

Taking Care of Our Primary Customer

AdAgrA 2025

Daniel Nicholls

Connection Question:

What are your best and worst cafeteria food experiences?



**Please remember to hold all questions
until the end of the presentation.**

There will be a Q&A time at the end.

Who are we?

Who are we?

Daniel Nicholls

-Agriculture Director at Holbrook Indian School

Angela Barber

-Food Services Director at HIS

Our Primary Customer

The cafeteria could be your farm's
biggest customer

Anything we do at an institutional farm should begin with:

**Anything we do at an institutional
farm should begin with:**

The Why

The Goal:

Use as much farm produce as possible in the cafeteria

How?

BOTH departments will need to adapt

Where to start

Have a meeting

Each department needs an understanding of the other's unique working conditions

Things to learn:

- The best ways and times to communicate
- How to prepare and package the produce (cleaning time=labor)
- Farm should know how/when cafeteria places orders with vendors

Things to learn:

- Cafeteria needs to let farm know what they need months in advance (a revolving menu helps with this—more on that later)
- Does either department have the bandwidth to preserve extra produce?

Check In

There will be struggles. Find them and make adjustments.

**What we have found
helpful at HIS**

Farm: Work with the cafeteria to make a “Dream List” based on the menu and make an availability list based on seasons; use this to plan for planting.

Cafeteria: Make a recurring menu to help plan for what is needed and how often. This menu can have built in flexibility (ie. “roasted vegetables” rather than a specific veggie).

Stay aware of each other's limitations
and strive to communicate when
something needs to be adjusted

**Challenges we
have encountered**

For the Farm:

- Growing things that were asked for that don't get used due to other sources of produce (ordered from vendor or donated by food bank)
- Planning how much to plant and when

For the Cafeteria

- Can be difficult to be adaptable (ie. changes to the menu, using something we have a lot of) when personnel resources are already slim
- It is much faster and easier to order from the vendors

Practical Considerations

- How does the cafeteria “pay” for the food from the farm? (at least good data to track as it shows like income to farm)
- Have a good system for communicating available produce and placing orders; also communicating totals to business office
- Is there a plan or any accountability for either department to stick to the arrangement?

Questions