



For Immediate Release

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Food for thought: October is National Farm to School Month

Small fingers planting seeds during science class, classroom visits from everyone's favorite farmer and locally grown produce featured at the cafeteria salad bar. These scenes just might be happening all around Macomb County this month. October is National Farm to School Month, a time to celebrate the connections happening all over the country between schools and local food!

In November 2010, Congress approved a resolution to officially designate October as National Farm to School Month. The passage of House Resolution 1655 demonstrates the growing importance and role of Farm to School programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food.

Farm to School is broadly defined as any program that connects schools (K-12 and colleges) to local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.

Farm to School programs provide benefits to the entire community: Children, farmers, food service staff, parents and teachers. "In Macomb County, we recognize the health and local economic benefits of providing children access to fresh, nutritious food. Farm to School programs contribute to the health of our local economy," said Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel. "We want to support our local farmers and help address the childhood obesity epidemic by teaching children about healthy eating by connecting them to the growing of food."

Some of those benefits include:

- More fruits and vegetables are consumed because of healthier options available in the school cafeteria.
- Schools report a 3-16 percent increase in school meal participation when farm-fresh food is served.
- Farm to School programs open new markets for farmers and help expand their customer base.

You don't have to be a cafeteria manager or school board member to get involved – parents, teachers, and even students can encourage and create opportunities for their school to make change happen!

To celebrate the first National Farm to School Month, schools across Michigan will be inviting farmers and chefs to visit their schools in October.

If you would like to get involved with Farm to School opportunities in Macomb, Oakland or Wayne County please contact: Katherine Hale, Michigan State University Extension Educator at: halek@anr.msu.edu or 586-469-6088.

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