

School Information Pack 2026

www.hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop

A program developed by

health + wellbeing
Queensland

An initiative of



Queensland
Government

Pick of the Crop is a flexible healthy eating initiative that offers support, funding, resources and networking for Prep-year 6 Queensland schools.

If you are...

- Keen to plan suitable activities for boosting awareness and uptake of veggies and fruit in school
- Passionate about the benefits of food and nutrition for your students
- Keen to support a whole school approach to student health and wellbeing through food and nutrition
- Eager to broaden learning opportunities that promote healthy food and drink choices



...this initiative is for you



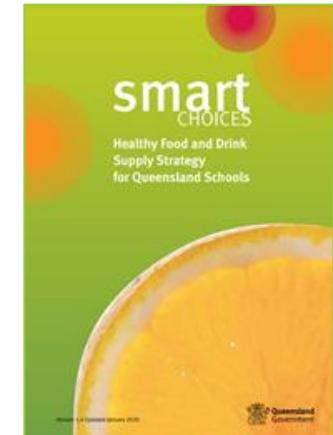
What?

- Pick of the Crop is a whole school healthy eating initiative with the aim to increase Queensland children's vegetable and fruit intake. It was launched in 2020, with over 200 schools participating in the initiative since then.
- It is flexible – your school designs actions based on local needs across different components, with support from a local regional coordinator and funding available in the first two years of implementation.
- It is consistent with:

Queensland Department of Education's Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Qld schools, which is all about offering healthy food and drink choices to students in Queensland schools across the whole school

The Good Practice Guide: Supporting healthy eating and drinking at school



Why?

Food and drink intake of children do not meet recommendations

3.2% of 5 to 11-year-olds eat sufficient vegetables, with 21% consuming 3 serves or more per day*



80.5 % of 5 to 11-year-olds eat sufficient fruit per day*



39% total energy intake of 4 to 8-year-old males and 36% of females comes from unhealthy food and drinks**



Healthy eating supports optimal growth and development in children, enables successful learning at school, performance at sport and can protect from common physical and mental health issues.



* Source: Queensland Government. Queensland survey analytic system (QSAS), <https://www.choreport.health.qld.gov.au/our-lifestyle/diet>

** Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics. AIHW 2018. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/food-nutrition/diet#/guidelines>

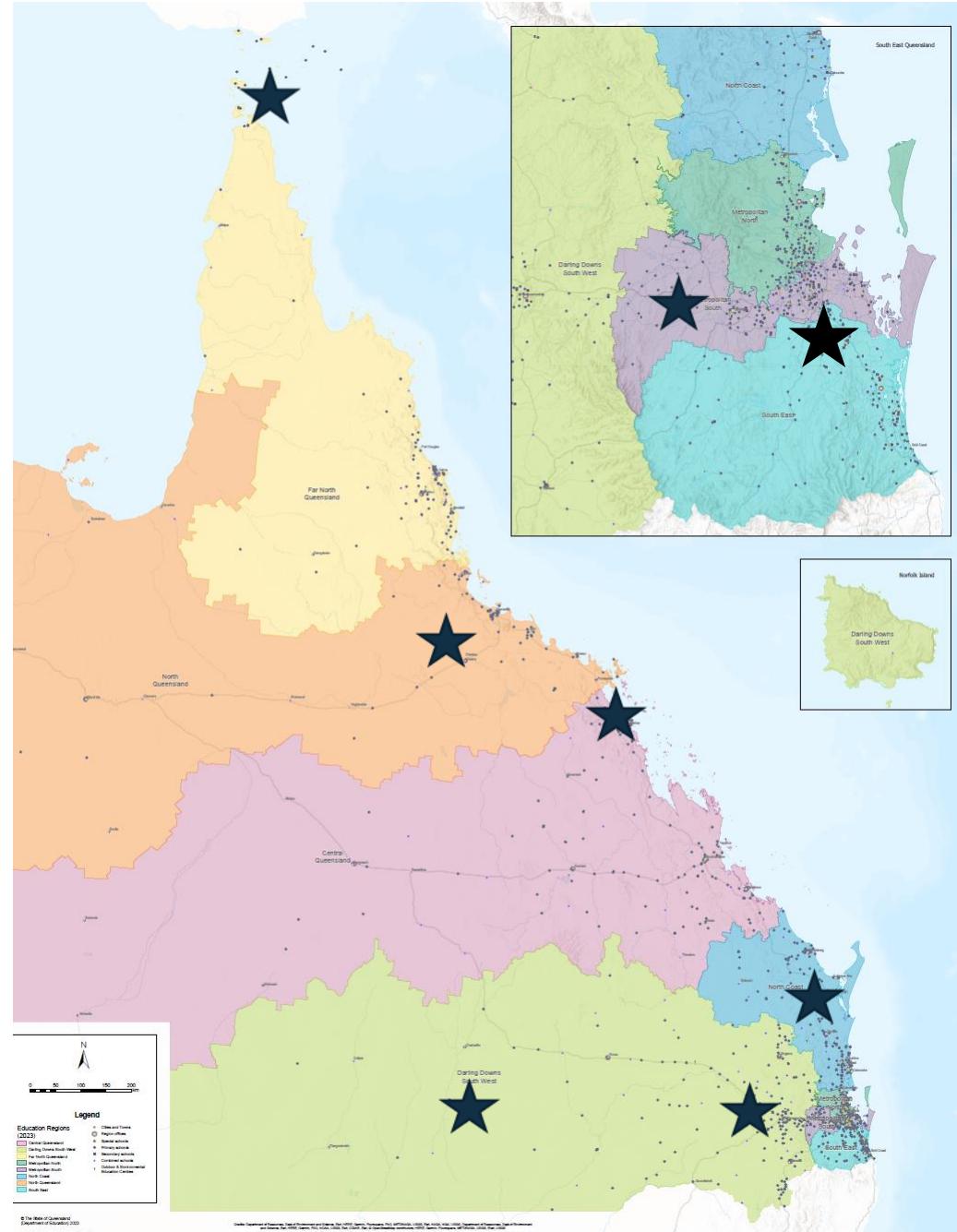
Who?

Pick of the Crop is for Queensland state schools

Where?

Schools in the following Department of Education regions can participate in Pick of the Crop:

- **North Queensland** (including Bowen, the Burdekin, Townsville)
- **Central Queensland** (Mackay LGA only)
- **North Coast** (including Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, Maryborough, Gympie and Sunshine Coast)
- **South East** (including Logan)
- **Metropolitan South** (including Redlands and Ipswich)
- **Darling Downs South West** (including Toowoomba, Southern Downs, South Burnett, Western Downs, Dalby and Roma)
- **Far North Queensland** (including Torres Strait and Cook Shire)



How? – view the videos for how Pick of the Crop works in schools

HWQld Pick of the Crop

<https://youtu.be/HL9dVo3LhPk>



Events held as part of Pick of the Crop
<https://youtu.be/xXMdcF0qsTY>



Eat the Alphabet (Bundaberg schools)
<https://youtu.be/X0vh-RZbdL0>



[Rollingstone State School](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_dNGq6LZCU



[Townsville West State School](#)
<https://youtu.be/XdFzhfCYWLQ>



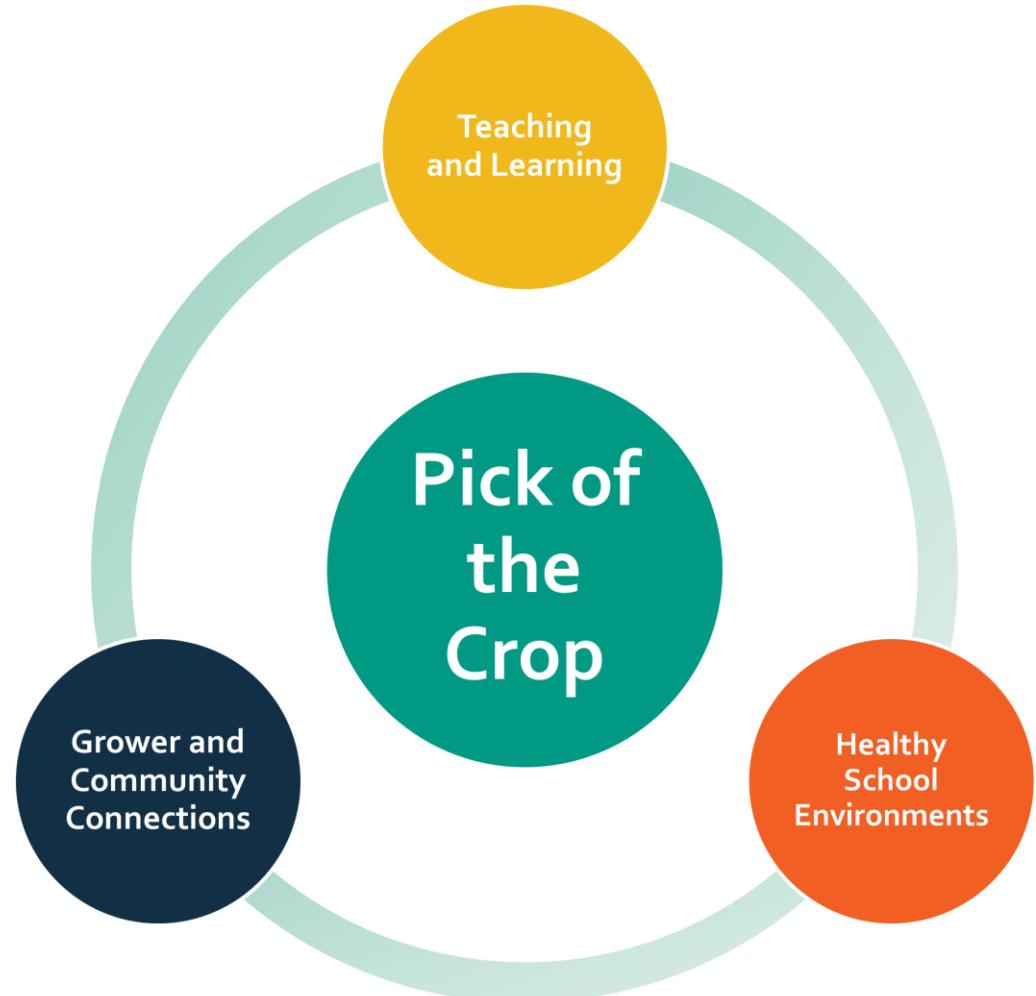


“What worked much better in our school were those opportunities that teachers found to weave in fruit and vegetable content to the curriculum and ways to align content with units as opposed to adding on additional content”

Pick of the Crop in action

Pick of the Crop – the Details

- ✓ Evidence-based initiative. In its 6th year of implementation in Queensland
- ✓ Whole school multi-strategy approach to healthy eating
- ✓ School-led actions, which focus on three *Pick of the Crop* components
- ✓ Builds on school strengths and current actions
- ✓ Boost funding available in year 1 and 2 of the program (on approval of an application, including a school action plan, via SmartyGrants since 2025)
- ✓ Support by a regional coordinator



	Teaching and Learning	Healthy School Environments	Grower and Family Connections
Pick of the Crop schools need to	Integrate food and nutrition education in the curriculum. Students will learn and gain knowledge, skills and experiences that will promote greater consumption of veggies and fruit	Provide opportunities for students to access to veggies and fruit by incorporating them into the school tuckshop, breakfast clubs, brain breaks and tasting activities and establishing school gardens.	Strengthen connections with growers and producers through Paddock to Plate, and implement engagement strategies with the community, families and parents, beyond newsletters and social media.
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of food and nutrition into the curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to veggies and fruit for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen engagement and connections with growers, the local community and families
Examples of actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cross-curriculum lessons ✓ Professional Development for teacher (face to face or online training) ✓ Nutrition education for students ✓ Implement existing evidence-based programs in the classroom on food and nutrition ✓ Fund Teachers Relief Scheme to support professional development or planning days ✓ Networking with other teachers or school staff ✓ Resources e.g. books, to support teaching in class ✓ Hold cooking classes and food preparation for students ✓ External stakeholders deliver nutrition workshops or lessons to students/families e.g. nutritionist or dietitians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reinforce a school-wide positive food culture with hands-on learning. ✓ Boost or develop a school garden ✓ Connect the school garden with the breakfast club or tuckshop ✓ Review and update the tuckshop menu with increased veggies and fruit products or serves, and participate in Qld Tuckshop Day ✓ Review school policies to support healthy eating or develop a Pick of the Crop school policy ✓ Promote / implement whole school veggie and fruit brain breaks ✓ Support all students to have veggie and fruit breaks ✓ Promote SWAPit to families or healthier lunchboxes ✓ Source donations for veggies and/or fruit ✓ Hold 'try it' or tasting days or events for students to taste different veggies and fruit ✓ Teacher modelling and engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Integrate paddock to plate messaging across school activities and teaching ✓ Connect with local farmers and/or producers through farm visits/excursions or incursions with farmers visiting the school and spending time in the classroom ✓ Participate in mini-farmers day ✓ Source other programs that connect students with agriculture ✓ Support National Ag Day ✓ Work with the Kindys, playgroups or OSHC ✓ Include messaging in 'transition to school' days ✓ Hold healthy fundraising activities or nutrition education sessions for families and carers ✓ Enhance food and nutrition education and learning in community-led groups e.g. cooking sessions ✓ Work with the parent organisation to support activities ✓ Plan and implement regular social media posts on veggies or fruit



What you receive as part of Pick of the Crop

Support from a regional coordinator
by school visits; online; email and/or phone.

Boost funding
Up to of \$4,000 + GST for 1st year participation*
with an additional \$1,000 for schools with ICSEA < 1000

Certificate of Participation
when you join.

School signs
for the school fence or garden.
year 1 schools only

Resource bag
includes seeds, gardening factsheets, recipes and more.

Access to a Closed Facebook Group
limited to Pick of the Crop schools only.

Termly eNewsletters and updates
from regional coordinators.

Networking meetings, promotions and events
held in your region with other schools.

Access to extra resources
[online](#) and on a Pick of the Crop DropBox
link from your regional coordinator



* \$2,000 + GST for 2nd year participation, subject to available funding



Boost funding – criteria

Eligible expenses:

- * Actions related to the three Pick of the Crop components
- * Supports student learning and intake of veggies and fruit
- * Maximum of:
 - * \$3,000 on school gardens or 1 component in year 1 (\$1500 maximum in year 2)
 - * Up to 2 days TRS for related planning or professional development
 - * \$1,000 allocated for transport for excursions
 - * \$1,000 for one program

Ineligible expenses:

- * Salaries / wages for school staff
- * Large infrastructure or equipment e.g. kitchen refurbishments, ovens, dishwashers, Thermomix
- * Excursions or incursions not related to veggies or fruit (e.g. dairy, beef or cane)
- * Chicken-related expenses
- * Routine supply of fresh veggies and fruit (unless a Try it Day or supplementary supply until gardens produce enough – maximum \$500)
- * Actions or excursions not related to veggies or fruit

In-kind support or other funding can be included in the school action plan.



Steps to participating in Pick of the Crop



Check out www.hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop/. Contact your regional coordinator to discuss the initiative in more detail (or email pickofthecrop@hw.qld.gov.au).



Consult school staff and gain commitment from your **school leadership** team



Nominate one or more **school champions**



Plan a **school action plan** in consultation with the school community and your regional coordinator



Enter and submit your school action plan through **SmartyGrants**



Implement your **School Action Plan** with support from your regional coordinator



Complete a **Term 4 Review Survey, Principal's Certification and reporting for HWQld**



Quotes from Pick of the Crop evaluation



'Have loved the program and the wellbeing perspective it has provided kids at school. Having the funding to allow them to experience growing their own produce has been brilliant.'
(Year 1 school)

[Regional coordinator] has been instrumental in improving our practise by suggesting terrific ideas to integrate additional learning opportunities. (Year 1 school)

The school shares kitchen and garden activities and recipes using ingredients from our garden on social media for parents and community members.
(Year 2 school)

'Every week in Term 3, the prep students would learn and eat an interesting fruit during the health lesson. I was thrilled to hear from the prep teachers that some students who rarely ate fruit started to bring in these 'interesting fruit' over the next few weeks for lunch. We had some positive feedback from prep parents after these activities.' (Year 1 school)

It has been so positive for our school but also for building relationships with local farmers and suppliers.
(Year 2 school)

'Prep students expanding their persistence in trying new healthy foods.' (Year 1 school)

Prep and Year 5 Design Technology Units. Growing veggies, using worm farms, learning about systematic solutions to growing, learning about recycling green waste using recycling organisms. Food and nutrition components that looked at what was actually in fresh fruit and veggies and how it is used by the body to regenerate cells, as fuel for immune system, etc.
(Year 2 school)

To enable children to better understand the benefits of and enjoy fruit and vegetables.'
(School action plan)

We have had a review of our tuckshop menu to include more items out of our garden and to adjust the menu as we produce different produce. (Year 1 school)

'One student and her brother, who are heavily involved in our garden, have started eating vegetables at home because of vegetables introduced to them through our school garden. They now bring cucumbers and carrots to fruit snack every day.' (Year 2 school)



Examples from North Queensland - Bowen and the Burdekin



Examples from the North Coast – from Bundaberg to Wide Bay to Gympie to the Sunshine Coast





Examples from the South East and Metropolitan South





**Examples from
Darling Downs –
Toowoomba region,
Southern Downs,
Western Downs,
Lockyer Valley and
South Burnett**



What now?

Speak with the regional coordinator for more information and start planning your participation in Pick of the Crop.

You can also contact Health and Wellbeing Queensland at: pickofthecrop@hw.qld.gov.au

