We can’t believe Farm to School month is already over, and the winter holidays are drawing near. After a successful month of celebrating – we want to know: where does farm to school go from here? Share with us your ideas, photos, and stories: farm2school@osu.edu, Facebook, or Twitter @OhioFarm2School.
THE FARM TO SCHOOL CENSUS
...STILL TIME FOR MORE OHIO DISTRICTS TO BE INCLUDED

By Carol Smathers
Ohio Farm to School State Lead

Farm to School Census

Some of the best information that we have about how school districts across Ohio and across the US are involved with Farm to School comes from the USDA Farm to School Census. In 2013—and again in Spring 2015—the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) surveyed every school district about their purchasing and other activities related to local foods.

2013 Data

In 2013, the USDA reported that 38,629 schools were buying local foods to serve in their cafeterias (during the 2011-2012 school year). These schools collectively reached over 21 million students by purchasing, serving growing, and teaching about local foods. Source: http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census#/state/oh

Ohio Farm to School participation

In 2013, 616 public school districts in Ohio received the Farm to School Census. Of those districts, 409 completed the survey. Of the schools that responded, 33% said they are engaged in Farm to School activities, and an additional 10% said they planned to start in the future. That left a lot of potential with nearly half of the respondents in Ohio not yet actively participating in Farm to School.

The Ohio districts that purchased local products collectively spent an estimated $34,780,859 on school food. They reported $3,912,708 of that on local foods. Importantly, 59% of those districts reported that they expected to purchase higher amounts of local foods in the future.

How do Ohio districts define “local”?

Here is how most Ohio respondents define “local foods”, according to the 2013 census:
- Within 50 miles (32%)
- Within 100 miles (12%)
- Within the state (19%)

Which local foods do Ohio districts purchase?

The local foods that school districts in Ohio reported buying most (2011-2012) include: apples, tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, cucumbers, milk, watermelon, chicken, bread/rolls and peaches.

The 2015 Farm to School Census

Changes to the process in Ohio

The USDA implemented the census again in the spring of 2015. This year, private schools and numerous other school entities were included in the sample. Expect to see the number of districts increase over the 2013 results.

Preliminary results

Last week preliminary results were issued by USDA, offering participating districts an opportunity to check their data, and offering others one more chance to let their Farm to School activities be counted. Preliminary data indicate that school districts across the country invested more than half a billion dollars in local foods in the 2013-2014 school year. For more information, go to: http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school.

Last chance to submit your district’s data!

The USDA is accepting submissions of new data and encouraging districts to correct existing records as necessary through November 20, 2015.

Just follow the three easy steps outlined at https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/ to find your district, check your record, and either update your data or make a new entry.

For more information about Farm to School participation in Ohio or to share your school’s Farm to School success story, contact Laura Kington at kington.10@osu.edu.

Looking forward to great results from Ohio!

Carol Smathers
Great Apple Crunch Day

States in the Great Lakes region celebrated Farm to School month together by crunching local apples on October 22nd. As a region, almost 600,000 people “crunched”!

In Ohio, more than 14,000 people “crunched”, including twelve districts from across the state, OSU Extension, and Highland Youth Garden in Columbus. Share your photos with us!

Big Day of Action

The National Farm to School network came together on October 22nd to tell Congress to support a strong Child Nutrition Act – including more farm to school! Join the national network in calling your legislators: farmtoschool.org/dayofaction

Rural Action Farm to Institution to School Open House

Rural Action, Hocking College, and Chesterhill Produce Auction are connecting K-12 students to local produce! Through a USDA grant, they have installed a blast freezer that allows Hocking College culinary students to freeze products made from Chesterhill for sale to local schools throughout the year. During Farm to School month, the Blast Freezer was unveiled with a dinner and celebration. Learn more about their great work: ruralaction.org
Updates from the Ohio Farm to School Advisory Board:

Our Fall advisory board meeting took place on October 8th, and was followed by a special policy forum. Eighteen farm to school stakeholders participated in the afternoon to share their priorities and work with farm to school activities, and to learn about engaging in related policy work.

A few key takeaways from the last meeting:

- Community needs Ohio Farm to School can help address
  - Administrative buy-in, through school policies and commitments
  - Mentorship programs and learning networks so that those engaged with farm to school can learn from each other
- Support for small growers
- Support for processing and other local foods infrastructure
- Policies to engage with...
  - Nationally: the Food Safety Modernization Act; the Farm Bill
  - Locally: school board policies, county/city plans such as the Local Food Action Plan in Columbus/Franklin County
- Further planning is needed!
  - To further discuss how we engage with policy issues
  - To establish more direction for Ohio Farm to School
  - To forge deeper connections as a Farm to School network
  - To bring more voices into the Farm to School discussion
  - To put a formal needs assessment and strategic planning framework in place

We are calling for a Farm to School Strategic Planning meeting on Thursday, December 10 from noon until 4 in the afternoon. If you are interested in participating or learning more, please email Laura Kington at Kington.10@osu.edu.
Get Ready Now!
Prepare to Apply for the National Farm to School Grant

Exciting news: the USDA is expecting to triple the funding available for its 2017 round of national farm to school grants. The Request for Applications (RFA) will be released in the coming months, and now is the perfect time to prepare to apply. You can help to ensure your project earns a share of the available funds by doing the following now:

1. Gather your team!

   • Recruit a dedicated, diverse team of teachers, administrators, school food professionals, and parents from your school to develop a plan of action. If your school has a School Wellness Team, that’s a great place to start.

2. Find a grant writer

   • An experienced grant writer can save you time and help to ensure that your application communicates your vision clearly while meeting the application requirements.

3. Connect with supporting organizations

   • Taking time to develop relationships with local organizations can be key to a successful long-term farm to school project. Find professional partners in your community who share in your vision.

The purpose of the USDA Farm to School Grant Program is to assist eligible entities in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. Each year the USDA awards up to $5 million in competitive grants for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships, and implementing farm to school programs. Legislation has been introduced that would increase the level of funding to $15 million for this grant program!

The USDA shares grant program information through their Farm to School E-letter. Sign up here to stay up-to-date on the FY2017 RFA and National Farm to School Program.

Check out the archived FY2016 RFA and find more guidance here:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school-grant-program
**State, Regional and National**

---

**Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum**
The semester-long Farm to School Youth Leadership curriculum is designed to empower high school students and engage them in meaningful, hands-on learning activities that also strengthen their school’s Farm to School program and link them directly with farmers in their community. Available here: http://www.iatp.org/documents/farm-to-school-youth-leadership-curriculum-all-lessons-and-worksheets

**USDA 2015 Farm to School Census: Early Results Are In!**
The new USDA data show growing farm to school efforts help to reduce plate waste and increase student participation in healthier school meals program. We will be sharing more about the census results in the coming months; in the meantime, read the first reports from the USDA by visiting their website: https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/news/new-usda-data-show-growing-farm-school-efforts-help-reduce-plate-waste-increase-student

**Collected Commentaries on Race and Ethnicity**
The summer issues of the Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development (JAFSCD) featured 24 commentaries on race and ethnicity in food systems work, all of which are available for free online. Despite the best intentions of many, the food movement still struggles with addressing issues related to race and ethnicity. Organizations and individuals hoping to improve their work in these areas can learn more here: http://www.agdevjournal.com/component/content/article/584.html

**The Role of Parents in Promoting Healthy School Environments**
Successful parent engagement programs establish effective relationships between school personnel and parents that reinforce children’s health and learning and cut across multiple settings—at home, in school, and in the community. Watch this informative discussion, hosted by Healthy Schools Campaign, about parent engagement around school health: www.healthychoolscampaign.org/events/healthy-schools-the-role-of-parents-in-promoting-healthy-school-environment

---

**On-going resources:**

- **Finding local farms, buyers, or restaurants that purchase/serve local foods**, visit **Ohio MarketMaker**: www.ohiomarketmaker.com

- **Finding farms in and around Ohio that sell directly to the public through local farmers’ markets, CSA’s, and on-farm sales**, visit **OEFFA’s Good Earth Guide** OEFFA’s searchable on-line directory.

- **Farm to School Webinars: National Good Food Network Website**: http://www.ngfn.org/resources/ngfn-cluster-calls/farm-to-school
  NGFN offers four recorded webinars on the topic of Farm to School at this time: “Food Hubs and Farm to School”, “Market-Based Models for Increasing Access to Healthy Food: Defining What Works”, “School Food FOCUS”, and “National Farm to School Network”. You can also sign up from their website to receive notice of upcoming webinars.

- **GroundWorks Community** URL: www.edweb.net/schoolgardens
New Funding and Presentation Opportunities

2016 Youth Garden Grant Application Now Open
The 2016 Youth Garden Grant supports educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life for students and their communities. Any nonprofit, school, or youth program planning a new or expanding an established garden program serving at least 15 youth between the ages of 3 and 18 is eligible to apply. The selection of winners is based on demonstrated program impact and sustainability.
Deadline: December 1, 2015
Learn more and apply here: http://grants.kidsgardening.org/2016-youth-garden-grant?utm_source=eblast&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=YGG%20OCT%202015%20OPEN%20EBLAST

8th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Call for Workshop, Poster, and Lightning Talk Proposals
The 8th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference: Moving Forward Together, will take place June 2-4, 2016. They are looking for proposals from individuals and organizations working to improve our food system, strengthen community health, empower youth, build equity and increase opportunities for farmers. We need your experience and expertise at the conference to continue to grow the farm to cafeteria movement!
Deadline: December 4, 2015
Learn more and apply here: https://app.wizehive.com/appform/login/nationalfarm2015_56152e141316f

Funding Cycle Now Open for Next Year’s Community Food Project Grants
The 2016 USDA Community Food Projects Grant Program Request for Applications has been released, with $8.4 million in grant funding available. Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs. Eligible grant applicants include food program service providers, tribal organizations, or private nonprofit entities, including gleaners. The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project is providing free one-on-one technical assistance and resources to organizations interested in applying for the Community Food Projects Grant Program through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
Deadline: November 30, 2015
Learn more and apply here: http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/cfp-rfa-fy-2016/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+SustainableAgricultureCoalition+%28National+Sustainable+Agriculture+Coalition%29+2015%20OPEN%20EBLAST
On-Going Funding Opportunities

Fruit Tree Planting Foundation - Orchard Donations
The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF) is dedicated to planting fruitful trees and plants to alleviate world hunger, combat global warming, strengthen communities, and improve the surrounding air, soil, and water. FTPF programs donate orchards where the harvest will best serve communities for generations, at places such as community gardens, public schools, city/state parks, low-income neighborhoods, Native American reservations, international hunger relief sites, and animal sanctuaries. Recipients must be nonprofits, public schools, or government entities. In addition, the “Fruit Tree 101” program creates outdoor edible orchard classrooms at public schools of all levels, across the country, to provide generations of students with environmental education opportunities and a source of organic fruit for improved school lunch nutrition.
Deadline: Rolling

Home Depot’s Retool Your School - Campus Improvement Grant
Home Depot’s Retool Your School program provides grants through a two-tier structure for campus and facility improvements at historically black colleges and universities. The program awards Tier I and Tier II grants based on a combination of consumer voting and advisory board panel selections. The college with the highest score will receive a $50,000 Tier I grant; thirteen other applicants will receive Tier II grants of $10,000 each. An additional three Campus Pride grants of $25,000 each will be awarded to the schools with the most votes and social media activity, as determined by Home Depot. Grant funds will go toward an improvement project at each school that is likely to have impact on the lives of students, faculty, and alumni for generations to come. Deadline: Rolling

Awesome Food $1000 Project Grants
Each month, Awesome Food will give one applicant $1,000 to help pull off an awesome idea involving food. The ideas must relate to food in some form, and the definition will be more inclusive than exclusive. Examples could include educating the public about DIY-farming, creating an ad-hoc eatery in a subway car, or recording videos of immigrants’ recipes. Anyone is eligible to apply: for profit, nonprofit, individuals, companies, schools, adults and children. Applications are reviewed as they are received. One grant is awarded each month.
Deadline: Rolling

Let’s Move Salad Bars to School Foundation believes that salad bars + schools = more fruits and vegetables for children. They could get a free salad bar (or multiples for multiple school sites) into your schools by end of November. A fairly easy application is now open, and must be initiated by the school district nutrition director. For great ideas for other equipment, recipes and procedures with real-world examples go to http://www.saladbars2schools.org/
Deadline: Rolling

Simply Organic 1%
The Simply Organic 1% fund supports and promotes the growth of organic and sustainable agriculture, including research, education and efficient/quality improvement projects.
Deadline: Rolling
Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

On-Going Funding Opportunities

Scouties Facial Tissues annual Video and Essay Contest: TREES ROCK!
Did you know that Scotties Facial Tissues (which plant 3 Trees for Every 1 they use) puts on an annual Video and Essay Contest called TREES ROCK!? The contest is for 3rd through 8th graders in the 50 United States and Washington D.C. They are sure you are always looking for ways to engage your kids in the classroom or in a club. TREES ROCK! is an excellent way to get kids to be creative on their own or as a team when learning about trees and the environment.

There are lots of prizes to be won and 2 schools will receive $10,000. To learn more, check out their videos on the Growing School Gardens Home Page. To download all of the important documents to get started, go to www.scottiestreesrock.com

Deadline: Rolling

Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes
Anyone can now enter on behalf of a Pre-K or elementary school to win our annual Healthy Playground Makeover Sweepstakes. Entering once a day, everyday increases the chance to make a big difference at a local school. Enter today! Little kids have a chance to make big changes too! Pre-K Schools and Head Start programs are eligible to enter to win a Smart from the Start Award. Ten schools will be awarded a $2,500 grant and one grand prize winning school will receive a $20,000 grant. The grants go toward making healthy improvements at the school, and incorporating energy balance concepts into classrooms.

Learn more at http://www.togethercounts.com/at-school/win-for-your-school/sweepstakes
Deadline: Rolling

The Pollination Project is a nonprofit organization that provides $1,000 seed grants to individual change makers. The Project has granted numerous awards to various small agriculture related operations who want to bring change into a community. The Project has received repeated media reports on how the organization is impacting small agricultural practices. New grants are awarded daily and there is no deadline for when to apply. We hope to have someone from the Project speak at a future meeting.
Deadline: Rolling

Micro-Grants/ Karma for Cara Foundation
These grants are awarded to children 18 and under to fund service projects in their communities, with ideas including rebuilding a playground or turning a vacant lot into a community garden.

Go to http://www.ysa.org/karma_for_cara_foundation
Deadline: Rolling
Events & Webinars

Save the Date! National Farm to Cafeteria Conference 2016

Save the date for the 2016 National Farm to Cafeteria Conference, to be held June 2-4, 2016 in Madison, Wisconsin. The National Farm to Cafeteria Conference is a biennial event that convenes a diverse group of stakeholders from across the farm to cafeteria movement who are working to source local food for institutional cafeterias and foster a culture of food and agricultural literacy across America. The conference is hosted by the National Farm to School Network, in partnership with local host organizations. More information to come soon.

Montgomery County Food Summit
Thurs, Nov 5 | 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Hosted by Montgomery County Food Policy Coalition, University of Dayton Hanley Sustainability Institute, and the Partners for the Environment Food Team.

Feeding Our Community: Hunger and the Local Food System ~ focusing on local food system solutions
Top of the Market, 32 Webster St., Dayton, Ohio

This is a FREE event and lunch will be provided.
Please RSVP by November 2, 2015 to:
Emily Bradford at BradfordE@mcohio.org or call 937-225-6470.

Food Waste: A Northeast Ohio Conversation
Sat, Nov 7 | 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Presented by Food Waste for Farms and North Central SARE, come join in the discussion! Hear what local farmers, chefs, environmental leaders, and composters are doing to redefine food waste in Northeast Ohio.

Food Waste For Farms, a pilot project out of Kent, Ohio, is linking area restaurants, food producers, schools, and farms to find more sustainable methods of managing food waste. Whether as animal feed or a compost material, Food Waste For Farms aims to decrease the amount of valuable waste in landfills.

Speakers include: Jennifer Carlin- Ohio EPA, Daniel Brown- Rust Belt Riders, Greg Jackson- Groundz, Abbe Turner- Lucky Penny Farm, Christopher Bond- CWRU Horticulturist Coordinator, Farm Food Program, Ben Bebenroth- Chef/Farmer/owner, The Spice Companies, Mike Minnix- Goodlands Sustainability, Ryan Holmes- MadCap Brew Company, Beth Kretschmar- Bon Appetit Management Company and Nick Morris- Red Winged Acres

Tickets: $10, includes lunch
November Meeting Center, Squire Valleevue Farm
37125 Fairmount Blvd. Hunting Valley, OH 44022

More info at http://foodwasteneo.eventbrite.com
Events & Webinars

**Ohio’s Food Hub Network Meeting**  
Nov 17 | 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

Join our food hub network to continue discussion and develop support for growers and local food-related efforts through local and national initiatives.

Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center  
2201 Fred Taylor Drive, International Room 110  
Columbus, OH 43210

**For more info and to RSVP**, call Kimberly Roush at 740-289-2071 x232

**Season Creation Workshop**  
Nov 12 | 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

$20.00 registration - Rural Action and Green Edge Organic Gardens are partnering on a series of intensive on-farm workshops. The workshops are held at the Green Edge Organic Gardens (16232 Henry Road, Amesville, OH 45711).

Sessions begin at the Amesville Grange Hall (17486 State Street, Amesville, OH 45711), then go to the farm and end at 4 PM. These trainings focus primarily on the use of gabled high tunnels for winter production, focusing on multiple aspects of the Green Edge Organic Gardens model of year round farming. The workshops include both on farm and classroom portions and are taught by the farmers.

**More info at** [http://ruralaction.org/events/](http://ruralaction.org/events/)

**Ohio Farm Bureau Grow & Know Events**

The Ohio Grow and Know series offers a number of tours, dining events, how-to seminars and learning activities focused on Ohio farms and food.

Nov. 19 Butler County Farm Bureau 'Tis The Season II,  
Nov. 21 Erie County Farm Bureau Young Ag Professionals Event,  
Nov. 27 Morgan County Farm Bureau Country Christmas,  
Dec. 2 Ohio Farm and Food Leadership Forum.

**More info at** [http://ourohio.org/events/grow-and-know](http://ourohio.org/events/grow-and-know)
Dig in to USDA Team Nutrition resources!
Team Nutrition offers a variety of materials that can enhance your farm to school program, including curriculum, event ideas, posters, and stickers. All Team Nutrition materials are available for download on the website and print copies can be provided for free to any school operating the National School Lunch Program. Go to http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition

Here are a few of our favorites:

• **Dig In! Standards-Based Nutrition Education from the Ground Up**: Explore a world of possibilities in the garden and on your plate using ten inquiry-based lessons to engage 5th and 6th graders in growing, harvesting, tasting, and learning about fruits and vegetables.

• **The Great Garden Detective Adventure**: Discover what fruits and vegetables are sweetest, crunchiest, and juiciest through a series of investigations and fun experiences connecting the school garden to the classroom, cafeteria, and home with this eleven-lesson curriculum for 3rd and 4th graders.

• **Popular Events Idea Booklet**: Discover fun ways to promote nutrition and physical activity at your elementary or middle school with ideas for 20 themed events, from scavenger hunts to try-day Fridays!

• **Make Today a Try-Day! Stickers**: Use these fun stickers as part of your taste-testing event and order posters to match!

Tools for Schools is an online toolkit where you can find all of USDA's best resources on school meal topics (e.g., fruits and vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, and reducing sodium) and implementing Smart Snacks. In the toolkit, you will find policy documents, nutrition education materials, Smarter Lunchroom strategies, kid-friendly recipes, and success stories from other schools. Visit http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools

USDA Local Food Directories
Local and regional food systems, including farmers markets, are one of USDA's four key pillars to revitalize rural economies and improve access to fresh, healthy food for millions of Americans. Four USDA Local Food Directories are now available online to give potential customers, business partners and community planners easy, one-stop access to the most current information about sources of local foods. The four directories are: National Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Enterprise Directory, National Food Hub Directory, National On-Farm Market Directory, and National Farmers Market Directory. For more information on the launch: http://blogs.usda.gov/2014/09/30/the-easy-way-to-find-local-food-usda-launches-new-local-food-directories/