

Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

National, Regional and State Updates

October 2016



See page 3-4 to read about Veggie U and how they are making a difference in special needs classrooms. Pictured is Kenny Kingsley harvesting a crop with his teacher on the left and a Veggie U classroom garden on the right.

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October is Farm to School Month!

This month's newsletter celebrates National Farm to School Month! In addition, we have updates from our state team, and a story about Veggie U, a nonprofit from Ohio that provides classroom gardens and curriculum. We hope your school is registered for the Great Apple Crunch and hope to meet you at a regional farm to school workshop!

TAKE ONE SMALL —OR BIG— STEP DURING FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH!

By Carol Smathers
Ohio Farm to School State Lead

Farm to School Month is here!

Last month this article looked back on many of the Farm to School successes that have been achieved throughout Ohio this year. Now let's look at the MANY opportunities during Farm to School month to make connections needed to bring local foods to school classrooms and cafeterias.

Resources and Materials

It's not too late to get great Farm to School Month materials from the National Farm to School Network (NFSN). Go to:
<http://www.farmtoschool.org/our-work/farm-to-school-month> .

This year's theme: “One Small Step”

Whether you are a food service director, farmer, teacher, student, parent or food enthusiast, you can help your local schools take small steps to advance farm to school.

Start by signing the **One Small Step Pledge** in October and you'll be entered to win support for farm to school activities at the school of your choice! You will also receive weekly emails throughout October that will provide ways to advance farm to school in your own community.

The weekly One Small Step emails will focus on:

Education	(Oct. 3-7)
Healthy School Meals	(Oct. 10-14)
Farmers + Producers	(Oct. 17-21)
The Next Generation	(Oct. 24-28)

Regional Farm to School Stakeholder Meetings

Five stakeholder meetings have been planned by local stakeholders throughout Ohio and November. Register today for the workshop nearest you at <http://farmtoschool.osu.edu/events/2016-workshops/>.

Central Ohio: October 4 in Columbus at OSU's Ohio Farm Bureau and Nationwide 4-H Center, 2201 Fred Taylor Drive, 2:30-7 p.m. Free.

Northeast Ohio: October 13 in Massillon at the R.G. Drage Career Technical Center, Morgan Hall and Conference Center, 2800 Richville Drive SW, at 12:30-5 p.m. Free.

Northwest Ohio: October 14 in Perrysburg at the Hilton Garden Inn Toledo, 6165 Levis Commons Blvd., 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Registration is \$30; lunch is included.

Western Ohio: Oct. 20 in Yellow Springs at Antioch College Wellness Center, 240 E. South College St., 2:30-7 p.m. Free.

Southwestern Ohio: November 10 in Pleasant Hill Academy, 1350 W. North Bend RD Cincinnati. Details 3-6 pm

Local Farm to School Events

Examples of local Farm to School trainings, events, and celebrations include:

School Garden Conference, “Getting Back to Our Roots”, hosted by OSU Extension, Franklin County, on Friday, October 7. Cost: \$55.

Farm to School Night 2016 hosted by Athens City Schools PTO. \$20 includes a locally-sourced meal and directly benefits efforts to serve local foods in Athens City Schools.

Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch

Rally enthusiasm for local foods in schools by gathering students, friends, and/or colleagues to bite into fresh, Ohio-grown apples and then posting photos of your Crunch event. For more details, go to the Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch website:
<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/applecrunch/>.

OHIO FARM TO SCHOOL CELEBRATES:

Veggie U Classroom Gardens

Written by Amy Fovargue

"Our students are eating better, making better choices for snacks, and getting up on their feet to live healthier lifestyles, and that will in turn help them grow into adults who live life to its fullest." This is a testimony from a special needs teacher using Veggie U curriculum.

"I have always been interested in helping my students make better choices about food and daily exercise and this was the greatest gift, to have a program that was designed to do just that. To top it off, Veggie U A+ was already aligned with the Ohio Academic Content standards-extended version which are used for students with learning disabilities," said Kristin Dickerhoff a teacher at Murray Ridge schools in Elyria.

Helping students to understand how foods are grown and encouraging them to try new foods is a critical component of Farm to School. Students who have taken part in growing foods are much more willing to try and enthusiastic about eating those foods. According to the National Farm to School Network, among schools that offer such learning opportunities, improvements in their students' eating behaviors include choosing healthier options in the cafeteria, consuming more fruits and vegetables through school meals and at home, consuming less unhealthy foods and sodas, and increasing knowledge and awareness about gardening, agriculture, healthy eating, local foods, and seasonality.

It can be a challenge for teachers to provide effective learning activities about growing and tasting new foods for any students. Further, finding the right curriculum and materials that meet the important considerations of special needs students can be especially difficult. Thanks to Veggie U, special needs teachers throughout Ohio are achieving great results teaching students with autism about gardening and the joys of eating vegetables.

"This was such a bonus as an educator, to have a complete comprehensive curriculum that was already aligned with the standards and had all the materials needed to teach sensory friendly lessons of such an important nature. All supplies, materials, and lesson



(Photo provided by Veggie U)

hands on worksheets were provided as well, along with an accompanying DVD and iPad app," she explained.

In her classroom of students with autism, many of the students with severe sensory issues avoid various food textures and smells and fixate on only eating certain foods. Therefore, they often do not get adequate nutrition. Having the opportunity to show children how "good food" reaches their plates was such a blessing, she said.

"I was completely blown away at how these precious students, who on a typical day would only choose to munch on crunchy chips or soft yogurt, were trying raw veggies during the first week's veggie tasting lesson," she said.

Even more exciting, students who would never be accepting of the slimy texture of a worm were handling the live worms that were delivered to our room by the Veggie U representative, Susan Fain, for our worm farm in week three. "I can't say enough about how much this curriculum has changed the lives of each and every one of my students and how it has evolved into so much more," Dickerhoff said.

Since the inception of Veggie U at her school, she has instilled "Healthy Snack Wednesday" in their primary wing of 50 students. Every Wednesday, each student in the primary wing gets a healthy snack that is prepared by her class and then delivered to each classroom while Dickerhoff's students practice their communication skills during delivery. Her school has also opened up a fitness room that she created in one of the empty classrooms. It is now giving each primary student 60 extra minutes of structured gross motor exercise besides the 60 minutes of scheduled adapted gym class each week.

Continued on page 4

Veggie U Continued from page 3

Dickerhoff looks forward to a continued relationship with Veggie U A+ and blessing my students with this amazing program. I have Veggie U A+ and our sponsors Nordson Corporation to thank for this wonderful asset that we have been blessed with here at Murray Ridge School.

Veggie U delivers gardens to classrooms in order to teach plant science and health in a unique, hands-on way. They know that school gardens are outstanding learning tools, but are not always practical as they are hampered by weather conditions, school property constraints, and educators' time. Veggie U can be part of the school day, and a tool for teachers regardless of their gardening experience.

Healthy soils grow healthy vegetables and healthy kids!

Susan Fain, special needs program coordinator at Veggie U explained, "Each classroom will receive a grow light, soil and worms to learn about plants and soil health, because we feel...healthy soils grow healthy vegetables and healthy kids. By learning this way, they will retain that veggies are good for them and they learn to like them," she added.

Veggie U A+ which was developed for special needs classrooms is an interdisciplinary program. Along with plant science, math and reading, both verbal and non-verbal language skills are developed. There are many opportunities for social skills practice like taking turns, working in groups and attending a party. Social stories are included in some of the chapter books, as well as life skills such as making healthy food choices and setting the table.

Veggie U A+ designed for special needs classrooms is currently in its third year in the classrooms. The first year it was piloted to 30 classes, the second year was 90 and now it is out in 100 classes, said Fain. "We love what teachers are doing with it! We have schools such as Elyria that have added it to their wellness program. I have never heard of one student that won't touch or taste what they grow. The growing of their own food makes them more confident. The parents are not having such a battle at dinner time. It gives the special needs kids a sense of doing something positive and creates a culture of wellness".

"The kids love to show off what they do. They are so proud. They learn to take care of a growing thing and respect and nurture it. It gives those students a chance to take care of something," Fain explained. Teachers are finding that the program is helpful for students with a variety of learning disabilities and diagnoses. The kids love to get their hands dirty and get very excited about it, she added.

Veggie U is an Ohio based non-profit that works hard to provide classroom gardens at no cost to schools. They are able to do this, through the generosity of their donors and grantors. Sometimes their funding is restricted by donors to specific geographic areas or populations. If grant funding isn't available for a particular school, Veggie U works with the school to identify local sources of funds. A new classroom garden with curriculum is \$450 per classroom. The perishable contents of the gardens can be replenished for \$225 in subsequent years. While currently only 10% of the kits are purchased outright by the schools and Veggie U able to find funding for the other 90%, funding is limited and there is a waiting list for financial assistance. To donate or learn more about what the program includes go to VeggieU.org.

Join us at noon on Thursday, October 13, 2016



There is still time to register and plan for a great Crunch event. Please register to help us keep count of all the great Crunches taking place throughout the region. When you register you will receive a 2016 Crunch Guide to help plan and promote your event. The Apple Crunch is about biting into delicious local apples, but it's also about promote our great farm to school and farm to cafeteria stories throughout the region. Don't forget to share your Crunch plans through social media before **and** after the Crunch. More details can be found in the Crunch Guide.

- We are excited to launch a Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch website this year. It will be your home base for Crunch information, registration and Crunch updates: www.cias.wisc.edu/AppleCrunch.
- Registration information is listed at the top of the GLGAC Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/greatlakesgreatapplecrunch) This is how we will **all** share our Crunch stories this year. Take a look at all the great pictures from last year, and get some good ideas for this year.
- Please share this information widely with all of your networks. You never know who might be interested in Crunching!

Registration Now Open: Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch

Last year there were 600,000 Crunches in the region. Register now and help the region get to 1 MILLION CRUNCHES on October 13: www.cias.wisc.edu/AppleCrunch

NATIONAL FARM *to* SCHOOL MONTH



Farm to School Regional Workshops 2016

Region	Date and Time	Location	Venue
Central	October 4 3 – 7pm	Columbus	The Nationwide & Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center
Northeast	October 13 1 – 5pm	Massillon	RG Drage and Technical Center
Northwest	October 14 8:30am – 2pm	Perrysburg	Hilton Garden Inn
West	October 20 3 – 7pm	Yellow Springs	The Wellness Center at Antioch College
Southwest	November 10 3 – 6pm	Cincinnati	Pleasant Hill Academy 1350 North Bend Rd 45224

Celebrate by digging in with your community! Workshop content is tailored to each region, and all will offer valuable information, resources, and networking to help build momentum for local farm to school projects.

Visit farmtoschool.osu.edu/events/2016-workshops for more information.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Events & Webinars

Webinar: Bringing Local to our Littlest Eaters: Local Procurement in Early Care and Education

October 12, 3:30-5pm ET

Serving local foods in meals, snacks, and taste tests is a core element of farm to early care and education and contributes to numerous benefits for kids, farmers, and communities. However, understanding where and how to purchase local foods as well as how to incorporate them into early care and education meal programs can be a challenge. In this informational webinar, speakers from the National Farm to School Network, US Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, and the Baxter Child Development Center will share tips for getting started, strategies for success, and innovative models that are advancing and scaling local purchasing practices in early care and education settings across the country. This webinar is open to all, so please share with your networks. <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1157837797011720450>

NESAWG It Take Region Conference

November 10-12 // Hartford, CT

The NESAWG Conference, now in its 23rd year, brings together practitioners and professionals from across the Northeast to explore ideas that move us towards a more sustainable and just farm and food system. Included on the agenda is a session for Farm to ECE and Preschool practitioners: "A Full Harvest: How Farm to Preschool Improves Food Security and Farm Viability." Learn how Farm to Preschool increases access to local foods by connecting farmers to preschools serving low-income populations and be delve deeper as you discuss how this model can be adapted to engage broader communities. <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1157837797011720450>



**Ohteens4Health
Youth Summit**
*Saturday
November 12*

*Health Summit by Youth, for Youth
Register today!*

*Nationwide and
Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center
2201 Fred Taylor Dr.
Columbus, OH 43210*

fcs.osu.edu/events/ohteens4health

News & Resources

State, Regional, and National

USDA is Now Accepting Applications for the FY 2017 Farm to School Grant Program

USDA has funding available to support the creation of new farm to school programs and/or strengthen existing programs. For more information, please see the RFA on the [USDA Farm to School Grants website](#). Up to \$5 million in grant funds is available to help schools create or strengthen farm to school programs this school year. Awards ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 will be distributed in four different grant categories: Planning, Implementation, Support Service, and Training.

Key Dates:

- September 13, 2016: Release the Farm to School Grant Program FY 2017 RFA.
- December 8, 2016: FY 2017 Farm to School Grant Program applications are due in grants.gov by 11:59 pm EST.
- May 2017: Awards Announced.

Nature Conservancy Seeks Proposals for School Gardens

The Nature Conservancy is awarding grants to support projects that implement green infrastructure to address local environmental challenges. These include access to healthy food, air quality, heat island effect, climate change, or storm water collection. Young people will work as social innovators to help their communities through project design and implementation. A \$2,000 grant will be awarded to 55 schools. Applications must be submitted online by 5 PM ET October 31, 2016. [Learn more here](#).

35 Food Education Organizations

Many organizations around the globe are working to instill healthy eating habits, foster food literacy, teach culinary skills, and educate children about the environmental, social, and health consequences of their food choices. Food Tank has selected 35 particularly noteworthy programs to feature on their blog - including the National Farm to School Network! <http://foodtank.com/news/2016/09/thirty-five-food-education-organizations>

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/>*

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

Thank you to all of our partners and supporters!



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NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

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