

# Ohio Farm to School State Network and Advisory

## March 5, 2020

### Introductions and Updates

#### **Noreen Warnock, Co-founder of Local Matters**

- Working on Local Food Action Plan which has a focus on nutrition education.
- Been working on senate bill 121 for 2 years to improve health education standards. Looking for more organizations to sign onto joint letter with 25 other organizations. Bill is still in the legislature. Refer to [Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance](#) and [Local Matters](#) for more info. The current need is to identify schools/districts that are doing in any depth nutrition and health education. If this bill passes, a curriculum will be created around health education standards, helping increase Farm to School.

#### **Michaela Oldfield and Anne Schneider, Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council**

- Have two grants in progress, both funded by USDA
  - One is local food promotion program, 2.5 years in
    - Increased sales to local growers by 600,000
    - Reached 31 K12 school districts in Ohio (19), KY and IN and have sold \$300,000 of produce from local growers to schools. Cincinnati Public Schools, purchased over \$100,000 of local food since adopting the Good Food Purchasing Program last year. CPS is serving as an anchor institution, making it easier for other schools to support local growers.
    - Local Food Connection (largest food hub in the area) recently partnered with Creation Gardens, a specialty foods distributor, helping overcome barriers including food safety processing, pricing, formal procurement, menu planning, product subbing, reporting metrics.
  - Second is USDA F2S planning grant
    - Working to pilot Feed our Future from Cuyahoga County.
    - Working with buying co-ops in the region.
    - Have educator focus groups coming up and Farm to School educator training coming up.
  - Curious to learn from others about how to deal with gap year between having a planning grant and being able to apply for an implementation grant
- Cincinnati Public Schools Good Food Purchasing Program
  - Been a policy for a little over a year.
  - Put out an RFP last March to consolidate local and non-local produce on one bid and provide a geographic preference.
  - Creation Gardens won the bid and worked with Local Food Connection to meet bid criteria. Now have about 40% local produce.
  - 5 values include local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare and nutrition.
  - Currently focusing on animal welfare by looking for organic milk, increasing breakfast participation to increase spending to offset increased cost.



## Introductions and Updates

### **Stacey Bettis, Stark County Educational Service Center**

- Services Stark, Carroll and Tuscarawas counties.
- Past president of SNA Ohio and still on the board.

### **Dave Sokoll, Oberlin Food Hub outside of Cleveland**

- Experience with running head start kitchens in Lorain seeing constraints of kitchens.
- Working with Feed our Future to provide harvests.
- Piloting products to provide local, organic products to schools.
- Did a local bistro box, looking at piloting local Ohio breakfast bar.

### **Laura Kepler, Food Service Director Akron Public Schools**

- Working on purchasing and serving local foods and education that happens in the cafeteria.
- Want to buy and serve more local foods in Akron Schools.

### **Kaleigh Niles, Masters of Public Health student at OSU**

- Working on program evaluation for CoIIN and Farm to ECE training.

### **Haley Carreta, Food Systems Project Manager at Dayton Public Health**

- Montgomery County published their food equity plan last year.
- Schools have started growing in classroom and now looking to expand buying local in cafeterias.
- University of Dayton is working on buying more local foods and doing an all local dinner once a quarter.
- Looking at Local Food Connection and seeing what needs would be for a food hub.

### **June Wedd, American Dairy Association MidEast**

- Represent American Dairy Association and National Dairy Council and 2000+ dairy farm families in Ohio.
- Released Farm to School dairy kit and may be offering additional materials this fall to schools and possibly dairy farm field trips.
- Just launched new [drink-milk](#) site with materials and tools available to schools.

### **Heidi Scarpitti, Dietitian at Ohio Department of Health**

- Just published [Youth Risk Behavior Survey results](#), survey filled out by middle and high school students and asks about nutrition, physical activity, gives BMI info, mental health, alcohol and drug use and sexual behaviors.

### **Elizabeth Douglass, Ohio Department of Education**

- Just had nutrition and wellness conference last week with a farm to school session.
  - The issue of food safety in the cafeteria and bringing items in was brought up as an issue at the conference.
  - Looking into distributing fact sheets from local health departments to address this.
  - Getting ready for summer food programs and looking for ways to do Farm to Summer- contact Elizabeth with any ideas.



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### **Julialynn Walker, Bronzeville Growers Market**

- Works with growers and small farmers and farmers markets.
- Would like to feed into the pipeline and work together better.

### **Patrick Tegge, Regional Program Specialist with SNAP Ed focused on PSE**

- This is a new position, looking forward to partnering together.

### **Ana Claudia Zubieta, Director of SNAP Ed**

- SNAP Ed does nutrition education and works with schools throughout Ohio.
- Just hired 3 PSE specialists throughout the state in Nobel county, Northeast Ohio and Logan county.
- Hoping these positions will scale up policy, systems and environment change throughout the state and to connect and be a resource for farm to school efforts.

### **Layla Lahoud, Cuyahoga County Board of Health**

- Working on social media for Feed our Future.
- Working on bringing farmers into schools including an orchard and Ethan Holmes (apple grower) has a curriculum that is being used in schools.

### **Alison Patrick, Program Manager at Cuyahoga County Board of Health, leading Feed our Future**

- In second USDA support service grant.
  - Coordinated a bid with Ohio School's Council (came out of focus groups with school districts). In 4<sup>th</sup> year of bid with 40 districts participating in the bid. Met last years purchasing requirements in December, bid continues to double in size every year. Oberlin food hub is new to the bid.
  - Targeted minimally processed food this year including butternut squash, frozen blueberries and carrot sticks, #1 seller is shagbark chips. Schools have appreciated competitive pricing on more local products beyond traditional apples and lettuce. Just released bid for next school year, due at the end of March with 53 districts committed. Working on transitioning this bid to a forward contract bid with USDA. Hope to help producers plan and grow school districts next year.
- Presenting at Ohio SNA on Feed our Future model on June 17.
- Partnership with the youth organization, Refresh Collective to design shirts around Harvest of the Month Program, [creating new style of t-shirts \(24 CARROT gold\)](#), youth are printing shirts and selling them so they are learning entrepreneurial skills, inventory management and business skills. Money made on t-shirts goes to support Farm to School ambassador program.
- Franchising FOF to Cincinnati area and interested partnering with other states.
- Partnering with Unified Purchasing Cooperative for Ohio River Valley hopefully on a farm to school bid
- Initially proposed in person culinary trainings for Farm to School grant → transitioning to online training (like Tasty videos) for Harvest of the Month recipes to be utilized by food service staff. These videos will be available on the website when finished for families and anyone to access.
- Going to release a grant for all local lunch tray next school year (all grown, raised and processed in Ohio). Looking for 5 very different school districts in North East Ohio to participate.



## Introductions and Updates

**Lacresha Johnson, Dietetic intern from CCBH, listening and observing**

**Chris Weatherholtz, Nutrition and Farm to School Curriculum Coordinator for Columbus City Schools**

- Continue growing number of schools with outdoor gardens and learning labs.
  - There were 18 last year and now there are 66 gardens in Columbus City Schools.
- Writing and curating lessons and literature for elementary schools to ensure that growing is being embedded into curriculum and used on a regular basis to support learning in health nutrition, reading, social studies, science and more.
- Many partners are helping with CCS farm to school efforts.

**Sarah Meeks, Family and Consumer Sciences Program Assistant in Wooster and Masters of Social Work Student**

- Working on USDA F2S grant with “A Whole Community” and brought in students from ATI to help with student clubs including composting and where food comes from.
- Also working with school food service to get input on farm to school from their perspective.
  - Working on “photo voice” project for food service employees.
- Going to have a community celebration to recognize barriers and successes for food service employees
- Long term looking to achieve a culture change in Wayne County, where there is a huge ag presence and trying to grow farm to school throughout the area.
- Funding through OSU connect and collaborate grant through next year.

**Annabelle Arbogast, AmeriCorps Public Ally with the Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council**

**Glennon Sweeney, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at OSU**

- Working on a workforce development program in Mansfield to be rolled out in a couple years. The program will be for high school students to work on micro farms to provide food for schools in Mansfield. Students and adults who complete this program will receive a certificate.
  - Looking for funding for this project.

**Heather Neikirk, OSU Extension Educator for Stark County**

- Works with Stark County Schools and Stacey Bettis on Farm to School in Stark County.
- Wrapped up USDA F2S implementation grant last year and hired Farm to School Coordinator, Kristina Windland.
- Want to do an annual fair field trip after taking 2,200 5<sup>th</sup> graders to a dairy farm last year. Would like to have all 3,700 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Stark county go through this experience. Working with County Fair Board to showcase local Stark county products. Field trip is a great opportunity for agricultural education and nutrition with a local lunch.



## Introductions and Updates

### **Barbara Burns, Food Service Director in Carroll County and RD**

- Hired 7 years ago when new superintendent wanted to increase cooking.
- Involved in designing greenhouse project for the school and have had greenhouse for 6 years.
- Although there is a large agricultural presence, there aren't a lot of specialty crops besides corn and grain, so they are partnering with Stark County to find vendors for schools. Farmers and producers not wanting to deal with paperwork to sell to schools has also been a challenge.
- Coordinating with FFA, a yearly plant sale and the greenhouse to now have a greenhouse management class. The greenhouse management class grows the plants and other students put in orders for plants for Mothers' Day and funds from plant sale supports the greenhouse. Greenhouse students also learning about hydroponics and tower gardens and incorporating it into all areas of curriculum.
- Doing a summer living art space in the cafeteria once a week, coordinating with local teachers, library, Extension and art center. Planting different themed gardens each week like salsa garden, chicken noodle soup garden.

### **Michelle Bailey, Garden Educator for Franklin Park Conservatory**

- Help support school gardens in Columbus schools mostly with middle and high school students
- Runs summer program at FPC called Teen Core. It's a summer internship and education program for 15-18 year old teens in Columbus City Schools. Students grow produce and sell it at farmers markets, discuss local food systems, food security, sustainability, culinary education, customer service and entrepreneurship.

### **Cynthia Walters, Olentangy Local Schools**

- Art teacher, representing Slow Food USA and Columbus and School Gardens of Ohio.
- Designing garden based professional development, involving curriculum, wellness and food service.
- Ultimate goal is to have garden-based learning at college level to create better food system.
- Established low tunnel school garden curriculum to grow during school year opposed to summer.
- Co-Chair for Slow food National School Garden Program and working with Congresswomen Marcia Fudge to get more time for lunch so students can sit down and enjoy food.
- Want students to take what they learn in school gardens to make food selections in cafeteria.

### **Sue Hogan, 4H Educator in Franklin County**

- Working with schools and after school programs.
- Facilitate annual School Garden Conference and Project Green Teacher series of school garden education courses.
- Working out of new Kunz-Brundige Franklin County Extension building where there are numerous garden initiatives and teaching gardens including veterans gardens and master gardener veggie trials.



## Introductions and Updates

### **Layla Abraham, Franklin County Public Health**

- Now managing the USDA Farm to School grant for Ohio Days My Plate My State program where schools serve one meal that is grown, raised, or processed in Ohio each month.
- Concluded focus groups with Franklin County teachers to discuss what resources are needed for teachers to integrate farm to school in the classroom.
- RFP will go out at the end of the month to offer mini grants to schools to start farm to school activities.

### **Valerie Jones, Community Engagement and Health Promotion, Franklin County Public Health**

### **Cathy Corbitt, Children's Initiatives for Ohio Department of Agriculture**

- Wanting to pull farm to school together throughout the state.
- Applied to Farm to School grant with ODE to connect Farm to School efforts across the state.
- Meeting with KY and IN state partners to discuss defining local in Cincinnati area.
- Presented to food service directors at ODE Health Expo.
- Wanting ODE to be more student focused and revamping campus tours to focus on kids and educating about science, technology in ag and where food comes from.

### **Micaela Wright, Farm to School Coordinator for ODA**

- Had a session at the ODE Health Expo on local food procurement and had someone from food safety at ODA speak. Found that there is a lot of misunderstanding about food safety and is a big reason for hesitation on starting farm to school. ODA will be creating a fact sheet on food safety for farm to school.
- Working with ODE on developing Farm to School calendar, which will go to every school across the state. Calendar will be released at Farm Science Review and will go through December 2021.
  - Each month will represent a certain commodity group, with a fact related to that group on each Friday. Outstanding food service directors will be highlighted. OSU Extension will be on the back cover. Send large scale events and national calendar dates relating to farm to school to Micaela.

### **Hannah Bills, Growing Healthy Kids Program Director, Columbus Public Health**

- Working on early care and education and bringing efforts from farm to school to early care.
- CPH awarded Creating Healthy Communities grant from ODH and using some of that to support Farm to ECE in Columbus by compiling professional development resources to help early care educators start farm to ECE.
- Delivering Farm to Early Care and Education training at OAEYC conference in late April.
- Working on Farm to Early Care mini CoIIN and diving into implementing Farm to ECE in the most equitable way possible.



## Introductions and Updates

### **Julie Wayman, Local Food Coordinator for Ashtabula County through OSU Extension**

- New to this position and hosting meetings with local growers, food enthusiasts, master gardeners.
- Working on Local Food Guide and distributing at local libraries, supporting farmers markets, doing health promotion, looking at ways to once again explore the feasibility of a centralized food storage and processing facility to increase sales for farmers.

### **Carol Smathers, OSU Extension Field Specialist and Farm to School State Lead**

- Farm to Early Care and Education (Colln) is working with the Ohio Early Childhood Health Network (OECHN) and working with equity consultant.
  - Received 1,680 responses on a needs assessment for Farm to ECE.
- Cheryl Graffagnino and Carol have a journal article accepted in the Journal of Child Nutrition and Management about the apple slicer data that came out of Columbus City Schools after the district started purchasing local apples and bought an apple slicer. Students are now eating more apples and less apples are being wasted.
- Growing teachers throughout the season project to create curriculum to flip the growing season from September-May.

### **Haley Plahuta, OSU Farm to School Program Assistant**

- Working on updating the [Ohio Farm to School website](#). If you have recommendations for resources, please send them to [plahuta.12@osu.edu](mailto:plahuta.12@osu.edu)
  - Working on a statewide map of regional farm to school contacts who can help answer questions about farm to school.
- Looking for Farm to School success stories to post on the website. Please reach out if you are interested in sharing your farm to school efforts!
- Apple Crunch will be October 8, 2020
  - Creating maps to show where early childhood sites and schools participated in Apple Crunch around the state. This will help target Apple Crunch promotion for 2020.
  - Would like to have larger events for Apple Crunch at orchards, fall festivals, community events etc. Please reach out if you would like to plan an Apple Crunch event in your community.

### **National Updates:**

- National Farm to Cafeteria Conference April 21-23 in Albuquerque.



# USDA Farm to School Child Nutrition Program and “DOD Fresh” by Anne Schneider

**Opportunity:** Help resolve unintended USDA Foods program challenges for small and mid sized farms by improving access to local foods in Ohio schools.

## USDA Farm to School Program:

1. Purchase “unprocessed agricultural products, both **locally grown** and **locally raised**, to the **maximum extent practicable and appropriate**,” and “Allow institutions to use a **geographic preference** for the procurement of unprocessed agricultural products, both locally grown and locally raised.”
2. Section 18 (g) of the *Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act* was amended to create a **Farm to School Program** to:
  1. Distribute grant funding to improve access to **local foods** in schools;
  2. Provide training and technical assistance to improve access to **local foods** in schools; and,
  3. Disseminate research and data on existing programs and opportunities for expansion.

**Who Defines Local?** While many state and/or local governments have adopted definitions of local such as “within the state” or “within the county,” schools using a geographic preference when sourcing food for the federal child nutrition programs are under no obligation to adopt any definition for local that might be in existence in local areas.

**Spending Flexibility as a Barrier to Buying Local:** Perception that maximizing “DOD Fresh” entitlement limits Food Service Directors’ ability to budget for local unprocessed fruits and vegetables within Ohio.

**Challenge:** To be fiscally responsible, USDA entitlement must be maximized for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

- Entitlement amount varies from year to year
- Schools have the option to spend some or all of their USDA Foods funds through “DOD Fresh” or through other USDA Foods programs
- A decrease in other USDA Foods product options (ex. “Brown Box”) creates a potential need to increase “DOD Fresh” allocation
- Only one awarded “DOD Fresh” vendor per state
- Selection criteria may not include “geographic preference”
- Very few Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio “DOD Fresh” product options





# USDA Farm to School Child Nutrition Program and “DOD Fresh” by Anne Schneider

## Spending Flexibility

### • Potential Action A

- Increase offerings of local products in “DOD Fresh” Catalog
- Challenges:
  - Current “DOD Fresh” contract requires extremely large volumes and very low margins for K-12 school products
  - Attracts large scale agriculture solutions which currently do not exist in the state for K-12 “DOD Fresh” local products

### • Potential Action B

- Option of receiving “cash in lieu” of “DOD Fresh”
  - Preferred solution by FSDs due to more flexibility to meet the needs of their districts
  - Increases potential for direct community impact of USDA Farm to School Programs
- Challenges
  - In order to control economic impact to commodity supply chain, “cash in lieu” option could also be limited to a percentage.

### • Hybrid of A and B

- Increase offerings of Ohio products in “DOD” Fresh Catalog
- Option of receiving “cash in lieu” of “DOD Fresh”

## Short Term Action:

- Challenge
  - How to best position Farm to School programming with existing food service spending flexibility and “DOD Fresh”?
- Potential Action: Provide Farm to School model solutions for every budget
  - Low, mid and high spending flexibility



## Ohio Farm to School

**Mark your calendars for the 2020 Meeting Dates:  
June 4, September 3, December 3  
All meetings will be 9:30am-12 pm**

