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Illinois Farm to School Network News

Here that? That's the sound of Illinois Crunching!

Join participants across Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin in celebrating Farm to School Month by crunching into locally and regionally grown apples on Thursday, Oct. 11. Everyone is invited to Crunch, including schools, early care sites, hospitals, colleges, community organizations, businesses, and more.



Help make Illinois the loudest Crunch"! Don't forget to register your site so you can be counted toward our goal of 500,000 participants across the state. There's still time!

[Register now!](#)

Newsworthy in Illinois

Join Healthy Lombard's Apple Crunch on October 11th

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On "Apple Crunch Day," Healthy Lombard is encouraging everyone to crunch into an apple in a unifying action to raise awareness about eating better diets for our health and the environment, access and affordability of fruits and vegetables, and supporting local farmers.

Hundreds of thousands of school students in Illinois will crunch into an

apple at lunchtime on Thursday, Oct. 11.

Read more [here](#).

Oak Park's Fresh Honey Harvest Donated To Local Food Shelter

OAK PARK, IL — The beehives at Oak Park's village hall have been buzzing with activity this year. The bees who occupy the hives near the village hall's south entrance yielded 50 pounds of honey, which the village packed into jars and gifted to Oak Park-River Forest Food Pantry.



The honeybee hive project is headed up by Village Forestry superintendent Rob Sproule, who said in a statement that "It seemed natural to share this tasty, local honey with members of the community who are in need." The harvest resulted in a total of 200 3-ounce honey jars, which will help aid families in need throughout more than a dozen zip codes in and around Oak Park and River Forest, according to a press release from the village.

[Read more here.](#)

Extension, Champaign Farmers Market collaborate on nutrition education



CHAMPAIGN – 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, 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.

After the farmers market completes for the summer, Kownacki and her team plan to take the process one step further. They will share the data they collected on the recipes to make change in partnering schools throughout the area. All of the recipes came from the USDA School Meal Program or Farm to School Harvest of the Month Program. The well-received recipes will be used in ABCS of School Nutrition within the school year to create healthy meals for local schools and childcare programs.

[Read more here.](#)

Resources for Schools & Feeding Sites

National Farm to School Month Celebration Toolkit

October is National Farm to School Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the importance of farm to school programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food.

Everyone can get involved and celebrate National Farm to School Month! At the National Farm to School Network, we encourage everyone to use National Farm to School Month as an opportunity to find small ways to get informed, be inspired and take action to grow farm to school in communities across the country. Whether you're hosting a taste test in the cafeteria, harvesting school garden produce, visiting a farmers market, reading a food-related book, or making a new farm to school connection, no action is too small!

Check out our new Farm to School Month Celebration Toolkit for 60+ action ideas you can try this month. We're excited to see the countless ways in which people celebrate – be sure to share with us by posting on social media with the hashtags #F2SMonth and/or #farmtoschool!



[Check out the toolkit here.](#)

News Across the Nation

Fresh-from-the-farm food adds to Fauquier school menus



WARRENTON, VA

The FRESH program creates a culture of health and wellness for students, staff and is funded by the PATH Foundation. Students learn about the seasonality of food products and the importance of supporting local agriculture.

Each month, there are one or two featured produce items incorporated into the Fauquier County schools lunch menu for grades K-12. They may be in the form of cooked items or raw fruit and vegetables.

A “What’s FRESH” tasting cart rotates through three schools on a monthly basis. Students sample either raw produce or a cooked item. They then vote on whether or not they like the item, which gives an idea of how successful it will be.

[Read more here.](#)

Introducing the First-Ever Nationwide Food Education Standards

Today, Pilot Light released the first-ever nationwide recommendations for food education for K-12 students, the Food Education Standards. The Food Education Standards were developed in collaboration with Pilot Light co-founders and chefs Paul Kahan, Matthias Merages and Jason Hammel, as well as nutrition and education experts and faculty from the University of Chicago, Columbia University, the United States Department of Agriculture and a teacher development team comprising Chicago Public School faculty.

[Read more here.](#)

Over-achieving cafeteria worker gets creative with fruit displays

Lewisburg, WV

At Lewisburg Elementary school fruits and veggies are looked at in a whole new light.

New cafeteria cook Laura Osbourne knows a thing or two about enticing kids to eat healthy foods. “I think about my kids or my grand kids. How they would enjoy seeing that. So I just take the little extra effort.”



The self-described over-achiever has created kid friendly fruit displays for the garden bar. She says, “It definitely gets them interested looking at the bar.”

Fifth grader Grant Burdette has noticed and he says other kids have too. “I think they’re really cool and creative. Like it could draw more attention to kids to eat a hot lunch.”

[Read more here.](#)

Resources for School Gardens



Don't forget about these garden grant opportunities!

Annie's Garden Grant Cycle is open!

Application Timeline: The application period for 2018 will open on 8/1/2018 and will close on 11/1/2018.

Read about the grant program [here](#).

Wild One's Seeds for Education Grant cycle is closing soon!

Application Timeline: Applications are due **October 15th**.

Read more and apply [here](#).

Wholr Kids Foundation Garden Grants cycle is closing soon!

Application Timeline: Applications close on **Oct. 15th**.

Apply [here](#).

Slow Food USA Garden to Cafeteria Toolkit



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.

Check out the free toolkit [here](#).

Garden News Across the Nation



Students enjoying fruits – and veggies – of their labor

RAPID CITY, NC

Reds, oranges and greens dot the landscape north of Chadron Intermediate School, and students dart from one spot to another, thrilled with each new find in the school's garden.

Created and planted through volunteer efforts, the intermediate school garden is producing buckets and bowls of fresh produce in its first year.

[Read more here.](#)

Little Farmers



Decatur, AL

Her blue mud boots peeking out from the bottom of a floral pink and green sundress, the young girl carefully walked up a 1-by-6 board leading to the chicken coop. The hem of the dress she clutched with her hand — speckled with dirt from a day of feeding pigs and lambs —

brushed the wooden plank.

“My favorite thing is getting eggs. I’m the best egg getter,” Shelby Murphy said, raising an arm in triumph.

As the afternoon sun beat down on the 600 hens milling around DSR Farms in Morgan County, the Murphy girls, 6-year-old Dallas, 5-year-old Shelby, and 3-year-old Raven searched for eggs in the weathered brown coop and paddock of shoulder-high grass — perfect for playing hide-and-seek.

[Read more here.](#)

Resources for Producers

Central Illinois Farm Beginnings

Central Illinois Farm Beginnings (CIFB) is a training program for those committed to creating a sustainable farm business. The Land Connection hosts Farm Beginnings to provide the best resources, information, tools and mentoring to help you start your own farm business in Illinois or Indiana.



CIFB courses are held on five Saturdays between November and February each year, and students present their farm business plan at the end of the course. After the course is complete, students are paired with mentors to gain the most valuable experience—on-farm learning. The Land Connection's 40+ mentor network spans across the Midwest and includes some of the best and most influential farmers in our region.

Check out the courses and reserve your spot [here.](#)

4-Season Production/Income



Philip and Kelli Anderson: Anderson Organics manages about 12 acres of veggies and cover crop across 3 different locations and is in its 9th growing season. We have been certified organic since 2012 and market our produce through farmers markets, restaurants, a local health store, and a CSA.

In the 4 season production/income field day we will discuss strategies to maintain cash flow and sales through the winter by having a diversity of crops to market. We will talk about storing roots, potatoes, onions, and winter squash as well as production of fresh greens and brassicas in a high tunnel. Planting dates, methods, and production issues pertaining to high tunnel growing will be discussed as well as winter post-harvest handling. We will also have time for questions and information sharing by other farmers with experience in 4 season production and income.

This field day will feature a panel of local farmers who extend their production season. Find out how they do it! Space is limited for this Field Day, so RSVP soon! RSVP by October 30th

[Learn more here.](#)

Producer News

Blood, Guts and Truth from Red Tomato

Posted September 26, 2018 by Laura Edwards-Orr & filed under [News](#).



On August 29th, after 13 years of supplying their regional apple program, Red Tomato received notice from our largest customer that they would be sourcing 4 of 5 apple varieties elsewhere. The harvest was underway. Shipping and warehousing contracts were in place.

More than \$100,000 of custom packaging sat in inventory. The news came in an email. To this day, our voicemails and meeting requests remain unanswered. Through the grapevine, we learned that we were underbid on one variety by \$.01 per pound. This is today's wholesale market.

Red Tomato will survive this setback. Our packaging has been resold. Our growers remain loyal. And, in more bountiful years, we built up a reserve for moments such as this. True resilience in this moment, though, will require reinvention. For the last several years, we have been observing an increasingly competitive and rapidly consolidating market. In response, we've tested updates and tweaks to the strategies that have enabled Red Tomato to scale local into the mainstream market over our 20 year history. It wasn't enough.

[Read more here.](#)

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