Illinois Farm to School Network Updates

**IFSN News: Marketing Webinar on January 23**

Join our webinar on January 23 at 2pm to learn how to market your farm to school programming.

In this webinar, the Illinois Farm to School team will share information about promoting your programming to your student customers to draw their interest and engage them. We will talk about how marketing your Harvest of the Month and Great Apple Crunch programming will help you to hit the target and improve student acceptance of mandated foods.

During the second half of our webinar discover how farm to school programs fit into school wellness goals and smarter lunchroom plans with Jessica Gadomski, Illinois Nutrition Education Programs extension educator at University of Illinois.

Who should join us? Anyone who works with schools, is on a wellness or food service team, or works with a school nutrition.

**Mark your calendar!**
IFSN Webinar: Successfully market your Farm to School program!
Tue, Jan 23, 2018 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM CST
Join on Computer or Smart Phone
On your phone: (312) 757-3121
Access Code: 293-291-517
On video-conferencing: Dial: 67.217.95.2##293291517
Cisco devices: 293291517@67.217.95.2

**IFSN News: Our 2017 Impact Summary is Out!**

It's been a busy year for the Illinois Farm to School Network and we want to share it all with you!
Our 2017 Impact Summary shares information on our focus throughout the year as we developed farm to school across Illinois. Read about our program success, see the impact made, and enjoy a highlight from our Farm to School Day event in St Charles, IL.

To complete the picture we have shared an exciting Harvest of the Month success story from Champaign District Unit 4. Their first quarter-data is in and we could not be prouder!

View the 2017 IFSN Impact Summary here.

Farm to School News and Events

News: National Farm to School Conference Scholarships Now Available

Scholarship application period: Dec. 18, 2017 - Feb. 12, 1028
Early bird registration: Jan. 29-March 9, 2018
Registration closes: April 9, 2018
Conference: April 25-27, 2018

The 9th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference will be held in Cincinnati, Ohio, April 25-27, 2018. Hosted by the National Farm to School Network, this biennial event will convene a diverse group of food service professionals, farmers, educators, students, representatives from nonprofits and government agencies, public health professionals and more for three days of learning, networking and movement building.

Join farm to cafeteria leaders from across the country at the 9th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference in April 2018. Scholarship now available, apply by 2/12 farmtocafeteriaconference.org

Read More Here

News: Should School Cafeterias Be More Like Fast-Casual Restaurants?
"Nothing screams 'success' more than when the vegetable is the dish that goes first," said Benavidez of Boston Public Schools.

The scene more closely resembles lunchtime at a fast casual restaurant like Sweetgreen or Chipotle than an elementary school-and that's by design. At four schools in East Boston-Bradley Elementary, Patrick J. Kennedy Elementary School, the East Boston Early Education Center, and East Boston High School-a pilot has been underway since May testing the feasibility of cooking meals made with fresher ingredients.

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Jill Shah, whose husband Niraj Shah founded the ecommerce site Wayfair, approached Boston Public Schools and offered to fund and implement a pilot to improve school food in the city's schools. Last year, looking for the first philanthropic opportunities for the Shah Family Foundation, she visited a few schools, where she said she saw kids "sporking a [plastic-wrapped] waffle stuffed with some kind of syrup."

Read More Here

News: Plate Waste Study Shows Farm to School Works!

Researchers at the University of Florida found that students who attend a school with a farm to school program eat 11% more fruits and 37% more vegetables!

A Plate Waste Evaluation of the Farm to School Program featured in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior tracked students' consumption of fruits and vegetables during meal time. Researchers evaluated fruit and vegetable consumption before and after a farm to school program was implemented at six schools in Alachua County, Florida, a FY 2016 Farm to School Grantee. Over 11,000 meals were observed by students who participate in the National School Lunch Program in grades first through fifth. More research needs to be conducted to fully understand the factors that are responsible for those results, but this is a good step in the right direction!
Farm to early care and education (farm to ECE) is a natural extension of farm to school that offers increased access to healthy, local foods, gardening opportunities, and food-based activities to enhance the educational experience in all types of ECE settings (e.g. preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, programs in K-12 school districts).

Community Ground Works through funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan, has developed resources for ECE providers, ECE support organizations, food service staff, and food producers.

Explore the ECE Resources Here.

USDA Team Nutrition ECE and Kindergarten Classroom Celebrations, Nutrition Activities & More!

Anytime is a great time to discover new favorite foods. Team Nutrition has resources and ideas to help make the journey of exploring new fruits and vegetables fun for children— and fun for adults too!

Take a look at the Discover My PLate Classroom Celebrations resource sheet for kindergarten students or the the Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Book for fun nutrition education ideas in and outside of the classroom! Are you searching for recipes to punch up nutrition and introduce new foods? The Team Nutrition Recipes and Cookbook Toolkit is a great place to start!

Food from Farms Toolkit for Direct Purchasing of Local Food

This toolkit from the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) is intended for use by school districts and child and adult nutrition programs, as well as other types of institutional food service, for procurement of local food directly from farmers.

The toolkit offers examples and templates for starting up community-based procurement of local food directly from farmers.
**Event: Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference (Rockford)**

The 22nd Annual Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference is happening on Monday, February 5, 2018 at 6799 Guilford Road, Rockford, Illinois.

University of Illinois Extension is excited to present the 22nd-Annual Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference at Midway Village Museum, Rockford, Illinois. This conference addresses common issues facing fruit and vegetable growers, with the hopes of providing the most up-to-date information to ensure a successful growing season and business.

[Read More Here.](#)  
[Register Here.](#)

**Training: 2018 Small Farms Winter Webinar Series**

University of Illinois Extension presents a weekly educational series for the small farm community. This series will provide practical knowledge on emerging topics which advance local food production in Illinois.

These online presentations will give small farm producers a look at how leading practices in production, management, and marketing enable operations to improve profitability and sustainability. The complete list of topics and speakers is located on the website. Webinars will be held from noon -1:00 pm on Thursdays and are free.

[View Topics & Register Here.](#)

**Resource: Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project**
The Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project (CUAMP) is an ongoing collaboration between individuals, organizations, businesses and institutions that seeks to inventory and map urban agriculture across the Chicago Metropolitan Area. It includes everything from small residential gardens to commercial urban farms.

In addition to serving as a tool for connecting gardeners, farmers, vendors, consumers, volunteers, funding sources, and others interested in urban agriculture, the information that is gathered and disseminated through CUAMP can be used to learn about and better advocate for Chicago's growing urban agriculture movement.

Explore the Resource Here.

Farm to School Gardening Grants and More!

Training: School and Community Garden Training 2018

Who Should Attend: K-12 schools with gardens or those planning gardens including three representatives (may include parents, teachers, school garden coordinators, administrators) from your school garden.

Supporting your school and/or community garden is important to us, and U of I Extension's horticulture team will do our best to serve you in 2018. We will be able to consult with you remotely and provide you with invaluable resources via our website. However, staff time for on-site visits is limited. In order to make the most of on-site visits, we are implementing a school garden training. Please join us at one of three trainings in order for U of I Extension to support your garden in the 2018 growing season:

- Tuesday February 13, 2018 from 4:30 to 7 pm at University of Illinois Extension Westchester Branch office, 2205 Enterprise Drive, Suite 501, Westchester, IL
- Saturday, February 17 from 10 am to 12:30 pm at FPCC Mathew Bieszczat Volunteer Resource Center, 6100 North Central Ave, Chicago, IL.
- Tuesday, March 27 from 4:30 to 7:00 pm at University of Illinois Extension, 4747 Lincoln Mall Drive, Suite 601, Matteson, IL

Register Here
Grants: Get Out and Grow School Garden Grant & Sweepstakes

Who Should Apply: K-12 schools of a state accredited school (Kindergarten - 12th Grade) located in the 50 United States and D.C.
Timeline: Begins at 12:00:00 a.m. Central Time ("CT") on December 1, 2017 and ends at 11:59:59 p.m. CT on March 11, 2018

Smucker Away From Home wants to help schools across the country develop gardens that help cultivate hard work and healthy eating habits.

The Get Out and Grow School Garden Sweepstakes is open to School Administrators or Foodservice Directors of K-12 schools. Tell us why a new or improved school garden would benefit your students. If you are a parent or community member, please share this page with your school and encourage them to enter!

Grant Information Here

Grants: Kids Gardening Budding Botanist Grant

Who Should Apply: Any Title I public or charter school located within 15 miles of one of the six target cities
Timeline: Applications must be submitted by January 31, 2018.

The Klorane Botanical Foundation is committed to supporting programs to teach respect for the environment and protect nature through the preservation of plant species and biodiversity. Designed to further their mission, The Budding Botanist Grant will help our youngest citizens learn about plants, explore their world and inspire them to take care of the life they discover in their local ecosystems.

In 2018, six grant packages valued at $3,000 in cash and supplies will be awarded in six metro areas across the United States including Chicago, IL, Kansas City, KS, Los Angeles, CA, New York, NY, San Francisco, CA, and Washington, DC (one school will be chosen from each location).

Grant Information Here

Contest: SPRING 2018 CARTON 2 GARDEN CONTEST
Who Should Apply: The Spring 2018 Carton 2 Garden is open to all PreK-12 public and private schools in the United States. Your school does not need a garden to participate.

Timeline: Spring 2018 Carton 2 Garden Entry Forms must be submitted by Monday, April 16, 2018.

Evergreen Packaging and KidsGardening.org are proud to present our fourth annual national Carton 2 Garden Contest! Open to public and private schools, contest winners will be selected based on their implementation of an innovative garden creation featuring creative and sustainable uses for repurposed milk and juice cartons.

Your school can get started by collecting at least 100 empty cartons from your home, community, or cafeteria. After gathering cartons, it's time to design and construct purposeful garden items and structures using them. Looking for ideas? Check out last year's winners for inspiration and visit us on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest or tips, activities, and lessons.

All entries must document and share their gardening experience through an online entry form and submission of up to 10 photos. In order to be eligible for the grand prize and specialty prizes, entries must also include a video link that tells the story of the project in its entirety. Please note: that each student that appears in the photos or video must have an accompanying signed official Carton 2 Garden parental release form submitted with your entry.

Contest Information Here

BECOME A NETWORK MEMBER

Join our growing movement. Click here to take the Farm to School pledge, and then spread the word. Forward this email and invite anyone you know who cares about Farm to School to join the conversation.