



Harvest of the Month

Seasonal Approach Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is Harvest of the Month (HOTM) changing from yearly “cycles” to a seasonal approach? How will this transition benefit schools using HOTM?

Schools implementing HOTM asked for more flexibility with the featured monthly produce items. By offering 7-9 fruit and vegetable items each season, schools can customize their monthly produce lists to their region. The flexibility in the seasonal approach will allow schools to feature the most cost-effective and highest quality produce item available each month. The seasonal approach will also allow for several produce items to be featured each month and better coordination with produce items highlighted by the *Network for a Healthy California (Network) Campaigns and Programs*.

2. Since several produce items are featured each season, do I need to inform my Program Manager about which produce item(s) our school will feature?

No. When following the seasonal schedule, any of the 7-9 produce items may be featured.

3. Can produce items that are available in multiple seasons or that are available year-round be featured in seasons other than the season identified on the schedule?

Yes, but produce items should be featured when they are in peak availability in their region. Some produce items are available in more than one season and different regions may have different peak seasons. Following the seasonal schedule helps to strengthen the effectiveness of a statewide approach to featuring a selection of produce items within the same season.

4. Can I use the same produce list from year to year?

Yes, schools can elect to feature the same produce items annually or they can feature different produce.





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Seasonal Approach Frequently Asked Questions (cont.,)

5. Can I still follow the Cycle I and II schedule?

Yes, schools may elect to continue following the “original Cycle I and II” schedules.

6. How were the six new produce items selected?

All HOTM produce items are selected using the following criteria, including:

- California grown
- In peak season*
- Represent a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables
- Familiar to children
- Affordable when purchased in season
- Align with the *Network campaigns and Programs*
- Easy to use for classroom taste testing
- Recommended by school produce buyers for seasonal availability and cost

* While many California grown produce items are available in multiple seasons or year-round, the seasonal schedule is based on when the featured produce items are in peak season in most regions of California.

7. We have developed complementary materials (i.e., supplemental materials, extension activities) for produce items featured in Cycle I and II. Will we be required to revise the materials to include seasonal information?

Resources that have been previously developed and approved by the *Network* will not be required to be revised. However, in the future, references to a seasonal approach should be encouraged. By following a seasonal approach, consumers will understand the importance of selecting produce during its peak season for quality, taste, cost, and variety.





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Seasonal Approach Frequently Asked Questions (cont.,)

8. Isn't the tomato botanically a fruit? Why is it listed as a vegetable?

From a culinary standpoint, tomatoes are commonly consumed as vegetables. Tomatoes, eggplant, squash, peppers, tomatillos, chilies, and cucumbers are several examples of foods that are botanically classified as fruit (the seed bearing part of a plant), but are commonly used and classified as vegetables. Many health organizations and government agencies, including the United States Department of Agriculture and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also classify these foods as vegetables. Stating that some vegetables are botanically classified as fruits can engage people, especially students, in conversation and educate them about the difference.

9. Can we feature just fruits or is it required to feature a combination of both fruits and vegetables?

The recommendation is to feature a combination of fruits and vegetables to promote healthy eating habits, support increased knowledge for both fruits and vegetables, and maximize students' nutrient intake.

10. Can I make recommendations/suggestions for new produce items?

Yes, comments may be submitted through info@harvestofthemonth.com.

