



Illinois Farm to School Network Updates

Ho! Ho! Ho! with IL Harvest of the Month

With the build-up to the holiday break, December is a festive and busy month. Sometimes good nutrition can get lost in all the sweets and festivities. But, that doesn't have to be the case!

Are you looking for a fun and healthy celebration for your meal lines? Check out the IL Harvest of the Month Holiday Resource [here](#).



Farm to School News, Grants and Resources

News: Maplewood, N.J. School Providing a Fun Option for School Recess

On any good-weather day, a visitor at Seth Boyden Demonstration School might encounter classes participating in a messy science experiment, exploring



changes in the weather, writing at the outdoor tables, or holding a discussion in the performance circle, where a ring of flat rocks provides natural seating.

The outdoor classroom has also become a favorite spot for children to sit, talk, and play during recess. The Garden Recess program has been an option for students for over 13 years and continues to grow!

[Read More Here](#)

News: Going Glocal in Decorah

Decorah Middle School (DMS) in Decorah, Iowa used their Project Produce grant to serve international recipes every day for one month.

[Read more](#) to learn the challenges and successes of introducing global tastes with local produce.



News: Middle School Teacher Prepares Fresh Lunches for 160 Students Every Day - From Scratch

There's slim chance that a middle school in Small Town, USA would find the resources to prepare a healthy, fresh meal every day for their students. I'm sure you've seen the headlines:

"Health experts turn up their noses at new school lunch rule"

"USDA delays healthy school lunch requirements"

"Hey kids! You can soon have low-fat, chocolate milk with your school lunch!"



But not in Chavez' kitchen. She is single-handedly revolutionizing the way kids eat and approach their school lunches.

[Read More Here](#)

New Resource: 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.

[Explore the Resource Here.](#)



Resource: School Food Institute Offers SFA's More Education Options

Learn online and at your own pace from Chef Ann through School Food Institute courses. Designed for school foodservice professionals and child nutrition advocates, these courses teach you everything you need to know about transitioning from highly processed heat and serve to scratch-cooked school food operations.



Eight engaging online courses give you a front row seat in Chef Ann Cooper's classroom, where you can learn directly from a leader in school food change on how to transition school meal programs to scratch-cooked operations that provide real, healthy food to kids at school every day.

[Learn more here.](#)

Grants: NRCS Help For Cook County Urban Farms

Who should apply: Individual Cook County growers or groups

Timeline: Two application deadline dates have been established-November 17, 2017 and January 19, 2018.



The urban landscape has many challenges for growing healthy food. NRCS can help with financial and technical assistance to manage natural resources like soil, water, and plants that can improve the crops urban farms grow. Financial assistance from NRCS is provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Individual growers or groups can apply to receive EQIP financial assistance by filling out the program application, establishing records, and creating an account at their local USDA Service Center. Two USDA offices service Cook County growers.

[Read more here.](#)

Grants: Salad Bars to Schools

Who Should Apply: K-12 schools participating in the NSLP

Timeline: Ongoing, the time frame for when a school district's salad bar(s) is/are funded varies; however, it can take up to 12-14 months for your salad bar(s) to be funded.



The [Chef Ann Foundation](#) and the Whole Kids Foundation, along with partner organizations donate salad bars to schools so that every child across our nation has daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

[Grant Information Here](#)



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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.

