

A Supplement to  
FoodService Director and  
Restaurant Business

2012

FRESH IDEAS:

# From Field to Fork

- Sourcing Fresh Produce
- Kid-Friendly  
Fruits & Veggies
- Food Safety



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Unforked's Crispy Avocado Taco combines tempura avocado with housemade pico de gallo and microgreens.

## FRESH IDEAS: From Field to Fork

Seasonal produce is transforming today's most exciting menus



By Joan M. Lang

**F**resh-in-season produce. Farmers market selections. Fruit- and vegetable-centric menus. What began as a niche phenomenon in agriculturally blessed places like California has become a full-blown industry trend, from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, Seattle to Sarasota. From school children to affluent restaurant-goers, everyone is happily eating their veggies. And seeking out the freshest and best in seasonal fruits and vegetables has become a smart strategy for foodservice operators.

"Produce is really driving our menu-development decisions these days," says Rob Corliss, executive chef of Sheridan's Unforked in Overland Park, KS, and the founder of the culinary company ATE, which specializes in "connecting people to their food, environment and wellness" through such activities as the Springfield (MO) Urban Agricultural Coalition.

Opened in June 2011, Unforked can best be described as "healthy food for on-the-go diners": ingredient-driven, nutrition-packed, and served quickly. "When it's practical, we use seasonal, local, and organic and all-natural ingredients, with an emphasis on quality and flavor," says Corliss.

Signature menu items include the Hail the Kale Salad (fresh ribbons of kale lightly tossed with Parmesan cheese, toasted bread crumbs, and lemon olive oil dressing); the Cali Taco (seared chile-spiked tilapia topped with creamy avocado-cilantro sauce and pickled red cabbage slaw); K Fries (hand-cut Kennebec potatoes sprinkled with sea salt); Crispy Avocado Taco (topped with seasonal pico de gallo and micro greens); and a grilled marinated portobello Veggie Burger with hand-torn leaf lettuce and garden tomato on a toasted egg bun.

Fresh produce does several other important things for

▶ Eight vegetables are among the top 30 fastest growing ingredients on menus in 2012. Kale leads the pack, growing by 48.7% in menu mentions. —*Datassential*

▶ The number of direct-sales farmers markets has increased almost 10% in the last year, to more than 7,800 registered markets across the country, vs. 1,744 in 2004 —USDA

menus, according to Corliss: “Chicken is chicken, but fruits and vegetables give a menu signature value. You can’t go down the street and get the exact same thing.”

Then, too—and anyone concerned about food costs should be paying particular attention—with produce you can do more with less of the traditional center-of-plate proteins. “Produce tends to cost less, so you can more easily absorb higher costs on some of your other ingredients,” explains the chef. “It balances out your overall food costs.”

Seasonal and local produce also provides an important creative boost for many chefs. “When you’re working with these kinds of ingredients, Mother Nature plays such a big part,” says Nuno Alves, chef de cuisine of Tavolo, which specializes in ingredient-driven pasta and pizza in the Boston suburb of Dorchester, MA. “With the weather, you never know what you’ll get, but that’s a great creative challenge.”

Signature items like gnocchi provide a vehicle for seasonality: They can be sauced with green and yellow zucchini, string beans, baby carrots and a fava-pod puree in the summer, or a heartier caponata-like eggplant mixture in the fall.

And Alves—one of 11 children in a Portuguese family where no food went to waste—is all about curing, sausage-making, pickling, and freezing for a snowy day.

Menu specials like grilled radicchio with corn and spice aioli, and fruit cobblers made with local peaches and berries are also deployed to take advantage of the seasonal bounty. Alves works with local farmers whenever possible, and has become more active with the local farmers market scene in order to forge relationships and find out what’s fresh and coming in next. He’s even sold Tavolo’s meatballs, pizza dough, marinara sauce and fresh pasta in a kind of quid pro quo where

he drops off his food and picks up produce from some of the farmers at the same time.



**MENU SAMPLER: THE THOMAS HOUSE (MARSHFIELD, WI)**

Gorgonzola and Sauteed Apple Salad

Bruschetta topped with fresh tomatoes, red onions and cucumber

Seared sea scallops on sweet-corn-and-chorizo risotto

## How Local Should You Go?

Hundred-mile menus and other interpretations of “local” may be getting all the buzz, but for many operators “seasonal” wins when it comes to importance and practicality.

Seasonal is definitely giving local a run for its money, according to Suzy Badaracco, whose company Culinary

Chef Alexander Ong, of Betelnut Restaurant in San Francisco, tops crispy chicken skin “crackers” with Toasted Chili-Crusted Pumpkin Seeds, Serrano Vinaigrette, and a mix of baby greens.



Chef Alexander Ong photograph courtesy of B&W Gourmet Farms

Tides provides trends forecasting. “Local and seasonal are cousins, but seasonal is the cooler place to be,” she told attendees at the Produce Marketing Association’s 2012 Foodservice Conference & Expo. Authenticity and seasonality are what consumers really care about as they become more conscious of sustainability issues, and foodservice operators need to refocus their attention to a strategy that’s more global and seasonal.

There are other reasons for the shift:

- Except in a few parts of the country, local crops have a very short season—and even then supply can be iffy due to factors like bad weather; the rest of the year, crops like potatoes, apples and root vegetables represent a steady source but are not enough by themselves to provide menu variety and customer appeal

- Research from environmental concerns like the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) indicates that local production may not be as good for the planet as everyone thinks. For example:

Long-distance transportation accounts for only about 4% of greenhouse gases in food production, according to UCS; most occur at the farm itself through the use of tractors and other equipment and materials

A new book, *The Locavore’s Dilemma: In Praise of the 10,000-mile Diet*, posits that large farms growing crops suited to their region are better for the environment because they use less energy per item and grow more food on less land

- Increased focus on authentic ethnic food suggests that many ingredients need to come from the global pantry—and fields
- Sourcing locally takes a significant commitment in time and even cost

“There are lots of tradeoffs when you get too literal with local,” says Chris Casson, who spent 15 years as a hotel and restaurant chef and is now produce sales and marketing manager at Shamrock Foods. “If you want to menu something delicious, follow the seasons. There’s a reason products like mangoes only grow in certain climates and for a certain period of the year, and chefs need to honor that.”



Top a hot baked potato with fresh veggies and cheese sauce for an enticing vegetarian item.

For many operators, these issues net out in menu programs that offer fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables year-round, and showcase local produce during peak harvest months. The ultimate goal: More produce on more plates.

Working through the USDA’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and a variety of other resources, the foodservice department at La Crosse (WI) School District has been aiming to expose students—and, by extension, their families—to as many different fresh fruits and vegetables as possible. Monies from the USDA grant are used to purchase and serve produce that would otherwise be financially out of reach.

“Starfruit, kohlrabi, purple tomatoes, pineapple... these are things many of our students would not have tasted otherwise,” says Joni M. Ralph, RD, CD, supervisor of school nutrition programs for the district.

The district’s multifaceted Smart Eats program also includes a farm-to-table component, which adds items like rhubarb cake, roasted parsnips, honey glazed carrots, Yukon Gold potatoes, red kuri squash, broccoli and even rutabaga chowder to the menu. “We want the kids to get the message that healthy foods, including fruits and vegetables, taste great.”

Unforked augments its core menu with seasonal produce-based specials, which are launched on a two-month schedule and include items like summertime’s Sweet Summer Salad (local watermelon tossed with fresh mint, basil, sliced red onions and queso fresco with a splash of lime juice), and this fall’s Harvest Slaw (shaved red cabbage and Brussels sprouts with a chickpea- and raisin-



**MENU SAMPLER: ROOT**  
(BETHLEHEM, NH)

- Grilled Snap Peas
- Korean Lettuce Wraps
- Veggie Steak (country-fried 3-bean steak, corn pudding and pepper gravy)

Baked potato photograph courtesy of the Idaho Potato Commission

▶ “Local” produce is generally grown within 100 miles and “regional” products are from within 250 miles



CHRISTOPHER RANCH

## Flavoring Foodservice, One Garlic Bulb at a Time

Think all garlic is the same? Think again. There are huge differences in the quality, freshness and consistency of garlic, from country to country of origin, and from variety to variety.

The vast majority of the garlic grown and marketed to foodservice by Christopher Ranch is Monviso, an exclusive California heirloom variety that can be traced back to the Piedmont region of Northern Italy. Based in the garlic-growing capital of Gilroy, CA, Christopher Ranch has been perfecting and improving Monviso for more than 55 years, resulting in a distinctive product that offers bold, nutty flavor and a creamy finish, without the acrid heat that's common with other kinds of garlic.

In fact, Monviso California Heirloom Garlic has the highest brix level compared to the most commonly found garlic in the U.S. (brix or °Bx represents the percentage of solids present in the juice of a given plant; the higher the brix, the better the flavor and quality).

"We are the only growers with a year-round supply

of this single, superior variety," says Justin Guibert, who heads up foodservice sales for Christopher Ranch. "Other suppliers may use garlic from Mexico, Argentina and China, but garlic is a product like apples: There's lots of fluctuation between varieties and sources. Because Monviso has a more robust flavor to begin with, and because it's available year-round, our customers can be assured of the best quality and consistent freshness throughout the year."

At a time when more chefs, and their customers, are considering the source of their food, every ingredient is being carefully selected—whether that product is a high-profile center-of-plate item like beef, or a hardworking flavor booster like garlic. But even chefs who grow their own garlic would be hard-pressed to replicate the Mediterranean-like climate of California, where the conditions are ideal for growing garlic. And because Monviso can be stored in a controlled atmosphere environment after harvest, Christopher Ranch offers foodservice operators a single consistent flavor profile that doesn't fluctuate with the seasons.

"That's really important when you are building and executing recipes, day after day," notes Guibert.

And of course the safety of Christopher Ranch Monviso is never in question, thanks to the company's industry-leading Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), system of third-party audits and gold standard traceability.

In addition to the widely used fresh peeled garlic and whole bulbs, Christopher Ranch provides an extensive line of value-added foodservice products such as roasted, fresh chopped and crushed garlic, and other custom industrial packs. Organic garlic is also available.

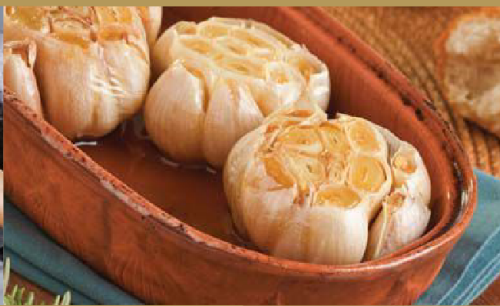
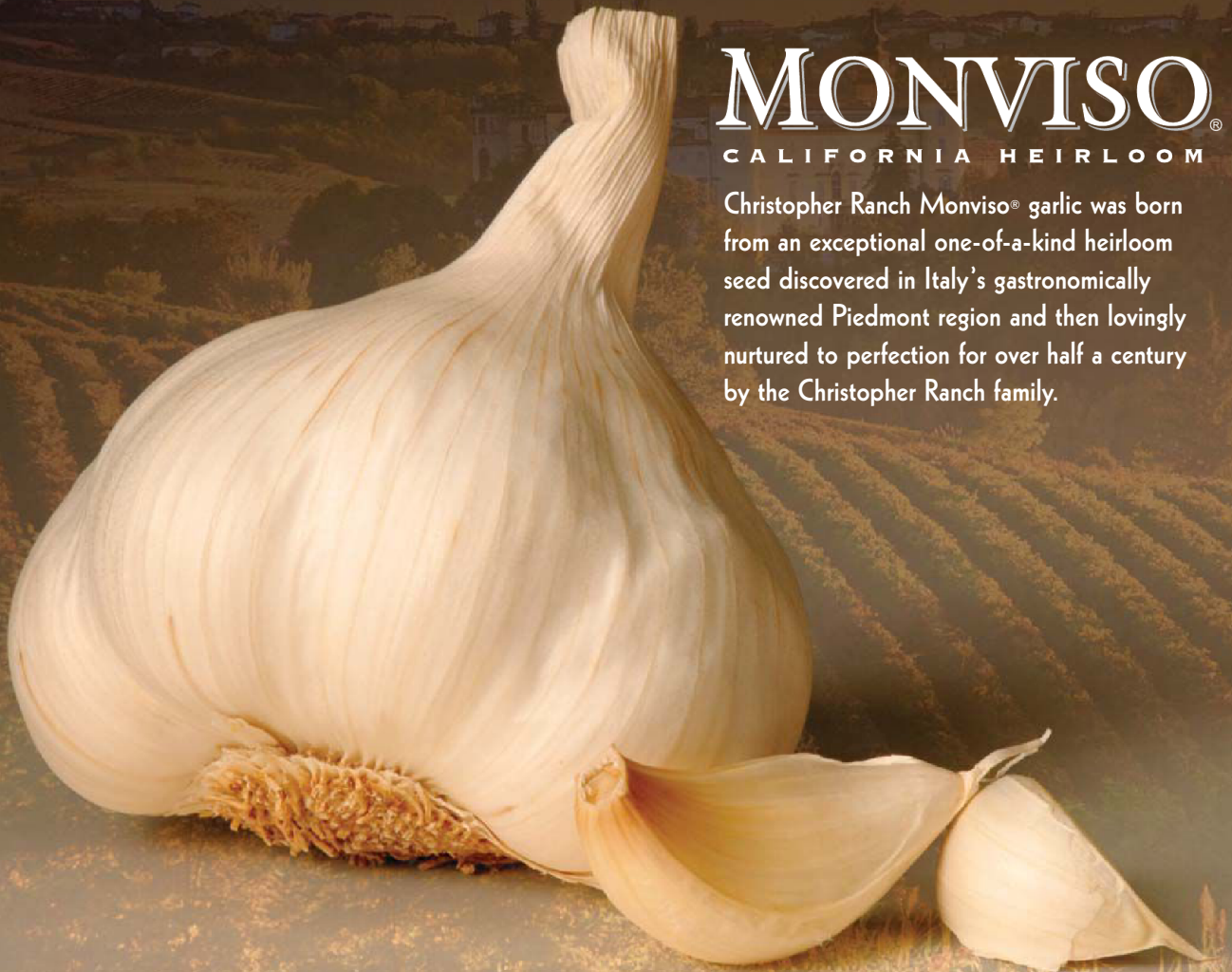
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Big Bowl's signature Stirfry Bar is a perfect showcase for fresh seasonal produce.

studded sweet-and-sour dressing) and a roasted Sweet Potato Taco with cranberries and toasted pumpkin seeds.

These LTOs not only serve to keep people excited, they also function as a test vehicle for new menu items and ingredients. Kale, for instance, has been a “rock star” for Unforked, and executive chef Rob Corliss has been experimenting with other utilizations for the green, including Voodoo Veggies (mixed with roasted sweet potatoes and spicy chiles) and worked into a pesto to flavor a warm tortilla filled with griddled portobellos and chiles. “We use local produce when we can, in the summer, but we’re also looking for those vegetables that can be used year-round in different ways, like kale and mushrooms,” says Corliss.

## Supplier Strategies

Getting farm-fresh produce to the table can be a challenge, but all kinds of new distribution models are springing up to meet the demand. Some chefs have the luxury of being able to travel to farms or farmers markets to get their produce. For those who can't, there's a new breed of middleman: John Lash, owner of Farm to Table in Austin, TX, bridges the gap between bountiful area farms and local chefs with a multi-farm pick-up and delivery service.

And at the other end of the spectrum, broadliners and other mainstream distributors are ramping up their efforts to carry more seasonal produce. Sysco, for instance, has been growing its FreshPoint division into one of the largest foodservice distributors of fresh fruits and vegetables in North America, with more than 30 warehouses in the U.S. and Canada. One way or another, it's getting easier to put fresh seasonal produce on the table.

Joni Ralph of La Crosse School District is part of a very innovative team partnership designed to support local

farmers. A coordinator with the La Crosse County Farm-to-School program, he serves as the point of contact between local schools and participating farms, and has implemented systems for procurement, processing and distribution based on mem-

ber needs. Much of the produce is sent to the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen, where it is processed and frozen, then sent to a distributor—Reinhart FoodService, which has a distribution center right in La Crosse.

“We tried getting the produce sent directly to our warehouse, but we ended up with 6 a.m. deliveries of beets in all different sizes and shapes and we couldn't begin to check them in, sort them and cook them,” says Ralph. “This arrangement streamlines the whole process.”



### MENU SAMPLER: SUPPER (PHILADELPHIA)

Relish Tray (trio of housemade pickled vegetables, spreads and salads with olive oil toasts)

BE Farm greens and herbs salad with Ben's apples, smoked chicken cracklins, cornbread and buttermilk

Back Porch Crudités (fresh BE Farm vegetables, herb salt, crispy biscuits and pimento cheese)

Reinhart, for its part, has increased its commitment to fresh produce through its membership in Markon Cooperative, which consists of eight independent, broadline foodservice companies in the U.S. and Canada. Markon's focus on innovation and food safety is strengthened through the shared resources of its members, and such proprietary brands as Markon First Crop (traditional vegetables), and Ready-Set-Serve (ready-to-use products such as salad greens). For the multi-unit operator, Markon provides improved food safety, consistent high specs, and full coverage throughout the country.

“The purchasing world has really changed in the last few years,” says Mike Knapp, procurement coordinator at the University of Colorado Boulder. “It used to be dictated by price and quality. Now there are all kinds of issues with sustainability, different diets, insurance and more. There's a lot more to think about.”

As with so many colleges and universities, UC Boulder is making a significant commitment to more sustainable

▶ The recently launched Responsible Epicurean and Agricultural Leadership program (REAL) is a voluntary program to certify restaurants, caterers and foodservice companies that meet certain criteria on the use of fruits and vegetables, among other healthy initiatives

practices on campus, including sourcing more local products and offering organic spinach and lettuce for its salad bars. “We’re trying to work with local farmers, but it’s challenging because many of the smaller ones can’t afford the insurance or distribution costs, and our purchasing regulations include certain price stipulations.” The food-service department is working with the school administration to address that, but in the meantime, Knapp is working on other moving parts.

“Our company for conventional produce is trying to source local products like potatoes and squash,” he explains. “Sysco Denver is stepping up, and that has helped because they maintain the guidelines and do the field inspections that smaller local farms can’t. It’s a real team effort,” continues Knapp, “but the students really appreciate it, and our sustainability initiatives have even become a recruitment tool for us.”

For some operators with the wherewithal, you can’t get any closer to farm freshness than actually becoming the farmer. Big Bowl, Lettuce Entertain You’s eight-unit fresh Chinese and Thai concept, has been on a mission to menu local for the past several years. Beginning with partnerships with local farms in the early years (and paired with other sustainability initiatives in such areas as green packaging and reduced energy usage), the initiative took a giant step forward in 2011 when executive chef Marc Bernard debuted his own 5-acre farm—Rustic Road Farm.

For Big Bowl, that commitment is as much cultural as practical. “It

takes time to dig the roots so that managers and employees buy into the whole idea of what we call building good food,” says Dan McGowan, president of Big Bowl, who also over-



The advertisement features a large background image of a winding asphalt road through a desert landscape under a dramatic, cloudy sky. In the foreground, a white semi-trailer truck with a green and white Albert's Organics logo and '30th' anniversary emblem is driving away. The top of the ad contains the Albert's Organics logo and '30th' anniversary emblem, with the text 'A UNFI Company' below it. The central text reads: 'In thirty years, we've taken organics places they've never been before.'

**30 years ago, the natural food revolution had a roadblock.** Tiny stores and local farms didn't have the time to deal with deliveries, as organics enjoyed its first micro-boom. Albert's Organics stepped in to connect stores and growers, setting the stage for the enterprise-scale organics we enjoy today. Now, we cover all of the USA from 7 distribution centers, transporting over 20,000,000 pounds of organic produce, meat, and fresh products every month to natural foods stores, chain stores, and food service customers. We're proud to be a part of the organic food revolution. Here's to the next 30 years!

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TANIMURA & ANTLE



## Field-Packed Lettuce: The Ultimate in Quality, Freshness and Flavor

The “Farm to Table” philosophy continues to build momentum in the foodservice industry. Now the route from the field to the fork is a little shorter, with Artisan Lettuce and Artisan Romaine Lettuce from Tanimura & Antle. These whole head, field-packed lettuces offer superior quality, freshness and flavor, plus better yield and versatility.

It’s just the latest in “Customer Focus, Quality Driven™” innovation from the company—since the late 1930’s when the Tanimura and Antle families began working in the fledgling Salinas Valley iceberg lettuce business. Today, Tanimura & Antle farms more than 30,000 acres throughout California and Arizona, with a full line of premium fresh produce.

“We may be a large producer, but this is still a family operation,” says Mike Antle, executive vice president. “There are three generations of Tanimura and Antle family members still working side by side with their dedicated employees.”

Rather than being packed and readied for market in distant locations, Tanimura & Antle lettuce is hand harvested

daily and packed right in the field. This pays off in better flavor and texture, and longer shelf life than product that has been mechanically processed offsite.

“We pride ourselves on delivering products that are not only fresh and flavorful, but also unique, to make it easier for operators to differentiate themselves,” explains Antle. Two products developed for foodservice bring that commitment right to the operator level, with great value and versatility:

- **Artisan Romaine**—Grown from proprietary seed, these dense, compact heads of sweet, tender Romaine are field-packed 24 to a case, providing uniform size and flavor and a higher yield (there are no tough central ribs to trim). Artisan Romaine is ideal used in whole-leaf form as a “chip” substitute, or halved and served as a wedge or grilled.
- **Artisan Lettuce**—Sturdier and more flavorful than spring mix, this assortment of mature, whole head lettuce is field-packed in 8-lb. mixed cases containing three different red and green lettuce varieties. Crisp, complex and colorful, Artisan Lettuces can be used individually or blended.

Quick Read Codes (QRs) on the cases of both products can be scanned with a smartphone, linking to videos that bring the viewer into the fields to see how they are grown, packed and then cooled and shipped. Prep tips and recipe ideas round out the two videos.

Like all produce from Tanimura & Antle, these lettuces are available year-round as the company shifts its production across its growing area. In addition, they also benefit from the company’s comprehensive food safety and traceability systems, including irrigation water testing, best practices for field hygiene and sanitation, and per-case traceability.

For more information: <http://www.taproduce.com/> trade or call 800-772-4542.



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Produce is showing up beyond the lemon peel in cocktails like The Aviary's Celery Cocktail (honeydew, green Chartreuse, riesling and muddled celery), in Chicago, and the freshly juiced tomato and basil-infused vodka Caprese, garnished with a mozzarella cube) at The Bernards Inn in Bernardsville, NJ



**MENU SAMPLER: CHILI'S**  
(ALL LOCATIONS)

- Fire Grilled Corn Guacamole
- Caribbean Salad (fresh pineapple, mandarin oranges, dried cherries, red bell peppers, green onions, cilantro, sesame seeds and honey-lime dressing)
- Lighter Choice Santa Fe Chicken Wrap (with corn, tortilla strips, avocado and tomatoes; served with steamed broccoli and a side of ranch)

sees L. Woods Tap & Pine Lodge, Tucci Benucch, Twin City Grill, and Magic Pan Crepe Stand for Lettuce Entertain You.

On any given day during the growing season, Rustic Road Farm provides four to five of the many items featured on Big Bowl's signature Stirfry Bar, which captures up to 25% of total sales; partnerships with Heritage Prairie Farm and other local growers provide much of

the rest. In addition, Big Bowl uses seasonal produce in menu specials and promotions, such as the Summer Harvest Celebration (Spicy Sichuan Eggplant, Thai Corn & Crab Soup), and shares the farm's potatoes, onions and beets with other LEYE restaurants, including L. Woods and foodlife.

## Keeping It Kid-Friendly

Initiatives like MyPlate and the USDA's new standards for school meals—which call for offering students more fruits and vegetables every day, among other changes—have called attention to making produce more kid-friendly.

A number of school districts were already heeding the call. Riverside Unified School District, in California, opened its pilot farm-to-school salad bar program in 2005 at one of its elementary schools, and it's now in place at all of its sites.

At Boulder Valley (CO) School District, "rainbow days" grant stickers when students select items from the bar with four different colors. And Santa Monica (CA) School District has developed and distributes annual menus to its local produce suppliers so the farmers know ahead of time what the schools will be needing and when.

The National Restaurant Association, meanwhile, has launched a "KidsLiveWell" program, in collaboration with HealthyDiningFinder.com, which highlights how restaurants are creating innovative solutions to provide better-for-you menu options (choices emphasize lean proteins, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy, as well as meet stringent nutritional criteria). More than 100 brands are now participating, and the qualifying items they offer are featured at [www.healthydiningfinder.com](http://www.healthydiningfinder.com).

For example, Ground Round offers a Chicken Breast Dinner with grapes as a side dish, while Arby's kids menu includes the option of Apple Slices with Strawberry Yogurt Dip.

Restaurant operators are already taking action, even without the dining finder: A recent SmartBrief poll revealed that more than 68% of respondents have made changes to their menu over the past year to include healthier options for kids.

Hyatt's new "For Kids by Kids" menu—"tasted, tested and approved by kids"—features items like Shaken Chopped Salad with roasted chicken, vegetables, brown rice and yogurt basil dressing; and Vegetable and Sesame Rice Noodles with marinated tofu, corn, green beans, basil and cherry tomatoes. The program is supported by games and activities for kids and

their parents, and menu QR codes that lead to information about healthy eating.

College "kids" can also benefit from efforts aimed at getting them to enjoy more produce. "I've been known to dress up in a carrot costume and give out stars when they try new things," admits Sara Spellman, A'viands food services director at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, SD. "The more stars they get, the better their chances that they'll win a great prize."

Spellman and her colleague Jane Klug, who oversees dining services at the newly renovated (to LEED Gold Standard) student



Students work on the farm operated by La Crosse School District in Wisconsin.

union, are on a mission to educate students on the bigger picture of healthy eating, wellness and environmental stewardship.

A campus garden is just part of the strategic plan, which also includes a “vegetable of the month” program for after-school kids, who get snacks and lunch through a local Achieve grant. “You want to get them when they’re as young as possible,” says Klug, “so they can start thinking of healthy food as being delicious as well as good for them.”

The garden provides zucchini, cucumbers, peas and pea pods, beans, broccoli, tomatoes and other fresh produce for students as well as summer camp and conference attendees. The foodservice department has learned to prep and freeze as many vegetables as possible for extended use at the Mongolian Grill station in the student union, and in items like zucchini muffins, fritattas and tomato sauce. Onions and acorn and butternut squash can be stored and used well into December, says Klug, and the team is also looking into orchard grants which can be coordinated with the biology department.

“When it comes to educating college kids about nutrition, you need to make it easy for them,” says Spellman. “At this point in their lives, they have enough other things to worry about.”

## Food Safety First

The industry is working to make produce safer

Recent events—including product recalls and outbreaks of foodborne illness—have put produce in the food-safety spotlight, but the safety of fresh fruits and vegetables has always been important.

The FDA’s Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which was signed into law in January 2011 and represents the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years, aims to ensure that the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it.

As of March 2012, FDA had announced a number of new initiatives, including a pilot project for rapid tracing, with the launch of three pilot programs designed to help the

Prepackaged produce tray-packs make it easier for kids and other customers to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables on the go. The inclusion of “lite” ranch dip makes them more fun.



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At Isabelle Farm in Lafayette, CO, avid diners pay \$210 for a multi-course dinner served en pleine air to honor the harvest

▶ Even beer and soda are going farm-to-glass, with beers like baby carrot Belgian wit and rhubarb saison, and sodas in raspberry, apple and habanero ginger ale

FDA implement a strong traceability program. One of the three types of foods selected for the pilot are tomatoes, according to the FDA's Sherri McGarry, senior adviser of the Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation Network. Tomatoes represent a complex food supply chain and were identified by most industry associations as a top candidate for the produce-related pilot.

Food traceability, in fact, has emerged as one of the signature goals of FSMA, with key implications for the produce sector. Many suppliers and distributors have implemented comprehensive field-to-fork tracing ahead of eventual regulations, and operators should work with their produce partners to understand and utilize these procedures.

In addition, the agency has begun work on a new regulatory framework to ensure produce safety in a global food system, with particular attention to produce imported from Mexico.

Other produce-related initiatives undertaken during the past year include:

- The establishment of a Sprouts Safety Alliance to help sprout producers in identifying and implementing best practices
- Work on a new Produce Rule that will “set science- and risk-based standards for the safe production and harvesting of fruits and vegetables,” according to Mike Taylor, FDA's deputy commissioner of foods. “The rule focuses on five familiar potential routes of contamination: worker health and hygiene; agricultural water; soil amendments; animal intrusion; and buildings and equipment”

It will be several years before the full process toward FSMA is complete, but in the meantime there is no shortage of well-established best practices that both the produce and foodservice industries can use.

According to Robert J. Whitaker, Ph.D, chief science & technology officer for the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), any successful food safety program requires personal involvement on the part of stakeholders, and every organization has the responsibility to develop suitable risk management rules.



PMA sponsors field trips during its annual foodservice produce conference in Monterey, CA.

“When it comes to food safety, one size does not fit all,” says Whitaker. “It’s a supply-wide responsibility, right down to the consumer.”

Still, Whitaker suggests that there are 7 Critical Questions that anyone involved in food safety needs to answer—in other words, “Here’s what you should be worried about”:

**1. Do you have a written food safety plan that’s specific to your operation?**

Good plans include routine internal inspections and annual audits.

**2. Were your products washed correctly?**

Any basic wash system should prevent cross-contamination and provide a defined water source, sanitizer/verification records and an

equipment sanitation system.

**3. Are your sanitation programs really effective?**

There need to be written Standard Operating Procedures for all sanitation steps, as well as a posted schedule, and all employees need to be trained on sanitation issues.

**4. Can you communicate your food safety program?**

Getting other team members on board means creating written program descriptions, employee training and outreach to both suppliers and customers.

**5. Do you know who touched your produce?**

Establish and follow an approved supplier list; track temperatures; store produce properly; and practice proper inventory management.

**6. How do you access emerging science?**

Make use of Internet, commodity/trade associations and other resources, including cooperative extensions, members of PMA's tech committee, and the Center for Produce Safety.

**7. Are you engaged in regulatory issues?**

Read the news; track FDA, USDA and CDC websites; cultivate awareness of state and local issues—you may want to consider appointing a point person for this.

As Whitaker puts it, “Food safety has to be part of your business culture.” ■

▶ 75% of responding restaurants report using some or only locally sourced food —SmartBrief

YOU + CAMBRO  
= PROFITS



“As Chef and Owner it is my responsibility to protect my investments, and I rely only on Cambro to store my fresh produce until it is ready for use. The success of my restaurants depends on the quality and freshness of our salads. I consider my Cambro containers an asset to my company — since opening my first restaurant in 2008 they have helped me Save my Greens!”

-John Bornoty, The Big Salad



Food is money. Our storage products help foodservice operators protect their investments from receiving to table with the promise of freshness and food safety. For 60+ years, Cambro foodservice equipment and supplies have earned the trust and loyalty of customers around the world, like John Bornoty, Chef/Owner, The Big Salad restaurants in Michigan. We're thrilled that Cambro storage products have helped John increase his profits and encourage you to put our Storage Containers to the test in your foodservice operation!



For more information, contact Cambro Customer Service at 800 833 3003

WATCH A VIDEO ON 5 TIPS TO PROPER STORAGE

**CAMBRO.COM/TRUST**

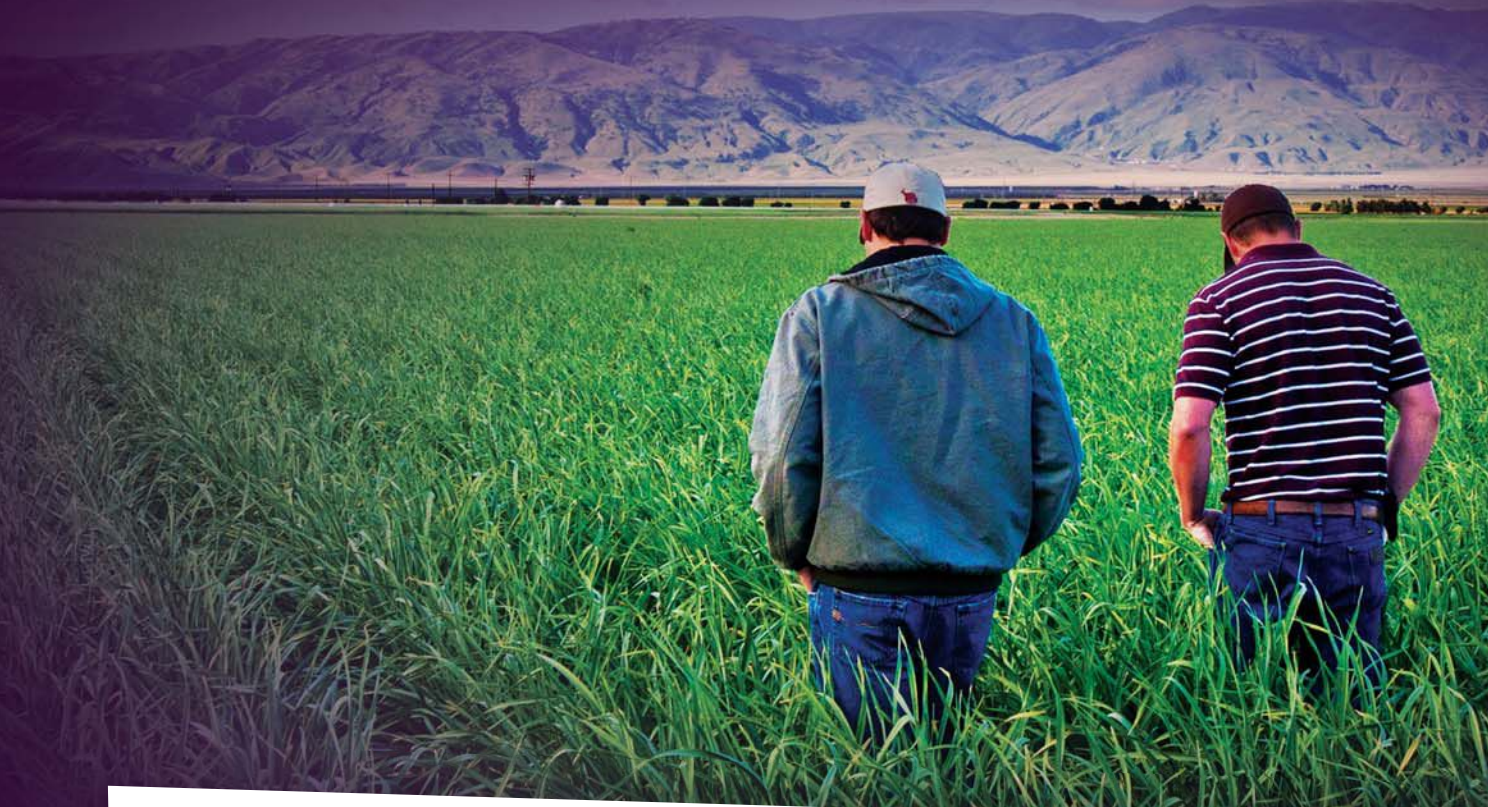
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THE  
**GARLIC**  
*Company*  
OF CALIFORNIA



# From seed to harvest, our garlic is in the best hands.



At The Garlic Company, selecting the finest, Mediterranean-origin seed is just the beginning. Our knowledge and expertise in garlic are second to none. Over the years, we've developed a gentler, greener, more effective way to grow garlic, with smaller amounts of land and less water. The result is higher quality, more flavorful garlic—and it's better for the environment. Discover why leading foodservice distributors choose The Garlic Company's California garlic over all the rest...talk to us today.

**Our garlic innovation starts in the field.**