INTRODUCTION:
The Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (WFFC) implemented a Farm to School program at three elementary schools in the Springfield School District during 2008-09, consisting of integrated educational activities including Harvest of the Month in the cafeterias, farm field trips, garden sessions, nutrition lessons, tasting tables, and harvest days. All activities were coordinated and overseen by the WFFC Farm to School coordinator.

EVALUATION FOCUS:
Impact related to educational activities

DESIGN:
Pre and post measures collected for students from School 1 (3rd grade) and School 2 & 3 (3rd-5th grade) participating in:
• School garden sessions—soil preparation, planting, harvesting, composting, plant identification, and tool use (with the School Garden Project of Lane County)
• Garden-Enhanced Nutrition Curriculum—nutritional content of fresh fruits and vegetables (taught by Oregon State University Extension Service)
• Oregon State University’s Nutrition Education Program for schools with a >50% free/reduced lunch rate.
• Farm Field Trips* to local farms (2 times)
• Tasting Tables* with fresh produce from local farms (made available for all school students in the cafeterias)
• Harvest Days*—students prepared a meal in their classrooms using produce harvested from the school gardens and farm field trips

* Activities “taught” by the WFFC Farm to School coordinator

OUTCOMES:
• Changes in students’ fruit and vegetable consumption assessed by the School Lunch Recall (J Am Diet Assoc. 2011;111:419-424). Student fruit consumption increased > 0.5 servings per day.
• Change in students’ knowledge about Oregon-grown foods and agricultural processes assessed by a knowledge test. Average increase of 2.37 in test scores from baseline to post-intervention and increased experiences on farms and in gardens.
• Perspectives of educators (school garden and classroom) and farmers who participated in field trips and Farm to School experiences assessed through one-on-one interviews.
  » School garden educators were enthusiastic about the integration of gardens with Farm to School programs and identified potential for integrating garden education into the school curricula.
  » The classroom teacher interviews described tensions created by introducing enrichment programs into time-constrained school days.
Perspectives of participating farmers on success factors, advantages, and requirements associated with selling produce to schools and participating in Farm to School activities were assessed through one-on-one interviews. The primary barrier for selling to schools was the inability of small farms to fulfill large orders. In order to establish a successful relationship with schools, farmers need to be flexible in their order fulfillment, find ways to reduce costs of packing materials, and have a centrally organized delivery system.

- **Farmers appreciated the opportunities to teach children** about important issues related to agriculture and ecology.
- **Opportunities to expand marketing** to parents in the community.

**LESSONS:**

- Teacher buy-in of evaluation activities is as important as their buy-in of the implementation of the educational activities. Teachers and principals/administrators need to know why participation in evaluation warrants use of children’s time and exactly what to expect.
- An on-site evaluation coordinator and volunteers for data collection result in a smoother process.
- Limited reading ability of 3rd graders at the beginning of the school year may warrant that the printed questionnaires be read out to them.

- Lack of support from school administration may prevent access to comparison groups and school food service data.

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**Logic Model**