

FARM FRESH FRIDAY

Serving food locally grown by Kentucky farmers in Kentucky schools is just good common sense. That's why more and more Kentucky schools are working with local farmers, many in their own communities, to fill their cafeterias and students' tummies with farm fresh fruits, vegetables, and other foods. In fact, sixty of Kentucky's 174 school districts brought the farm to school during the 2011-12 School Year, reaching approximately 702 individual schools with an estimated 363,819 children in attendance.¹ By bringing locally raised food into the cafeteria, classroom and community, Farm to School programs support healthy children, farms, and communities. And, with Kentucky's fertile agricultural land in transition as farmers cut back on growing tobacco and transition to raising fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy and eggs, schools are a natural market for their products. Considering Kentucky schools serve over 130 million meals a year and spent over \$50 million on food during the 2011-12 School Year, the impact that Farm to School programs will continue to have on Kentucky's economy is staggering.¹

So, to bring the farm to school for more Kentucky kids, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Kentucky Farm to School Task Force, is launching *Farm Fresh Fridays*, a statewide campaign that encourages Kentucky schools to incorporate locally grown food into their school meals at least once a month. *Farm Fresh Fridays*, though, can do more than just bring farm fresh food grown by local farmers into school cafeterias. *Farm Fresh Fridays* will provide an opportunity to bring education and first hand experiences into classroom learning environments, increasing children's consumption of healthy food and providing them with food literacy that teaches them where their food comes from. *Farm Fresh Fridays* will create partnerships that help the community understand and connect to local food producers.

¹ United States Department of Agriculture. 2013 Farm to School Census. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census/>

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HOW DO FARM FRESH FRIDAYS WORK?

Cafeteria

- Starting in October 2014 (National Farm to School Month & Kentucky Farm to School Month) running through May 2015, one Friday each month the school lunch menu should include one Kentucky Proud® fruit or vegetable.
- The selected fruit or vegetable should vary from month to month depending on seasonal availability & nutrition guidelines as set forth by the USDA's National School Lunch Program.
- Procurement of the selected fruits & vegetables would follow regulations & guidelines required for participation in the USDA's National School Lunch Program.

Optional Classroom Activities

- Provide interactive lessons & activities related to selected fruit or veggies for teachers to use as an optional nutrition education lesson on selected *Farm Fresh Fridays* each month.
- Collaborate with community partner organizations to deliver interactive nutrition education regarding fruits, vegetables, and locally-grown foods as part of *Farm Fresh Fridays*.
- Invite a Kentucky grower of selected fruit or vegetable to school on *Farm Fresh Fridays* to speak to students, such as those enrolled in agriculture-related classes and/or student members of Future Farmers of America (FFA).

Optional Community Activities

- We will conduct a photo contest each month for Farm Fresh Friday events across the state. Schools that have participated in Farm Fresh Friday will post one photo of their program in action at their school, and the best photo of the month will be featured on the Farm to School Facebook page in a special post.
- Schools will simply have to create a Facebook page, become friends of the Farm to School Facebook page, and post a photo after their Farm Fresh Friday event. The winner will be asked to provide more information about the photo and/or event, and a special post will be made on the Farm to School page highlighting that school's Farm Fresh Friday event.
- This activity will encourage schools to create their own pages, Farm to School pages, and/or Farm Fresh Friday pages. Therefore, the Farm to School efforts of individual schools across the state will be made more visible, and each month a different school will have their program highlighted. This should bring more visibility to Farm to School efforts across Kentucky, and should increase the use of the current Farm to School Facebook page.