



Illinois Farm to School Network Updates

IFSN News: Welcome Marlie Wilson!

We are excited to announce that the Illinois Farm to School Network has hired a new Network Coordinator!

Marlie Wilson, a former state Farm to School Grants Manager, from Madison Wisconsin

will be joining the IFSN team next week. She has relocated to Chicago and brings her farm to school knowledge and passion to our network. Marlie can be reached at marlie@sevengenerationsahead.org



Join us in wishing a warm welcome to Marlie!

Farm to School National News

News: Farm to School Goes Lean with Local Beans

The Greeley-Evans School District in Colorado takes local protein beyond meat - they source dried, local beans for school meals!

They will use approximately 1,500 pounds of dried pinto beans this school year from Leffler Family Farms in Eaton, Colorado. The pinto beans will be featured on the menu in a scratch-cooked bean and cheese

burrito as well as other student-approved recipes. Pinto beans are an excellent alternative as a non-meat option for vegetarians and are packed with protein and fiber.

[Read More Here](#)



News: Creede students get the opportunity to taste local foods!

Students of Creede School were greeted by giant, walking vegetables last Tuesday as they entered the cafeteria for a special lunch. Dedicated and skilled Food Service Director Malcolm Sneed, a local chef, is known to serve up delicious and inspired meals to students.



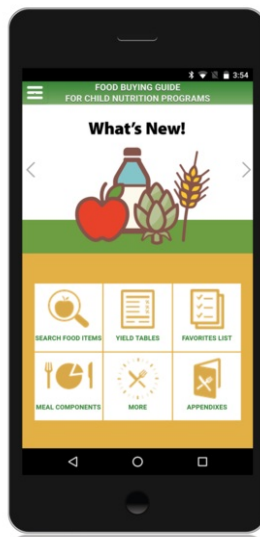
Chioggia Beets, also known as Candy Cane Beets, were also sourced from White Mountain Farm and prepared in two different ways on Tuesday for students to try. As students entered the cafeteria, Task Force volunteers adorned in vegetable costumes handed out samples of sweet, pickled beets and the students were given a chance to vote "I loved it!" "I liked it!" or "I don't know... but I'll try it again!" The "I loved it!" jar received the most votes at 32, 12 students said they "liked it", and 21 students said "I don't know..." It is important that kids are willing to try foods multiple times as their palettes develop because a negative sentiment can shift toward an acquired taste over time.

[Read More Here](#)

News: The USDA Food Buying Guide Has a Mobile App!

The FBG has gone digital to provide

menu planning features at your fingertips! Add the app to your smart phone and use it when you really need it. This app gives you easy access to the food guide when onsite in the kitchens, accepting deliveries, and anytime you are working remotely!



Search and locate yield information for foods typically served in Child Nutrition



Compare yield information to determine the foods that best meet your program needs.



Create a Favorites foods list! Stay tuned for the ability to save a Favorites foods list for access at a later time.



Email and print search results, food comparisons, and listings of favorite foods.

The FBG Mobile App also includes access to narrative content which provides:

- CN Program-specific information for meeting meal pattern requirements
- Helpful information related to food purchasing and how to utilize food yield information in the FBG
- Additional resources related to meal pattern requirements and menu planning for CNPs.

[Read More Here](#)

Events: National Farm to Cafeteria Conference

Save the date for the 9th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference coming to Cincinnati, Ohio, April 25-27, 2018! Hosted by the National Farm to School Network, this biennial event will convene more than 1,000 diverse stakeholders working to source local food for institutional cafeterias and foster a culture of food and agricultural literacy across America.



Hurry! The scholarship application period is open Dec. 18, 2017 to Feb. 12, 2018 at 8pm ET.

[Read More Here](#)

Information for Schools and Early Childcare

Resource: Wellness Wednesday Webinar Series

With curricular changes, funding concerns and testing requirements, you may wonder how can schools find the time to address student health and wellness. The right question to ask is, if healthy students show improved academic scores, improved classroom behavior, and higher attendance rates, how can schools not focus on student health and wellness?



Action for Healthy Kids offers a wide variety of virtual learning opportunities. From school breakfast programs and recess before lunch to wellness policy implementation and more, most sessions are of no cost and are open to any interested individual or group. Listen in live or check out the archived webinars.

[See the list here.](#)

Smarter Mealtimes in Childcare ECE Resource for Early Care and Education Sites

The Smarter Mealtimes Movement takes the effective, research-based strategies that make the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement so successful in K-12 lunchrooms and adapts them to work in diverse early childhood education (ECE) settings such as daycare centers, HeadStart, and home care. By using behavioral economics to encourage little kids to try, select, eat, and enjoy healthy foods, these tools encourage kids to practice healthy norms and establish healthy eating habits.



The Smarter Mealtimes Movement was developed in 2017 in partnership with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, or CACFP, and with stakeholders in the fields of extension, child care, and nutrition. The organization is housed within the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, located in Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, and is associated with the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs, or B.E.N. Center.

[Explore the ECE Resources Here.](#)

Information for Producers

Event: 2018 Good Food Expo

When: March 23-24, 2018

Where: UIC Forum, Chicago
Who should Attend: anyone involved in the good food movement!



Greet spring and celebrate our region's growing local food community! The 14th Annual Good Food EXPO invites you to two dynamic days that connect all the people active in the Good

Food community - farmers, food producers, investors, trade buyers, policy makers, activists, families and Good Food lovers.

Admission is FREE with online registration (Master Class is \$55 in advance, \$65 at door).

Network, Sell and Connect at Friday's Good Food Trade Show
FamilyFarmed's Good Food EXPO kicks off on Friday, March 23 with the Good Food Trade Show: Production, Policy & Industry Exchange. Industry stakeholders come together for a day of exhibiting, educational programming and networking opportunities. This 14th annual event is centered on the Good Food Marketplace, where more than 100 farmers and producers engage with buyers, retailers, investors and others interested in the rapidly growing consumer demand for healthy food produced locally using sustainable, humane and fair practices.

New in 2018 is farmer training with Atina Diffley. On-Farm Food Safety & FSMA farmer training will be held on Thursday, March 22 as a Good Food Expo pre-conference event at the UIC Forum in Chicago. And the Wholesale Success workshop happens March 23. Both are free - register here. The first 20 Illinois Specialty Crop farms to register for exhibit space Friday, or both Friday and Saturday receive \$370 discount.

[View Conference & Register Here.](#)

Grant: Frontera Farmer Foundation 2018 Grant

Timeline: deadline to apply is Sunday, March 11, 2018

Who should apply: for capital improvements of up to \$12,000 to small and mid-size farmers in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin that sell their food products to customers in the Chicago area at farmers markets and otherwise.

The Frontera Farmer Foundation is committed to promoting small, sustainable Midwestern farms serving the Chicago area, by providing them with capital development grants. Small local farms, which often struggle financially, are more likely to promote biodiversity by planting a wide range of produce and operate using organic practices. By their artisanal approach to agriculture, the freshness of their product and the variety of their offerings, these farmers insure the highest quality food while they add immeasurably to the fabric of their local rural community.



Information for School Gardens

Webinar: Establishing & Maintaining a School Garden



When: Tuesday, February 20th at 1:00 PM EST

Presenter: Josh Dolan, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Tompkins County

School gardens have been spreading widely during the last few years and offer an amazing opportunity for outdoor educational experiences as well as indoor lessons and activities that compliment nearly any subject area. Beginning new school gardens can be a daunting task, but there is no need to be overwhelmed. With careful consideration and planning, teachers, administrators, parents and outside agencies can establish and maintain school gardens that engage students and the school community at large. This webinar will cover the establishment process from siting to funding a garden, provide an overview of curriculum resources, and look at the human element with an eye toward sustaining garden programs over the long term.

[More Info Here.](#)

Training: School and Community Garden Training 2018

When: Multiple dates

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](#)

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. 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.

