New Partnership: IL Harvest of the Month & Aggrega8

Seven Generations Ahead and the IL Farm to School Network have partnered with FarmLogix to share Aggrega8, a free online platform that allows food service purchasers to easily source local products for Illinois Harvest of the Month and beyond.

Institutional food service buyers—including K-12 schools, juvenile justice centers, children homes, summer and after-school feeding sites, and early child care sites—can join the platform for free while registering for IL Harvest of the Month.

Aggrega8 will feature 5-8 options of seasonal, local items available each month, as well as a regionally-produced “No Antibiotic Ever” poultry option. Buyers will be able to identify the farm and see the number of miles to their location with every order!

Aggrega8 works with distributors across Illinois so that most food service buyers can receive the local products right off their regular delivery truck. Should buyers prefer a one-on-one relationship with a local farm, the platform also allows them to purchase directly from a selected producer.

Ready to sign up for Aggrega8 now? Click here.
Check out more on our website now!

Program registration numbers are soaring—register
Are you registered for the 2018-19 IL Harvest of the Month program or the 2018 Great Apple Crunch? To date, IL Harvest of the Month will reach over a half million children in the 2018-19 school year, plus over 477,600 are 'Crunching' in October - and it's quickly growing!

The 2018 Illinois Great Apple Crunch is set for Thursday, October 11, with registration closing the day prior. You can learn more and register [here](#).

Registration for the 2018-19 IL Harvest of the Month officially closes on November 1, 2018. In order to gain access to all of the resources, recipes, and lessons we have on our website, you will need to register (it's free!) and receive a password- so don't wait too long to jump in and add Harvest of the Month to your school menus!

Check out our [Harvest of the Month factsheet](#) to learn more.

Click [here](#) to register.

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**Newsworthy in Illinois**

**Gardens grow a sense of community for Arlington Heights neighborhood**

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS IL

Arlington Heights Elementary School District 25 is leading an effort to integrate students from low-income families into their community through a batch of new programs and amenities, including community gardens and summer meals.

Called The Dryden Place Project, the initiative serves five apartment buildings along Dryden Avenue, east of the village's downtown and within the boundaries of Windsor Elementary and South Middle schools.

[Read more here](#).

**Lawmaker seeks to expand urban farming in Illinois**

CHICAGO IL
A measure awaiting Gov. Bruce Rauner's signature would enable local counties or municipalities to create urban agricultural zones in areas where access to food is limited.

Sonya Harper is a state representative whose district covers the contrasting sides of Chicago that have come to symbolize the Windy City. Harper said her community on the southwest side of Chicago has one grocery store to serve close to 70,000 people. Many of those residents lack transportation.

Read more here.

Celebrate in the cafeteria and the classroom as Illinois turns 200!

The Illinois School Board of Education is celebrating Illinois' 200th birthday with a special Bicentennial Menu celebrating Illinois agriculture! Check out the Bicentennial guide for ideas and resources, and be sure to join Illinois Harvest of the Month for recipes and resources on how to integrate fresh and unprocessed Illinois-grown items into your menu. The year-long series of programs and events will culminate with Illinois' 200th birthday on December 3, 2018.

Read more about teacher resources here.

Check out the Illinois Bicentennial Lunch Menu here!

Resources for Schools and Feeding Sites

Grant: Salad Bars to Schools

With summer coming to a close it's time to think about adding salad bars to your feeding operation. The Chef Ann Foundation along with partner organizations provide salad bars to schools across the U.S.

Eligibility: Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is eligible to apply. There is just one application form for both multiple salad bar and single salad bar package requests. The food service director for your district is the required contact person for the application.
Award Criteria: Salad bar grants will be awarded based on a formula that takes into account: A) readiness to implement a salad bar lunch program, and B) application date.

Apply here.

Resource: Case studies of progressive farm to school districts

In 2018, FoodCorps, along with School Food Focus and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, developed a series of case studies profiling progressive districts that are making significant and positive changes to their school food experiences.

The goal of this project was to produce a body of detailed information and analysis, firmly based in the experience within the districts, which would help inform other school districts, community advocates, funders, and policymakers about the implementation of more healthful and regional purchasing by schools. Here is the list of case studies:

- PreK-12 School Food: Making It Healthier, Making It Regional
- The Professionally Trained Kitchen
- The Culturally-Responsive Cafeteria
- The Peer-to-Peer Kitchen
- The Centralized Kitchen
- The Skills-Based Kitchen
- The Production Kitchen

Read more here.

Resource: Dream a New Dream: Operational manual for cafeteria farm to school programs

Chef Greg Christian, Beyond Green Partners, has written a curriculum for institutional kitchen managers and decision makers that outlines the necessary steps and educates about potential pitfalls. This operational manual consists of actionable steps to help schools transition to sustainable programs that serve meals cooked from scratch meeting USDA standards while sourcing local ingredients and achieving budgetary goals.

Driven by kitchen efficiencies and waste reduction, the curriculum starts with measuring where the current program stands and works toward a unified vision established by the school.
Local partners in North Iowa have received a planning grant through the USDA’s Farm to School Program

MASON CITY IA

The grant brings nutritious, local foods into schools and creates new economic opportunities for farmers.

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, West Fork Schools, Mason City Schools, CAL/Hampton-Dumont Schools, ISU Extension & Outreach - Cerro Gordo County, North Iowa Fresh, and Healthy Harvest of North Iowa will partner to carry out the grant.

Grant objectives include bringing together producers, school administrators and staff, and stakeholders to create an action plan for local food procurement in schools.

Opinion: "Don't yuck my yum"

JACKSON MS

As a food educator, I spent many hours in classrooms doing taste tests, interactive cooking demos and nutrition lessons. I've seen elementary schoolers, even the so-called picky eaters, taste everything from sauteed Swiss chard, to beet smoothies to chickpea cookie dough, and ask for seconds.

I had one simple rule that helped my students approach food with an attitude of positivity and adventure: "Don't yuck my yum." I first heard the phrase during my orientation with FoodCorps, an AmeriCorps organization dedicated to connecting kids and schools with healthy food.

Back in the classroom, I would ask the kids, "Say you're eating something you really love-let's just go with pizza-and someone comes up to you and says, 'I hate pizza. It's disgusting,' how would that make you feel?" After a few moments of contemplating a world in which someone hated pizza, most kids would reply they'd feel bad, angry or embarrassed.
Chef Ann Foundation wants you to share your perspective

As districts transition to scratch cooking, the Chef Ann Foundation often hears concerns about staffing, from hiring more employees to making sure you build a reliable team.

The Chef Ann Foundation would like to know what you think! They have a few questions to determine what your staffing needs are and how you fulfill them. School food service can share their perspective by taking this quick 3-minute online survey.

Help them out and take the THREE-minute survey now.

Resources for School Gardens

Grant: Project Learning Tree GreenWorks Grant

**Deadline:** The annual deadline to apply is September 30

**Who should apply?** To be eligible to apply for a grant, applicants must have attended a PLT workshop, either in-person or online, that provides training, lesson plans, and other resources to help integrate these projects and environmental education into your curriculum or youth programs.

Project Learning Tree offers GreenWorks! grants up to $1,000 to schools and youth organizations for environmental service-learning projects that link classroom learning to the real world. Students implement an action project they help design to green their school or to improve an aspect of their neighborhood's environment.

The projects provide opportunities for student leadership and partner students with their whole school, local businesses and community organizations, and natural resource professionals. The funds can be used by students to implement recycling programs at their school, conserve water and
energy, establish school gardens and outdoor classrooms, improve a forest, restore a natural habitat, and more.

Learn more and apply here.

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**Grant: Samul Classroom Herb Garden Grant**

![Herb Society of America logo]

**Deadline for 2018-19 academic year:** October 1, 2018 with awards announced December 1, 2018

**Who should apply?** Public and/or private 3rd through 6th grade teachers, with classes of a minimum of fifteen (15) students may apply for an indoor or an outdoor herb garden grant.

The Herb Society of America will select ten (10) schools/classrooms serving grades 3 through 6 to receive $200 "Seed Money" to establish an indoor or outdoor herb garden. The funds may be used for supplies such as soil, plant trays, containers, child or youth sized tools, etc.

Learn more and apply here.

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**Grant: Garden Crowdsourcing Grant Match- Apply for SeedMoney**

![SeedMoney logo]

**Application Deadline:** November 12, 2018

**Who should apply:** SeedMoney offers fundraising tools and grants to non-profit food gardening causes including, but not limited to, school gardens, community, food bank, and other related gardens.

This fall, SeedMoney will be awarding 100 garden grants ranging in size from $200-$600 to US-based and global food garden projects. We will be doing this through our 4th Annual Giving Gardens Challenge, a 4-week online giving campaign running from November 15th to December 15th.

We offer two types of grants: challenge grants and merit grants. Challenge Grants ($400) are awarded to the 50 projects that raise $600 or more the fastest using our crowdfunding tools. Merit grants ($200) will be awarded to projects that don't win Challenge Grants but which we deem worthy of support. We will also award an additional $600 bonus grant to the project that raises the most.

Learn more and apply here.
Grant: Apply for the Safer® School Garden Grant

**Application Period:** Send your submission in between September 1 to December 1  
**Who can apply?** Schools that win the Safer® School Garden Grant cannot enter to win again in future years. Student's school must be located in the United States.

School gardens can bring classmates closer together and unite everyone in a common goal of better health. Healthy and safe food is what Safer® Brand is all about, that’s why we make products that are safe for organic gardening to help you and your plants thrive.

Note: No purchase necessary to apply for Safer® School Garden Grant. A purchase will not improve your chances of getting picked for the grant.

[Learn more and apply here.](#)

Resource: Garden to Cafeteria Toolkit

It just became easier for school districts across the country to connect school gardens with the school meal program. Slow Food USA, in partnership with Whole Kids Foundation, has developed a toolkit to help school district food services safely bring school garden produce onto the lunch line!  
**What is the toolkit?**

The toolkit builds off the successes and safety protocols of five school districts across the United States to provide templates and a step-by-step process to help District Food Services develop their own protocols. It is developed based on the successes of the following school districts:

* Austin Independent School District  
* Chicago Public Schools  
* Denver Public Schools
Garden News Across the Nation

PREP Academy's Learning Garden- Our first harvest

DENVER CO

Want to be inspired? Follow PREP Academy’s journey as they received, planted, and harvested their Learning Garden for the first time!

Brought to you by the folks at Big Green.

Watch the video here.

School gardens produce endless learning opportunities

Healthy 2020

SHEBOYGAN WI

With gardening season in full swing, we are reminded to be conscious and mindful of where our food comes from, be it the farmers market, the grocery store or our own backyards. Food less traveled is more nutrient-dense and flavorful than produce sold at grocery stores, which on average travels as much as 1,500 miles.

The kids of today are a part of a generation that does not understand what real food is and where it comes from. Being able to discern a potato from an onion is a seemingly lost skill and the rise of diet and lifestyle-related diseases at younger ages has sounded the alarms to change the way we teach nutrition in schools.

Read more here.

Resources and News for Producers

Event: ILFMA Summer Feast; Farm to table dinner
The Illinois Farmers Market Association (ILFMA) invites you to indulge in an unforgettable farm-to-table "Summer Feast" fundraiser at Bleuroot restaurant in West Dundee, Illinois on Thursday, August 23, 2018, 6:30 p.m. This one-of-a-kind meal, served al fresco and sourced from the freshest and most seasonal ingredients available, will be specially prepared by Chef/Owners Maria Terry and Peter Capadona.

You'll deepen your connection and appreciation of local agriculture as you savor a handcrafted welcome cocktail, multi-course meal, featuring farm fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs, organic grass-fed meats, Illinois wine, and more while overlooking the Fox River in historic downtown West Dundee, Illinois. This exclusive and authentic experience is limited to just 36 guests, tickets are $125.00 each and most importantly, your participation will help ILFMA support our local food initiatives throughout Illinois.

To reserve your seat at the table for ILFMA's "Summer Feast" fundraiser click here.

Event: 2018 WFAN Annual Conference
Stepping into Action: Changing Foodscapes

WFAN's mission is to engage women in building an ecological and just food and agricultural system through individual and community power. Our members work every day to fulfill a vision for a food system that supports farmers, eaters, and the environment.

This two-day annual conference is our opportunity to learn from our diverse peers, build a stronger network, and foster connections for long-lasting change. The conference will feature women in our network through regional field tours; day-long intensives; a farm-to-table dinner; art + story gallery featuring work by women farmers; creative community building; and workshops.

Learn more here.

Call for Submissions: Instagram Story Quilt
Our individual stories are part of a much larger narrative, one that cannot be told without a network. Online social networks are extremely powerful for telling stories and maintaining relationships, but deep personal connections still usually
have an in-person component.

One of the many ways women lead the creation of an ecologically and socially just food system is by supporting and mentoring each other. We want to create an Instagram story quilt featuring women leading change in the food system this way, but we can't tell this story without your help.

Learn more here.

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**Event: You're invited!**  
**IL Stewardship Alliance Harvest Celebration**

Sunday, September 23, 2018  
5:00 p.m.  
*Erin's Pavilion*  
4965 S 2nd St.  
Springfield, IL 62703

You've waited all year, and now it's here! Tickets for our 12th Annual Harvest Celebration are finally on sale. Join us for an evening of fine food, local libations, live music, action-packed auction items, and amazing company. We're saving your seat. This year's theme is herbs. It's going to be herbaceous, bodacious, vivacious...and pretty much everything "acious". If you're tenacious, you'll get your tickets today!

Learn more here.

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**Resource: Illinois Specialty Crop Podcast Series:**  
**Thomas Harrison- Crooked Row Farm 7/7**  
**Mark Hartstein "Shades" - Local Chef 7/21**

Our Illinois Specialty Crop Podcast Series showcases specialty crop producers and growers here in Illinois and looks at the stories are behind their farms. The short interviews are recorded by Jim Lewis at WDWS NewsTalk 1400 in Champaign, IL. All of the producers featured in the series sell their products at local farmers markets or at their own farmstead stores here in Central Illinois.

We hope you will enjoy learning about the featured specialty crop producers and check out our accompanying Specialty Crop Cards Series that can be found on our website.  
Enjoy the series, and let us know what you think.

Listen in here.
On-Farm Variety Trials: What's the fuss about?

Mallory Krieger, The Land Connection

We've all been there. It's the deep winter, the days are short and cold. The farm is buttoned up for the season. For the first time in nearly a year, we have the time and space to dream. It is Planning Season, the weeks in the winter when we pour over the seed catalog and drool over flashy new varieties, voraciously seek out our old standbys, and mourn the loss of discontinued favorites. An important and underused tool in the farmer's toolbox is the on-farm variety trial.

I recently attended the On-Farm Variety Trialing Workshop held last week by the Organic Seed Alliance at PrairiErth Farm. There, I met University of Wisconsin researcher Dr. Ruth Genger. She led a tour of PrairiErth Farm's potato variety trial and described what she values so highly in farmer-led, on-farm research.

Read more here.

Are you following us on social media?

The Illinois Farm to School Network is on social media! You can find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Follow us to stay up-to-date on national F2S news and local farm to school programs, workshops and fun facts!

This newsletter made possible by:

Seven Generations Ahead
Building Healthy & Sustainable Communities
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BECOME A NETWORK MEMBER!

Join our growing movement. Click here to join the network, and then spread the word. Receive the monthly IFSN newsletter and stay informed! Forward this email and invite anyone you know who cares about Farm to School to join the conversation.