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## Illinois Farm to School Network News

### Farm to School by the numbers

The Illinois Farm to School Network has been working hard to increase farm to school programming and participation across our state.

As the year comes to an end, we are proud to share the growth of farm to school in Illinois! Our program participation numbers are growing every year, as more and more child feeding institutions and garden programs choose farm to school.

Our Great Apple Crunch numbers and data for 2018 have been tabulated and you can view the exciting results "Crunch Success in Illinois" on our website [here](#).

We couldn't have advanced farm to school without our network of dedicated and passionate members who are working to change food purchasing and education practices in their communities. (That's you!)

Thank you!



## Urban agriculture is all around us



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL IL

Developing urban agriculture education and community garden projects has become a priority for University of Illinois Extension in addressing food deserts.

If you have never heard of a food desert, it is defined as “an area of low income and low access to food.” We do have areas in Bloomington that fall into this category of food desert. The areas may expand if we were to define 'access to food' to include the word 'healthy.' The city of Bloomington has also taken steps to address the food insecurity among its residents.

Read more [here](#).

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## Food for Thought: Passing the pucker test. Proof that when sampling new foods your choices don't have to be popular!

### Sauerkraut passes the test at Strafford's Newton School

WEST LEBANON NH

Introducing new dishes from the Farm-to-School program at Strafford's Newton School is as much science as it is culinary art.



To record their impressions of new foods, students visiting the cafeteria drop tokens into jars labeled with a happy face, a sad face and a “meh” face. Perhaps their scientific method for last week's sauerkraut taste test would have benefited from a fourth option: a face with a squinched up mouth and eyes.

“There was a lot of puckering going on,” said Gret Hewes, the school's food service director.

Read more [here](#).

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## Resources for Schools & Feeding Sites

### 2018 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant is open

Application Deadline: **Dec. 31, 2018**

**Who should apply?** School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program. **All schools are encouraged to apply!**

**The information:** SFAs can request funds to replace, renovate, or purchase new kitchen equipment needed to serve healthier school meals, improve food safety, and expand access to school meals.

ISBE is required to competitively award the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants to eligible SFAs. Higher priority must be given to high-need schools where 50 percent or more of the enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and to schools that have not received a previous NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant. The Notice of Funding Opportunity and information on how to apply are available on the NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant webpage at [isbe.net/Equipment-Grants.aspx](https://isbe.net/Equipment-Grants.aspx). If you have any questions regarding this funding opportunity, contact Emily Durbin at [edurbin@isbe.net](mailto:edurbin@isbe.net). You can review guidelines and past awardees [here](#).

### **Fruit and Veggie Grants are still available**

**Grant Deadline:** Available until funding is depleted.

**Eligibility:** Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Schools with greater than 50% free and reduced eligible enrollment encouraged to apply.

**Funding:** \$2,500 per school.

**The Information:** This grant program awards school projects that help kids learn about and eat more fruits and vegetables. The grant is sponsored by Skoop and the Chef Ann Foundation. Learn more [here](#).

### **Winston Equipment Grant 2019 is open**

**Grant Deadline:** Open now, will close on **January 31, 2019**

**Eligibility:** Applications can be submitted by a school nutrition director who has been a member of SNA for at least one year.

**Funding:** 10 pieces of equipment, which could include CVap® holding cabinets, holding drawers, and rethermalizers.

**The Information:** Complete a short survey with basic information about your district and create a video to 'show' us your story, videos should be no longer than 2 minutes in length. Learn more [here](#).

### **Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Program**

Applications are due by **January 7, 5:00 PM**.

The Illinois Green Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools that have active programs, actions, and dedication to promote and educate about sustainability. Working in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Green Alliance is accepting applications from schools across Illinois. To learn more and apply click [here](#).

### **Farm to Early Care and Education webinar series resource available**

This webinar 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. There are twelve webinars in all. Check out the resource [here](#).

## Downloadable Resource: Guide to using The Creative Curriculum® to support Farm to ECE models

This resource, developed by The Policy Equity Group, aligns farm to ECE strategies with one of the most widely used ECE curricula—The Creative Curriculum®. The guide explores how teachers can use The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool and The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers, & Twos as a foundation to embed farm to ECE learning opportunities into their existing practices. Read the full resource [here](#).

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## News Across the Nation

### Farm to school programs have been good for Minnesota farmers and students alike. Is it time for the Minnesota Legislature to cough up some lunch money?

SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS MN

At Lyndale Elementary in South Minneapolis in late October, a crowd of well-dressed adults stood inside the cafeteria, waiting their turn to proceed through the lunch line. Two state legislators were among the crowd: Reps. Jenifer Loon, R-Eden Prairie, who would go on to lose her seat in the November election, and Jim Davnie, DFL-Minneapolis, who held on to his.

With her voice raised to cut through the noise, Kate Seybold, farm-to-school coordinator for Minneapolis Public Schools, painted a picture of a school menu full of meats, grains and produce sourced from Minnesota farms. In 2017, the district spent \$250,000 on 130,000 pounds of produce from 15 farms, as well as another \$155,000 on local turkey and beef.

When school districts fill their kitchens with locally sourced food, everyone wins, advocates say: School children eat better, small farms sell their crops and the public's money feeds the local economy. Since 2002, the number of Minnesota school districts with farm-to-school programs has grown from six to 268. But without policies providing technical and financial support for school districts, the state won't see the full benefit of such cooperation, Weber said. "The food system has not been kind to our young people over the last 30 years." Read more [here](#).

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### Georgia preschool teacher recognized as PBS KIDS "early learning champion"

FOREST PARK GEORGIA  
PBS KIDS named 17 educators,  
including Andrea Zoppo from Little  
Ones Learning Center in Forest Park,



Georgia, as PBS KIDS Early Learning Champions.

This new awards program recognizes committed educators who work with young children, from infants to second

graders, and will offer a variety of community building, leadership and professional learning opportunities provided by PBS and member stations over the next two years.

Read more [here](#).

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## Resources for School Gardens

### Kid's Gardening 2019 youth garden grant closing soon

**Grant Deadline:** Application is due **December 17, 2018**.

**Eligibility:** Any nonprofit organization, public or private school, or youth program in the United States or US Territories planning a new garden program or expanding an established one that serves at least 15 youth between the ages of 3 and 18 is eligible to apply.

**Funding:** Cash prize plus a large garden tool package including seeds, garden tools, curriculum and other items.

**The Information:** The selection of winners is based on demonstrated program impact and sustainability. Previous Youth Garden Grant winners who wish to reapply must wait one year after receiving the award and must prove that their garden programs have been significantly expanded. Read more and apply [here](#).

### Lesson Plan – Ethnobotany for the Holidays

Overview: How do you combine history, social studies, geography, and science, and wrap in a bit of holiday fun? By exploring ethnobotany!

Grade Level/Range: 3rd – 6th grade

Objective: Students share recipes of their favorite holiday foods and research the origins and historical uses of important plant ingredients.

[kidsgardening.org/ethnobotany-for-the-holidays](http://kidsgardening.org/ethnobotany-for-the-holidays)

### Harvest for Healthy Kids Garden Lessons Toolkit

Harvest for Healthy Kids helps children develop healthy eating habits. The program connects young children with fresh food grown close to home through activity kits that teach science, math and literacy. Each kit is developed and tested by teachers and childcare providers, and includes hands-on activities with different fruits and vegetables, colorful picture cards, newsletters for families and background information for adults. All Harvest for Healthy Kids activities are aligned with early learning standards and have been rigorously evaluated.

Access the toolkit [here](#).

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## Gardens at school might boost availability of veggies at home

By: Chloe Reichel, research reporter, Journalist's Resource

Having a garden at school might influence whether vegetables are available to children at home, a forthcoming study in Preventive Medicine finds.

Home fruit and vegetable availability is a strong determinant of how much people eat them, and fruit and vegetable consumption in turn is associated with a number of improved health outcomes, including reduced risk of developing certain types of cancer and cardiovascular disease. But research finds kids don't eat nearly enough fruits and vegetables. Between 2007 and 2010, 93 percent of kids didn't meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Patterns vegetable intake recommendations, according to a 2014 report published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Read more [here](#).

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## Resources for Producers

### Cultivating Motivated and Reliable Farm Employees Webinar

Wednesday, January 16 from noon-1:30pm (central time) FREE

Reliable farm labor is essential to a growing farm business. Join Rachel Armstrong from Farm Commons for a webinar where we will discuss the process of legally hiring employees and explore strategies for building a motivated and reliable farm workforce. Read more and register [here](#).

### Whole Farm Planning – Make Your Business Work for You

January 29, 2019 | Urbana, IL

Is your farm working for you or do you work for it?...

In this all-day workshop, we will begin the business planning process, exploring your goals, beliefs, and values; crafting your mission and vision statements; and analyzing your resources, products, and markets. Read more and register [here](#).

### Organic Grain Conference

February 13-14, 2019 | Urbana, IL

The Organic Grain Conference is the largest event in Illinois dedicated solely to organic grain education and networking! The 2019 conference will build upon the first two amazing years by increasing the number of break out sessions from two to four and growing the trade show to 25+ vendors. Read more about this conference [here](#).

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## Illinois to receive \$691k for local produce expansion

### SPRINGFIELD IL

Illinois will receive \$691,000 in federal funds to expand the availability of locally grown produce.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture announced last week that money will be divided among 12 projects. Fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops are among those that qualify for the program.

Illinois is the nation's largest producer of pumpkins and horseradish. It ranks in the top ten states in acreage devoted to cantaloupes, green peas, lima beans, and sweet corn. Read more [here](#).

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