



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](#).

2017 Illinois Farm to School Impact Summary Seven Generations Ahead



Our Focus in 2017

- Growing our network to 535 members!
- Providing a monthly newsletter to 950 subscribers
- Developing & promoting 811 H2376 recognizing Apple Crunch in Illinois, adopted in May 2017
- Tabling at events and conferences to build recognition & share farm to school programming
- Providing webinars, presentations & technical trainings
- Providing on-site school visits for farm to school events
- Providing individual assistance to schools, producers & partner organizations
- Providing technical visits to participating schools
- Participating in cafeteria and garden food ratings
- Building partnerships with like-minded organizations and groups
- Connecting school districts & distributors to local and regional producers and suppliers
- Developing programming & best practices for schools



Farm to School Day Network Event

March 2017, Geneva, IL

This was a day-long educational event paired with an evening community event, the FairShare Feic. Our morning began with school foodservice training on Farm to School programming and scratch cooking, including a live recipe demo! The afternoon provided fun learning opportunities for local families focused on gardening and child nutrition. Evening attendees including teachers, nutrition staff, agency staff and local residents munched on delectable local foods and learned practical ways to ensure a home garden for life-long health from our keynote speaker and local celebrity, Shanna Coronado.



469,848 Crunches across Illinois!

Participating schools received over 8000 posters plus educational materials through our partnership with Illinois Ag in the Classroom. Local apples from Illinois & Michigan were served at 919 school sites in 30 IL counties. Total Great Lakes Crunches: 1,467,555!



This program, released in May 2017, has a dedicated website with 80 scalable recipes, toolboxes for schools and farmers, and an Extension Kit to reach school communities. By October, 28 school districts & 9 partner organizations registered totaling 518,057 students at 1108 sites. 14 Illinois distributors receive monthly Harvest of the Month program updates.

Early Success with Harvest of the Month

Champaign District Unit 4 in Champaign, IL (Enrollment: 9948 students)

Students of Champaign District Unit 4 grabbed up 1835 pounds of local sweet corn, bell peppers and potatoes during August, September and October 2017. These HOTM produce vegetables were served at 18 school sites each month utilizing both hot and cold recipes. The HOTM logo and featured veggie, along with fun and nutrition facts were highlighted on menus, digital cafeteria boards and the district's website and phone app. Curriculum ideas and materials were shared with teaching and garden staff. The Carrie Bussey Elementary School was gifted the 2017 National Farm to School Month sweetstakes prizes receiving a Captain Planet Learning Garden Kit, SunClaym (Seed) Standing Desk, and High Mowing Organic Seeds. This elementary school garden is now planning to plant veggies for Harvest of the Month in the spring of 2018!

Farm to School News and Events

News: National Farm to School Conference Scholarships Now Available

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



NATIONAL FARM to CAFETERIA CONFERENCE
NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

April 25-27, 2018 | Cincinnati, Ohio

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 School Resources for Schools and Early Childcare

Community Ground Works Farm to ECE Resources for Early Care and Education Sites

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!

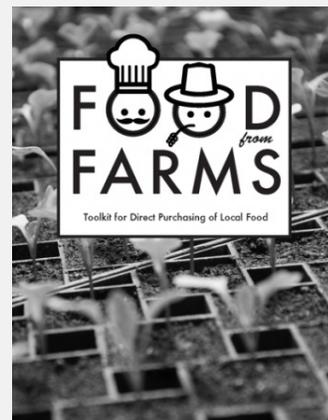
Take a look at the Discover My PLate [Classroom Celebrations](#) resource sheet for kindergarten students or the the Team Nutrition [Popular Events Idea Book](#) for fun nutrition education ideas in and outside of the classroom!

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.



Farm to School Resources and Events for Producers

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.



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[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.

