



# Inspiring school students to choose veggies and fruit

**Pick of the Crop is a whole school healthy eating initiative developed by Health and Wellbeing Queensland. It aims to increase the opportunities for Queensland primary school students to learn about and eat more vegetables and fruit.**

Consistent with the latest Australian and international evidence, Pick of the Crop supports school communities to create healthy environments by integration of food and nutrition education into the curriculum; increasing access to vegetables and fruit for students; and strengthening connections and engagement with growers, local communities and families.

## Regional focus

Schools in the Department of Education regions of Far North Queensland, North Queensland, Central Queensland (Mackay LGA), North Coast, Metropolitan South, Darling Downs South West and South East are invited to participate in Pick of the Crop.

Since 2021, nearly 260 schools have participated in Pick of the Crop. Starting with 35 schools for the pilot phase, Pick of the Crop has now expanded in 2025, to 230 schools, with 52,497 student enrolments.

## School-led actions

Schools develop locally designed action plans, focusing on their needs and environment.

These are based on three Pick of the Crop components:

- 1 Teaching and learning
- 2 Healthy school environments
- 3 Grower and community connections

For more information, see [hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop](http://hw.qld.gov.au/pick-of-the-crop)





## Benefits for schools

- Individualised support is provided by locally based regional coordinators who:
  - engage, guide and facilitate schools to adopt and implement Pick of the Crop
  - highlight opportunities for connecting with the curriculum
  - collaborate and partner with local producers or organisations to increase student's opportunity to taste and learn about vegetables and fruit every day.
- Access to grant funding over two years, to assist implementation of school action plans.
- Ability to join a closed Facebook Group.
- Receive termly communications from regional coordinators.
- Opportunities to attend regional network events, professional development sessions, statewide webinars or promotion events.
- Ongoing access to resources, information and tools through a dedicated webpage.

## Commitments from schools

- Demonstrated commitment from school leadership is essential to Pick of the Crop's success, with 'School Champions' leading the initiative in schools.
- Submission of a school action plan through SmartyGrants, linking actions to the three Pick of the Crop components.
- Maintaining good communication with regional coordinators in relation to the implementation of the approved action plan, including termly meetings.
- Completion of a Term 4 Review.

### Quotes from the 2024 evaluation

Teachers are starting to see that kids learn the curriculum out in the garden and in the kitchen, and often [learn] better. You don't always have to teach blocks of 30-minute lessons in the classroom to cover each area of the curriculum.

– *School Champion, Darling Downs*

Before, the garden was an afterthought. Now it's a real focus and a garden the students want to explore. They go there every day. That's thanks to what POTC started last year.

– *School Principal*

I just wanted to say what a fabulous initiative. As a parent I understand the importance of guiding kids to understand food and help them make healthy choices. Thank you for promoting the program. :-)

– *Parent*

Dear Mango Grower, thank you for the mangoes. They were scrumptious and when I ate the mango it felt like it was summertime. From your friend

– *Year 1 student*

