

Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

National, Regional and State Updates

February 2016



Photos by Amy Fovargue

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Ohio Farm to School Success Stories: Fremont City Schools

We are kicking off a series of Ohio's farm to school success stories to inspire and encourage more activity in schools and institutions across the Buckeye state! Our first story visits the Fremont City School district through an interview with Michaeleen Rogers, child nutrition supervisor who retired last month after 40 years of service. See page 2 for the story – then keep reading to learn about upcoming events, webinars, funding opportunities, and resources related to farm to school activities throughout the state.

OHIO FARM TO SCHOOL CELEBRATES:

Fremont City Schools

Written by Amy Fovargue and Carol Smathers

We talked with Michaeleen Rogers, child nutrition supervisor who retired last month after 40 years of service in Fremont City Schools to learn about their farm to school work. Rogers was instrumental in bringing local foods to the district and her positive relationships even encouraged the local producers to sell to other schools. "For many years, USDA would not allow us to buy local foods, thankfully that changed," she said.

Other challenges she faced were: finding a product that fits the school's needs or having them redesigned to fit the meal program. "It also takes a lot of time to develop relationships with suppliers and sometimes the language or standards are a barrier as my idea of a case and theirs are different," she explained.

Fremont City Schools benefited from a \$29,000 Farm to School "planning grant" from the USDA in 2014. The grant was used to further the health and wellness efforts, including serving more local foods in the cafeteria, growing vegetables in gardens and vertical containers, and planting fruit trees. During that year, the district surveyed students in grades 5-12 and parents about school meal program participation and satisfaction. The survey results were used to make some menu changes and include more choices in the school meals.

At the high school Rogers had a new grill installed in September, so they could grill locally produced beef burgers. She recently purchased a machine to make smoothies from local fruit. They also received a license to serve fresh made pizzas daily.

A closing comment from Rogers, regarding having fresh fruits and veggies as snacks at school was, "10 years from now when these kids are grown, I want them to think of having fruit or veggies as a snack. They are developing their healthy habits here at school."

Pizza Day at Lutz Elementary

It was pizza day at the Lutz Elementary school in Fremont. They were initiating a fresh whole wheat crust that was provided by the local Papa Murphy's pizza. It was being baked in the school's oven by business owner Mike Wing.

Typically his business does not cook the pizza as it is a take and bake business, but he was there to train the kitchen staff on how to bake it. Mike was proud to be serving at the school where his wife, children and grandchildren had attended. "These relationships with the local businesses have built support and trust for the district," Rogers said.

Eshleman's Fruit Farm in Clyde has a 200 acre fruit and vegetable farm, sells to Fremont schools

Eshleman's typically sell primarily apples to the schools, but have sold peaches, pears and some veggies in the past. "After successfully selling to Fremont schools, we then reached out to the other schools (currently 10 districts). The schools want the sweeter varieties that they can eat fresh in medium to smaller sized which works best for the children.

Golden delicious, Fuji, Gala, and Jonagold are the varieties the schools want," Betty Eshleman said. "The schools and retail market want locally grown apples, because they taste so much better. One school stopped buying from us for a year and one of the student's complained that they did not taste as well, so we are back to selling to that school," she explained.

Roots Poultry started selling to the Fremont school system three years ago

According to Mark Damschroder of Roots Poultry, "This has been a nice addition to our business. I consider it a success because we are getting feedback from parents that appreciate the fact that their student is getting good food," he said.

Damschroder said, "Michealeen was great to work with because she wasn't afraid to try new ideas, we are still working on a ground chicken sloppy joe that the students will like. We worked together to test different cooking methods on some of the schools equipment, and we even tested an oven set up at our facility to cook some of our products, in addition to some other products the schools were using. She was a strong advocate of the farm to school program and we truly appreciated that."

Read the full story here:

<http://farmtoschool.osu.edu/2016/02/01/fremont-city-schools-celebrate-local-in-everyday-menus/>

Get Involved with Ohio Farm to School This Year!

Join Our Stakeholder Input Calls

We have begun our stakeholder input calls with producers and parents this past month – and they were great! Join us to share your experience with farm to school, learn from your peers, and to help inform Ohio Farm to School's work this year – including the regional workshops!

We'll be holding various stakeholder input calls every other month this year – let us know if you want to be involved by emailing Laura at Kington.10@osu.edu.

Our next calls will be for:

- OSU Extension educators on February 22nd at 3pm,
- Producers on March 29th at 3pm,
- Parents on February 2nd at 10am.

Not an Extension educator, producer, or parent? Email us to get involved!

Save the date for our regional workshops next October!

In farm to school month 2016 (October!), we will convene six regional workshops across Ohio. At each workshop, we will share regional success stories and provide trainings and resources, as well as facilitate relationship-building between parents, producers, food service staff, and other farm to school stakeholders!

- October 11: Southeast Ohio
- October 13: Northeast Ohio
- October 18: Northwest Ohio
- October 20: Western Ohio
- October 27: Central Ohio

Or just get in touch...with questions, stories to share, or anything else!

News & Resources

State, Regional and National

Michigan Farm to School Step by Step Guides

While some of this information is specific to Michigan, much of these guides apply here in Ohio, as well!

Farm to Early Childhood Programs -

foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/farm_to_early_childhood_guide

Garden to Cafeteria -

foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/garden_to_cafeteria

Purchasing Michigan Products -

foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/mi-purchasing-guide

Marketing Michigan Products -

foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/marketing-mi-products

Food Day Report: Food Education in America

Getting food education – cooking, gardening and academic skills – into every school will require collaboration from many groups and individuals, as well as an approach based on research. This report describes the state of food education in America to provide a baseline and recommend what more could be done. Schools have the unique ability to educate all children throughout the country about food and nutrition. Yet elementary school children receive an average of just 3.4 hours of food and nutrition education a year. We need to understand current practices to inform change.

Read the full report:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/foodday/pages/3852/attachments/original/1450802226/Food_education_report.pdf?1450802226

Senate Agriculture Committee Passes CNR Draft

This week, the Senate Agriculture Committee unanimously approved their version of the Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization (CNR). The bipartisan bill, Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016, is a big victory for the farm to school movement, with all priority policy pieces recommended in the Farm to School Act of 2015 included. Under the bill, funding for the USDA Farm to School Grant Program is doubled from \$5 million to \$10 million per year, helping schools across the country increase their local food purchases and expand food and agriculture education. The bill also increases the ability for tribal schools and feeding programs to serve culturally significant foods and increase the scope of the USDA Farm to School Program to include early care and education centers, summer food service program sites and after school programs.

Read the National Farm to School Network's coverage: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/news-and-articles/senate-agriculture-committee-passes-cnr-draft>

School Wellness Materials – ¡En Español!

Action For Healthy Kids has updated their school wellness materials in Spanish! Access the materials at actionforhealthykids.org/Spanish or actionforhealthykids.org/Padres

News & Resources

State, Regional, and National

Harvesting Healthier Options: Report on State Legislative Trends

The National Conference of State Legislatures put together this report on state-level local foods legislation. This report focuses on state legislation in all 50 states enacted between 2012 and 2014 that aimed to strengthen various components of local food systems. The report is organized into chapters focused on six policy areas with the most state legislative action: local food system approaches; **farm to school**; farmers' markets; community gardens and urban agriculture; healthy grocery retail; and food policy councils.

Read the full report: http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/_pdf/about_us/FSPP/harvesting-healthier-options.pdf

School Food FOCUS: Primer on Geographic Preference

This guide came out a couple of years ago – but we still get so many questions about geographic preference! Want to learn more about how federal policies for school lunch influence your school's ability to buy local? When purchasing fresh local foods, school districts must navigate three levels of procurement law – federal, state, and local. This primer summarizes state and federal law and provides guidance for setting a preference that complies with both. It also provides step-by-step guidance on how a school district can implement a geographic preference policy starting with articulating the legal authority and rationale for buying local.

Read the full report: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FOCUS_GP_Primer.pdf

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; read the first reports from the USDA in the meantime by visiting their website:

<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/news/new-usda-data-show-growing-farm-school-efforts-help-reduce-plate-waste-increase-student>

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
- Ohio Proud** is a resource for identifying local farms and food producers: <http://www.ohioproud.org/>

Get Ready Now!

Prepare to Apply for the National Farm to School Grant

Exciting news: the USDA is hoping 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. In past years, the USDA has awarded 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.

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/farmentoschool/farm-school-grant-program>

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

On-Going Funding Opportunities

Scotties 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

USDA Requests Applications for Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Center

This grant will support strategies to reduce child food insecurity in rural communities.

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

Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association Annual Conference

February 13 – 14

Granville, Ohio

Ohio's largest sustainable agriculture conference will feature keynote speakers, approximately 100 workshops, local and organic meals, full-day pre-conference events, a kids' conference, childcare, a trade show, and Saturday evening entertainment. This year's conference theme is "Growing Right by Nature", and keynote speakers will be Lindsey Lusher Shute from the National Young Farmers Coalition and John Ikerd, expert and author in agricultural economics.

Registration is now open – and meals are going fast!

More info and to register: <http://www.oeffa.org/conference2016.php>

USDA Webinar Series: Planning for Farm to School Success in 2016

Preliminary results of the 2015 Farm to School Census tell us that more than 1,700 school districts don't yet have farm to school programs, but are interested in starting one. The USDA is here to help! Through this 11-part series, we'll guide you through the USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit. Served up in bite-sized 30 minute webinars, we'll offer questions to consider and helpful resources to reference when starting or growing a farm to school program. Guest speakers will join the webinars to share their hands on farm to school experiences.

Upcoming webinars:

Finding and Buying Local Foods: February 4, 2:00 PM EST

Farm to School Menu Planning: February 18, 2:00 PM EST

Food Safety: March 3, 2:00 PM EST

More info and to register: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/videos-and-webinars>

Free School Garden Workshop: Starting Seeds

February 18

3:30 – 5pm

Civic Garden Center

Cincinnati, Ohio

Join the Civic Garden Center of Greater Cincinnati for a free workshop on school gardens at 2715 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45206. The workshop will be presented by Greg Potter, the Community Gardens Coordinator of the Civic Garden Center.

To register: call 513-221-0981

Events & Webinars

Southeast Ohio Farm to School conference

March 3 - 4 | The Plains, OH

Join Southeast Ohio food system partners for the 2016 Southeast Ohio Farm to School Conference!

Topics Covered will include:

- Farm to School Procurement
- School Gardens
- Food Safety
- Food Service Staff Training
- Sourcing Local Food
- Healthy Food Curriculum
- Food Policy
- Appalachian Regional Success Stories
- and MUCH MORE!

For more information on the conference schedule, classes, and registration:

<http://www.ohiofoodshed.org/southeast-ohio-farm-to-school-conference-registration-open-now/>

Action for Healthy Kids: Webinar Series

Action for Healthy Kids is hosting a webinar series this winter! Below are the upcoming sessions related to farm to school.

- **February 23:** School Breakfast: Creative Breakfast Service Models
- **March 1:** 2016-2017 School Breakfast Grant Opportunities Webinar
- **March 9:** Growing Your School Gardens
- **March 15:** Engaging Your Parent Community in School Health and Wellness
- **March 16:** Get Recognized as a Health Promoting School: The Role of School Nutrition Staff

For more information and to register for webinars: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/events/webinars>

Save the Date! National Farm to Cafeteria Conference June 2016

Registration opens on February 15

Scholarship applications open now, through February 29

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.

For more information, to apply for a scholarship, or to register: <http://farmtocafeteriaconference.org/>

USDA Resources

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/>

The USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit

Just getting started with farm to school? The USDA has a comprehensive, easy to understand guide for how to begin a farm to school project. The Farm to School Planning Toolkit guides you through questions to consider and helpful resources to reference when starting or growing a farm to school program. It is designed for use by schools, school districts, and community partners. The toolkit is filled with tips and examples, insights from others, and lists of resources for further research. Each school district is unique, so browse the topics to find the resources most relevant to you and your implementation team! Visit http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/f2s/F2S_Planning_Kit.pdf

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NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
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Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

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