It’s December and we have completed our five regional workshops. We were happy to meet many of you throughout the state. This month we have featured Sandusky City Schools as our success story, don’t miss their hands on approaches for the students to enjoy local foods.

See page 3 to read about Sandusky City Schools and their Farm to School activities that are available year around. Pictured is a field trip to Eshelman’s fruit farm and the apple monkey bread the second grade class made.
OHIO FARM TO SCHOOL
CELEBRATES:

2016: A Year of Progress in Ohio Farm to School
By Carol Smathers
Ohio Farm to School State Lead

2016 Objectives Met
In 2015, the Ohio Farm to School Advisory Group identified unmet needs and set priorities for the OSU Extension’s Farm to School program in 2016. The primary objectives for 2016 were to develop a series of Ohio F2S Success Stories that showcase what is possible and what is working for Ohio districts to increase procurement of, serving and promoting, and teaching about local foods. We are also creating an inventory of contacts who can provide direction to other districts by sharing their own successes.

The farm to school success stories were first published to the farmtoschool.osu website in January of 2016. We have learned about many unique efforts throughout the state and have passed those on to our partners through the newsletter and through social media.

As we educate others on the three C’s of Farm to School being: Community, Classroom and Cafeteria, we have tried to provide a balance of stories including school’s growing gardens and the education involved as well as local food procurement at the cafeterias.

2016 Regional Workshops
In October and November we hosted five stakeholder events throughout Ohio to advance Farm to School progress on a local level. More than 250 attended the meetings collectively having many experts speaking on the following topics: local foods movement, procurement, information on USDA Farm to School grants, and producer and food service director panels.

Other Accomplishments
Throughout the year we hosted stakeholder conference calls for OSU Extension personnel, producers, parents and food service directors. This was a good opportunity to hear updates throughout the state.

We enjoyed attending the national Farm to School conference during May in Madison, WI. The USDA Farm to School Census data was released in June, this information can be found at farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov.

Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch
The Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch was an enormous success! We are very excited to share that, the count was at 1,188,986! Here in Ohio we had 22,269 crunches registered at 28 schools. As a region of six states we made the One Million Crunch goal - way to go team!

Check out the local television coverage on North Olmstead schools on our Ohio Farm to School Facebook page. Also, we celebrated the two Ohio colleges making the top among the nation in Local Food Procurement. Congratulations, Wilmington and Oberlin for your recognition and your commitment to local foods!

Our advisory board will be meeting via a webinar on December 15. We will be planning our activities for 2017. We look forward to partnering with Columbus experts speaking on the following topics: local foods movement, procurement, information on USDA Farm to School grants, and producer and food service director panels.

Our advisory board will be meeting via a webinar on December 15. We will be planning our activities for 2017. We look forward to partnering with Columbus City Schools as they have committed to offering an Ohio sourced meal for their 50,000 students in January and the coming months.
Sandusky City Schools was one of the first schools in Ohio to become active in Farm to School. “The district knew it was a win/win situation for the students and the community”, said Brad Kraft, Sandusky City Schools Dining and Food Services Director.

The goal was to offer students a healthier choice of fruits and vegetables and to get them to eat them at the school and at home. “Our challenge was finding a farmer who could supply our district with such a high volume since we feed 3500 students”, said Kraft. “We found some local farmers and have a great relationship with Tender Shoot Farm and Eshelman’s Orchard”, he added.

Kraft engages students in learning about local foods. He teaches students about the nutritional fact of fruits and vegetables by displaying information on television monitors throughout the cafeteria (especially the local ones), so when they go to the grocery store, they can ask for something more nutritional than a bag of chips.

Kraft offers fruit carts at breakfast and lunch which has increased their sales and provided a healthy ala carte food option. These carts are used to offer local vegetables when in season. “Some of the reactions on their faces when they first see a peach or a pear for the first time (are surprising). When they ask... ‘What’s this?’” That’s when the true fun begins (for Kraft) of explaining and encouraging them to try it. Nine out of 10 times they like it,” he said. The middle and high schools have salad bars. There are 1,200 students served at the high school daily with an average of 150 – 200 using the salad bar.

We have a kitchen at the high school that used to be a culinary program about eight years ago. The culinary program is no longer offered. I cleaned it up and created a project-based learning lab for the elementary students. Students come to the lab and do projects like learning the different types of apples grown in Ohio followed by then food preparation using apples. As they are learning about apples, they are also learning about math and science, he explained. “We also offer summer classes where third through fifth graders come to the lab and learn about baking beads and cooking vegetables and fruits. When the students complete the class they receive a cookbook of simple recipes to help promote cooking and eating healthy at home”, he said.

“I also have teams of students from each elementary school building we call it “The Lunch Bunch Crew”. They sit down with me once a month and go over lunch ideas that they would like to see on the menu. I took these students to a dairy farm in Fremont this year and to Toft’s Dairy to show them where their milk comes from and how it is processed”, Kraft said. When asked if there was a need to change the school’s kitchen storage or methods such as an increase in labor to prepare the local food, Kraft replied that there is one big difference: the school is putting more produce on the cooler shelves and less sugary canned fruit on storeroom shelves. The staff understands the importance of serving our students fresh fruits and vegetables, and they make it work!

Last year, Kraft made a decision to serve as many fresh fruits and vegetables in the cafeterias as possible. The only two vegetables that they don’t serve fresh are corn and green beans (frozen). Every day, fresh fruits are offered in all schools for breakfast and lunch. Apples are local all year. The other items they offer are oranges, grapes, kiwi, pineapple, watermelon, cantaloupe, pears, and bananas. These are obviously not all local, but they are fresh!

At Sandusky all of the school buildings have ovens and steamers. The high school has a new full sized Rational Combi oven that they purchased through the USDA Cafeteria Equipment Grant they received two years ago. Kraft said, the staff use it all of the time for their fresh steamed vegetables.

We at Ohio Farm to School are proud of Sandusky City Schools success in combining educational efforts in the community, classroom and their cafeteria!
Events & Webinars

Farm to School for All

As we reflect on a historic election, the National Farm to School Network remains steadfast in our belief that all children deserve equal access to healthy, nutritious food and high quality education. We always have been, and always will be, committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our nation’s children and communities. From our ongoing work on Child Nutrition Reauthorization, to providing resources and opportunities for shared learning, we are dedicated to bringing farm to school to all communities.

We are a diverse network of advocates, educators, administrators, food producers, parents, policy makers, food enthusiasts and more, and together we’re growing a healthier generation of kids and the change makers of tomorrow. In the nearly 10 years since the National Farm to School Network was established, the farm to school movement has grown by leaps and bounds, from a handful of schools in the 1990s to more than 42,000 schools today. That’s the power of a grassroots movement!

There is still work to do, but no limits to our potential. Together, we’ve shown our ability to affect great change. And together, we’ll continue our work to ensure that all of our nation’s children have access to a bright and healthy future.

School Food Support Initiative

The Life Time Foundation, Chef Ann Foundation and Whole Kids Foundation are joining forces to provide technical assistance grants for up to seven U.S. districts in 2017. The number one request we hear across the country from food service teams that want to innovate and improve their school meal programs is: “How do we start?” Assessing your current operations is a key step towards enriching and building a stronger food service program. It allows you to identify opportunities and challenges to accomplish your department’s goals.

School Food Support Initiative will work with the selected districts through a technical assistance program that includes a workshop for food service directors, on-site assessment and on-site assessment debrief and strategic planning, along with peer-to-peer collaboration and access to a food service program Assistance Grant. The program has a value of approximately $192,000 per participating district (depending on district size). Together with you, we can provide children with the real, healthy food they deserve by eliminating highly-processed and artificial ingredients from school menus.

$50,000 SFSI Assistance Grant – School Food Support Initiative participating districts will have the opportunity to apply for a one-time $50,000 systems grant to help implement assessment recommendations. These funds will support system-wide improvements such as equipment purchases, K-12 software investments, etc.

To learn more go to: http://www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/school-food-support-initiative/
New Evaluation Tool: Farm to School Activity Tracker

The Farm to School Activity Tracker (F2SAT) allows diverse farm to school (F2S) programs to use a consistent tool for recording and tracking-related activities. Divided into 4 domains—school meals, classroom education, engagement activities, and gardening activities—the F2SAT is an accurate and reliable tool for cross-comparison of F2S program activities. Find the full article here: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19320248.2016.1227753. Title: Farm to School Activity Tracker as an Accurate and Reliable Measure of Farm to School Programming. The Farm to School Activity Tracker and a User Guide are both available in the Wisconsin Farm to School: Toolkit for School Nutrition Program in the "Evaluate your work" section.

New FSMA resources from NSAC

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition been hearing questions from produce farmers about food safety training and, in particular, whether they need to sign up for a training focused on FDA’s Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rule for produce farms right away. The short answer is: probably not, but you should start considering your options now! If you grow fruit or vegetables and have questions, check out this just-released FAQ from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/learn-about-the-issues/food-safety-training/

It covers such questions as: "Do I have to take a FSMA training?", How do I know if I am covered by the FSMA Produce Rule?", and more!

Real Food Standards 2.0

The Real Food Standards were researched over the course of 18 months, with input of 100+ industry experts, farmers, ranchers, fishermen, food service operators, and students. 130 certification and label claims were vetted; 40 now qualify as 'real food' in the final version of the Real Food Guide. Check out our most comprehensive compilation of criteria and certifications to date. http://calculator.realfoodchallenge.org/help/resources

Dairy Curriculum websites

Educator welcome page with links to Discover Dairy: https://www.midwestdairy.com/dairy-resource-center/educator-resources/
Farm to School overview page: https://www.midwestdairy.com/schools-and-communities/farm-to-school/
Online Farm Experience – a discussion guide is coming: https://www.midwestdairy.com/farm-life/

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/
Participants Needed for School Lunch Study, Compensation Included

As the school year progresses, many families are revisiting that age-old question: pack lunch or buy? Recent federal regulations have caused changes to school lunches, prompting many parents and children to rethink their options.

“There are many demands on schools to get school lunches ‘right,’ both so students get the nutrition they need and so that they will be attracted to school lunches from a taste perspective,” said Brian Roe, professor of agricultural economics in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University.

Roe and his colleagues are seeking adults with children in grades 4-11 who attend a school that serves lunch to participate in a study where the student and the adult share their thoughts about school lunch programs.

Parent and child will be asked questions separately and then as a team. The survey either can take place on Ohio State’s agricultural campus in the college library near Fyffe Road and Woody Hayes Drive, in a public meeting place such as a coffee shop, or in the participants’ home. Researchers estimate the surveys will take 45 minutes to an hour, but could take more or less time depending on the conversation.

Parents will receive $20 and children $10 for their participation.

Research sessions are being scheduled from now through the end of November.

To participate in the study or for more information, email Patrick Laser at laser.22@osu.edu to state your interest, and a member of the research team will reply with available dates and times.

The research is being funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Roe is a member of the college’s Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics. He also has appointments with Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, the outreach and research arms of the college.

Letter to Senator Brown Sign-on Opportunity

On behalf of children and families in Ohio, we write to urge you to pass S. 3136, the Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016, before the end of this year. This legislation includes significant expansion and improvement of child nutrition programs, connecting more hungry children with healthy meals. It also protects programs from potentially devastating policy changes in coming years. Child nutrition legislation is a top priority for our organizations and it should be a top priority for the Senate this year.

The Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act includes significant improvements to the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Farm to School program. It also protects nutrition standards that ensure children are eating fresh, healthy meals at school.

https://goo.gl/forms/Ge2Q535w9NhicB22
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 word 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 though 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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