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Illinois Farm to School Network News

Crunch success in Illinois

Congratulations Illinois!

You took it to the next level for the annual Illinois Great Apple Crunch. We celebrated with 583,566 total Crunches across our state! That's 1,231 individual sites with 1,178 preschool Crunchers, 570,855 student Crunchers, and 11,533 adults all crunching into local apples on October 11.



We are beginning to see reports of Illinois apples purchased for the Crunch from our distributors. Get Fresh Produce reported that 60,240 lbs of Illinois Apples (sourced from Rendleman's Orchard in Alto Pass and Flamm's Orchard in Cobden) went to 310 schools. In 2017, Get Fresh moved 50,360 lbs of Apples to 253 schools. That's an increase of 9,880 lbs and 57 schools!

Your photos sharing all things Crunch were fantastic! We enjoyed every one of your online posts and shares. Thank you for making this our biggest Crunch ever. See you next October for the 2019 Crunch!

Newsworthy in Illinois

Extension, Champaign Farmers Market collaborate on nutrition education



CHAMPAIGN IL

For many SNAP recipients, access to local produce can be cost-prohibitive if not outright unavailable, as local growers may not have the ability to accept Link cards, and purchasers may not be able to afford the produce out of pocket, according to a news release.

Because of Land Connection's commitment to SNAP recipients, this summer University of Illinois Extension's SNAP-Ed Program, serving Champaign County, collaborated with the organization to teach attendees at the market what to do with their produce once they purchase it. Extension staff first started serving recipes in early June.

In the three months that they have worked at the market, EXT staff have talked to nearly 1,000 people and have demoed recipes including Apple Cucumber Salad, Mediterranean Quinoa Salad, Squash Casserole, Summer Vegetable Salsa, Spinach Salad with Strawberries, Whipped Sweet Potatoes and much more.

All of the recipes came from the USDA School Meal Program or the IL Farm to School [Harvest of the Month](#) Program. The well-received recipes will be used in ABC'S of School Nutrition within the school year to create healthy meals for local schools and childcare programs.

[Read more here.](#)

Food for Thought:

Farm to School movement feeds kids, boosts local economy

RED WING MN

When I was eating school lunch in the 1970s, there were just two days looked forward to: spaghetti day and pizza day. The mystery-meat hamburgers and overcooked vegetables, and hard, cold mashed potatoes were just bad.

My children have been eating school lunch for the past decade, and I've been impressed with the daily offerings of fresh vegetables and fruits and the improved quality and nutritional value of the food.

But the Farm to School "movement" really excites me.

[Read more here.](#)



Giving Tuesday is coming up fast!

#GivingTuesday- Give early on November 27, 2018!

Last year 45 million dollars were raised on Facebook; almost half a million people gave money to more than 46,000 organizations. Facebook will match your donation made on Nov. 27 up to \$20,000 per donor until they reach \$7 million in total donations.

Will you give to support IL Farm to School? Find us at: [IFSNFacebook](#)

Every act of giving has a story. What's yours?

Help Farm to School reach across Illinois!

Tell your giving story and you could win up to \$10,000 for your favorite nonprofit organization!

[#MyGivingStory](#) is a contest open to anyone in the U.S. who can share why they give to an organization. Enter your story about why you support the IFSN by November 30 and share on social media.

You can also donate to IFSN via Seven Generations Ahead on our [donate page](#) or support us while you shop! Choose Seven Generations Ahead as your charity of choice and [Amazon Smile](#) will donate a portion of your purchase to support our programs.

Thank you!

Resources for Schools & Feeding Sites

USDA FY 2019 Farm to School Grant now open

Application Deadline: December 4, 2018

Who should apply? Eligible schools, State and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and Non-profit entities.

The information: The FY 2019 Farm to School Grant Program Request for Applications (RFA) is now open to applicants. Due to additional funding made available to the Farm to School Grant Program through the FY 2018 Omnibus Bill, the Office of Community Food Systems (OCFS) seeks to award approximately \$7.5M in FY 2019 funding. Award decisions will be released in late spring or early summer of 2019. Learn more and apply [here](#).

2018 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grant coming soon

Application Timeline: ISBE will release a Request for Proposals by year's end.

Who should apply? Illinois SFAs participating in the National School Lunch Program

The Information: The USDA has allocated \$1,106,911 for the Illinois State Board of Education to competitively award Equipment Assistance Grants to eligible School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch

Program. ISBE is currently developing a Request for Proposals and will provide further information with a Notice of Funding Opportunity and details on how to apply later this year. You can review guidelines and past awardees [here](#).

Fruit and Veggie Grants are 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

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](#).

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](#).

Zero Waste Schools Fox Valley Event

Date: November 28, 4:30–6:30

Place: The Onion Pub & Brewery, 22221 N. Pepper Rd, Lake Barrington, IL

The Information: Join Seven Generations Ahead, Mindful Waste, and the Fox Valley Sustainability Network for an evening of complimentary drinks, appetizers, and education. Learn strategies for source reduction, recycling, composting, and food recovery that engage students, save money, and sustain our beautiful planet. [Register here](#).

News Across the Nation

Can teaching kids to cook make them healthier later in life?

Civil Eats

It's a hot afternoon in late May and



Sierra Sutton, Risa Luk, and Sissi Mesa, all seniors at the High School for Environmental Studies in Manhattan, are roasting trays of broccoli and potatoes to serve for lunch at the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen.

The meal is the culmination of a year-long, in-school food course developed by the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Tarrytown. The primary aim is to educate kids about the complex workings of the food system and how they can help to change it. The course also aims to teach students a little something about cooking, nutrition, and food budgeting—once the purview of the home economics classes offered across the U.S.

[Read more here.](#)

Cool idea– Spicy Salsa competition for kids

San Diego CA

The Humboldt County Office of Education’s (HCOE) Nutrition Education Programs and Services host an annual Salsa Competition in which students in area schools plan, prepare and share original salsa recipes. The inspiration for this event comes from the varied nutrition education activities that take place as part of the Harvest of the Month program. Students combine math, science, and art as they learn about nutrition and develop cooking skills that will last a lifetime.



“Engaging kids in food-based activities such as cooking and gardening increases their willingness to try new foods and develop healthy eating habits,” said Megan Russin, Nutrition Educator with HCOE.

[Read more here.](#)

Resources for School Gardens

Budding Botanist grant for school gardens

Grant Deadline: Application is due Nov. 19, 2018.

Eligibility: Open to any Title I public or charter school in the United States.

Funding: \$500 curriculum and garden tool package, as well as a check for \$2500 to install or expand a school garden.

The Information: Applicants must be planning a new or expanding an existing school garden program designed to teach students about environmental sustainability and the importance of biodiversity. Learn more and apply [here.](#)

Kid's Gardening 2019 youth garden grant

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](#).

Springfield MO Public Schools farm to school garden toolkit

This garden toolkit has been created by the Springfield, MO Public School District and contains twelve toolkit sections including How to Use School Garden Produce and Season Extension. Designed in partnership with the Ozarks Regional YMCA, this resource guide is available to prepare any garden champion with the tools necessary for sustainable growing year after year. Check out the toolkit [here](#).

South Carolina garden toolkit for school and preschool

This toolkit is an updated version of the “Eat Smart...it’s in the Garden” Garden Toolkit © 2010, which was a collaborative effort of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina. The SC Farm to Institution toolkit provides information to develop and school or preschool garden including eight topic areas.

Access the toolkit [here](#).

Garden News Across the Nation

Let It Grow

The long-lasting benefits of a school garden — supporting health and wellness, encouraging students to choose nutritious foods

Amid the litany of education reforms that emphasize innovation and new methods, school gardens stand out as a low-tech change. In an era where kids' lives are more sedentary, and where childhood obesity has risen dramatically, gardens support and encourage healthful eating as a key component of children's physical wellbeing, which can aid their academic and social success, too. And as the consequences of food deserts and poor nutrition on life outcomes become starker, advocates say that school gardens can act as a counterweight — an outdoor respite for children growing up in environments that can be otherwise unsafe or barren.

Where cries of "Eat your broccoli!" and "Haven't you had enough sugar?" fall flat, how exactly can school gardens prompt healthier eating habits — and what are the best practices for establishing one?

[Read more here.](#)

Resources for Producers

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.](#)

Cover Crops: Doing what can't be done – again

December 4, 2018 | Ft. Wayne, IN

Learn from top farmers and researchers who have been there, done that. Discover how to refine your management system to get the most financial and biological return from your investment – and build resiliency in your operation to withstand uncertain economic pressures and extreme weather events.

Read more about this [here.](#)

Beginning farmer incubator program (Pushing the Envelope Farm)

Date: Ongoing | Geneva, IL

This program provides young growers training in small-scale farm operations. The program provides organically managed land and farm infrastructure with on-site housing, access to ongoing education, and the opportunity to live with other young sustainably-minded farmers. Read more [here.](#)

Producer News

Five ways to double your farm's revenue using Facebook



As part of the latest GenNext Growers Webinar Series, Tony Ndoca, an Illinois-based GenNexter himself who also consults small and mid-size farms on business development as well as sales and marketing strategy, led an interactive presentation on this trending topic.

Ndoca has firsthand experience in what social media can do to boost business. He and his sister successfully employed an online social campaign for their family farm and it led to (after four years) not just doubling, but more than tripling revenue.

Impressive results aside, Ndoca admitted it took some time to figure out what social media platform would be the best fit and how to use it. Despite having multiple choices, he gives a hearty nod to Facebook and its broad appeal. “If you’re doing one thing online and using social media at all for your farm, it should be with Facebook,” he said.

[Read more here.](#)

Beyond farmers markets: Helping small growers get fresh produce into grocery stores

About 10 years ago, Kathryn Draeger and her family moved from St. Paul to a farm near Clinton, in western Minnesota’s Big Stone County, where they raise grass-fed beef cattle, organic soybeans, and barley.

Draeger is also a professor who runs the University of Minnesota Extension’s Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, an agency that works on a variety of rural sustainability projects. So, while she works the land, she’s also charged with thinking about ways to make farming and rural life better.

One question quickly came to mind after she began to shop for groceries in this region: How could rural grocers offer more of the fresh produce that is grown in the farm fields all around them?

[Read more here.](#)

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