



# School Fruit Micro- Business

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## Introduction

This document has been developed to provide practical guidance to secondary schools who are interested in setting up a school fruit micro-business

The document is intended to give general guidelines and can be adapted to suit the individual needs of each school.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the staff and pupils of Scariff Community College.



# Benefits of Fruit & Vegetables

## Why Fruits and Vegetables Are Important

There are many reasons to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables every day - research shows that fruits and vegetables are vital for good health. Worryingly, most Irish children do not eat nearly enough of these essential foods.

Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables every day can help reduce the risk of:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Type II diabetes
- Certain cancers

Fruits and vegetables are packed with essential vitamins, minerals, fibre, and disease-fighting phytochemicals (*fight-o-chemicals*).

## Fruits and Vegetables Fight to Protect Health

The phytochemicals in fruits and vegetables "fight" to protect health. Phytochemicals are usually related to colour. Fruits and vegetables of different colours (green, yellow-orange, red, blue-purple, and white) contain their own combination of phytochemicals and nutrients that work together to promote good health. In addition, by eating more fruits and vegetables and fewer high-calorie foods, your body finds it easier to balance your weight. Most health authorities agree that 5-10 portions of fruit and veg per day are necessary for good health.

## What Counts as a Portion of Fruit/Veg?

A portion is a handful-sized helping of fruit and vegetables. For example, an apple, a cupful of grapes, or a glass of fruit juice.



"It actually made me aware of how little fruit I was eating, by making fruit available in school, I had at least five portions a day."

*Ciara*

<b>Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and cooked fruit and vegetables</b>	all count
<b>Fruit juice</b>	only counts once per day, however much is drunk
<b>Fruit and vegetable dishes</b>	can count – provided they contain a good portion of fruit or vegetable
<b>Beans and pulses</b>	count, but only once a day
<b>Other fruity drinks (e.g. Capri-sun, fruit shoot)</b>	don't count

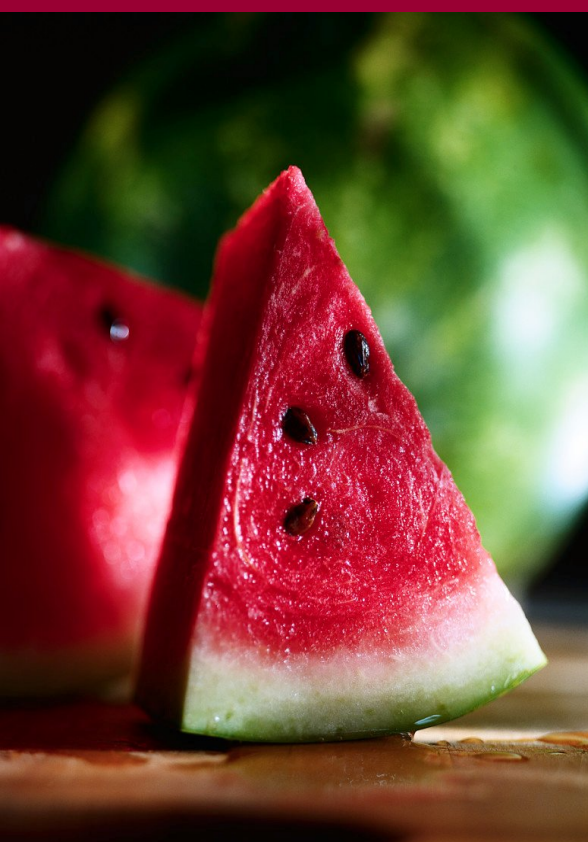
## Fruit Micro-Business

What is a fruit micro business?

Students run a business that sells fruit to staff and pupils. Students are responsible for the ordering, marketing and distribution of the fruit, as well as the day-to-day running of the enterprise. The programme encourages an entrepreneurial attitude, as well improving fruit consumption within the school.

Why start a micro-business?

The fruit micro-business allows students to develop key business skills whilst promoting healthy lifestyle habits. Setting up a fruit micro-business encourages fruit and vegetable consumption and reinforces positive health messages within the school environment.



Having fruit on sale in the school makes it very convenient for everyone. Instead of junk, fruit has now become the snack-food of choice for the vast majority of students. This project has led to a huge increase in health awareness among the students. *Teacher*

## Case Study

### Scariff Community College, Co Clare

The school fruit micro business started in Scariff Community College in late 2005. The school has approximately 300 students, and is situated in one of the larger towns in County Clare.

The business was set up by a group of 5<sup>th</sup> Year & Leaving Cert girls called the Teenage Lifestylers, with support from two teachers and RedBranch. The girls are responsible for all aspects of the business, including ordering, marketing, promotion and sale of the fruit.

Initially, the fruit was sold from a small office in the school hall. The sales during the first few months ranged from 150 – 250 pieces per week. Currently, the fruit is also being sold from baskets in a number of classrooms, and the students have also begun to sell fruit to the teachers.

The staff pre-order their fruit on a weekly basis. Orders are placed on a Thursday and the fruit is delivered the following Tuesday. A rota system is in operation whereby four students take charge of the business on a weekly basis. The range of fruit on offer includes apples, pears, bananas, mandarin oranges, kiwis and grapes.

Six months after the launch of the business, the students were selling about 250 pieces of fruit to the staff and 300 pieces to students each week.

The Teenage Lifestylers have organised their own notice board where they can post lifestyle information and advertise the fruit. They have also worked on a range of fruit-related recipes & fact sheets which they post on the board and a copy is enclosed with each staff fruit hamper. In addition to the fruit micro-business, the girls have arranged for the setting up of hip-hop classes for students at the school – combining a fun activity with healthy exercise.

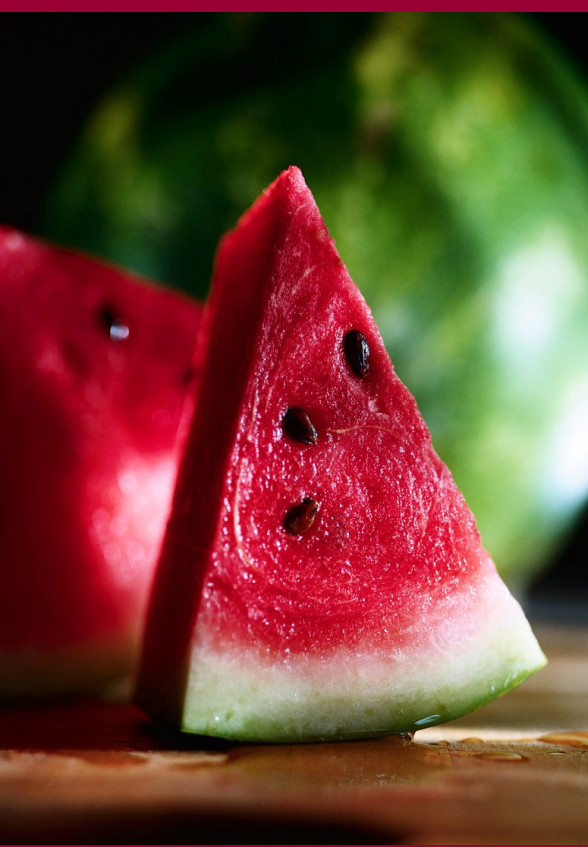
#### Quotes

Our experience (and sales) so far tells us that students were very willing to make a change to healthier foods. We have had no problem selling fruit and we have a very good supply of regular customers.

*The Teenage Lifestylers*

I enjoyed the experience of working in the fruit business and also helping to raise the awareness of healthy living.

*Emya*



Six months after the launch of the business, the students are now selling about 250 pieces of fruit to the staff and 300 pieces to students each week.

## Case Study Continued...

“The first 2 months were the most difficult but following a numbers of marketing strategies, we established & maintained a loyal customer base.” *Tina*

“It was a great experience and also great if I wanted to set up an enterprise.” *Sinead*

“This project helped us to link aspects of our subjects like Business, English, Home Economics, Accountancy and Computer skills in a business environment.” *Caoibhe*

“It actually made me aware of how little fruit I was eating, by making fruit available in school, I had at least five portions a day.” *Ciara*

“The rota system worked really well because each group worked one week a month so we had plenty of time for other activities.” *Donna*

“Even though initially students thought the organic fruit was expensive, they could taste the difference and they didn’t mind paying for it.” *Niamh*

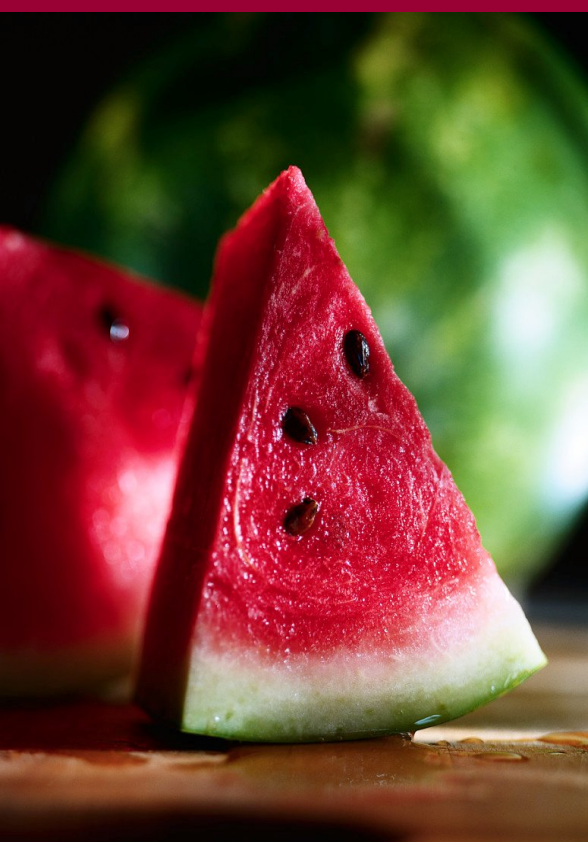
“Having fruit on sale in the school makes it very convenient for everyone. Instead of junk, fruit has now become the snack-food of choice for the vast majority of students. This project has led to a huge increase in health awareness among the students.” *Teacher*

“It has made people think about what they are eating and has given them an opportunity to change.” *Teacher*

“It has given us the opportunity to benefit from healthy organic fruit and food without us having to go out of our way to find it.” *Teacher*

“This is a very good experience, for both students and teachers. Educating us on a healthier lifestyle and has raised the awareness on life-enhancing food and hopefully reduced the consumption of junk. Great to see water replace fizzy drinks.” *Teacher*

“It is the most effective project that has happened in the school since I came here. It has changed the eating the eating habits of the students, instead of eating junk now they eat fruit.” *Teacher*



“It is the most effective project that has happened in the school since I came here. It has changed the eating habits of the students, instead of eating junk now they eat fruit.” *Teacher*

# Setting Up a Fruit Micro-Business

**Decide on group members**

Agree responsibilities

**Arrange a Supplier**

Organic v non-organic, delivery dates, pricing

**Set Prices**

**Decide on Customers**

Who will you sell to?

**Distribution**

Where will you sell from?

**Promotion**

Put up posters, send out flyers, workshops to reinforce idea, announcements in classroom



“This project has not only given the students an awareness of the benefits of organic produce, it has also taught the girls involved in selling the fruit valuable entrepreneurial, marketing and other skills involved in running a business.” *Teacher*

## Fruit Micro-Business

### Decide group members

Before you set up your business you should decide on how the business is set up. How many members will you have? What are the responsibilities of each member? Will you have a teacher working with you?

It is advisable that you find a teacher that can act as a liaison for the business.

### Arrange a Supplier

Before you start you are going to need to decide on a supplier. When you are choosing a supplier there are a number of factors you should consider.

- Do you want to sell organic or non organic produce
- What is the cost price from the supplier—can you get it from another supplier more cheaply?
- How often will the supplier deliver?
- What time will the delivery be made?
- What is the quality of the produce on offer?

If necessary, RedBranch can help you to source an appropriate supplier.

### Set Prices

Once you have decided on a supplier you can decide on the price you are going to charge for your fruit. Be careful—if you charge too much you may discourage customers from buying your fruit. However, if you charge too little you may end up losing money.

Try to recycle paper bags and boxes— using plastic bags adds to your costs and is not environmentally friendly.

### Decide on your customers

It is very important to know who your potential customers are. In most school run fruit shops the customers include students and the staff. However there is no reason why you can't sell to parents as well. If you are selling to teachers and parents you should consider taking a weekly order as this may help boost sales. Orders can be taken at the end of each week and the fruit can be delivered at the start of the following week.



“Our experience (and sales) so far tells us that students were very willing to make a change to healthier foods. We have had no problem selling fruit and we have a very good supply of regular customers.” *The Teenage Life-stylers*

# Fruit Micro-Business

## Distribution

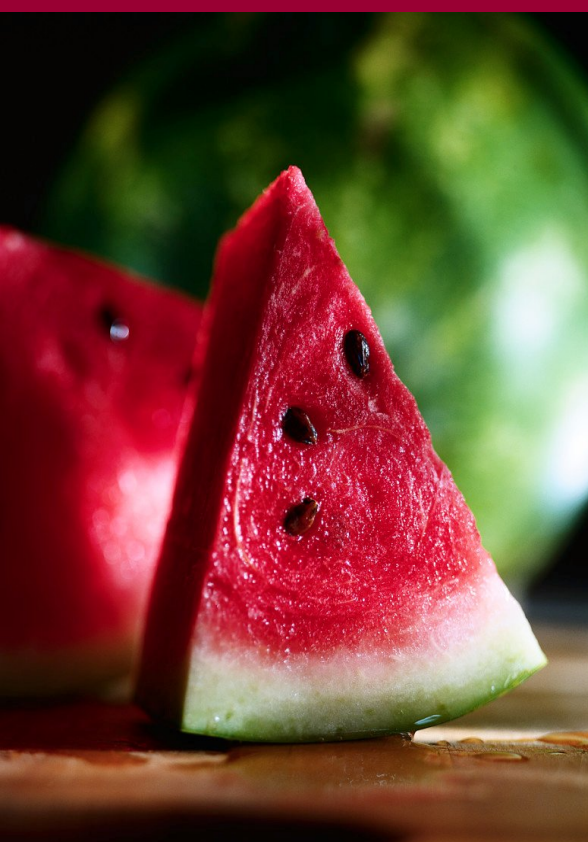
Before you start selling fruit you need to have arranged storage as well as somewhere to sell from. You should discuss this with the school who may be happy to give you a space to set up a table. You should also consider selling fruit in the classroom. This has proven very successful in some schools, where a basket of fruit is left in classrooms with a collection tin beside it. A pricelist is visible and students put the cost of their purchase in the tin.

Make sure you have a plan B for over-ripe fruit! It can be used to make jam or smoothies (which can in turn be sold!), or you could have special offers to sell off old stock.

## Promotion

It is important that you promote the product you are selling. There are a number of ways you can do this, including:

- Putting up posters
- Distributing flyers
- Talk to the principal about allowing students to eat fruit during class times
- Making announcements in classrooms
- Workshops/classes on healthy eating
- Poster competitions



I enjoyed the experience of working in the fruit business and also helping to raise the awareness of healthy living. *Emya*

## Frequently Asked Questions

Who will be responsible for the scheme?

Students will be responsible for the day to day running of the business but it is advisable that a teacher oversees the project—especially communication with suppliers.

How is fruit sourced?

There are a number of ways to organise fruit supply:

- It may be sourced from a local shop or greengrocer
- It can be purchased from a local fruit wholesaler
- RedBranch have links with fruit suppliers who can supply to schools.

Will the fruit be delivered?

This will depend on the arrangements made, but it should be easy to organise delivery of fruit. Simply ask the person you are getting the fruit from if they can arrange delivery.

What about litter?

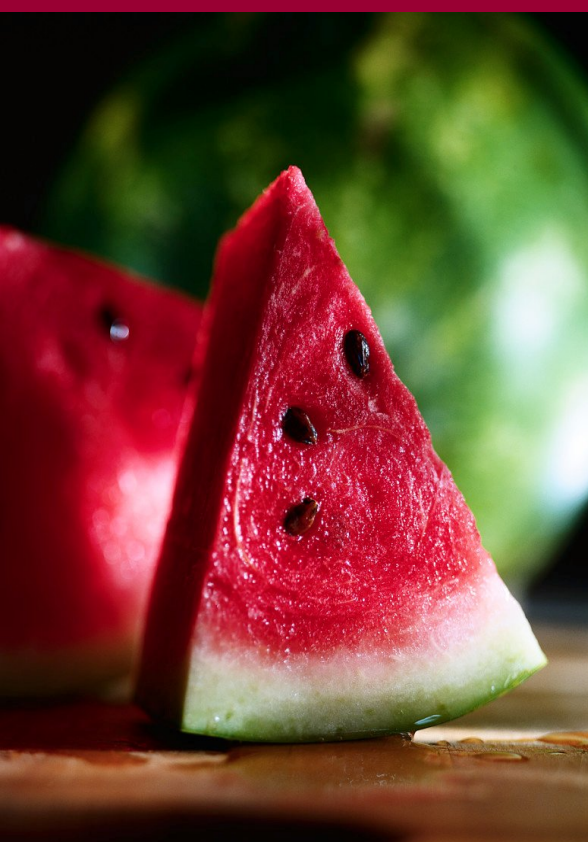
Any litter created can be composted. Additional compost bins can be placed around the school. Students can also be encouraged to take their litter home with them and dispose of it in their bins at home.

Is there a difference between organic and non-organic fruit?

Non-organic fruit has been sprayed with pesticide chemicals. This stays on the skin of the fruit and may be damaging to health. Cheap fruit is not necessarily tasty, so be prepared to taste-test samples from your suppliers.

Can young people be allergic to fruits?

Yes! Though it is exceptionally rare, some young people can be allergic to fruits. It is important to find out if any children in the school are allergic to fruit.



“The first 2 months were the most difficult but following a number of marketing strategies, we established & maintained a loyal customer base.” *Tina*



# Appendix A

## Sample Order Form

