

Plant-based products for K12 schools

What are plant-based products?

Plant-based products include prepared plant-based proteins like vegan beef, chicken, pork and egg products; other plant-based proteins like tofu and tempeh; and plant-based dairy products like non-dairy milk and dairy-free cheese.

What are plant-based products?

There are so many benefits to adding plant-based products to your menus.

- There is an [increased demand](#) for plant-based meals among K-12 students.
- Plant-based meats are high in protein.
- Plant-based products can help your operation meet the demand for more plant-based meals while also keeping prep-time low.
- Plant-based dairy products are a delicious and nutritious option for the rising population of students that are lactose intolerant or allergic to dairy.
- Offering plant-based products gives students a wider variety of healthy options.
- Plant-based products are more sustainable than animal foods.

“ *GroundPro is perfect for blended dishes. We have been using it in Sloppy Joes and kids are loving it!*

—Food Service Director California



Check out our Crispy Impossible Black Bean Shepherd's Pie recipe (pictured above) [here](#).



How to incorporate plant-based products on your menus

- Menu meals that include plant-based products in addition to whole-food plant-based meals that use plant-based protein sources like beans, legumes and hummus.
- Consider using a combination of legumes and plant-based meat in a recipe to keep protein high and costs low.
- Serve veggie burgers daily or weekly.
- Offer plant-based ‘chicken’ nuggets (like [Rebelloys](#)) alongside conventional chicken nuggets.
- Incorporate [our K-12 recipes](#) onto your menus regularly.
- Use plant-based ground ‘beef’ crumbles (like [Deeply Rooted](#), [GroundPro](#), [Impossible Foods](#) or [Morningstar Farms](#)) to replace the meat in your existing recipes for things like spaghetti, tacos, burritos, chili, etc.
- Test out recipes that utilize high-protein and approved meat alternatives like [tofu](#) and [tempeh](#).
- Set up a *sampling table* for new plant-based menu items and give students the opportunity to give their feedback.
- Offer CN-labeled plant-based milk options like [Ripple](#) for students who can’t consume dairy.
- Market your plant-based offerings with helpful, educational and fun signage to get students excited.
- Focus on naming your plant-based entrée in a way that highlights the flavor and texture of the dish and avoid including words like “vegan,” “meatless,” “vegetarian” and “meat-free” in the name.



“ I’m really happy with my *Deeply Rooted* crumbles! It’s served on *Meatless Monday*, but I don’t emphasize the fact that it’s a *meat substitute*. The kids who care know it is, and the other ones just know it’s delicious! Surprisingly, the *elementary kids* love it the most.”

—**Food Service Director, Middlesex County, Connecticut**

We have hundreds of non-proprietary recipes for K-12 food service professionals that meet the USDA guidelines available on our website [here](#).

K-12 success story

“On days it is served as the primary entrée, Impossible products see approximately 40% participation, which is comparable to that of animal-based entrees. By intentionally not highlighting it as exclusively a vegan/vegetarian option, it has allowed for Impossible products to appeal to vegans and meat-eats alike, driving participation rates comparable to those of animal-based meat.”

-Richfield Public Schools



Looking for additional, hands-on assistance with your plant-based menus?

Our team is experienced in assisting K-12 food service professionals with their plant-based menus. Our menu of services includes

- Consulting & advisory services
- Employee & consumer engagement and messaging
- Carbon footprint assessments
- Recipe, menu & concept development
- Training & employee engagement

All of the services listed above are available at no cost to K-12 institutions that sign our [Forward Food Pledge](#).



Find out more information at forwardfood.org

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