along with the graphic designs and promotional materials offered by campaign organizers (Fig. 1).



Fig 1. “Snap for Snap Peas!” graphic design, on banner

Organizers at participating sites completed a pre-survey created by the four lead organizations, assessing technical assistance needs, meal site numbers, educational plans, and supply requests. This pre-survey would have served as an application had interest been greater than available resources. After completing the pre-survey, meal site organizers were instructed to complete required paperwork to access their grant funding and promotional material. The last requirement of the campaign was for meal site organizers to complete a post-survey, after their farm to summer activities had taken place. Both the pre-survey and post-survey were created and shared through Google™ forms. Results were analyzed using Microsoft Excel™.

## Survey Process

Open April-May, 2019, the campaign pre-survey was completed by 30 individuals who represented 30 summer meal programs, double the number of participants in the 2018 “Root for Radishes!” farm to summer campaign. Of the 15 communities that participated in 2018, 13 participated again in the 2019 campaign, an 87% retention rate. 17 communities participated for the first time (Figure 2). Evaluator Chelsea Krist of the ISU Extension and Outreach Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development Program created a map using Google™ to show the location of each site participating in 2019 (Fig. 3).

Participants were asked to estimate the number of students they serve daily in the pre-survey. Figure 4 shows that the size of participating sites varied from serving between 1 and 30 students to serving over 100 students daily. The estimated total number of students reached through the 2019 farm to summer campaign is estimated to be around 1,850.

Fig 2. The majority of 2018 participants chose to participate again in 2019

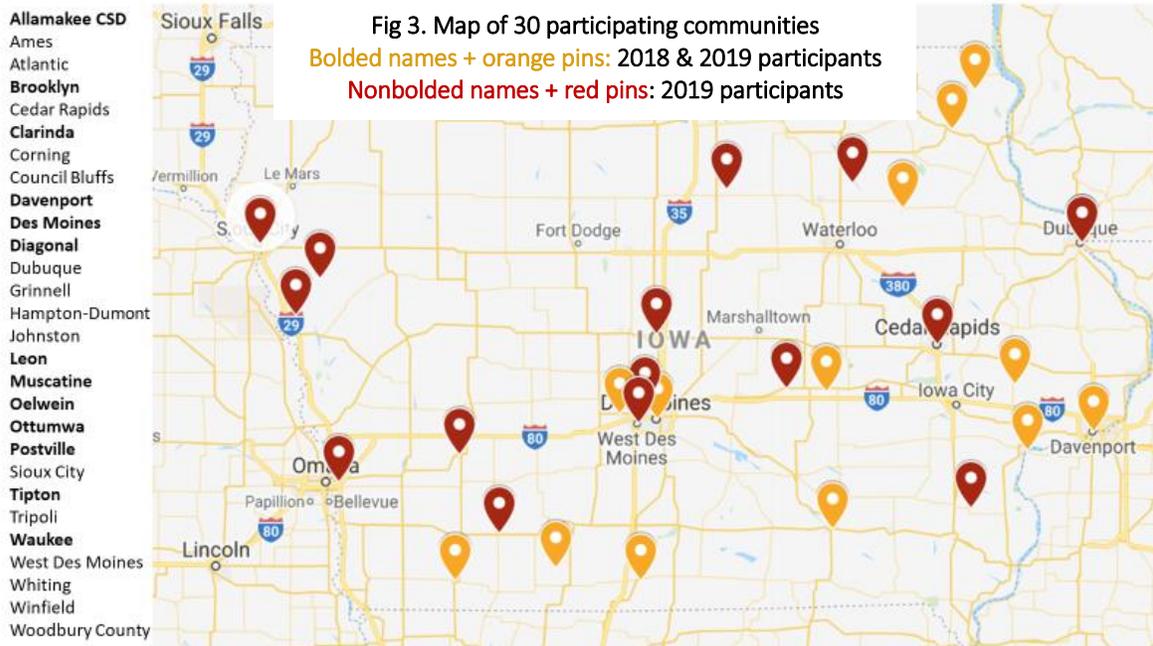
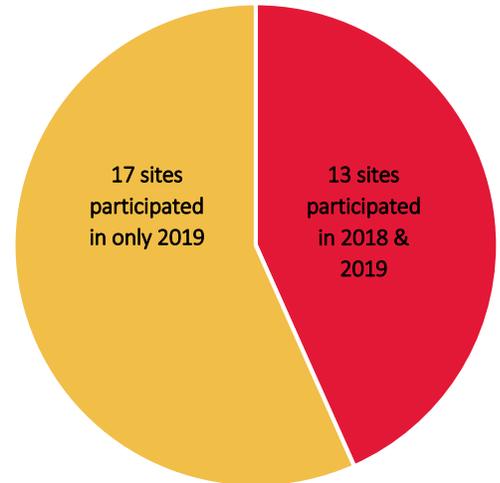
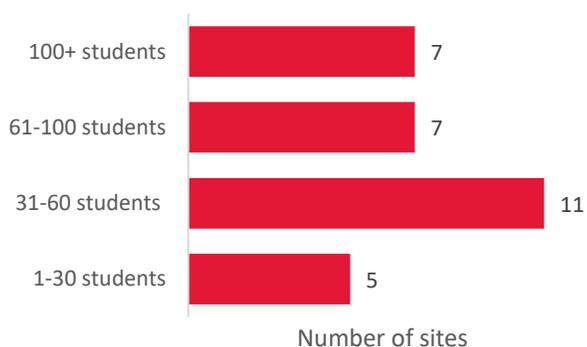


Fig 4. Daily student numbers varied across participating sites



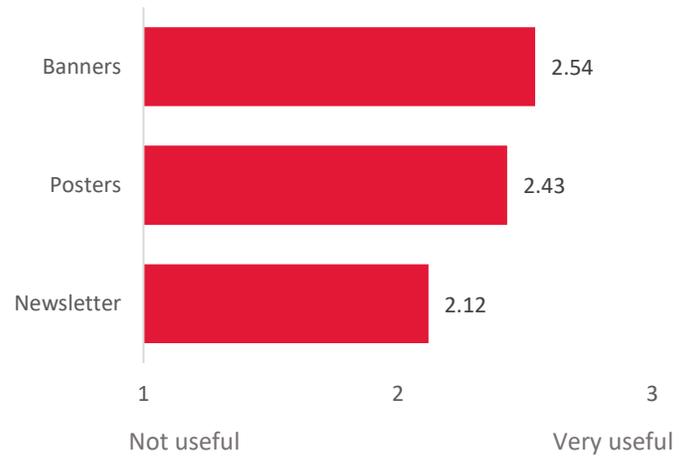
Of the 30 pre-survey applicants, 25 completed the paperwork to access the mini-grant funding, all received promotional materials, and 29 completed the final evaluation, for a final response rate of 97%. The post-programming evaluation survey was shared with participants in August and closed in September, 2019. It posed questions about site-specific promotion, farm to summer educational activities, grant funds spending, technical assistance support, barriers to implementing goals, and lessons learned. This report combines relevant data from the pre and post-surveys to provide an overview of 29 meal sites’ experiences, the reach of the “Snap for Snap Peas!” farm to summer campaign, and recommendations for future statewide campaigns.

# Results

## Site Organizers Largely Valued Campaign Promotional Materials

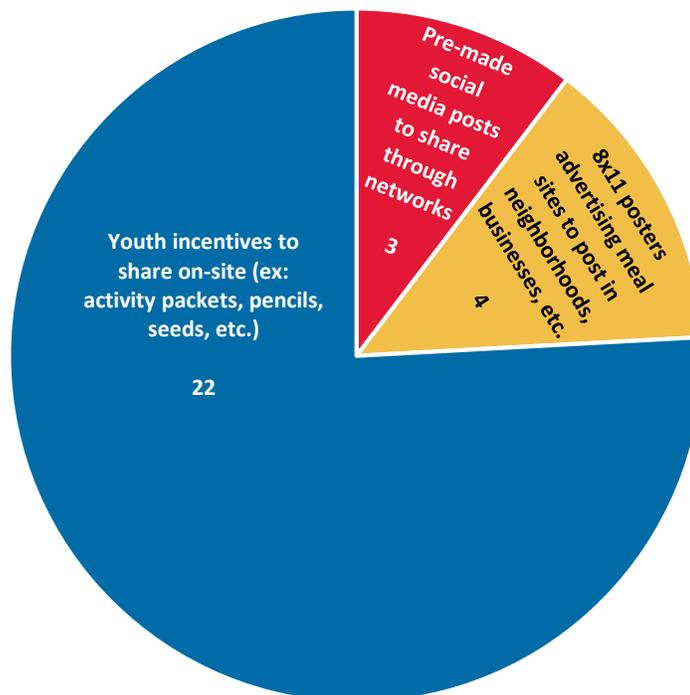
IDALS provided several promotional materials to participating sites (an editable community newsletter, laminated 8"x15" posters, and 3'x5' banners) to support outreach and communication around the farm to summer campaign (Appendix A). Figure 5 shows that respondents from all participating meal sites found these materials at least somewhat useful, especially the posters and banners. In additional comments, several respondents noted how they utilized the materials. Banners were commonly posted inside and outside schools or sites serving meals, posters were commonly shared with local businesses and other community spaces around town, and newsletters were edited and sent home with students to share with their families.

Fig 5. Banners are the most useful promotional material



In consideration of how to plan and fund future campaigns, participants were asked to select the number one offering that would most enhance promotion of their meal site and campaign (Fig. 6). The majority of respondents noted that having incentives for youth (ex: activity packets, pencils, stickers, seeds, etc.) would be most beneficial. It should be noted that many of these items were offered last year, and many second-year participants missed the availability of those supplies this year.

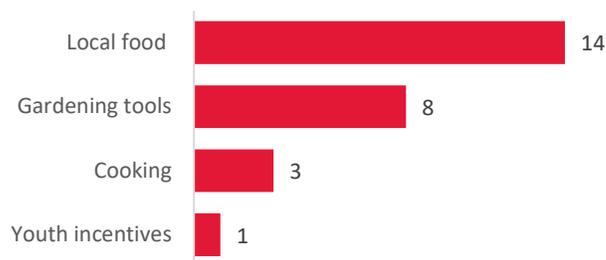
Fig 6. Youth incentives would most enhance site and campaign promotion



### Funding was Spent on Local Food

Of the 30 participating summer meal sites, 25 received \$150 to support educational programming around local food. Site organizers were largely autonomous in deciding how to spend this funding, as long as the purchases went toward the promotion and support of local foods and producers at their summer meal site. All but one site rated the \$150 amount as adequate support for their campaign, meaning they were able to purchase the supplies needed to support the campaign. When asked to report the most useful item purchased with the mini-grant, over half of respondents selected local food (Fig. 7).

**Fig 7. Participants rated local food as the most useful item purchased with the \$150 mini-grant**



**Fig 8. Most participants did not use technical assistance**



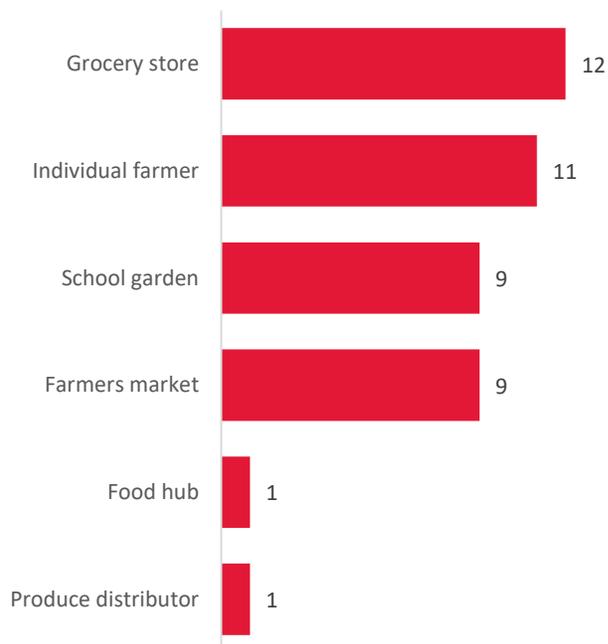
### Most Respondents Did Not Use Technical Assistance

Organizers offered to connect participating sites with technical assistance providers who could offer broad support around local food sourcing, educational programming ideas, promotion, etc. Of the 28 respondents, eight used some form of technical assistance to support their farm to summer campaign while 20 respondents did not (Fig. 8). Of the eight respondents who did use technical assistance, four partnered with the local ISU Extension and Outreach county staff and four partnered with local farmers for the purposes of additional programming support and procuring local food. In future work, organizers could be more specific when inquiring into and defining technical assistance needs to see if interest in support increases.

### Sites Served More Local Food, More Often than in 2018

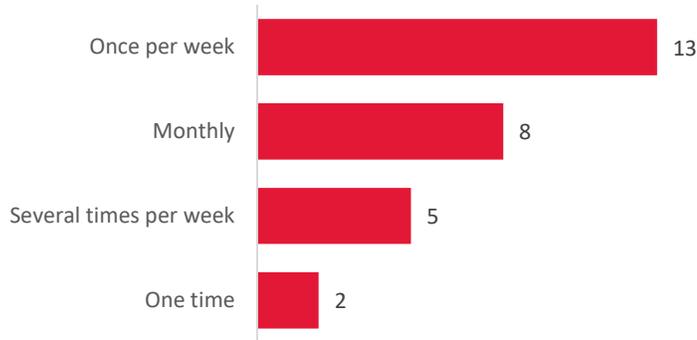
Of the 28 respondents, 27 sites reported successfully procuring local food as part of their farm to summer campaign. While most sites acquired their local food from more than one source throughout the summer, selecting two or more options on the survey, most local food purchases happened at grocery stores or from individual farmers (Fig. 9). While several sites reported working directly with a grocery store to order local produce, it is likely that at least some of these food purchases did not come from local sources.

**Fig 9. Most local food was purchased at a grocery store or from an individual farmer**

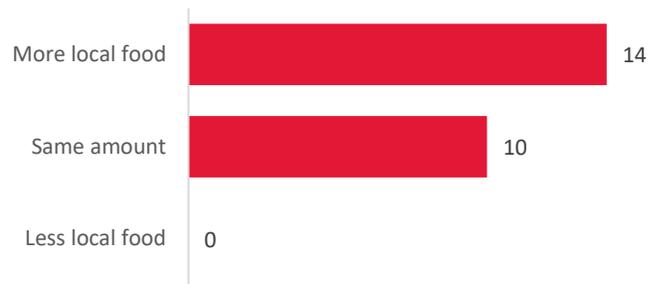


The frequency of offering local food varied between sites, as shown in Figure 10. While 46% (13 out of 28) of meal sites served local food once per week, all other sites served local food less frequently than that. Organizers did not set requirements or goals around how often to serve local food, but this average is more frequent than in 2018. With that, the majority of sites sourced more local food this summer than last summer, with zero participants responding that they sourced less local food (Fig. 11).

**Fig 10. Most sites served local food once per week**



**Fig 11. The majority of sites sourced more local food this year than last year**

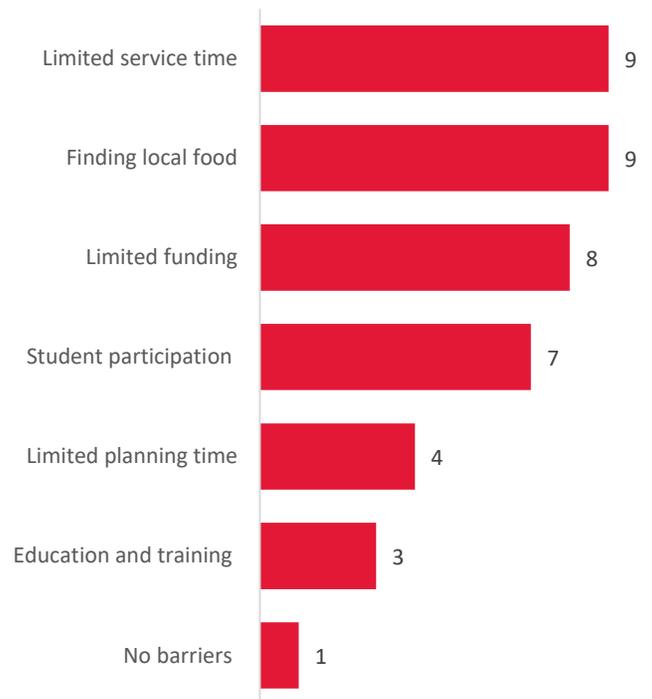


### ***Barriers to Implementing Farm to Summer Programming***

The survey asked participants to share barriers to implementing farm to summer activities in their communities. Most sites selected two or more barriers in their responses and one site reported that there are “no barriers.” Limited service time (referring to the short amount of time that most meal sites operate daily) and finding local food are the most common barriers across these sites, with limited funding reported as the next most common barrier (Fig. 12).

Respondents were asked to share what practices, if any, they found most helpful for overcoming the challenges of implementing farm to summer. People from 16 sites responded, many mentioning that external partnerships (with volunteers, farmers, food educators, families) and internal partnerships with other staff members were important to overcoming challenges. This speaks to the issue of limited service time; partnerships are necessary to delivering programming and engaging youth while concurrently preparing and serving meals. Developing and sticking to a plan and offering a variety in the vegetable tastings were other best practices mentioned by more than one respondent.

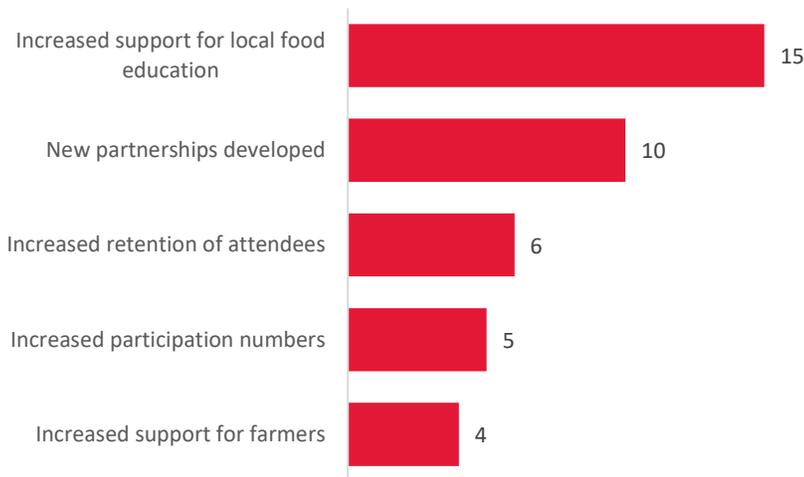
**Fig 12. Limited service time and finding local food are most common barriers**



### ***Outcomes and Continued Learning***

As summer meal site organizers develop and evolve community strategies for implementing farm to summer activities, program leaders will continue to learn and reflect on the outcomes of this second campaign. Respondents were asked to select any outcomes of participating in the “Snap for Snap Peas!” campaign, and 25 of the 29 respondents checked at least one outcome. A total of 40 outcomes were identified.

**Fig 12. Farm to summer enhances support for local food education (responses from 25 sites)**



As shown in Figure 13, 15 respondents stated that farm to summer programming increased support for local food education. 10 respondents noted that their farm to summer project helped to develop new partnerships. With less than one third of participants reportedly using technical assistance, but reporting new partnerships as an outcome, organizers should consider more specifically defining “technical assistance” in the post-survey. As was reported as an outcome of the 2018 campaign, sites indicated increased participation and retention of attendees at their summer meal sites as outcomes, along with increased support for farmers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

In its second year as a statewide, collaborative project, the “Snap for Snap Peas!” farm to summer campaign was successful in growing interest and providing useful resources (promotional materials, and funding for local food, gardening and cooking supplies) to summer meal programs. These coordinators learned useful, relevant information about the context of local food education during the summer months. Campaign coordinators should consider the opportunity to, once again, offer youth incentives to campaign participants to enhance and support local campaigns.

While common barriers of limited service time, finding local food, and limited funding exist, site organizers are looking toward external community partnerships, in-house support, and innovative programming to overcome these challenges. An additional solution for limited service time, outside of having more hands-on-deck, could be to increase the length of daily meal service, perhaps only once per week for campaign-specific activities. It is clear from this project and evaluation that meal program coordinators are enthusiastic about farm to summer opportunities and observed benefits of the campaign, including enhanced support for local food education, new partnerships, increased participation and retention of youth, and increased support for farmers. Coordinated surveying of farmers local to participating sites and maintaining a list of annual farmer partners and markets may aid in overcoming barriers related to finding local food.

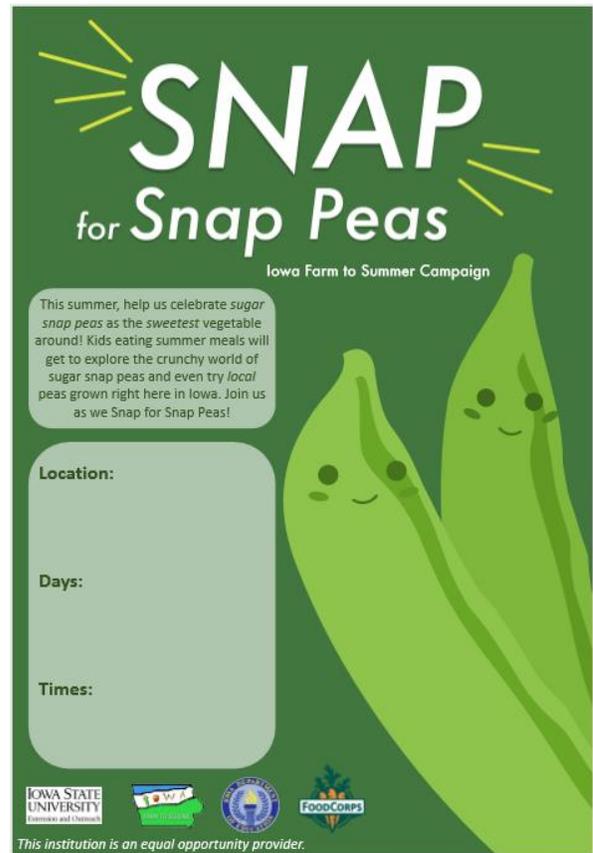
This evaluator recommends that for the future, development, outreach and promotion of the statewide farm to summer campaign begin earlier in the school year so to involve more sites and communities. An in-person training for meal site hosts could be organized in conjunction with another required training, perhaps in the winter or early spring to lengthen site-based planning time. As the importance of partnerships was iterated across several responses yet most sites did not use technical assistance, coordinators should consider how to best serve as partners outside of the role of providing technical assistance.

One element of this campaign coordination not mentioned in the above report is that funding was made available for campaign coordinators to visit up to nine participating meal sites. This evaluator conducted eight site visits across the state, meeting with campaign leaders to discuss and observe local programming and systems. Pictures and descriptions of activities and goals can be found here: [SFSP Site Visit Overview](#).

APPENDIX A.

Graphic Art Designed as Promotional Materials

“Snap for Snap Peas!” 8” x 15” Poster



“Snap for Snap Peas!”  
3’ x 5’ Banner



# "Snap for Snap Peas!" Editable Community Newsletter, 2 pages



Oooh **SNAP**  
for Snap Peas  
Iowa Farm to Summer Campaign

that's sweet!

[INSERT NAME OF SITE/SPONSOR]

## Help us Snap for Snap Peas!

This summer [INSERT SITE OR SPONSOR NAME] will be highlighting sugar snap peas as the SWEETEST vegetable of the summer! Students eating summer meals at [INSERT LOCATION] will get the chance to [INSERT GENERAL ACTIVITIES; EXAMPLE: "grow, cook, and taste local snap peas"]. Join us as we Snap for Snap Peas!

[INSERT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SITE. INCLUDE A GENERAL OUTLINE/SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES BEING OFFERED. MENTION OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS/EDUCATORS WHO WILL BE ASSISTING WITH PROGRAMMING]

Questions? Contact [INSERT POINT OF CONTACT AND CONTACT INFO].



**Looking for a Summer Meal Site near you?**

For English, text "FOOD" to 877-877 or call 1-866-348-6479

For Spanish, text or "COMIDA" to 877-877 or call 1-877-842-6273

## Where can you find sugar snap peas?

Sugar snap peas are jam packed with sweet flavor and make a great crunchy addition to a fresh summer stir-fry or simply dipped in ranch. But where do you find snap peas?

You can find *Iowa-grown* sugar snap peas in abundance during spring, early summer, and fall. Just check out [INSERT NAMES OF LOCAL FARMERS MARKET, FOOD CO-OP, FARMS, ETC.] for the freshest, sweetest sugar snap peas! If you don't have convenient access to any of those options, you can find them year-round at all major grocery stores.



## Super Simple Sautéed Sugar Snap Peas

| Ingredients:   | Directions:   |
|--|---|
| 1 <u>tbsp</u> olive oil<br>1 <u>lb</u> sugar snap peas, trimmed<br>Salt and pepper, to taste | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.</li><li>2. Add peas to the skillet.</li><li>3. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 8-10 minutes, or until peas are tender.</li><li>4. Add salt and pepper, to taste.</li></ol> |



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