More Alaska-Grown Food Coming to a Cafeteria Near You

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

As the Kodiak Island Borough School District kicks off classes this week, schools, and more specifically school cafeterias, can look forward to more Alaskan grown foods gracing lunchtime menus. The district recently acquired grant funding from the state Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, or DCCED. The Nutritional Alaskan Foods for Schools Grant Award was given to all 52 districts across the state, but dollar amounts varied based on size and population of the districts. Kodiak scored $55, 557 of the more than $3 million the DCCED provided.

Superintendent Stewart McDonald said the district has received school lunch grants in the past, but this is the first of its kind.

-- (KIBSD Food 1 : 27 "The grant's purpose is to purchase for our lunch program, foods that are grown in Alaska or harvested in Alaska. Seafood or actual grown produce. And so our food service department will be engaged in researching what ways we can best make those purchases to be cost effective and bring Alaskan grown products to our kids.")

While the grant calls for Alaskan foods, McDonald said it would be great if the money could invest in the Kodiak economy and utilize island resources.

-- (KIBSD Food 2 : 20 "Oh it would be wonderful if we could find an appropriate source here on the island because not only does it financially benefit someone on the island but it also saves us in all of the shipping and handling and everything else that makes providing hot lunch for kids in the district a challenge.")

More specifically, McDonald said it would be great to see more seafood on the menu.

-- (KIBSD Food 3 : 23 "Mostly I'd think I'd like to see what kind of seafood products could make it into our lunches. We had a fish to schools grant in the past that we have lessons learned about what works, what the kids will eat and what they won't. So I'm hoping we'll use what we've learned through that past grant to be able to use this new grant and use it well.")

McDonald said the money will be put into place as soon as possible, and he said Alaskan grown food items could start showing up in school lunches as early as September.

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