



**Regional Farm to Food Bank (RF2FB)
Egg Purchasing Pilot for Food Hubs
Evaluation Report**
September 2024

*Funded by The USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA)
Research and report produced by the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association*

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Acknowledgments

This evaluation has benefited immensely from the time and engagement provided by those who worked tirelessly to make the RF2FB Egg Purchasing Pilot for Food Hubs a success. A special thanks to the individuals who took the time to complete a survey, participate in the collective analysis discussion, or review a draft of this report. This report attempts to highlight the perspectives and experiences of those who developed and implemented the Pilot, in the hopes that it will lead to higher quality New Mexico Grown programming and improved outcomes for the people the programs are designed to benefit.

Executive Summary

From August 2023 through June 2024, The Food Depot (TFD) and the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association (NMFMA) initiated the Regional Farm to Food Bank (RF2FB) Egg Purchasing Pilot for Food Hubs. The Pilot was put in place as part of the RF2FB program, which is housed within New Mexico Grown, the state's institutional local food procurement program, and is also part of the Governor's Food Initiative. The purpose of the Pilot was to allow for initial RF2FB egg purchases to be made by TFD and distributed to food bank clients, with the idea that the Pilot would provide an opportunity for: food bank clients to access an important, affordable, and in-demand protein source; food hubs to explore and test egg sourcing possibilities from local/ regional egg producers; and the NMFMA and partners to lay the groundwork for exploring future possibilities, both for eggs to be purchased by other NM Grown buyers, and for eggs to be purchased from non-hub vendors (including small-scale egg producers themselves).

Egg Pilot purchases started in November 2023 and concluded in June 2024. There were 24 egg purchases totaling 3,072 cases (equating to nearly 90,000 pounds), which were delivered to thousands of food bank clients across the state via the four participating food banks and their food pantry partners. The eggs provided an estimated 72,906 meals, using a standard food bank meal calculator (1.2 pounds = 1 meal). Eggs were purchased by TFD from one Approved Supplier food hub that sourced from a regional egg producer based in Colorado.

A mixed-methods internal evaluation of the Egg Pilot, which took place from July-September 2024, found that project partners succeeded in providing high-quality eggs — an important staple and protein source — to food insecure food bank clients in New Mexico. The Pilot was able to meet demand-side needs of the food banks while also being adaptable to the supply-side needs of the NM Grown Approved Supplier Program (ASP). The Pilot facilitated strong collaboration between implementing partners and helped to establish guardrails and structures for future NM Grown egg purchasing. Stakeholders expressed appreciation for, and overall satisfaction with, the Pilot. There were, however, challenges in set-up and implementation, including a lack of clarity of roles between TFD and the NMFMA. Arguably the biggest weakness of the Pilot is that all of the eggs purchased were sourced from one regional producer, which shines a light on the current lack of a viable supply chain for small-scale or midsize graded egg producers in New Mexico or neighboring states. While there will certainly be challenges and complexities with future local or regional egg sourcing, the Pilot has provided invaluable learning opportunities that should make for a smoother path forward.

Recommendations from the evaluation include the following:

1. Ensure greater clarity of roles and communication between the ASP and the Buyer.
2. For future RF2FB and any other NM Grown egg purchases, work to diversify the pool of egg producers selling into the program.
3. Other NM Grown buyers beyond TFD should explore egg purchasing.
4. Think outside the box in order to take a regional food systems perspective and to explore the feasibility of purchases of ungraded eggs from local producers.
5. RF2FB should undertake a mock egg recall exercise and a site visit to egg suppliers in FY25.

I. Introduction

From August 2023 through June 2024, The Food Depot (TFD) and the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association (NMFMA) initiated the Regional Farm to Food Bank (RF2FB) Egg Purchasing Pilot for Food Hubs. The Pilot was put in place as part of the RF2FB program, which is housed within New Mexico Grown¹ and also part of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Food Initiative. Purchases made during the Egg Pilot were only allowed to be made by TFD (that is, no other NM Grown buyers were able to purchase eggs as part of the Pilot), and purchases were only allowed to be sourced from food hubs that met Approved Supplier Program (ASP) food safety, supply chain, and sourcing specifications and requirements for eggs. The Pilot was rolled out in two phases: Phase I ran from August – December 2023; and Phase II was from January – June 2024. The purpose of the Pilot was to allow for initial RF2FB egg purchases to be made by TFD and distributed to food bank clients, with the idea that the Pilot experience would provide an opportunity for: i) food bank clients to access an important, affordable, and in-demand protein source; ii) hubs to explore and test egg sourcing possibilities from local/ regional egg producers; and iii) the NMFMA and partners to lay the groundwork for exploring future possibilities, both for eggs to be purchased by other NM Grown buyers, and for eggs to be purchased from non-hub vendors (including small-scale egg producers themselves).

RF2FB is funded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) through a 3-year Local Food Purchasing Agreement (LFPA). The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) holds the cooperative agreement with the USDA and provides compliance assurance, fiscal management, and overall oversight. TFD is responsible for the project's food procurement on behalf of all of New Mexico's food banks, and the NMFMA manages the ASP. Eggs were an acceptable product for purchase according to the LFPA terms, and food banks have experience purchasing eggs at commodity-scale through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and at smaller-scale via private funding sources. However, eggs were not an allowable product for wider NM Grown program purchasing. Therefore, since RF2FB was a part of the overall NM Grown initiative, RF2FB could not initially purchase eggs.

During a survey conducted by The Food Depot in late 2022 of food banks and food pantries across the state, eggs were highlighted as a high- priority local purchase item, as they are an important source of protein for food bank clients and they can be difficult to obtain through TEFAP or other sourcing mechanisms. As a result, in early 2023 the NMFMA and TFD began exploring the possibility of establishing an egg pilot for RF2FB, including possible local or regional sources for eggs, along with potential food safety and quality assurance requirements.²

¹ New Mexico Grown is the state's local food procurement program, which provides resources to institutions to purchase locally produced food from New Mexican farmers, ranchers, food hubs, and distributors. Food purchased through the program serves children in early childhood education centers, students in K-12 schools, elders at senior centers, and food insecure clients at food banks. All food producers that sell to NM Grown buyers must be part of the Approved Supplier Program (ASP), a food quality assurance program that provides producers access to institutional local purchasing while also ensuring food safety, quality, and product specification requirements are met.

² The LFPA allows for sourcing from local or regional food producers. For the RF2FB project, this means those based in New Mexico or regional producers located within 400 miles of the product's final distribution point.

Assessing local and regional egg supply that would ensure acceptable food safety and quality standards turned out to be a complex undertaking. In the state of New Mexico, for example, there are no graded egg producers whatsoever, and graded eggs are the common standard for institutional or wholesale buying. Therefore, the partners had to consider if it would be possible to source ungraded eggs from local producers or to source graded eggs from regional producers. In the end, the NMFMA and TFD decided that graded eggs that had third-party organic or animal welfare approved certification from regional egg producers would be the best source for the Egg Pilot and that a more in-depth analysis of the longer-term prospects of sourcing ungraded eggs would also be warranted (this analysis is still ongoing). Given the need to go through Approved Suppliers for NM Grown purchases, however, participation in the Egg Pilot on the supplier side was limited to food hubs that were already on the NM Grown Approved Supplier List, and these hubs would need to source from regional egg producers. The hubs would also need to ensure product transportation and delivery and that all food safety specifications and quality assurance requirements were met – specifically ensuring appropriate cold chain needs at each step of the process.

In July 2023, the NMFMA developed an [Egg Pilot Overview](#) that included initial food safety and quality assurance specifications along with an “expression of interest” form for hubs to complete for the Egg Pilot. A total of three hubs were interested, though only one hub ended up selling through the Pilot; a second hub met supplier requirements but their pricing was much higher and ultimately deemed not an efficient enough use of funds given the high hunger rates in the state; and a third hub could not find a regional producer source within 400 miles of its distribution area that met product specifications. On the receiving end, TFD’s RF2FB purchasing staff offered the opportunity to participate in the Egg Pilot to the five food banks within the New Mexico Association of Food Banks — Echo Food Bank, Roadrunner Food Bank (RRFB), The Community Pantry (TCP), the Food Bank of Eastern New Mexico (FBENM), and The Food Depot. All but FBENM were interested.

Egg Pilot purchases began in November 2023 and went through June 2024. There were 24 egg purchases totaling 3,072 cases (equating to nearly 90,000 pounds), which were delivered to thousands of food bank clients across the state via the four participating food banks and their food pantry partners. The eggs provided an estimated 72,906 meals, using a standard food bank meal calculator (1.2 pounds = 1 meal). Table 1 offers further details.

Table 1. Regional Farm to Food Bank Egg Pilot Purchasing & Distribution Snapshot

Receiving Food Bank	Cases Received	Pounds Received	Purchase Amount	Orders	Meal Count
RRFB	912	24,338	\$62,016.00	7	20,282
TCP	576	16,939	\$39,168.00	4	14,116
TFD	864	24,864	\$58,752.00	9	20,720

ECHO ³	720	21,346	\$48,960.00	4	17,788
Total	3,072	87,487	\$208,896.00	24	72,906

The Egg Pilot evaluation took place from July through September 2024. The evaluation was an internal exercise led by the NMFMA’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) Lead and included quantitative and qualitative methods along with a desk review of key documents and information from the pilot. This report presents the results of the evaluation. The document is organized as follows: after the introduction, Section II details the scope and methodology; Section III provides key findings from the evaluation; and Section IV includes recommendations.

II. Pilot Evaluation Scope & Methodology

The [Egg Pilot Evaluation Plan](#) was drafted in early 2024, updated in April-May, and finalized in June. The purpose of the evaluation was to document successes, challenges, and lessons learned from the Egg Pilot along with recommendations for the future. Specific evaluation questions are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. RF2FB Egg Purchasing Pilot Evaluation Questions

<p>Overall: What worked well about the pilot and why? What was most challenging and why?</p> <p>Based on the Pilot experience, does there seem to be long-term viability in including eggs in NM Grown? If so, what considerations are needed for expanding NM Grown egg purchasing in the future – either through more food bank purchases or other buyer purchasing?</p>
<p>For Participating Approved Supplier Hubs: How was the Egg Pilot experience from the following supplier-side perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ASP specifications for egg sourcing and food safety; - ability to respond to buyer requests (volumes, packaging & labeling, transport, etc.); - pricing; - ease of doing business with the buyer; and - ability to source eggs meeting pilot requirements?
<p>For the Buyer: How was the Egg Pilot experience from the following buyer-side perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - availability of product supply in needed volumes and any additional requirements (packaging & labeling, transport, etc.); - pricing; - ease of doing business with suppliers; - satisfaction of participating food banks that received eggs; and - use of values-based procurement.

³ All egg distributions for ECHO were coordinated through TCP; eggs were delivered by the vendor to TCP and then logistics of getting eggs from TCP to ECHO were handled by those two entities.

For Food Banks that received eggs:

How was the Egg Pilot experience from the following food bank receiving perspectives:

- quality of product;
- ease of receiving product;
- guidelines provided in the receiving Standard Operating Procedures (SOP); and
- food bank client feedback?

For ASP staff/ contractors:

How was the Egg Pilot experience in terms of:

- determining the ASP guidelines;
- approval process for interested hubs;
- coordination with suppliers and the buyer; and
- understanding supply-side challenges and opportunities?

The evaluation used quantitative and qualitative methods, including:

- desk review of data and key documents from the pilot;
- surveys for four distinct key stakeholder groups: participating Approved Supplier Hub; TFD purchasing staff; NMFMA ASP supporting staff/ contractors; and participating food banks that received eggs;
- collective analysis discussion with TFD purchasing staff and NMFMA ASP supporting staff/ contractors.⁴

Appendix 1 provides details of the documents and information reviewed, and links to the data collection surveys and collective analysis guide can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Table 3. RF2FB Egg Pilot Evaluation Methods, Timeline, and Results

Method/tool	Timing	Mode	Results
Desk Review	May - July 2024	Review of key Program Documents and Data	See Appendix 1
Participating Approved Supplier Hub Survey	July 1 - 15 2024	Electronic survey via Survey Monkey	n=1 (out of 1 possible)
Buyer Purchasing Staff Survey	July 1 - 15 2024	Electronic survey via Survey Monkey	n=2 (out of 2 possible)
Receiving Food Bank Staff Survey*	July 1 - August 15, 2024	Electronic survey via Survey Monkey	n=2 (out of 3 possible)
ASP Staff/ Contractor Survey	July 1 - 31 2024	Electronic survey via Survey Monkey	n=3 (out of 3 possible)
Collective Analysis Discussion	August 21, 2024	Zoom call facilitated by NMFMA MERL Lead	Completed with 4 participants plus facilitator

⁴ Collective analysis is a participatory, qualitative, and collaborative process in which a group of stakeholders explore raw evaluation data themselves as a means to shape data analysis. This is meant to lead to better understanding, higher collective levels of ownership of the analysis, and more nuanced analysis.

*The survey for receiving food banks was only sent to three of the four food banks that received eggs. One of the four participating food banks did not directly receive its eggs from the supplier; they were formally received by another participating food bank and then those two food banks worked out final distribution details.

Data Analysis & Presentation

All survey data was entered into Survey Monkey, then aggregated and reviewed through Survey Monkey's "Analyze Results" and "Present Results" features. Analysis of the survey data was then used to refine the collective analysis guide. For the collective analysis discussion, the Zoom call was recorded (after consent from participants), and the call was then transcribed using Zoom transcription features. The transcription was reviewed and coded for key themes and sub-themes. Triangulation was achieved through using multiple primary data collection methods from several stakeholder groups along with the review of information from a variety of sources during the desk review. The draft report was shared with collective analysis participants for review; feedback was incorporated into the final report.

Evaluation Limitations

There are three main limitations to the Egg Pilot evaluation:

- First, the evaluation did not include direct feedback from food bank clients themselves because the NMFMA did not have direct access to these populations and because the evaluation focused more on pilot processes and operations. This limitation was primarily addressed through asking questions about client satisfaction to participating food bank staff.
- Second, the overall number of survey responses is low, which is understandable for a pilot but does limit the evaluation's ability to draw broad conclusions as the findings are based on a limited number of perspectives.
- Third, this was an internal evaluation, and the evaluator also served as part of the NMFMA's ASP team for the Egg Pilot during design of the Pilot and through Phase I.

While these types of limitations might be expected from a process-focused internal evaluation of a small-scale pilot initiative, they are nonetheless important to note.

III. Key Findings

Through the RF2FB Egg Pilot, project partners were able to provide high-quality eggs — an important protein source — to food insecure food bank clients in New Mexico. While the Pilot had its share of challenges, detailed below, it was able to meet the demand-side needs of the food banks while also being adaptable to the supply-side needs of the ASP. Furthermore, the Pilot facilitated strong collaboration between key stakeholders and helped to lay the groundwork for any future NM Grown egg purchasing. While there will still be challenges and complexities with future local or regional egg sourcing, the Pilot has provided invaluable learning opportunities and experiences that should make for a smoother path forward.

In addition to the summary in the preceding paragraph, this section provides details related to participating food bank and hub satisfaction, food bank client satisfaction, NMFMA and TFD set-up and implementation experiences, and the limitation of egg supplier diversity.

Key findings include:

Participating food banks and the supplier food hub were satisfied with Egg Pilot processes.

Participating food banks that received eggs through the Pilot and the supplier food hub rated their experiences with all aspects of the Egg Pilot operations and processes as satisfied or very satisfied. For the food hub, this was across nine categories such as the approval process for participating, ability to source eggs meeting requirements, ability to meet buyer requests for scale, packaging, and distribution, and communication with the buyer. For the food banks, this included categories such as egg quality and maintaining food safety requirements, communication with purchasing staff and hub staff, ease of receiving the product, etc. Respondents highlighted how smoothly the program operated, with one respondent commenting that “Working with RF2FB staff was amazing. Love this program,” and “The Regional Farm to Food Bank team is phenomenal, they are conscious of the spending and understand the impact of the work they are doing.” One of the food bank respondents noted that the “quality of eggs was great.”

Food Bank clients also seemed to appreciate the Egg Pilot.

Egg Pilot stakeholders also expressed that food bank clients were satisfied with the Egg Pilot, as one survey respondent stated, “This affordable protein type is highly valued at food banks and is a great use of program funds.” A participating food bank staff respondent observed “Our families loved receiving the eggs, as many of them cannot purchase them at any of the local stores due to price.” In addition, the two food bank survey respondents rated food pantry client satisfaction as “satisfied” and “very satisfied.” During the collective analysis, one participant also noted that it was easier for any and all food bank clients to access the eggs distributed through the RF2FB Egg Pilot, as eggs distributed through TEFAP have certain recipient requirements (for example, to provide an address or identification, fill out certain paperwork, etc.). The Pilot therefore was more inclusive in who was able to access eggs as compared to TEFAP eggs.

The Pilot provided an important affordable source of a staple protein while establishing guardrails and structures for purchasing high-quality, safe eggs.

As noted above, thousands of food bank clients in many parts of the state were able to access eggs through the Pilot. From an economic standpoint, eggs are expensive for consumers to purchase but they were found to be an affordable and valuable protein for TFD to purchase and participating food banks to distribute. The Pilot partners were thus able to put in place a structure that was responsive to an in-demand product that was new for NM Grown. The Pilot benefited from being able to adapt certain food safety and distribution specifications from existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that food banks have in place for TEFAP eggs. At the same time, the NMFMA and TFD worked to establish important product specification and

food safety/ quality assurance guardrails that could serve as a model beyond the life of the Pilot.

The Pilot was strengthened by high levels of collaboration between TFD and the NMFMA.

Strong collaboration between TFD and the NMFMA was one of the strengths noted by TFD food purchasing staff and the NMFMA ASP support staff and contractors; all survey respondents in these stakeholder groups were either satisfied or very satisfied with TFD-NMFMA collaboration during set-up of the Pilot. One respondent commented, “Thanks everyone for patience in this roll out of a new program area. Appreciated the thorough and thoughtful dialogue leading up to decision making.” This theme was also explored during the collective analysis discussion, as one participant acknowledged the challenges inherent in rolling out a Pilot and that the two organizations worked very well together to address challenges that arose to ensure high-quality work was being done. Another participant highlighted the collaboration as an example of a value chain coordination network in action, and that the collaborative network got the work done that was necessary to establish and implement the Egg Pilot.

The Pilot set-up had operational challenges, especially in terms of the initial ASP application process, developing product specifications and requirements, and full clarity of TFD and the NMFMA roles.

Although overall collaboration was strong between TFD and the NMFMA, the process to develop and roll-out the Pilot was still a challenging one. While the two organizations worked closely together every step of the way, each had distinct roles and responsibilities. Given that the NMFMA manages the ASP, it was primarily responsible for developing the application process for suppliers to be able to participate in the Pilot – including establishing initial specifications and standards for suppliers to meet in order to be able to sell to TFD as the buyer, which were provided in the overview document and the “expression of interest” form. The overview document and expression of interest form specified who could participate, the types of eggs that could be sourced and where geographically they could be sourced from, and initial food safety and quality assurance requirements. The NMFMA was also responsible for reviewing expressions of interest forms and accompanying documentation that were submitted by interested hubs as well as any necessary follow-up with interested hubs to discuss application details — including egg sourcing and transportation and distribution plans. As the buyer, TFD was responsible for all details related to egg purchasing including communications with the participating food banks and hubs (once approved to sell) and ensuring food safety and quality assurance of all eggs sourced through the Pilot. As such, TFD developed a set of buyer requirements for the purchase and delivery of eggs. These were based on the requirements in the ASP expression of interest but included some additional detail as related to product specifications, delivery requirements, product labeling, and other buyer-side requirements. TFD additionally developed an SOP document for participating food banks to use to ensure food safety and quality assurance of delivered eggs. In addition, as part of the NMDA’s compliance assurance role, they can initiate site visits to help verify the information that TFD gathers from suppliers which can include visits to hubs and/or producers.

The surveys and collective analysis discussion revealed a significant challenge in terms of the NMFMA and TFD knowing exactly what their roles and responsibilities were as they related to communication with the applicant hubs in the Pilot, as well as the initial application process. One survey respondent noted, “there was a pretty steep learning curve in terms of setting out grading standards, clear food safety specs, third party certifications, distribution and handling requirements, etc. It took a lot of time and effort to develop the guidance and then implement the guidance when going through the approval process with the three hubs that applied.” Because eggs were a new product and the standards were different than hubs had used when previously sourcing eggs, there was quite a bit of back and forth between the NMFMA and hub applicants regarding how hubs would meet the standards and also provide required documentation. Another survey respondent stated that it was “a slog to determine the product specifications, and there was a period of back and forth...about what was required on the label that would meet the needs of the NMFMA, the food banks, and comply with federal regulation. I don’t know if there was any way around that.”

During the collective analysis one participant noted that there was not enough clear communication among TFD and the NMFMA “to know where we can jump in and where the buck stops with the other organization. So I think it was a lot of communication breakdown. But again, I think some of this is just an exercise in learning.” This led to some confusion among the partners in terms of where exactly the handover of supplier communication and coordination would take place in the process of going from the NMFMA in its ASP management role to TFD in its buyer role. This was particularly challenging given that eggs were a new product for the ASP and that eggs are more complicated from a food safety and regulatory perspective than many food products. In reviewing the initial draft of this report, a reviewer noted that the Pilot would have benefited from a mock recall exercise, which could have helped identify any further communication gaps as well as the level of preparedness of key stakeholders in the event of an actual recall. Finally, it was noted in the collective analysis that part of the breakdown may have been from the Egg Pilot being “a classic example of building the plane as we’re flying it.”

Lack of egg supplier diversity was a significant limitation during the Pilot.

Arguably the biggest weakness of the Pilot is that all of the eggs purchased through the Egg Pilot were sourced from one regional egg producer. The lack of supplier diversity was acknowledged in the surveys and collective analysis alike. One survey respondent noted that even though the Pilot purchased a significant volume of product, it was not supporting a diversified market. Moreover, the hubs that did not end up selling through the Pilot would not have had other egg suppliers either, as none of the Approved Supplier hubs in New Mexico source from other egg producers that could have met the product specifications and food safety requirements. ***Importantly, this shines a light on the lack of a viable supply chain for small scale or midsize graded egg producers in New Mexico or neighboring states.*** While multiple hubs showed interest in the Pilot, it was evident that hubs also have limited capacity when it comes to the regional egg supply chain.

Working through a single egg producer also made it difficult to utilize the RF2FB values-based procurement principles and required flexibility and innovation to adhere to project procurement guidelines. Despite this significant limitation, the Pilot was also the first time that any NM Grown buyers had purchased a regional producer's product, which provided an opportunity to work through an in-state hub to purchase regionally. In the end, project stakeholders still felt like the benefits of running the Pilot, and especially getting high-quality, regionally-sourced eggs to food bank clients in need, outweighed the cost of lack of supplier diversity.

The Pilot provided lessons that could be applicable to other NM Grown buyers or other products.

Through the Egg Pilot, key stakeholders were able to develop systems and structures that should be helpful in the future — whether it be for additional egg purchases by TFD or other NM Grown buyers or for other products. Systems and processes that were developed included: establishing important guidelines for food safety that address potential risks and vulnerabilities across the production, supply, and cold transport/distribution chains; sourcing from a regional producer for the first time; and the buyer experience of purchasing a new product that is an affordable and staple protein source. This work helps provide credibility for future similar efforts in expanding products, regional sourcing, or buyers.

IV. Recommendations

(1) Ensure greater clarity of roles and communication between the ASP and the Buyer.

The NMFMA as the entity that manages the ASP inherently works closely with NM Grown buyers. During the Egg Pilot, the NMFMA and TFD enjoyed very strong levels of collaboration. In the future, it will also be important for the roles of the ASP and of the Buyer to be extremely clear (in terms of where responsibilities stop with the approval process and where they pick up with the Buyer), especially for new products or those that are more complicated such as eggs. In addition, the NMFMA and the Buyer should consider having one point person per entity that has ultimate responsibility for communications when dealing with complex products or supply chains.

It will also be important to determine exactly what information the ASP needs to ask for, what information Buyers should obtain, and what information will likely be needed by both the ASP and the Buyer. This is especially important since the role of the ASP is to determine if a potential supplier can meet the minimum food safety and quality assurance criteria to be able to access NM Grown buyers. The Buyer will then likely have additional needs to determine if an Approved Supplier will be able to meet their specific requirements and to confirm if requirements are being met once purchasing has begun (including when/ how NMDA gets involved for compliance assurance). In the future, it would be helpful to more clearly define these roles and responsibilities in the NM Grown Quality Management System, and it could also be useful to show standard delineation of responsibilities in some type of visual.

(2) For future RF2FB and any other NM Grown egg purchases, work to diversify suppliers.

The evaluation made it clear that it will be important to broaden the number of producers providing eggs to the RF2FB or other NM Grown buyers. This suggestion does, however, come with a caveat for RF2FB, since that project is currently set to end in June 2025 and the potential for future funding is very uncertain. Therefore, any exploration of supplier diversification for TFD purchases will have to be done with this in mind, so this recommendation is most relevant for other NM Grown buyers that purchase eggs in the future, or if there is funding for local food purchasing for food banks that goes beyond the RF2FB. Supplier diversification could be most helpful in geographic areas that would allow for distribution in the southern part of New Mexico.

(3) Other NM Grown buyers should explore egg purchasing.

The Egg Pilot provides a model and structure that could be used by other NM Grown buyers to do their own pilots or testing of egg purchasing — especially for those buyers that can easily use eggs in their meal preparations and provisions.

(4) Think outside the box in terms of state lines and presumed regulatory barriers.

The Egg Pilot provides important experience for future programming that could work from a more regional food system perspective. For example, the NM Public Education Department will have the opportunity in the near future to pursue USDA Local Food for Schools funding for local and regional procurement and will be able to apply lessons learned from the Egg Pilot to that potential future work.

The NMFMA should also continue to work with the NMDA and other stakeholders to assess the feasibility of NM Grown purchases of ungraded eggs from local New Mexico producers and to determine what food safety, buyer education, and other requirements would be needed to make that happen. This is a work in progress that could provide meaningful market opportunities to local producers and serve populations in need around the state.

(5) In FY25, RF2FB should undertake a mock egg recall exercise and a site visit to egg suppliers (the site visit could be at the hub and/or producer level(s), which would be determined by TFD and NMDA).

Appendices

Appendix 1. Documents & Information Reviewed

Resource	Description
Regional Farm to Food Bank (RF2FB) Egg Purchasing Pilot Evaluation Plan	Details the scope of work for the evaluation
RF2FB Egg Pilot Guidelines	Summarizes the RF2FB Egg Pilot purpose, who can participate, sourcing requirements, food safety standards, timeline, and how to participate in the Pilot
RF2FB Egg Pilot - Food Hub Interest Form and Responses	Approved Supplier Program expression of interest form for participating in the Egg Pilot and the responses from 3 hubs to the form
RF2FB Egg Pilot SOP for Safe Handling for Eggs	Safe egg handling, receiving, storage, and distribution instructions for food banks that received eggs through the RF2FB Egg Pilot
Ordering, Purchasing and Distribution Record	Itemized record of all Egg Pilot purchases and distributions
RF2FB Supplier Addenda for FY24 Egg Purchases	Summarizes Buyer-Supplier expectations for purchasing and pricing during the Egg Pilot
RF2FB Buyer-Seller Memorandum of Understanding for FY25	Buyer-Supplier MOU to be used in FY25 for locally grown fruit, vegetable, meat and egg purchases, outlining obligations and expectations of each party
RF2FB Egg Supplier FY25 Request for Proposals	RFP for upcoming FY25 purchases from Approved Supplier hubs for eggs through the RF2FB project; includes product specs, delivery, labeling, packaging, and other requirements; and information on how suppliers can make a bid
RF2FB Supplier Driver Log Quality Assurance Checklist (for FY25 use)	Checklist for completion onsite at transfer of product to help ensure product quality and integrity through the supply chain
NM Food Bank Local Product Interest Survey Results	Provides listing of high, medium, and low priority items for local purchase, as identified by the NM food banks participating in the RF2FB project

Appendix 2. Data Collection Tools

[Participating Approved Supplier Hub Survey](#)

[Receiving Food Bank Survey](#)

[The Food Depot Purchasing Staff Survey](#)

[NMFMA Approved Supplier Program Support Staff/ Contractors Survey](#)

[Collective Analysis Guide](#)