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Illinois Farm to School Network News

Submit your farm to school story to Seven Generations Ahead!



Seven
Generations
Ahead

Are you an institution or community program that operates a youth garden or farm in Illinois? Or maybe you're a school or early care site buying local foods for your meal program? **Share your story and [apply for the 2019 Illinois Farm to School Case Study Series!](#)**

By sharing your accomplishments and the details of your farm to school experiences, you will help others around Illinois envision what farm to school could look like in their garden and child nutrition programs. The case study is also a great way to promote your activities and attract more funding and support for your project!

In 2019, Seven Generations Ahead and the Illinois Farm to School Network will be accepting applicants who participate in youth farming or gardening, farm to school programming (including the Great Apple Crunch and Harvest of the Month), and those procuring local food for a child feeding program to participate in **Illinois Farm to School Case Studies**. These case studies will be shared publicly through partner organizations and funders, and will be utilized in mapping projects focused on garden activities, culinary programs, and local food sourcing across Illinois. Selected applicants will participate in a phone interview and a possible site visit. We encourage our case study participants to share approved pictures and printed information pertaining to their programs.

Interested? [Apply now!](#) All case study participants will receive a farm to school goodie bag as a thank you for sharing their experiences!

Newsworthy in Illinois

Growing Healthy People high tech school gardening programs teach students important life skills.

Growing Healthy People, a non-profit organization, has created year-round gardening programs at Thomas Jefferson Middle School in Waukegan, Lake Forest Country Day School and Bowen Park Urban Ag Lab in Waukegan. The organization utilizes cutting edge gardening technology including hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics in greenhouses to allow students to grow food year-round during the entire academic school year.

The students at Jefferson Middle School also contribute their produce to the Roberti Community House and food pantries in the Waukegan area. Students learn valuable life skills through these gardening programs: how to grow their own food; the importance of healthy food and good nutrition; and about careers in horticulture. Read more [here](#).

Teen prisoners can grow veggies, skills in Kane County.

ST CHARLES IL

Can growing vegetables help teenage prisoners develop useful skills and respect?

Officials and volunteers at the Kane County Juvenile Justice Center believe so. And the federal government is giving \$94,484 to grow their project.



The USDA's Farm to School program grant will pay for a coordinator for two years. There will be lessons about plants and nutrition in the detention center's school, and the coordinator also will work to include more fresh local produce on the center's menus. The garden started in 2017 in grow bags on an outdoor basketball court. "About half were dead," said Donna Plonczynski of Geneva, who saw them when she toured the facility with an eye to doing volunteer work. A University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, she suggested moving the bags to an adjacent yard and having volunteers help.

Read more [here](#).

Enter the ABC's of School Nutrition Meal of the Month contest.

Send IL Extension and ISBE a photo of a meal you serve (breakfast, lunch, or

dinner) and get entered to win a prize (valued at up to \$125) from Learning ZoneXpress! Check out previous winning trays and nutrition tools [here](#). To enter the contest, send your meal photos to schoolnutrition@illinois.edu

Food for Thought:

Innovation can stem from small steps, some of them at little or no cost. You don't have to break the bank to change lunch menus.

A Grass-Roots Push for Healthy School Food:

A mom's movement in rural Colorado has students eating better – and others following her lead.

IDALIA CO

AUBREY Richards remembers picking at school cafeteria fare warmed from cans or the freezer.

She and her friends “would eat the cheese off the top of it and we would leave the bottom” of the pizza, says Richards, a teenage student at Idalia School in eastern Colorado’s Yuma County. “The chicken noodle soup, we wouldn’t eat any of that.”

But after a recent lunch of hamburgers with a side of spicy oven-baked potato wedges, along with anything students wanted from the salad bar – all made from scratch – Richards succinctly summed up the impact of recent changes made to the cafeteria’s offerings.

“I ate everything,” she says. A volleyball and basketball player, she adds that eating better is helping her on and off the courts.

“If I feel fuller, I’m more willing to do more, so I do more work in class,” she says. Read more [here](#).

Resources for Schools & Feeding Sites

Fruit and Veggie Grants are still available

Grant Deadline: Available until funding is depleted.

Eligibility: Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. Schools with greater than 50% free and reduced eligible enrollment encouraged to apply.

Funding: \$2,500 per school.

The Information: This grant program awards school projects that help kids learn about and eat more fruits and vegetables. The grant is sponsored by Skoop and the Chef Ann Foundation. Learn more [here](#).

Winston Equipment Grant 2019 is open

Grant Deadline: Open now, will close on **January 31, 2019**

Eligibility: Applications can be submitted by a school nutrition director who has been a member of SNA for at least one year.

Funding: 10 pieces of equipment, which could include CVap® holding cabinets, holding drawers, and rethermalizers.

The Information: Complete a short survey with basic information about your district and create a video to 'show' us your story, videos should be no longer than 2 minutes in length. Learn more [here](#).

Farm to Early Care and Education webinar series resource available

This webinar series is designed for early childhood program staff including food service directors, cook staff, administration, teachers, and family day care home providers, and can also be beneficial for those seeking to support farm to ECE efforts. There are twelve webinars in all. Check out the resource [here](#).

Downloadable Resource: Guide to using the Creative Curriculum® to support Farm to ECE models

This resource, developed by The Policy Equity Group, align farm to ECE strategies with one of the most widely used ECE curricula—The Creative Curriculum®. The guides explores how teachers can use The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool and The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers, & Twos as a foundation to embed farm to ECE learning opportunities into their existing practices. Read the full resource [here](#).

News Across the Nation

Kids eat healthy and taste new foods through Harvest of the Month program at CCS.



ROME NY

From Zucchini Parmesan and Halloween Beans to roasted cauliflower and Asian Cabbage Slaw, pupils at Clinton Elementary School are learning to appreciate healthy new foods by tasting special treats made from vegetables and produce that come from local farms.

The Clinton Central School Parent Teacher Association's Farm to School Committee, working with Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES

Food Service and the Mohawk Valley Farm to School Initiative, has launched a new Harvest of the Month sampling program.

Harvest of the Month is a Farm to School initiative that promotes a seasonal,

locally grown item each month. A day or two before the Harvest of the Month is listed on the menu each month, the elementary school kitchen staff will prepare a batch of the menu item for volunteers to serve samples to students in the cafeteria. The idea is to encourage the students to try something new and maybe even choose it for lunch later in the week. Read more [here](#).

Resources for School Gardens

Harvest for Healthy Kids Garden Lessons toolkit

Harvest for Healthy Kids helps children develop healthy eating habits. The program connects young children with fresh food grown close to home through activity kits that teach science, math and literacy. Each kit is developed and tested by teachers and childcare providers, and includes hands-on activities with different fruits and vegetables, colorful picture cards, newsletters for families and background information for adults. All Harvest for Healthy Kids activities are aligned with early learning standards and have been rigorously evaluated.

Access the toolkit [here](#).

Check out Big Green's Video Library [here](#).

Check out more resource [here](#).

Garden News Across the Nation

Jackson students feed zoo animals with homegrown produce.

JACKSON MS

What do you feed a hippo?

Anything it wants, the saying goes.

Well, not exactly.

The students at Wingfield High School on Thanksgiving week delivered pounds of Red Russian and Tronchuda kale, Green Buttercrunch and Red Oak Leaf lettuces, Arcadia broccoli and Georgia collard greens to the Jackson Zoo.

The students, under consultation from area agriculture and horticulture experts, have been growing the crops specifically for the zoo animals, to help out the community and to learn about the craft themselves.

Read more [here](#).



Resources for Producers

Whole Farm Planning – Make Your Business Work for You

January 29, 2019 | Urbana, IL

Is your farm working for you or do you work for it?...

In this all-day workshop, we will begin the business planning process, exploring your goals, beliefs, and values; crafting your mission and vision statements; and analyzing your resources, products, and markets. Read more and register [here](#).

Farm Finances Webinar Series: A Practical Guide to QuickBooks

February 2019 | Anywhere, USA

Managing financial records and bookkeeping is challenging. Accounting software like QuickBooks can make the process much easier. Learn how to set up and use QuickBooks to streamline bookkeeping for your farm. Register [here](#).

Organic Grain Conference

February 13–14, 2019 | Urbana, IL

The Organic Grain Conference is the largest event in Illinois dedicated solely to organic grain education and networking! The 2019 conference will build upon the first two amazing years by increasing the number of break out sessions from two to four and growing the trade show to 25+ vendors. Read more about this conference [here](#).

Chicago Food Policy Action Council › CFPAC's 14th Chicago Food Policy Summit

February 15, 2019 | Chicago, IL

The day will consist of workshops, speakers, hand-ons activities, food demos, a marketplace of resources and vendors, and a Food Business Clinic.

Connect with food workers, farmers, vendors, and local leaders to discuss food policy and critical issues involving climate change, labor, food access, urban farming and the economics of food production in Chicago, Cook County and Illinois. Read more and register [here](#).

Producer News

Go from farm to table in Champaign County.



Agritourism—travel centered around farms, food, and food production—has become a popular trend in group travel. And where better than Illinois, in the heart of the very farm-forward Midwest, to take a group of foodie travelers?

In Champaign County, you'll find both urban and rural landscapes that are just

right for exploring the state's regional favorites as well as more adventurous fare. Get ready to dig into hearty beef sandwiches, homemade pies, craft-brewed beer and so much more in Champaign County. Read more [here](#).

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Seven Generations Ahead | 708.660.9909 | [Email](#) | [Website](#)