

Farm to Work Program — Frequently Asked Questions

Farm to Work

What is the Farm to Work Program?

Farm to Work is a DSHS employee wellness program that provides the opportunity to receive a fresh basket of local produce delivered right to your work every week. Each basket contains 10-12 different items of the freshest produce from a local farm, and you can order as often or as seldom as you like.

Why should I take advantage of **Farm to Work**?

By participating in Farm to Work, DSHS employees have the convenience of fresh, reasonably priced produce delivered to their worksite. DSHS employees also have access to recipes and cooking tips to help them learn how to prepare the produce they receive in their baskets.

How does the program work?

The program operates on a weekly cycle.

Beginning at 5 pm every Friday, online ordering opens for the following week's basket. You have until the next Friday at 5 pm to place your order through Sustainable Food Center's secure website, using a debit card or credit card. That Tuesday afternoon, the produce is ready for pickup at the designated time and place. Check the Farm to Work page for more information about ordering at your particular location.

At any location, all you have to do is show up with a bag so you can carry away your vegetables, and with an ID so we can check you off the list.

Ordering Cycle



How much does it cost to participate in **Farm to Work**?

The weekly basket is \$20. All orders will be prepaid through a secure server.

Who is coordinating all this with the farmer?

The coordination with the farmer is being done by the [Sustainable Food Center](#), a non-profit organization that works to improve access to local, healthy and affordable food for children and adults in Central Texas. This organization has previously launched a Farm-to-Cafeteria program and a Farm-to-School program, and is hosting the Farm-to-Work online-ordering site.

What kinds of produce can I expect in my basket?

Each Monday, DSHS employees can check the ordering website to get a general idea of what produce will be included in the next basket. However, here is a [Texas Department of Agriculture's Product Availability Guide](#) that may give you a good idea of what is available during different times of the year. Summer baskets could have squash, zucchini, green beans, peppers, peas, tomatoes – big and little, cucumbers, onions, eggplant, okra, basil, maybe a cantaloupe or some peaches or blackberries. A winter basket could have spinach, lettuce, greens, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, beets, cilantro, garlic and carrots.



Contents in the first-ever Farm to Work basket included tangerines, onions, cucumbers, eggplant, zucchini, okra, cherry tomatoes, basil, and squash.

What do I need to bring to pick up my basket?

In order for us to verify your order, you will need to present either your employee badge or a printed receipt of your order at the drop off site. You will also need to bring bags to put your produce in. Each week, the farmer will deliver the produce in individual baskets. At the drop off site, you will transfer the basket contents to your own bags to take it with you. The baskets will be returned to the farmer for use the following week.

What if I placed an order but I need someone else to pick up my basket on the delivery day?

You may have someone else pick up your basket for you. They will need a copy of your printed confirmation receipt.

What if I can't pick up my basket? Can I get a credit?

Unfortunately, you will be unable to get a credit or refund. However, you can get someone to pick up your basket for you if they have a copy of your receipt. Unclaimed baskets will not be able to be resold; the produce will be donated to a charitable organization.

Can I choose what items I want in my basket or order a half basket?

Each basket offers you 10-12 of the freshest produce options available that week. The baskets are assembled before they arrive at DSHS, and due to the large number of customers, it will not be possible to choose which items you want or do not want in each basket. It is not possible to offer a half basket either, as this would be complicated for the farmer and DSHS to coordinate. However, the ordering website has a list that gives you a general idea of what will be included. If there are any items you don't like, maybe you could ask a co-worker to split the basket with you and divide it as you both like. You can also use the trade box when you pick up your produce to exchange with others who have ordered that week.



Annette, Marvin, Doris, Kevin, and Sonny (l to r) take great pride in the produce from their farm. They enjoy participating the Austin Farmers' Market and are proud to offer their farm's bounty to DSHS employees. As Sonny explains, "It's good and fresh – you gotta eat well to live well."

Who is the farmer?

At DSHS Main Campus and Austin State Hospital, the produce is provided by the Naegelin Farm. A true family business, Doris and Sonny Naegelin's family has been farming in Lytle, TX for five generations. Naegelin Farm sits on about 300 acres in the Winter Valley region south of San Antonio. Along with their seven children, the Naegelins are keeping the family farming tradition alive by utilizing sustainable growing practices and innovative direct-marketing techniques.

The Naegelin Farm currently cultivates about 160 acres to grow a diverse array of over 30 different seasonal crops. The Naegelin family sells their fruits, herbs, and vegetables every week at the Austin Farmers' Market (www.austinfarmersmarket.org).

Is the produce organic?

While neither farmer supplies all certified organic produce, both avoid the use of chemicals and synthetic fertilizers. The use of the word "Organic" is controlled by the USDA

and requires a fee that many smaller farms cannot afford to pay.

Naegelin Farms, who delivers to DSHS Main Campus and Austin State Hospital, is moving towards more sustainable and organic growing practices. The farm provides produce that is sustainably grown – meaning they use natural methods of building healthy soils that grow flavorful and nutritious fruits and vegetables. Their goal is to provide for healthy land, healthy people and healthy food, so they avoid the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

By purchasing food from local farmers, you are supporting the environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability of our food system.

How far does the food travel to get here?

Naegelin farms is located in Lytle, Texas, just southwest of San Antonio. From door to door, the farmer is traveling just 116 miles to reach the DSHS Central Office.

If I order this week, do I have to order next week?

No. Unlike traditional farm subscription delivery programs, there is no long-term commitment to participate. Farm to Work operates on a weekly cycle, so you can order as often or as little as you like.

Will Farm to Work be offered year round?

The farmer will be able to supply for Farm to Work mostly year round. Depending on the crops and the weather, there may be a 3-4 week break in August/September and another 3-4 week break in January/February. We will keep employees informed of breaks via e-mail and the Building Healthy Texans website.

What is the trade box?

A box is placed at the pick-up site with a few produce items inside. When you pick up your basket, you can trade a single item you don't want for something else that is in the trade box.

I have placed an order, now where do I pick up my produce?

For DSHS Main Campus, orders will be available on Tuesday between 3:30-4:30 pm outside the G Building. Look for the Farm to Work pickup spot in front, under the east corner of the metal overhang ([81 kb pdf map](#)).

For Austin State Hospital, orders will be available on Tuesday between 3:00-4:00 pm at the loading dock on the north side of Building 540 on Avenue C at North 5th Street. ([163 kb pdf map](#)).

For deliveries at Howard Lane, DSHS employees can begin placing orders by 4 pm on Mondays for Farm to Work delivery the following Wednesday. Ottmers Family Farm delivers the baskets of produce to Howard Lane; baskets are available for pick up from 2:15 - 2:45p.m. in front of entrance to Texas WIC (suite 275).

For San Antonio State Hospital, orders will be available on Tuesday between 3:30-4:30 pm at the Motor Pool Pavilion near Maintenance.

How should I store my produce?

Here are a few tips about safely storing produce from the US Food and Drug Administration: www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm114299#storage

The American Dietetic Association's website also has suggestions for buying, preparing, and storing produce:

www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=10952

Whom should I contact if I have questions or comments?

For ordering or billing problems, including order verification, incorrect charges, or problems with a credit card, contact [Sustainable Food Center](#).

To give feedback about the Farm to Work program, contact [Sustainable Food Center](#).

For any questions or comments specific to DSHS, e-mail bringinghealthyback@dshs.state.tx.us.

By participating in Farm to Work, DSHS employees have the convenience of fresh, reasonably priced produce delivered to their worksite. DSHS employees