

Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

National, Regional and State Updates

March 2017



It's March and it is time to plan and plant school gardens. See page 3 for the story on Local Matters and their impact on farm to school education. Photos by Local Matters



Contents:

Farm to School Update.....	Page 2
Success Story.....	Page 3
Events & Webinars.....	Page 4
News and Resources	Page 5
Contact Information.....	Page 6

Local Matters is a non-profit organization founded in 2008 that teaches children and families what healthy food is, where it comes from, how to grow it, and how to access it affordably. They are located in Columbus, yet they have already grown to reach additional satellite partners with their Cooking Matters program in Toledo; Delaware, OH; Newport, KY; and Cincinnati. The proprietary nature of their curriculum allows them to train partners and expand their reach.



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

OHIO

OSU Extension selected as Core Partner for National Farm to School Network for 2017-19

Well, actually, this grant award allows OSUE to *continue* at the lead Farm to School agency in Ohio. OSUE has served as the state lead organization for Farm to School in Ohio since 2011. OSUE appoints a part-time director (me) and a part-time program coordinator for Ohio Farm to School. OSUE has offered—and will continue to offer—trainings and resources to support the procurement, serving, and teaching about local food in schools for students of all ages across Ohio. These offerings include:

- Statewide conferences (over 450 attendees from across Ohio in 2013 & 2015)
- Regional workshops each year (over 550 attendees total in 2014 & 2016)
- Farm to School web-based resources and social media communications
- Responses to inquiries from schools, producers, and other stakeholders
- Monthly newsletters, including in-depth Ohio success stories
- Resources for Extension's Farm to School efforts across Ohio (88 OSUE county offices)

OSUE received “Level 1” funding, which will cover the costs of attending the NFSN annual meetings. Most remaining Farm to School program costs are covered by OSUE and other grant funding.

An expanded focus of our role as NFSN core partner will be Farm to Early Care and Education or “Farm to ECE”. We are pleased to have the following supporting partners involved with this project:

- Healthy Children, Healthy Weights Program at Columbus Public Health
- The Ohio Early Childhood Health Network
- Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Program at the Ohio Department of Health
- OSU Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Together with these supporting partners, the diversity of the Ohio Farm to School advisory group will be enhanced, new Farm to ECE training materials and opportunities will be developed, and farm to school activities will benefit even more children and producers throughout Ohio. If you would like to help expand Farm to ECE in your community, please join us in these efforts.

From your new (and continuing) Ohio Farm to School “State Lead”,

Carol Smathers

Ohio Success Story

Local Matters Creates Healthy Communities by Amy Fovargue

Their mission is to create healthy communities through food education, access and advocacy. They do this by teaching children and adults about healthful food. Local Matters has delivered lessons to more than 80 sites across Columbus, reaching more than 11,000 individuals annually. Most of their programming takes place in at-risk neighborhoods, providing a solution to food insecurity through increased access to healthy foods in tandem with nutrition education.

Their Food Matters and Growing Matters programs work with children and youth in a variety of settings (schools, partner nonprofit organizations, recreation and parks) to get participants excited about food and to teach them how to grow food and how to prepare it. Within their curriculum they inform students about Ohio grown foods as well as providing geography, plant science, and multi-cultural lessons. Local Matters believes the relationship between knowledge of healthful foods and increased access to them as a solution for hunger and diet-related chronic disease. Their work makes the connection that farm-to-school means food in our garden or from a local farm, and the likelihood of children eating locally (from farms or gardens) can be increased if they are part of the growing, harvesting and eating process.

They also provide summer programming with Columbus Parks and Recreation and other locations having summer feeding sites. Their learning gardens are a tool for community engagement, unifying neighborhoods around a common goal and providing an educational experience and sustainable food option for children, youth and adults. Students are excited to watch food grow from seed to fruit and into a meal. All students are encouraged to try new foods and they report overwhelmingly positive feedback on the many plant-based dishes.

The learning gardens grow vegetables suitable to Ohio's climate, like tomatoes, ground cherries, kale, arugula, onions, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and more. Students are introduced to kale chips, pasta, salads, including a Three Sisters Salad – a bean, corn and squash medley that incorporates food history and gardening techniques.



Another example of a partnership is with the YMCA collaborating on a garden for a Bhutanese-Nepali population within the Northland neighborhood. Our team worked with leaders to identify plants that would grow well in Ohio and respected the community members' cultural preferences.

In partnership with Godman Guild's summer employment program with twelve at-risk youth, they provide experiences that provide lifelong skills and a long-lasting impact. Community collaboration enables them to reach those with the greatest need. We can make a larger and longer lasting impact through shared resources and expertise.

One student explained, "This program has helped me with my resume, my networking, my people skills and gardening and knowing how to cook. Kale is my favorite thing to cook, but I like to cook a little bit of everything. I enjoy the biological aspect, the leadership aspect and the learning of new things."

Food Matters and Growing Matters work most directly with children and youth, but their impact extends to the entire family. "We have heard parent feedback about the Food Matters program (stating) changing eating habits (in the) home. Weekly updates are sent home with the students including the regions or topics that were the focus, as well as the recipe for food that was prepared or tasted. Parents were then able to have conversations with their children about the lessons and prepare the food at home which increased exposure to new healthy foods," said a Bridgeway Academy teacher.

Local Matters story continues on page 4



Events & Webinars

Save the Date -

Thursday, October 12, 2017



1. Webinar: Promising Partnerships: Extension and Farm to Early Care and Education

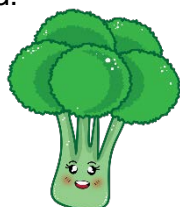
March 14, 2pm ET

With the goal of bringing practical information to improve the lives of agricultural producers, consumers, families, and children, extension is a natural fit for partnership in farm to school and farm to early care and education (ECE) initiatives. The National Institute for Food and Agriculture, in partnership with the National Farm to School Network, will be offering a webinar to share extension and farm to ECE partnerships and projects. To register:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/006e61922b93ddd334538d7d4481ef37>

Local Matters story continued from page 3

Local Matters has created positive experiences for children, helping them associate fruits and vegetables with fun. "To hear my son say, 'broccoli is good for you and I like broccoli' was amazing because he (once) refused to eat vegetables," a Food Matters parent said.



The **OSU Extension Direct Marketing Team** brings you easy access to direct marketing resources thanks to the contributions of numerous collaborators. The Direct Marketing team will be hosting monthly webinars on various topics. All of the webinars will start at 12 noon and be **FREE!**

<https://southcenters.osu.edu/marketing/direct-marketing-webinars>

Webinars

The 2016-2017 **Farm to ECE Mini-Webinar Series** is a series of 12 webinars covering various topics in Farm to ECE. This series is designed for early childhood program staff including food service directors, cook staff, administration, teachers, and family day care home providers, and can also be beneficial for those seeking to support farm to ECE efforts.

This webinar series is hosted by Abby Harper, harperab@ANR.MSU.EDU Farm to School Specialist, MSU Center for Regional Food Systems.

Topics are as follows:

- [Introduction to Farm to ECE](#)
- [Strategies for Introducing New Foods](#)
- [Introduction to Local Procurement](#)
- [Local Food Purchasing pt 1: Purchasing from Farmers](#)
- [Local Food Purchasing pt 2: Purchasing from Food Hub](#)

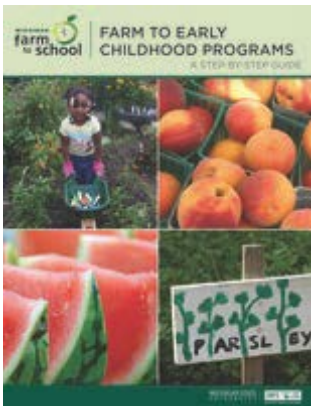
Little Kids Digging In: Farm to Early Care and Education (ECE)

We are helping healthy habits take root in children by introducing local foods, nutrition education and farm-related activities in child care and home day care facilities. Take a look at some of the Farm to ECE

Learn best practices about procuring local foods, updated CACFP meal pattern guidelines, and nutrition education for Farm to ECE programs with these resources:

- [Procuring Local Foods for Child Nutrition Programs;](#)
- [CACFP Best Practices;](#)
- [Grow It, Try It, Like It!;](#) and,
- [Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children.](#)

Go to : <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool>



Check out what Michigan is doing with Farm to ECE!

The [Michigan State University \(MSU\) Center for Regional Food Systems \(CRFS\)](#) has worked to support statewide farm to school development for over a decade. Take a look at the [Farm to Early Childhood Programs: Step-By-Step Guide](#) to find out how to get started. Go to: http://foodsystems.msu.edu/resources/farm_to_early_childhood_guide

This guide outlines the steps and tools to guide providers in purchasing local food. Steps include assessing current practices, identifying local food availability, connecting with farmers and incorporating local foods into menus.

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/>

Thank you to all of our partners and supporters!



Ohio Farm to School Newsletter

Authors:

Carol Smathers, Ohio Farm to School State Lead

Amy Fovargue, Healthy Living Program Coordinator

For Ohio Farm to School inquiries or to submit information, e-mail farm2school@osu.edu

Follow Ohio Farm to School on Facebook



CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity