IFSN News: Don't forget to register for Farm to School programming!

Registration for Harvest of the Month is open now! You can find individual registration forms for returning participants, new participants, and supporting organizations located on the front page of the website. Access registration [here](#).

**UPDATES:** On June 1st, the Harvest of the Month website began conversion to the upcoming 2018/19 school year complete with a new seasonal calendar!

We've changed the layout of the HOTM calendar. Instead of a 12-month grid with one highlighted local fruit or vegetable item in each, Harvest of the Month has gone seasonal! Participating schools, early childcare, and feeding sites can now choose to feature any local food item on the seasonal list for our region each month. And, we've added dairy and grains to improve the number of choices during our cold, midwest winter!

New recipes for K-12 schools, CAFCP, and home recipes for families, new tools for education and program promotion along with new featured foods will all be available to registered 2018/19 participants!

If you have a 2017/18 password, it has expired. Don't get locked out this great program. Register for 18/19 now!

Registration for the Apple Crunch is now live! Schools, early childcare, feeding sites, non-profit organizations, and Illinois businesses can all be part of the Great Lakes Apple Crunch! You can register for Apple Crunch [here](#).

**UPDATES:**
Our website has been updated and now features tools for [food service](#) with recipes and service line hints.
New! Check out the Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch Guide, chocked-full of tools, procurement assistance, recipes, and helpful tips. The guide is provided by the Great Lakes Apple Crunch folks at the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems in Madison, WI. You can find the Illinois specific Crunch Guide on our website [here](link).

Check out the 2018 Apple Crunch poster [here](link).

Don't Delay! Join the crunchin fun and register your site soon!

**IFSN Resource: Local Foods are heating up summer feeding!**

Are you a summer feeding site in Illinois? Then serve up fresh, local produce!

**When is local produce a sweet deal?** We all know the difference between a home-grown tomato and a store-bought tomato. The taste difference during the height of the season can be eye-opening for young eaters. It's a flavor and sensation overload! If you have an opportunity to purchase locally during the summer your customers will taste local produce when it is best. What better way to introduce your students to interesting and new fresh fruits and veggies?

**Got school gardens?** School garden programs that run through summer school and beyond have an opportunity to tie what they're producing to Harvest of the Month and utilize lessons and activities. Continuing with Harvest of the Month programming through the summer months can add more activities and education to garden work. Creating a summer garden maintenance schedule with added learning activities as extra credit for fall classes can be the motivator that keeps kids, and parents, engaged all summer long!

**Not a school garden site?** Can you connect your feeding program to a park district or community garden near by? Adding farm to school programming linked to a garden space in your neighborhood is a great way to introduce summer meal eaters to fresh, local veggies and allow them to experience growing food in a garden setting.

**No gardens nearby?** Try connecting to a local farmers market or an area grower, or urban farm. Strike up a partnership to educate your kids and share how food is grown. Then, add local ingredients to the menu! Don't know where those growers are located? You can search for growers at Local Harvest by zip code [here](link). You can search for local farmers markets at the IL Farmers Market Association, and download their new phone app *What's In Season?* to help you find local veggies and fruits at the market [here](link).

Are you summer feeding at school?
Summer feeding at school is the perfect time to try out Farm to School programming! Utilizing recipes and creating local/regional menus with a smaller group of kids during summer feeding is a great way to try your hand at programming. Experiment with local veggies, dairy, grains, and fruits to gauge your customer's interest and find their favorites. Create mini surveys using your school's phone app or go "old school" and share printed surveys to get those customer responses to your new menu items. Doing the groundwork before the busy school year begins will give you a time advantage and allow you to plan ahead!

Plus, buying local produce, dairy and grains during the summer provides the perfect opportunity to choose potential school-year suppliers and develop a relationship with new, local vendors. Look for, and talk to producers at your local farmers market to check out offerings and availability through late fall. Ask about a potential farmer visit to your cafeteria during the winter, or a field trip to the farm in the spring or fall. Develop a relationship with a local farm and watch it grow every year!

Want to learn more? Contact the programs manager or call 708-628-4501. Check out our website with links to our programs 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!

News in Illinois

News: Farm to Table 2018 dinner raises $7,200 for West Prairie FFA

MACOMB, IL

Dozens of community members gathered under a balmy June sun on Friday for 2018 Farm-to-Table benefit dinner for West Prairie Future Farmers of America.

Guests dined outdoors at tables set with black table cloths, garden arbors, linen napkins and decorative floral table center pieces and sipped beverages from a cash bar while students of the West Prairie FFA served food prepared by Magnolia's Restaurant and Catering located on Lafayette Street.

As preparations were being made to receive guests for the benefit dinner, The Voice caught up with Corinne Biswell who is one of the FFA advisors and agricultural teachers at West Prairie High School in Sciota.
Biswell explained that the Farm-to-Table benefit is an annual event held to raise funds for sophomore and senior agricultural high school students in the county. The benefit, she said, is rotated each year between different FFA chapters. "Last year was Macomb FFA, this year it's West Prairie FFA and next year it will be rotating to the Bushnell-Prairie City FFA," Biswell said.

Read more here.

Resources for Schools and Early Childcare

**Resource: USDA Planning Toolkit - Farm to School menu planning webinar resource**

Did you know the USDA has a treasure trove of recorded webinars on Farm to School topics for school and early child care feeding sites? Check out the recorded webinar on menu planning for farm to school programs!

-Bring local products to life on your school menus! In this fourth webinar, Chef Kent Getzin, Director of Food Services in Wenatchee, WA will share a variety of ways to incorporate local products into your school recipes, salad bars, and cycle menus so they become permanent items in your kitchen inventory. Prepare for the presentation by drooling over the local food featured in The Lunch Room: Wenatchee's Farm to School Movement.

Check out more webinars here.

**Resource: Complete Salad Bar Tool Kit available and it's free!**

Why Salad Bars?
Research shows that incorporating salad bars into school lunches increases children’s consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Salad bars profoundly shift the typical school lunch by offering students not only variety but also choice.

- Assessment and Planning
- Training
- Operations
- Salad Bar Procurement
- Marketing Your Salad Bar
- Salad Bar Tools & Resources

Check out the resources here.
News: Gardens at school might boost availability of fresh vegetables at home.

WATSONVILLE, CA
Becca McKnight, from Pajaro Valley Unified School District's Food & Nutrition Services stood guard in front of the strawberries, promising the eager students that no one would leave empty handed-they just had to wait their turn.

"It's great, seeing them so excited for fresh fruits and veggies," McKnight smiled. "And they really are at the prime age to get interested in where it all comes from."

The event, dubbed a "Know Your Farmer Taste Test", is part of PVUSD's Harvest of the Month Program. Every month, a locally-grown fruit or vegetable is featured in every student's school lunch.

Read more here.

News: Prairie Heights Farm site of farm-school seminar

BRUSHY PRAIRIE, IN
One of Indiana's largest school farms hosted the Steuben County Food Procurement Field Day, which drew food service directors and health representatives from across Indiana.

The seminar at Prairie Heights School Farm was organized by a newly established Farm to School Action Team in Steuben County.

The team wants to bring awareness to the local food system, build networks of producers and consumers, identify barriers to local food access and educate people about how food is grown and sourced. Members of the team include Parkview Health, Shape Up
Information for School Gardens

Grant: Project Learning Tree GreenWorks Grant

When: 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.

Garden News: Big Green Chicago is looking for CPS schools to apply for learning gardens! (Pssst...they're hiring, too!)

Big Green Chicago is Growing!
Big Green is working towards the goal of 200 Learning Gardens built and in Chicago Public Schools next year. To support that effort and their network of existing Learning Gardens, Big Green is seeking applications for a Garden Educator to join their team. The job description and details can be found on the website here.
In addition to expanding their team, Big Green is seeking applications from CPS schools who would like to apply for a Learning Garden to be built in the 2018-2019 school year. If you are a school, a school partner, or school community member and are interested in bringing a Learning Garden to your school the application is open and can be found on the website.

Garden News: Hometown Farmer - Riverside School Garden

SIoux City, IA

Roughly 100 kids were busy planting a garden in the heat at Riverside Elementary in Sioux City Friday, May 25th. The students started by planting flowers and carrots in the garden plot, just across the street from the school.

The flowers help attract pollinating insects to garden, in it's 6th growing season. Laurie Taylor volunteers with the kids. She says they don't just learn about the plants by doing this outdoor work, they also learn about the animals and insects the kids might find in the garden, too.

Read more here.

Garden News: Students plant Three Sisters garden at Central Grade School

Traverse City MI

Soil embedded itself under fingernails and dirtied the soles of bare feet as Sara Bageris' third-grade class stepped softly around the Three Sisters garden at Central Grade School.

Some of the 8- and 9-year-olds planted seeds that will soon sprout corn, squash and beans under Samantha TwoCrow's watchful eye Friday. Other students were enthralled by several earthworms and a lone pill bug, both of which provide a more fertile ground for the plants to grow.

The activity is part of the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District's Farm to School program, led by coordinator Steve Urbanski with the help of AmeriCorps VISTA service member Alice Bowe. Planting the Three Sisters crops, which is a native American practice dating back thousands of years, combines lessons from science, math and social studies.
Resource: School Garden Support Organization Network

The National School Garden Network (NSGN) connects over 900 individuals and organizations working to support school garden programs at a district, regional, statewide, or national level. Members share resources and strategies for supporting multiple schools gardens, with the ultimate goal of aligning efforts across communities.

The School Garden Support Organization Network offers this online forum for individuals and organizations to discover resources, best practices, and much more. Apply to join the group to browse these discussions.

- Funding and Budgeting
- Research and Assessment
- Training and Staffing Garden Educators
- Garden to Cafeteria
- Policies to Support School Gardens
- Program Management - Running Regional or Statewide Programs
- Creating and Managing Garden Sites
- Curricula and Instructional Resources
- Announcements - Miscellaneous

Join the chat here

Information for Producers

News: Some Illinois Farmers Focusing On Uncommon Crops

Corn and beans are king across Illinois, but some farmers make a living with...
less common crops, including pumpkins and popcorn. Some grow grain sorghum or have apple orchards or berry farms. Illinois Farm Bureau Local Foods Program Manager Raghela Scavuzzo said horseradish is another Illinois product with a niche market. She said there aren't many horseradish farmers, but a few produce a large amount. "You don't have to have a ton of land to produce a large amount," Scavuzzo said. "It's mainly sold for processing, but we have some of the longest standing horseradish producers in the country."

Horseradish takes a specific kind of soil and water level to grow, and it thrives in Illinois.

Learn more here.

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Resource:

-Doug Gucker is a University of Illinois Extension local food systems and small farms educator.

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program was created in 1988 by Congress to address the need for greater investment in sustainable agriculture. It does this through a competitive grant program that is focused on being science-based, regionally directed, problem solving and farmer tested.

How has SARE helped Illinois farmers? In the past 20 years, 121 projects have been funded on a variety of topics related to improving the sustainability of Illinois farmers. Below are a few examples of the recent projects.

If you are looking for a solution to a specific farming problem, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program may be able to help you either with the answer in one of our publications or by helping you find the solution through a grant project. SARE has six different grants that are available to be applied for here in Illinois and each type of grant requires that there be farmer participation. The six grants are Farmer-Rancher, Partnership, Research and Education, Youth Educator, Professional Development, and Graduate Student.

Learn more here.
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.