

SENATE MEMORIAL 19

Water and Natural Resources Committee
November 18, 2025

Jason S. New
Division Director, Marketing and Development

NMDA

Senate Memorial 19: Statement of Project

During the Fifty-Seventh New Mexico Legislative Session in 2025, the New Mexico Senate passed Senate Memorial 19 (SM 19), as amended, introduced by Senator Crystal Brantley, Senator Pat Boone, Senator Candy Spence Ezzell and Senator Pat Woods. The memorial requested the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and the Public Education Department (PED) to convene a workgroup to develop a plan in which 50% of beef, cheese, milk and produce served in public schools originates from and is processed by New Mexico producers.



Senate Memorial 19: Approach & Methods

Key stakeholders formed a workgroup to develop recommendations for SM 19, incorporating produce to create a comprehensive food strategy.

The workgroup is composed of representatives from the following agencies, industry organizations and non-governmental associations:

Jason New, Nicholas Frazzini, Candie Sweetser – NMDA
Michael Chavez, Elizabeth Anichini, Aaron Moore – PED
Tom Patterson – New Mexico Cattle Growers Association
Alena Paisano, Denise Miller – New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association
Benjie Segovia – New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau
Beverly Idsinga – Dairy Producers of New Mexico
Kari Dominguez – New Mexico Chile Association
Pam Roy – New Mexico Food and Ag Policy Council

Collaborators:

Eric Denton – Glanbia/Southwest Cheese, Clovis
Art Schaap – Tucumcari Mountain Cheese, Tucumcari
Jeffrey Joerg – Creamland Dairies, Inc., Albuquerque
Manny Encinas – Trilogy Beef Community, Moriarty
Joe Madrid – USA Beef Packing, Roswell
Michelle Thomas – A&M Meat Processing, Alamogordo
Dustin Dixon – High Country Meat, Raton
Dan Duran, Hidalgo Global

Agriculture, Health, and Economic Well-Being

- Programs advancing New Mexico's local food system
- Driving nutritional security, economic resiliency, and long-term viability for farmers and ranchers, supporting their ability to thrive competitively.
- Bringing together producers, agencies, and communities to identify opportunities, address challenges, and build a more resilient statewide food system.



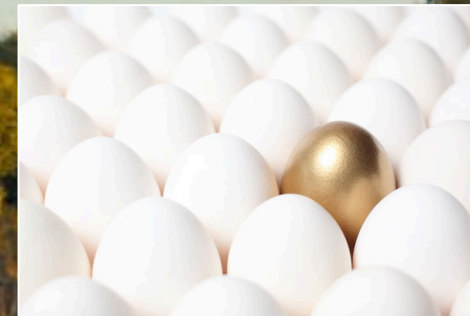
INTEGRATED STRATEGIES

Coordinated investments in nutrition and market development help create long-term, healthy food economies and open new markets for New Mexico farmers, ranchers, and food producers. Strengthening logistics and market pathways increases the availability of locally grown and raised foods across the state.



PREVENTION VS. REACTIVITY

A resilient food system is built through proactive planning. New Mexico's investments prioritize prevention, using smart, evidence-based food and agriculture strategies to **lower long-term costs, improve quality of life, and strengthen the entire system without relying on reactive emergency responses.**



UNLOCKING RESILIENCE

Community-driven, environmentally responsible efforts increase access to nutritious, locally produced food. These investments strengthen producers, enhance rural and tribal economies, and build a more sustainable food system for all New Mexicans.

NM Agriculture: SM 19 Industry Snapshot

21,000 Farms

There are 21,976 farms, a 16% decrease from the 2017 census.

- Average farm size is 1865 acres, up 15% from 2017 census (*Note: 33% of farms <9 Acres; 53% of farms < 53 acres*)
- Land in farms adds up to 39,128,563 million acres (*4% decrease from 2017 census*)
- 95% of all NM farms and ranches are family owned.

Fruits & Vegetables

Produce crops make up only 0.2% (88,524 acres) of New Mexico's total farm acreage.

- 3,000 acres non-citrus fruits
- 25,000 acres of harvested produce.
- 60,400 acres of nuts.

Approximately 200 produce farmers sell to schools through the NM Grown Program.

Beef Country

Cattle and calves totaled 1.28 million head as of January 1, 2025; *down 10k head from 2024.*

Inventories (head):

- Beef cows: 450k
- Milk cows: 240k
- Calf crop: 560k
- Steers (>500 lb.): 115k
- Replacement heifers: 70k
- Bulls: 30k
- Calves (>500 lb): 205K

NM is ranked No. 21 nationally in beef production.

Dairy State

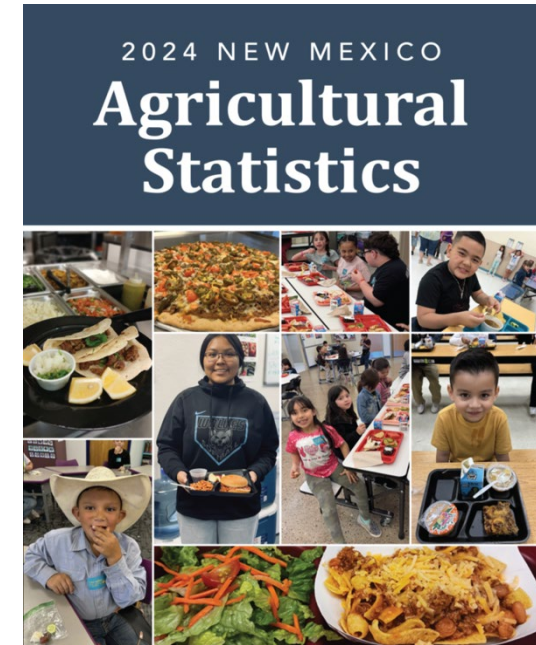
Cash receipts (milk): \$1.23 billion

Milk production per cow: 24,717 lb.

Milk production: 5.93 billion lbs. (*NM is ranked No. 11 nationally*)

Cheese production: 925 million lbs.

NM is ranked No. 4 nationally in cheese production, producing 6.5% of the U.S. total.



Overview of Produce Supply Chain

Produce crops account for just 0.2% of New Mexico's farm acreage (~88,500 acres), with most committed to other markets. This limits local supply for schools compared to states like Arizona and California.

Despite this, New Mexico leads the USDA Southwest Region in direct farm purchases, with NM Grown buying over \$3.1 million in produce in FY25.



EXAMPLE: LETTUCE SUPPLY CHAIN

Production

Southern NM: large farms
(head/romaine)
Central/Northern: small/mid
farms (mixed greens)
Protected production: hoop
houses, hydroponics

Post-Harvest Handling

Washing, cooling, packing
Small farms: limited facilities
Food hubs: shared wash/pack
and cold storage

Aggregation

Agri-Cultura Network,
La Montañita Co-op
Light processing: wash,
bag, label
Need capacity for
ready-to-serve lettuce

Distribution

Direct delivery to schools
Regional pooled deliveries
Weak cold-chain logistics high
transport costs

Markets

Schools (NM Grown), hospitals
retailers, restaurants, farmers
markets still rely on imported
lettuce

Industry Constraints (Produce)



Regional Aggregation Facilities
(food hubs, packing houses);
Cold Storage

Washing, Packing and Minimal Processing
Capacity; Conversion to School Market
Specifications
Extending Seasonal Availability
(freezing or drying)

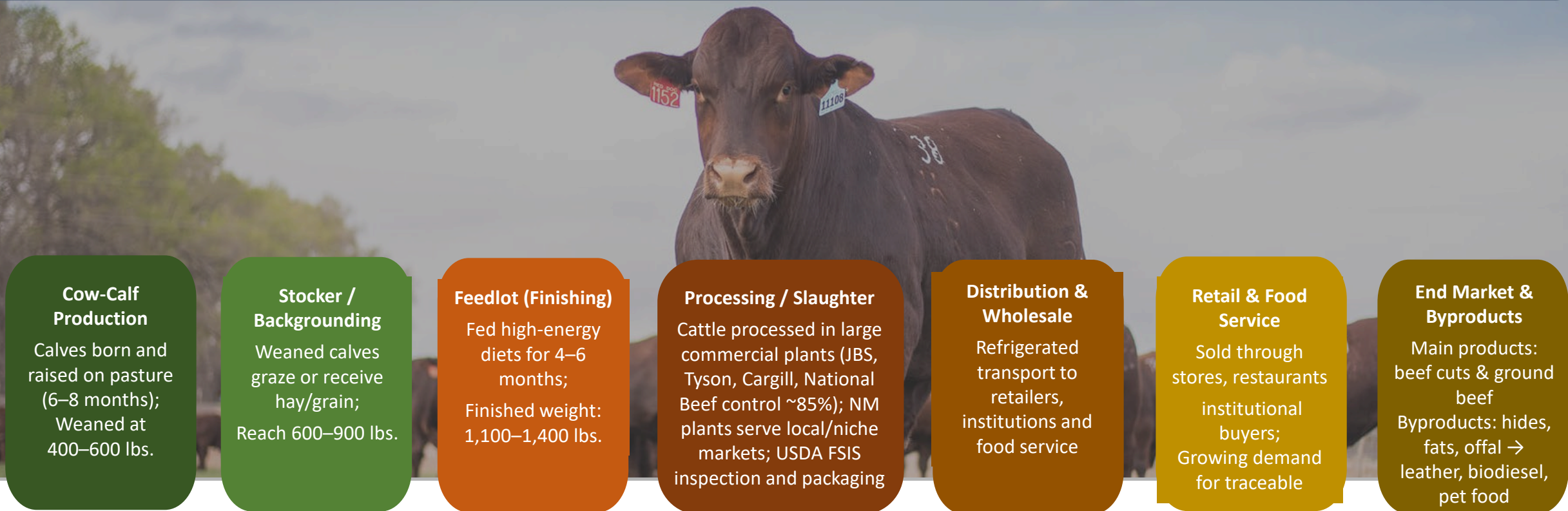
**Required investments
in Production
Infrastructure**

Cold Chain Logistics, especially
to rural communities;
High transport costs for small loads;
Supply Chain Coordination;

Data on local production volumes;
forward contracting; food safety
compliance and certification

Overview of Beef Supply Chain

New Mexico has many cow-calf operations but limited feedlot and processing capacity, sending most calves out of state for finishing. Ranchers in the workgroup see opportunity in marketing local cull cattle (including bulls) and beef-on-dairy. Expanding in-state slaughter and processing is key to meeting SM 19's goal of sourcing New Mexico beef for schools.



Cow-Calf Production

Calves born and raised on pasture (6–8 months); Weaned at 400–600 lbs.

Stocker / Backgrounding

Weaned calves graze or receive hay/grain; Reach 600–900 lbs.

Feedlot (Finishing)

Fed high-energy diets for 4–6 months; Finished weight: 1,100–1,400 lbs.

Processing / Slaughter

Cattle processed in large commercial plants (JBS, Tyson, Cargill, National Beef control ~85%); NM plants serve local/niche markets; USDA FSIS inspection and packaging

Distribution & Wholesale

Refrigerated transport to retailers, institutions and food service

Retail & Food Service

Sold through stores, restaurants institutional buyers; Growing demand for traceable

End Market & Byproducts

Main products: beef cuts & ground beef
Byproducts: hides, fats, offal → leather, biodiesel, pet food

Processing Capacity Constraints (Beef)

Capacity to Supply 50% of New Mexico Beef to K-12 Schools



Schools demand less than 0.4% of statewide production, indicating raw cattle supply already exists

Meeting 50% goal would require 780,029 lbs. of beef, or 4,589 head.

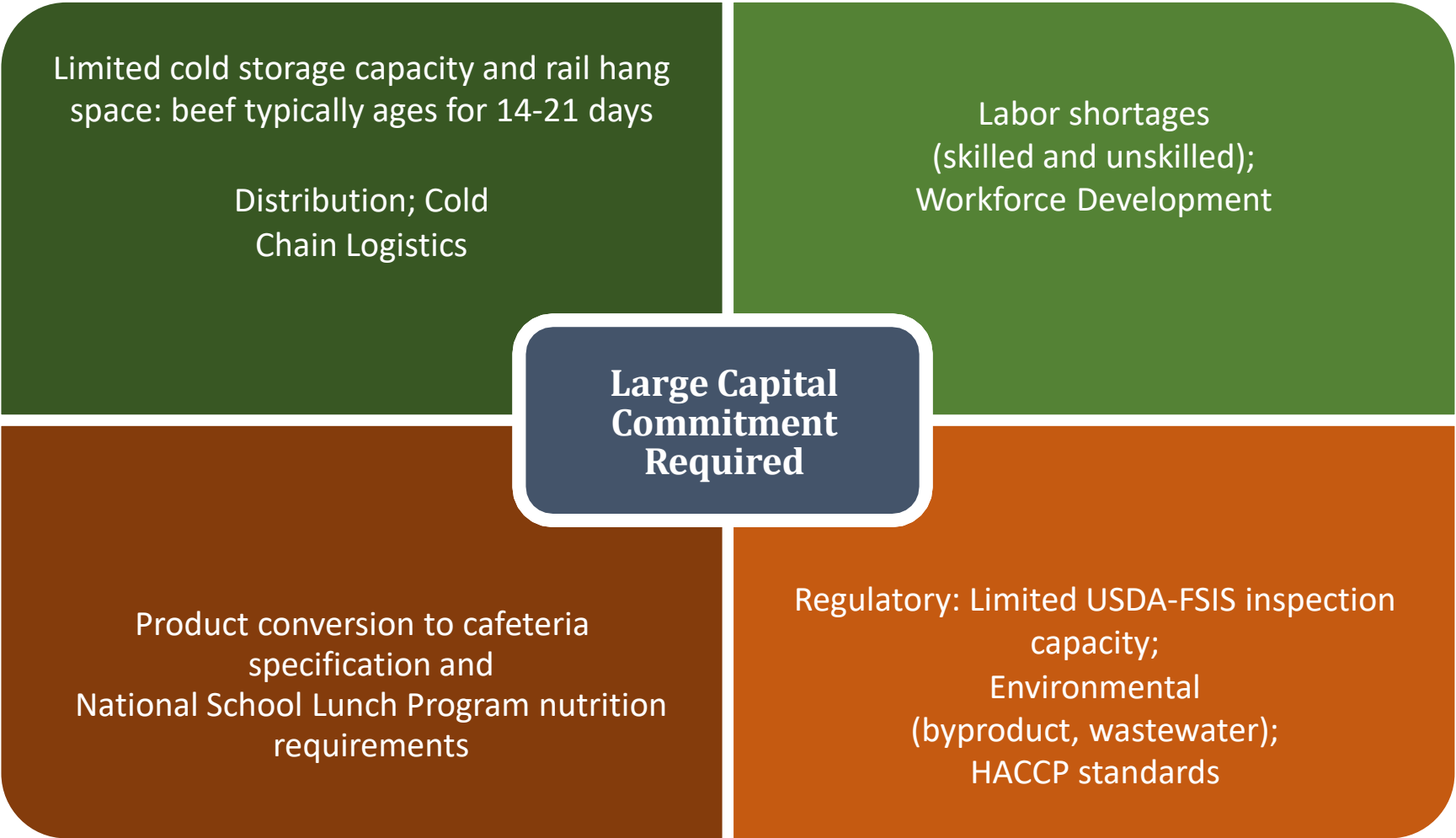
In 2024, meat processors slaughtered approximately 5,900 head of cattle (USDA-NASS).

Some workgroup meat processors are already operating at full capacity and need time/capital investment to expand production.

Consider other market segment demand (direct, retail, food service, other institutional markets)

Value chain challenges: finishing, processing, conversion, cold storage and distribution capacity

Industry Constraints (Beef)



Overview of Dairy Supply Chain

Most New Mexico milk is processed into cheese, powders, and other value-added products. Processors like Creamland and Tucumcari Mountain Cheese source entirely from in-state dairies, while co-op models used by larger processors (e.g., Southwest Cheese, Leprino Foods) mix New Mexico and out-of-state milk. This blending blurs the line between “New Mexico-Made” and “New Mexico-Origin,” and separating sources isn’t commercially feasible for school meal programs.

On-Farm Production

Cows milked 2–3 times daily
Feeding, housing & herd health managed
Milk cooled and stored in bulk tanks

Collection & Transportation

Milk collected daily or every other day
Tested for temperature, bacteria & antibiotics
Transported in refrigerated tankers

Processing

Milk tested again and processed into fluid milk, cheese, cultured & powdered products


Packaging & Distribution

Packaged in cartons, bottles, blocks or bulk containers
Fluid milk ships quickly; cheese & powders move regionally or globally
All rely on refrigerated ('cold chain') transport

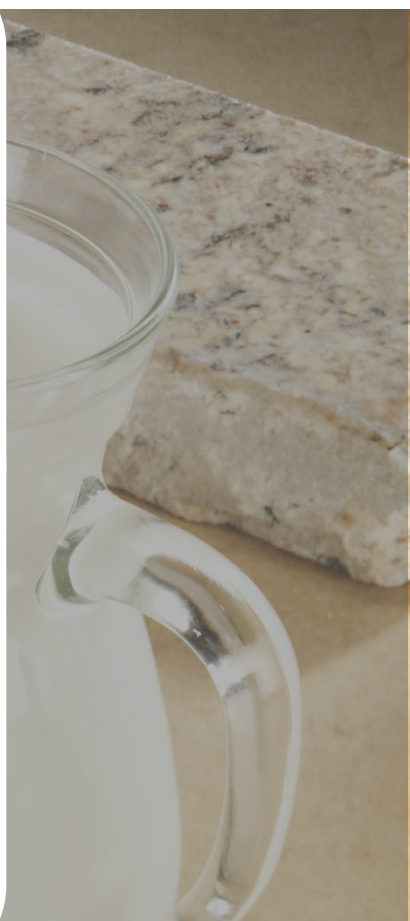
Markets & Byproducts

Products reach institutional, retail, food service, industrial & export markets
Byproducts (whey, lactose, casein) used in feed, pharmaceuticals & nutrition

Industry Constraints (Dairy)



Bottling and Packaging
(e.g., half-pint milk cartons,
sliced and shredded cheeses)



Conversion from bulk
to institutional-ready cheese production

**Expand Specific
Processing Required by
School Cafeterias**

Cold Chain Logistics
(e.g., refrigerated distribution and
warehouse cold storage)

Long term/predictable purchasing commitments
to justify investments

Cross-Cutting Priorities

To achieve 50% New Mexico-origin food in schools, the state must invest in processing, packaging, food safety, and distribution to convert farm products to school-ready formats.

Expanding rural distribution, maintaining cold chain logistics, and securing school purchasing commitments are essential to building and sustaining reliable local supply chains.

Connecting producers and food hubs with school distributors will strengthen local supply chains and improve access to New Mexico-grown foods.



Expand USDA-inspected plants

Co-packing facilities
Technical assistance
food safety compliance,
inspection, HACCP
standards

Invest in bottling and packaging for half-pint milk cartons, sliced and shredded cheese

Conformity of cheese type and utilization
Establish NM Grown provisions for Value-Added (e.g. cheese)

Develop aggregation hubs for washing, portioning, and bagging
Freeze or dry to extend seasonal availability
Technical assistance
food safety compliance

NMDA and the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association partner to strengthen the state's local food system by funding programs like NM Grown ASP, Capacity Building, and Double Up Food Bucks.

Other NMDA partners include: La Semilla, Albuquerque Public Schools and Santa Fe Farmers Market.

Together, we support producers, expand markets, improve nutrition, and build resilient regional food economies.

Sourcing 50% of beef, cheese, milk and produce is more about aligning systems

Enhancing Local Supply:

Baseline support and expansion of local food incentive and infrastructure programs (e.g., NM Grown, HFFF, LMPG)

Strengthen Processing and Distribution:

Provide technical assistance for food safety certifications (NM Grown Approved Supplier Program).

Continue to invest in local food systems equipment and infrastructure funds (HFFF, LMPG)

School Demand v. Local Supply Capacity

Align Procurement and Regulatory Systems:

- Streamline reimbursement timelines to maximize local purchasing.
- Enable multi-year and forward contracting.
- Maintain statewide data platform to track local purchases (e.g. NM Grown ASP and LFDP)

Strengthen Collaboration:

- Define "New Mexico-origin" standards.
- Streamline inspection and reporting systems.
- Integrate 50% farm-to-school goals through NM Grown
- Establish benchmarks and reporting to measure progress and guide future investment

Thank You

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MEAT PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN NEW MEXICO



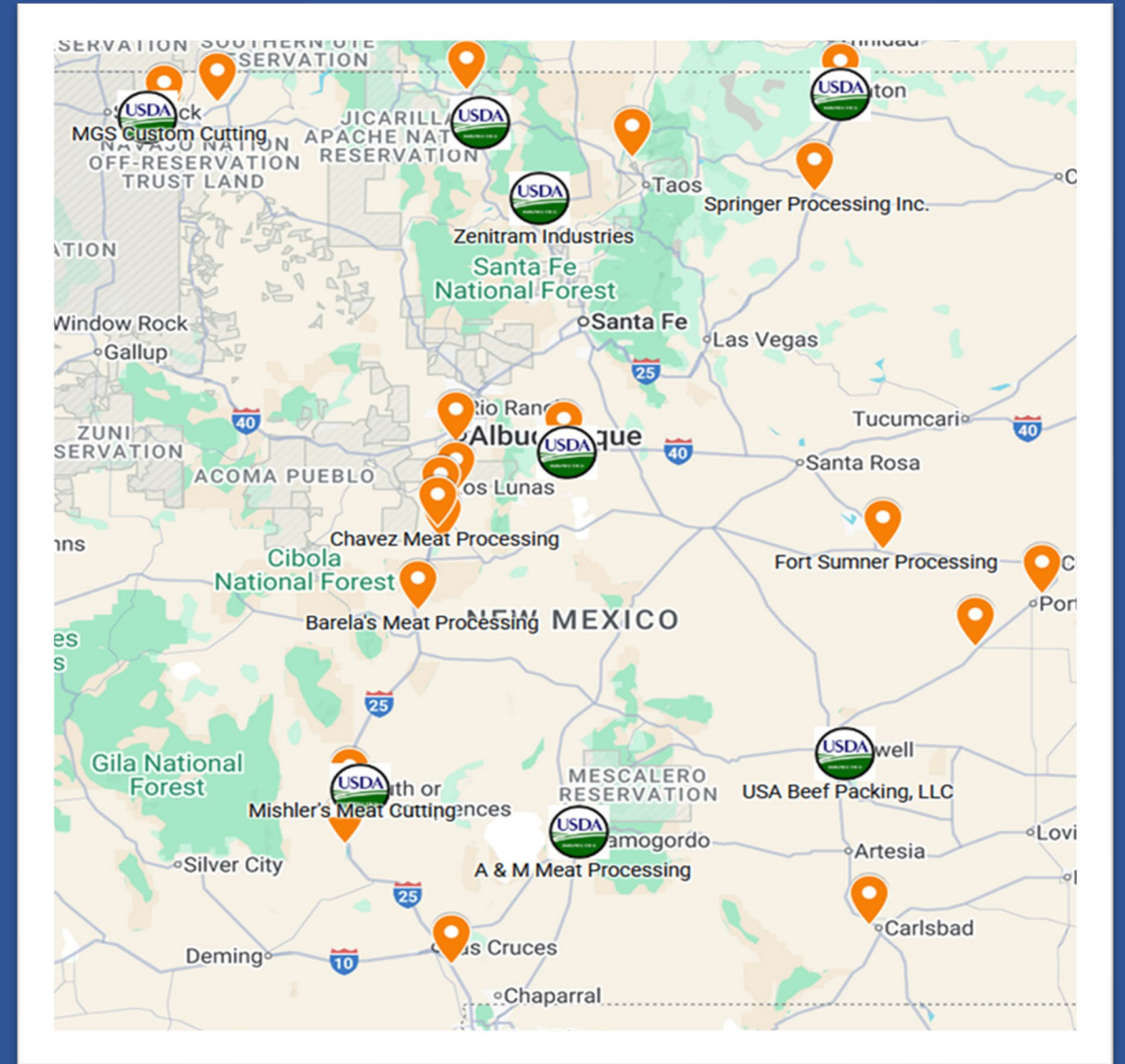
SM 19- Plan to ensure 50% of beef served in public schools originates from and is processed by New Mexico producers

Joe and Nayely Madrid



New Mexico Meat Processing Industry

- 2024 NM ag stats- 1.28 million cows
- Slaughter Plants
 - 8 USDA-FSIS (2 Sheep/Goat only)
 - About 22 custom-exempt (Not for sale)
- Commercial Beef Slaughter 2024- 5,900 head
- To meet SM 19 50% goals- 780,000 pounds of beef (approx. 4,589 head). Assuming primarily ground beef and stew meat is purchased, making up approx. 34% of a carcass. -Fed cattle or 70% of a carcass –Cull Cattle
- Competing with other market sectors grocery, wholesale, DTC
- Adequate Funding for farm-to-school programs



Industry Challenges Throughout the State

Lack of Markets in
the State

Rail/Hanging
Space

Cold Storage
Distribution

Workforce/Labor

Solutions through SM 19- specific examples/opportunities recommendations

Expand in-state processing capacity

- Definition of New Mexico Origin: Cattle is Raised & Processed in New Mexico
- Invest in USDA-inspected and state-inspected meat plants, co-packing, and cut-and-wrap operations to handle institutional-scale beef processing.
- Support upgrades in infrastructure and equipment through existing programs like the New Mexico Local Meat Processing Grant (LMPG).
- Investment is needed for grinders, packaging equipment, and workforce training to supply schools with cafeteria-ready ground beef and patties.
- Expansion of LMPG into more broad capacity building needs.
- Adequate Funding for farm-to-school programs





USA BEEF PACKING, ROSWELL NM

Slaughter Capacity: 65 Head Per Day

Processing Capacity: 20,000 Pounds Per Day

Cooking Capacity: 2,000 Pounds Per Day

Cold Storage & Distribution: 20 Semi Loads Current
Capacity



NEW MEXICO &
Best



Slaughter & Processing

Slaughter Capacity: 65 Head Per Day

Processing Capacity: 20,000 Pounds Per Day



RTE Kitchen

Capacity: 2,000 Pounds
Per Day



Distribution Hub and Cold Storage

20 Semi Loads Current Capacity



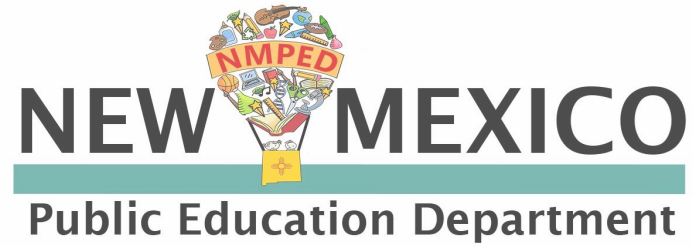


Key takeaways-solutions for expansion

Priorities moving forward:

- **Infrastructure Investment:** Increase funding in processing, distribution, cold-chain capacity expansion
- **Policy Alignment:** Simplify school procurement to prioritize local products.
- **Stable Funding:** Provide a simplified purchasing system to include local beef products into local schools.
- **Data & Tracking:** Develop a statewide purchasing-level tracking system to monitor progress toward the 50% sourcing goal.
- Modified Payment terms to expedite reimbursement
- Access to capital, lines of credit

With existing cattle numbers and strong producer interest, New Mexico can meet the 50% beef sourcing goal. This comes with continued strategic investment in processing, conversion, and coordinated procurement.



Senate Memorial 19: **Sourcing 50 % of Beef, Milk, Cheese, and** **Produce from NM Producers**

Michael Chavez, Senior Manager
Student Success and Wellness Bureau

*Presentation for the
Water & Natural Resources Committee*

November 18, 2025



Executive Summary

Goal of Senate Memorial 19 (SM 19): Study how to serve 50 percent locally produced and processed beef, cheese, milk, and produce in New Mexico public schools.

- Strong foundation for local purchasing established by 10+ year investment in NM Grown
- Achievable long-term goal requiring phased implementation, policy alignment, and sustained funding
- Integrates economic development, agricultural sustainability, and student nutrition improvements
- Healthy Universal School Meals (HUSM) includes increases in fresh, NM Grown produce and meat





School Meals: Background

Healthy Universal School Meals (HUSM) is New Mexico's meal quality improvement initiative for schools that operate a National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

More than 56 million meals are served annually in the state, with less than 4 percent of the total of all school food budgets spent on locally sourced foods.

USDA Food in Schools subsidizes agricultural **commodities** sold to schools at low-cost.

- School Food Authorities (SFAs) receive \$0.30/meal in funding to spend on subsidized commodity agricultural products.
- SFAs can purchase raw beef, cheese, vegetables directly or divert them to processor.
- Most SFAs purchase most of their beef and cheese at subsidized, low-cost prices through USDA commodity purchasing.

History of Local Procurement through NM Grown



10 years of growing local procurement in K-12 schools

- In the 2025-2026 school year, approximately **\$2 million** in funding is dedicated to K-12 NM Grown awards.
- **Interagency taskforce:** Public Education Department, Early Childhood Education and Care Department, Aging and Long-Term Services Department, New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association
- **Local Food Data Portal** tracks NM Grown purchasing across agencies.
- More than **200 local producers** sell directly to schools or through food hubs.
- New Mexico's **Approved Supplier Program** is unique in the nation for having a home-grown food safety certification program that connects small producers to institutional purchasers.
- ~80 percent of New Mexico's students attend a school that participates in NM Grown.





Estimating SFA Demand for SM19

- School lunch demand for beef, cheese, milk, and produce estimated based on ~ **33 million lunches served** in the 2024–2025 school year.
- Daily and weekly serving sizes come from USDA meal pattern requirements
- Milk, fruits, and vegetables included in every reimbursable lunch
- ~25 percent of meals include a beef portion and ~20 percent include a portion of cheese.

Product	Daily Meal / Volume	Annual Total Demand	SM19 50 Percent Demand Goal
Beef	Maximum 2oz, Cooked Daily	1.56m lbs (780 Tons)	390 Tons
Cheese	1 Oz	416k lbs (208 Tons)	104 Tons
Milk	1 Carton Or 8 Oz	16.6m lbs (8,320 Tons)	4,160 Tons
Produce (Vegetables)	3 Oz, *3 ³ / ₄ Cup Weekly	6.2m lbs (3,120 Tons)	1,560 Tons
Produce (Fruits)	2 Oz, *2 ¹ / ₂ Cups Weekly	4.1m lbs (2,080 Tons)	1,040 Tons



Challenges



Lack of Access to Information for Monitoring

- Gathering required information cumbersome for SFAs
- Tracking required for oversight would also be challenging

Limited Staff Capacity

- SSWB staff dedicated to NSLP and HUSM implementation and certification in ~240 SFAs

Lack of Local Preference in Commodity Purchasing and Low Subsidized Prices

- Subsidized USDA Food in Schools prices unprofitable for NM Producers to compete with
- USDA Food in Schools does not offer a method for local preference

USDA Foods – *USDA Foods and DoD Fresh programs cannot be used to meet the 50% local sourcing goal*

- The state has no control or verification authority over the origin of USDA Foods products.
- These channels should be considered supplemental, not part of the local procurement strategy.



PED Recommendations

Continue to invest in incentivized local procurement through NM Grown

- Help schools to use the micro-purchase threshold to purchase local foods for school meals
- Continue to expand local purchasing beyond NM Grown award funds

Future innovations towards 50% sourcing goal:

- Educate SFAs on how they can maximize local purchasing through geographic preference and forward contracting.
- Increase alignment between school menus and seasonal production
- Learn from examples in other states (Montana Marinara)
- Investment in technology required to monitor SM19 would be better directed towards monitoring system for HUSM more broadly
- Include meats beyond beef in SM 19 investments to align with school food demands and culturally important foods



For More Information

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Transforming Lives **from the ground up**

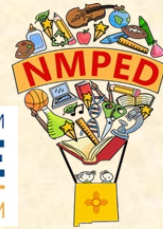
Impact investing in New Mexico's
people, food, and local economies

Alena Paisano
Approved Supplier Program Director
New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association

November 2025



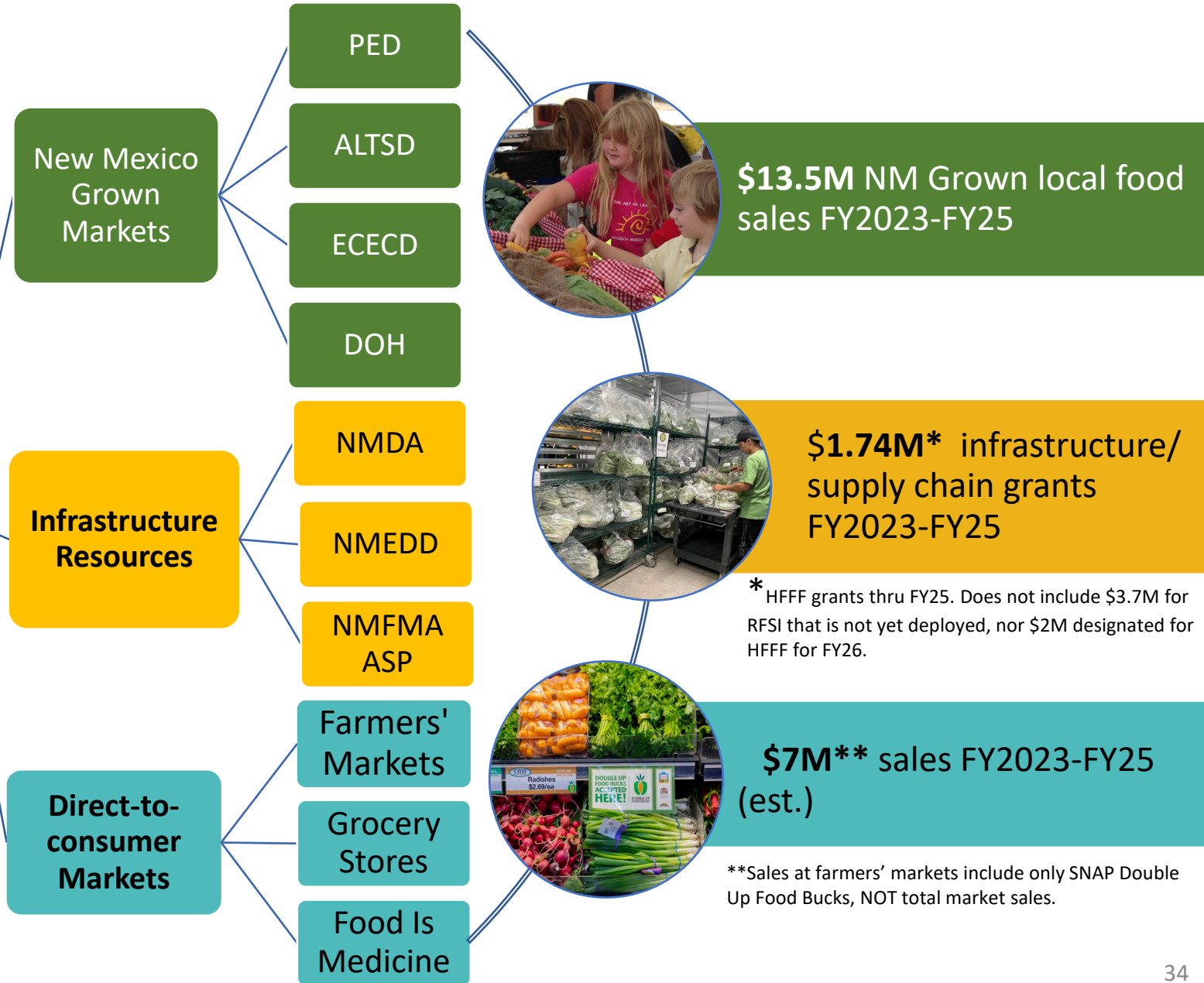
GOVERNOR MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
FOOD INITIATIVE
 CULTIVATING A NEW FOOD SYSTEM



Delivering reliable local agricultural markets

NM Farmers, Ranchers & Food Producers

Year after year, these proven programs are helping feed New Mexicans and spur economic resiliency for farmers and ranchers. **This is what transforming the local food system looks like.**

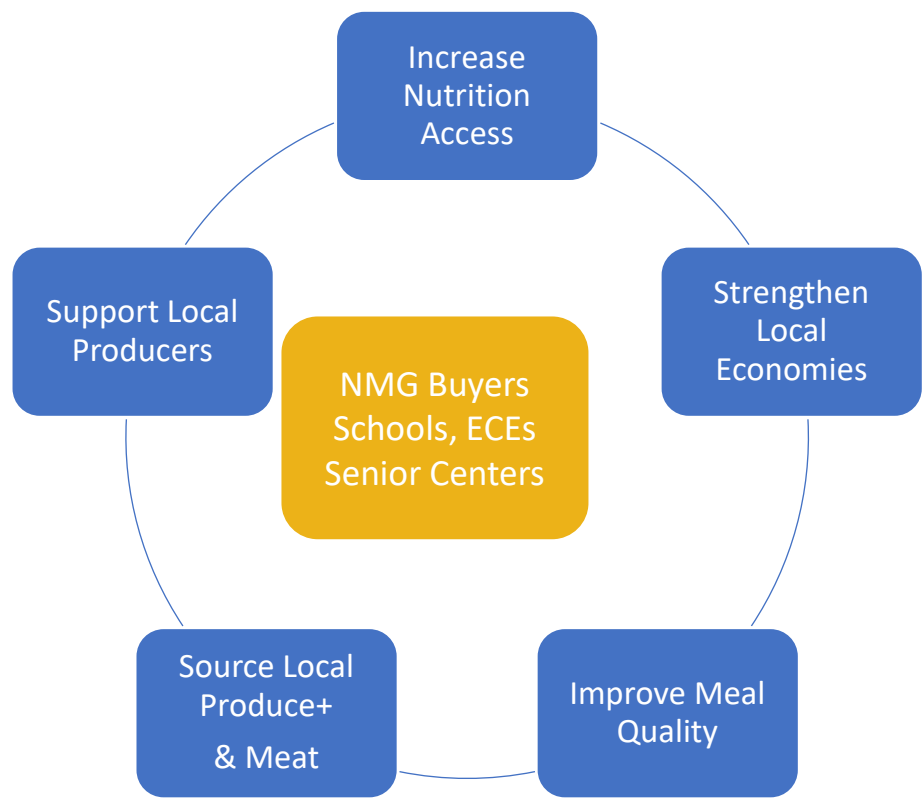


* HFFF grants thru FY25. Does not include \$3.7M for RFSI that is not yet deployed, nor \$2M designated for HFFF for FY26.

**Sales at farmers' markets include only SNAP Double Up Food Bucks, NOT total market sales.



**NEW MEXICO
GROWN**



New Mexicans Feeding New Mexicans



Milestones and Wins: **Why it Matters**

New Mexico Grown incentivizes the purchase of local produce, meat, grains and legumes for meal programs across the state through purchasing grants. **The Approved Supplier Program** supports safe, traceable local food sourcing while helping NM producers connect with schools, institutions, and buyers to meet growing demand for local agriculture products.



250+ ASP farmers & ranchers



282,647 people accessed local food



253 schools, senior centers, preschools, food banks



More than 1,539,735 complete meals

For Farmers/Ranchers

FY 2024 Impact:

- **250+** farmers certified, inv. **85** produce +, **32** ranchers, and **165** more who sell through food hubs, etc.
- **65%** of Approved Suppliers have farmers under 10 acres
- **55%** of suppliers are considered historically marginalized
- **\$4.2 million** economic benefit to NM farmers and ranchers

For Students

FY 2024 Impact:

- **62** School Food Authorities in **24** counties
- **534,176** meals
- **260,774** students served in **632** schools
- **641,001** pounds of food from **155** local farmers/ranchers

For Seniors

FY 2024 Impact:

- **163** senior centers in **28** counties
- **276,298** meals
- **29,840** unduplicated seniors served
- **82,876** pounds of food from **54** local farmers/ranchers

For Preschools

FY 2024 Impact:

- **28** childcare centers in **8** counties
- **37,435** meals
- **10,505** children served
- **44,291** pounds of food from **23** local farmers/ranchers



Produce- Specialty Crops

- Food Safety Training: Tier 1 &2
- Food Safety Plan TA (GAP)
- Infrastructure & Supplies

Meat- Beef, Bison, Lamb/Mutton, Pork

- Federal Licensing & Regulation TA
- Compliance- Program Requirements
- Cold Chain- Food Safety & Distribution TA

Food Hubs & Distributors

- HGAP+ Technical Assistance
- Network Coordination Support



Laguna Pueblo- ASP Food Safety Training



Anthony Youth Farm, Dona Ana County - ASP Producer



Sol Ranch, Wagon Mound - ASP Producer

The pathway to NM Grown sales...

ASP is our homegrown food safety certification and source verification program.





Allowable Products

- Produce, pantry items, meat
- Uplift cultural/traditional foods

Local Foods Data Portal

- Purchasing trends- demand
- Tracking sales for state agencies
- Regional production planning tool

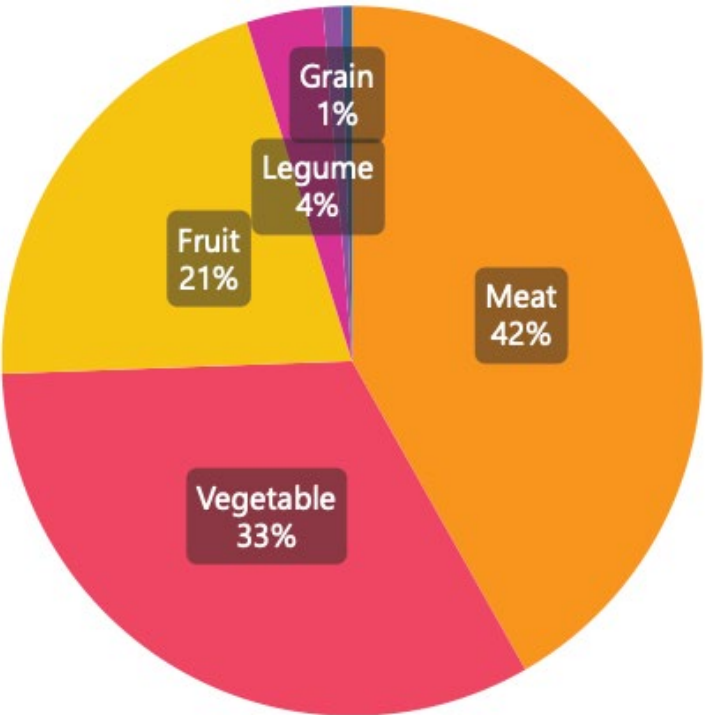
Training & TA

- Invoicing & quality management
- Purchase planning & forward contracts
- Nutrition patterns & menu integration
- Regional networking events with ASP Producers

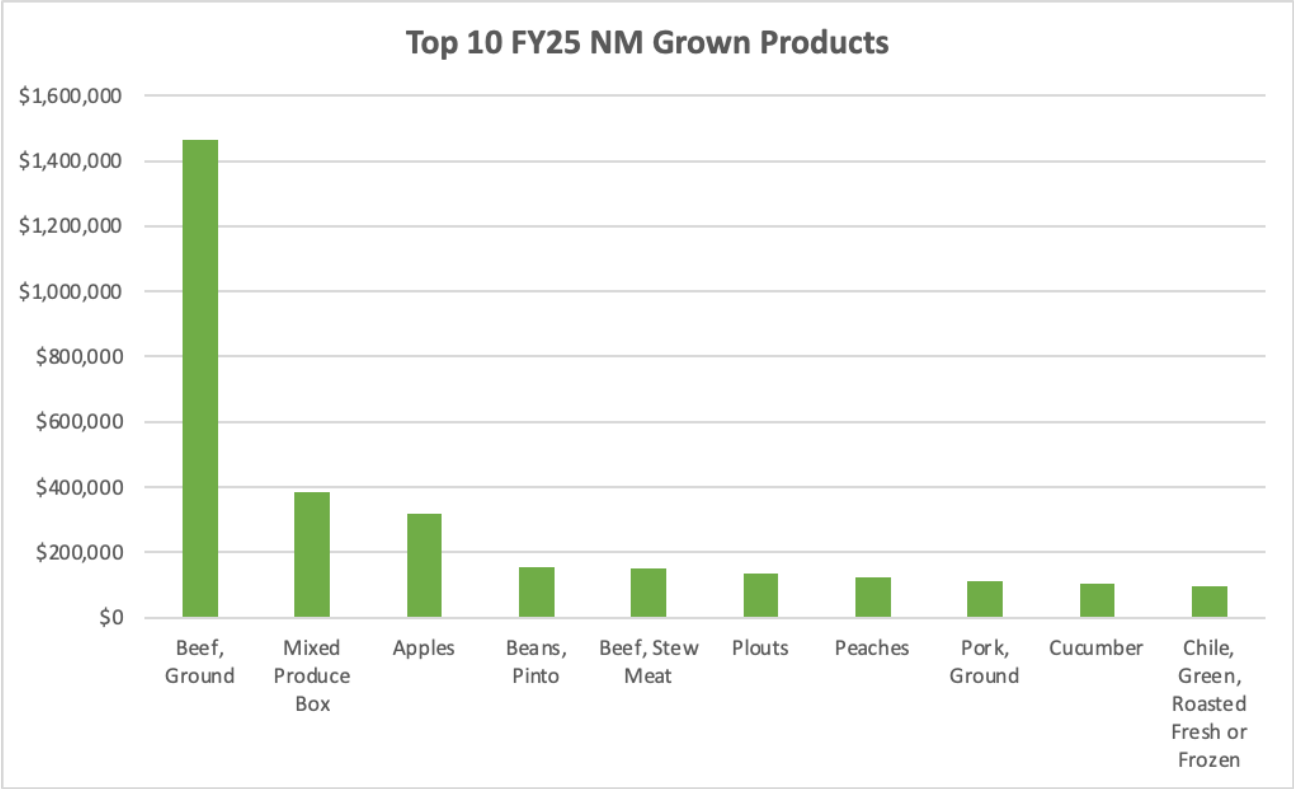


Market Trends: Local Meat & Produce Sales

New Mexico Grown incentivizes the purchase of local produce, meat, grains and legumes for meal programs across the state through purchasing grants. All purchases are tracked through the Local Food Data Portal, a key interagency tool for monitoring compliance and assessing impact. In **FY2025 Approved Suppliers sold over \$5.2 million** in local produce, meat, grains and legumes to NM Grown buyers. Beef was the top product sold, with schools purchasing \$544,868 on meat products.



Percentage of FY25 NM Grown Purchases/Sales by Food Category



Top 10 Individual NM Grown Products by Purchasing/ Sales Amount

What Beneficiaries Say: **Why it Matters**

Numbers only tell part of the story. These programs make a difference in the lives of the people they serve. In their own words:

“The New Mexico Approved Supplier Program has been lifechanging for our operation. It’s just opened up so many opportunities to new markets. It’s making us accessible to schools, senior living centers, the food banks.”

-Approved Supplier

“Kids can have meat that has been born, raised, and processed within a 10 mile radius of their schools! I've been selling beef for 15 years now, and this is the most exciting thing to happen!”

- Approved Supplier

“The Approved Supplier Program has allowed us... to tap into this whole statewide network of different institutional buyers that we might not normally have met here in our direct local community.”

-Approved Supplier

“Talk to some of the students, and they know when it's not from New Mexico. They know when it's New Mexico carrots. They know when it's New Mexico beef. They taste the difference, and they appreciate the value of it.”

-NM Grown Buyer





FY2026 Appropriation Request

Invest in NM producers to support local institutions & grow healthier communities

\$430,000 REQUEST - NONRECURRING

NEED

Proven backbone for NM Grown local food procurement and other wholesale market opportunities. Producer training and technical assistance, food quality assurance program for buyers, plus interagency coordination and communications support.

BENEFICIARIES/ LOCATIONS

- **282,647** people accessed local food
- **253** schools, senior centers, preschools, food banks
- **1,539,735+** complete meals

PRODUCERS/ SALES

- **10x** market growth over past five years (\$550k in 2020)
- **\$5.2 million** sales, FY2025
- **253** ASP farmers and ranchers
- **27** counties with ASP producers

More Information

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New Mexico Grown Coalition Chair

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newmexicogrown.org

Since 1994, dedicated to strengthening the local food system by supporting the state's agriculture producers and cultivating strong networks for a healthier New Mexico.



Top-Line Priorities



Approved Supplier Program
\$430,000 nonrecurring
NMDA

Regional Farm to Food Bank
\$2,000,000 nonrecurring
NMDA

Continued Support
for NM Grown line
items

Healthy Food Financing Fund
\$2,000,000 nonrecurring
NM Economic Development Department

Agricultural Water Resilience Program
\$5,000,000 nonrecurring
New Mexico State University