

New York Farm to School



2008 Food Service Director's Survey Highlights

Christina Grace, Manager, Urban Food Systems Program

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets

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Our Pride is Inside.

Purpose

Objectives:

- Determine extent of New York's farm to school activity
 - Assess interest in farm to school
 - Identify opportunities and barriers
 - Distribution
 - Product
 - Geographic
 - Focus the activities of NYSDAM and Coordinating Committee Members on greatest needs and interests
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Method

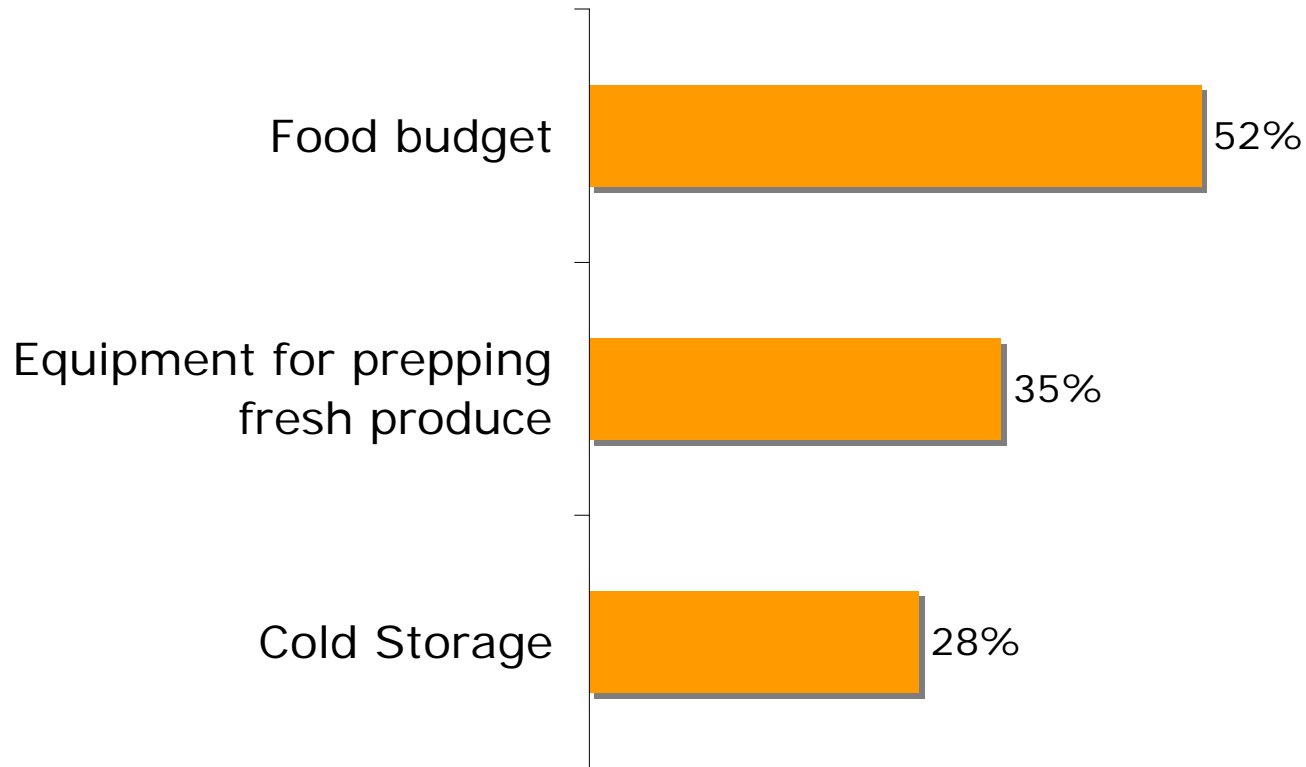
- Quantitative Survey
 - 49 closed and open questions
 - Web-based, Survey Monkey
 - Used OGS contact list of 730 k-12 public or private schools
 - 30-day data collection period
 - Food Service Focus
 - Process (menu development and purchasing)
 - Resources
 - Local sourcing habits and interests
 - Barriers to purchasing local foods
 - State support for local procurement
 - Collaborative Development/Tested Tool
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Demographics

- 209 school districts/29% response rate
 - Average enrollment 2581 (does not include NYC)
 - 24% have summer meals programs (n=208)
 - Cost to produce lunch is average \$2.54, range from \$.75-\$4.06 (n=149)
 - 53% of cost reported as being for food (n=142)
 - Free/reduced-price lunch rates align with the state averages
 - 86% self-manage food service (n=207)
 - Aramark and Sodexo most common management companies
 - Does not include NYC
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Operational Resources

- Average total staff = 25, range 1-450 (n=201)
- 65% reported fully operational kitchens in all district schools (n=202)
- Obstacles to purchasing more fresh produce in general (n=207):



Produce

- 85% districts sell fresh produce a la carte (n=189)
- More than 1/2 respondents have salad bars in schools
- 17% sell produce in vending machines (n=188)

Sourcing:

- Most 62% rely on 5 or more distributors or other sources for food purchases (n=139)
- 124(66%) purchase fresh produce from a specialty produce vendor (n=188)
- Produce is commonly ordered 2 days in advance
- Fresh produce is rarely purchased through a cooperative bidding process, whereas 83% of respondents (n=199) purchase canned/frozen cooperatively

Top Items:

- Lettuce (96%)
- Tomatoes (95%)
- Apples (95%)
- Carrots (92%)
- Cucumbers (90%)
- Broccoli (81%)
- Onions (79%)
- Peppers (79%)
- Grapes (68%)
- Watermelon (68%)
- Potatoes, baking (59%)
- Pears (57%)
- Melons 55%)
- Strawberries (53%)

Dairy & Meat

- Exclusive agreements are common (86%, n=134)
 - Cooperative Bids:
 - 69% purchase some items through cooperative bids
 - Of those, 84% purchase dairy through cooperative bids (n=139)
 - Dairy is commonly ordered 2 days in advance
 - Artificial Hormone/Antibiotic Free:
 - 56% of (n=189) were interested in artificial hormone and/or antibiotic free dairy.
 - 50% interested in artificial hormone and/or antibiotic- free poultry and meat products
 - Respondents who had purchased locally or were interested were 3x more likely to be interested in these products
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Local Purchasing

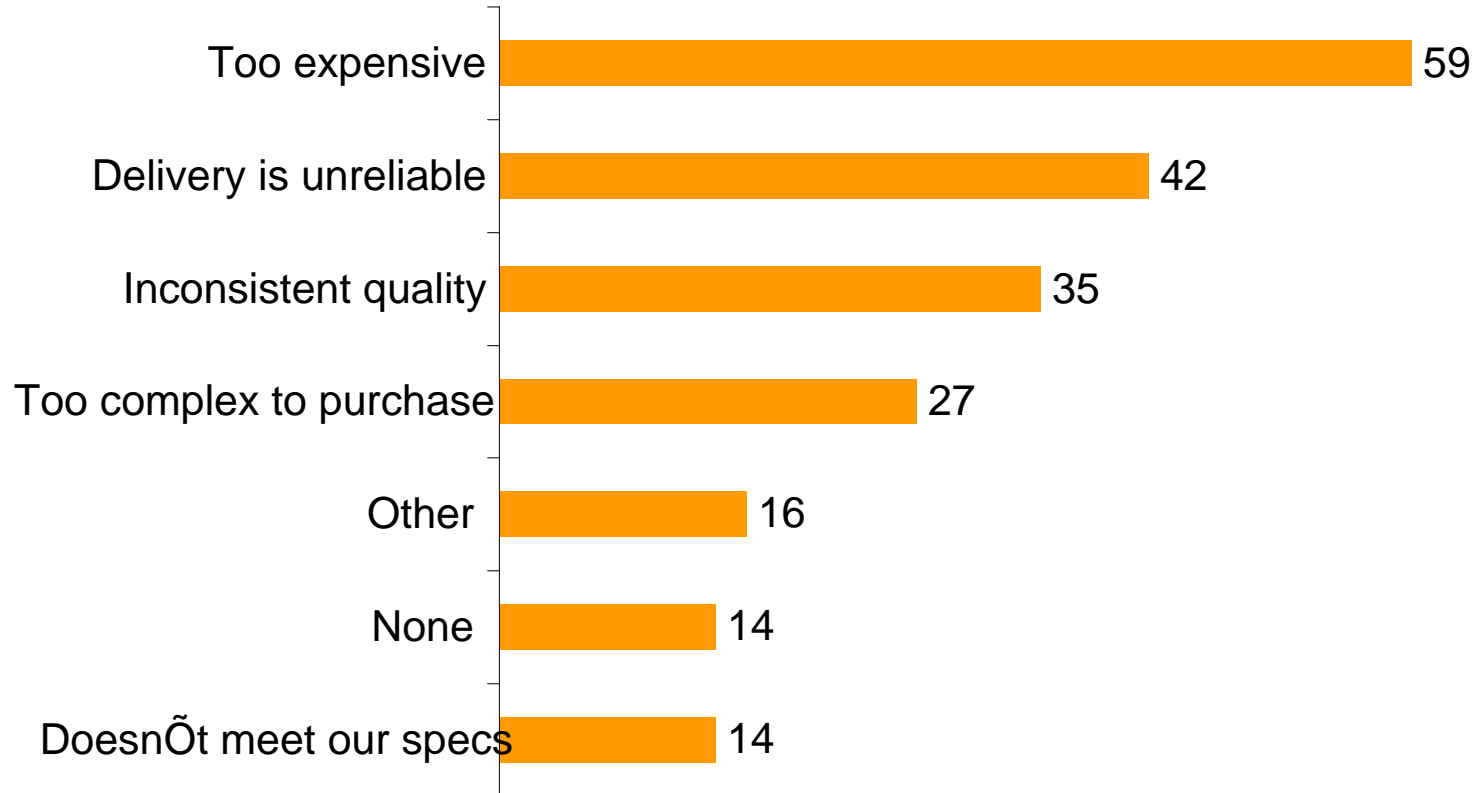
- 63% had purchased local, 118 districts
- 30% were interested in purchasing local products, 56 districts
- 120 respondents agreed to be listed in a directory of schools interested in buying local
- 53% were not at all familiar with NYS's procedure for local purchasing
- Most local purchases were made through distributors vs. direct from farmers
- Top purchasing counties: Erie, 18; Monroe, 8; Suffolk, 7

Top Local Items:

- **Apples (98%)**
- Carrots (82%)
- Lettuce (80%)
- **Tomatoes (80%)**
- Broccoli (75%)
- Cucumbers (75%)
- Milk (72%)
- Peppers (68%)
- Onions (68%)
- Yogurt (68%)
- Cheese, cream (62%)
- **Potatoes, baking (61%)**
- Beef (61%)
- Chicken (61%)
- Frozen Veg. (59%)
- Watermelon (58%)
- Grapes (57%)

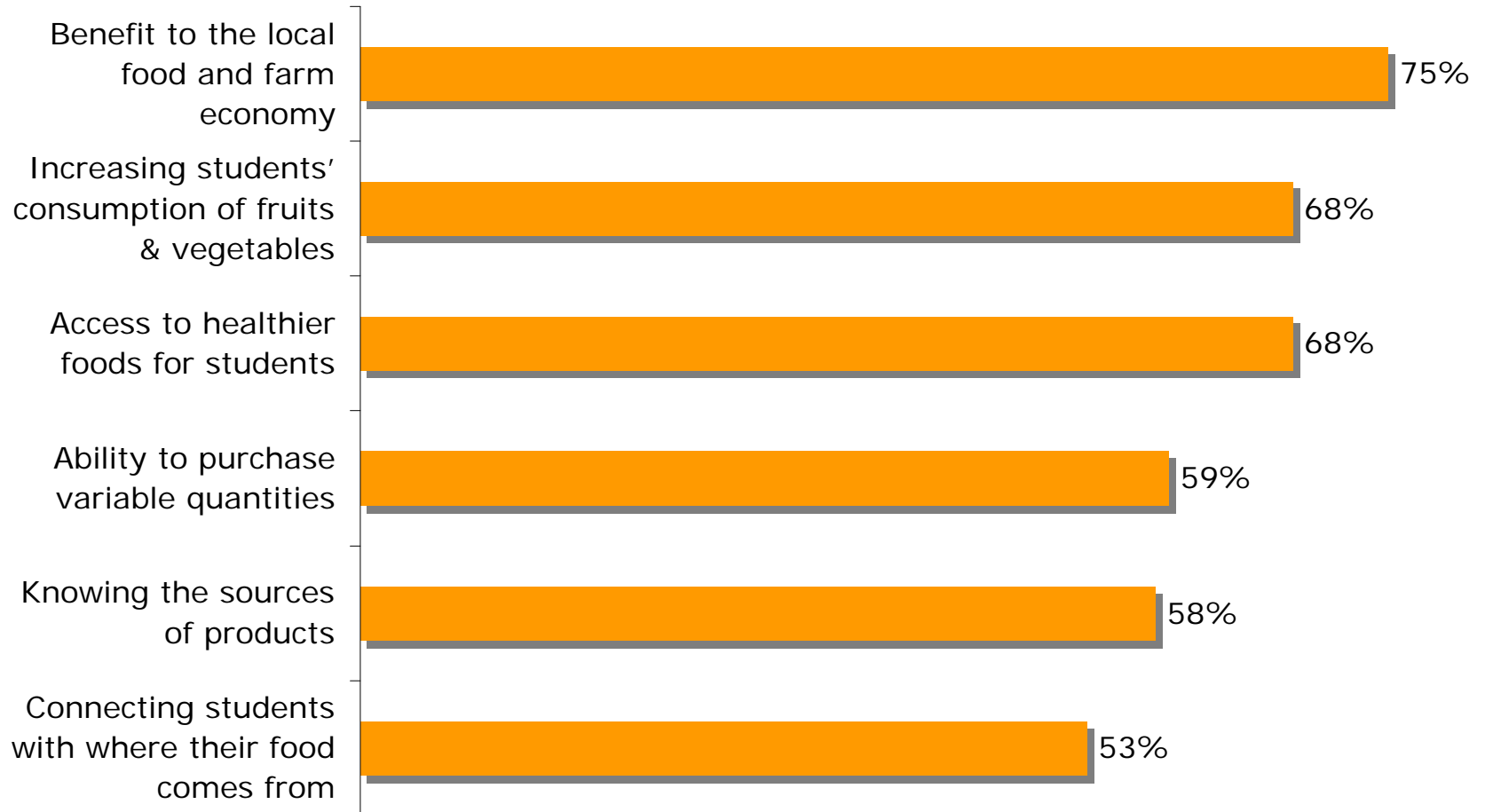
* Bold= purchased direct from farmer by more than 25%

Local Purchasing Concerns



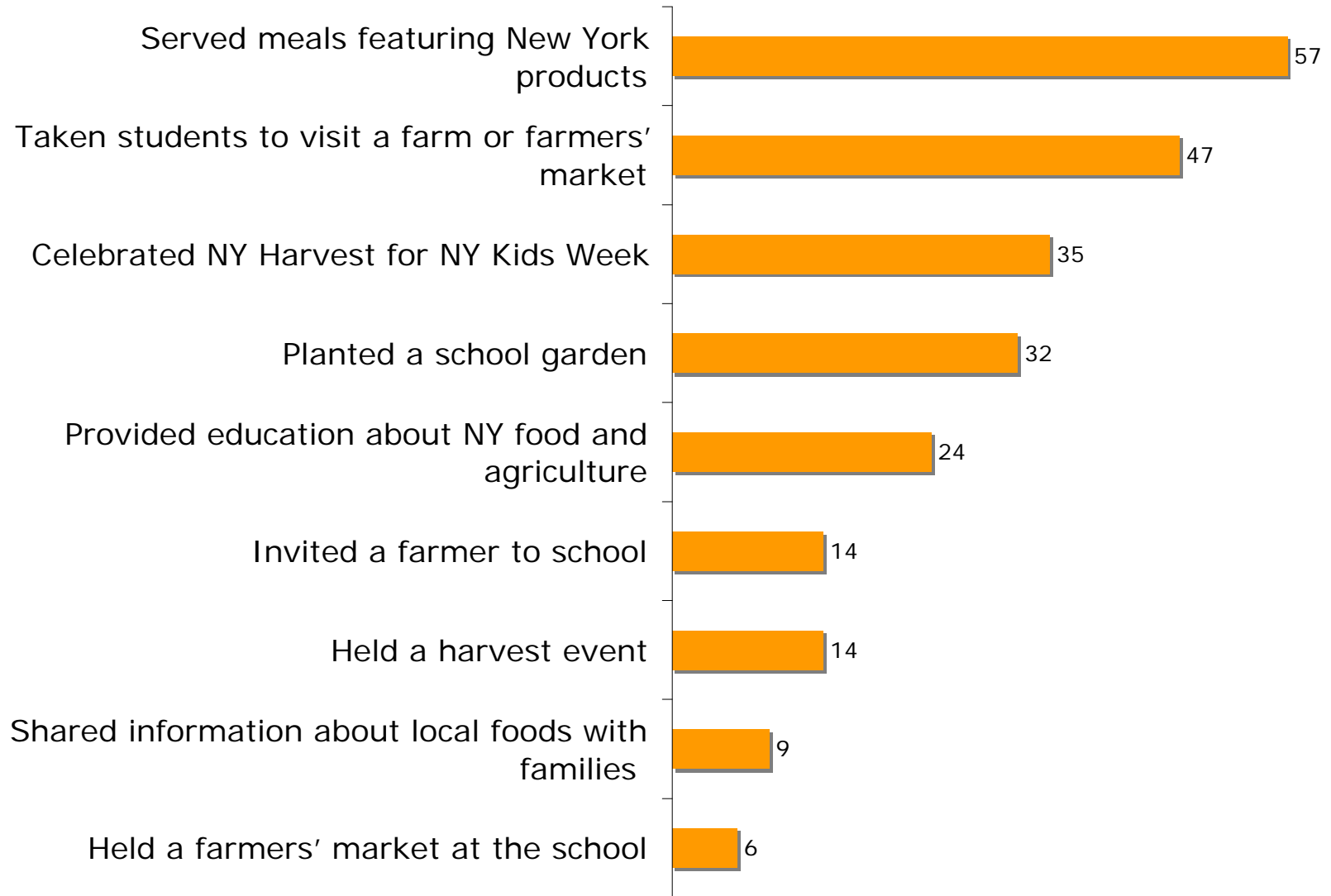
Lesser process concerns include HACCP standards, business insurance for farmers, procurement issues (negotiating FS contracts).

Motivations for Local Purchasing

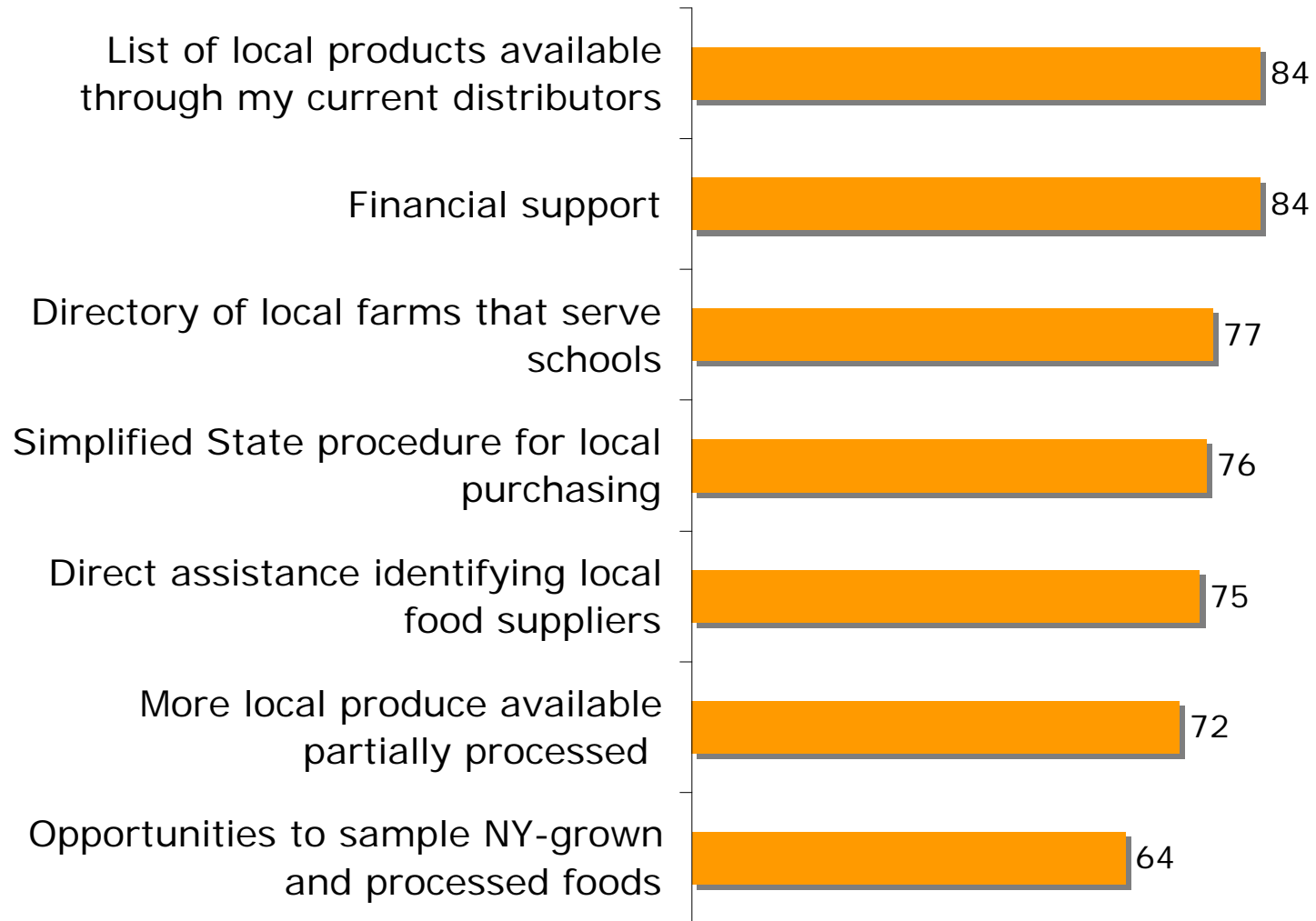


N=179

Farm to School Activities (%)



Resource Priorities - Very Useful (%)



There was also interest in cooperative bidding and F2S promotional materials. Case studies, local recipes, public recognition by state and city agencies, and supporting data were perceived as less useful.

Next Steps

- Database/Directory Development:
 - Inventory of Farm to School districts
 - Target “interested” districts
 - Local sources (direct and in-direct)
 - Products
 - Distributor Outreach/Market Development
 - Focus on distributors serving the “interested” districts and current local purchasers
 - Considering regional distributor roundtables or “mini” tradeshow to promote local products to distributors
 - Continued Support of New Product Dev. (ie. Carrot coins, chopped romaine, frozen veg mixes)
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Contact

Christina Grace

Manager, Urban Food Systems Program

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

P: 718-722-2834

E: christina.grace@agmkt.state.ny.us
