



NJ Farm to School News

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NJ Department of
Agriculture
Division of Food &
Nutrition

Spring Ahead with Farm to School

Did you know?

NJ farmers produce more than 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables. Nationally, NJ is one of the top 10 producers of blueberries, cranberries, peaches, tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, snap beans, spinach and squash. That is why NJ is the Garden State!



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While many consumers know that New Jersey is the Garden State, and are familiar with the ever popular *Jersey Fresh* program, these two issues are now starting to reach New Jersey's youngest consumers - school-aged children.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture is working diligently with the New Jersey Farm to School Network (NJF2S) in order to bring more visibility of the Farm to School initiative. Currently, the NJ Farm to School Network is accepting applications for its second annual School Garden Award.

Over the last two years, NJDA and NJF2S have

worked together on various levels, culminating with the annual *Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week*, which takes place during the last week of September. The highlight of last year's events was the awarding of the School Garden Award to Margate's Eugene A. Tighe Middle School and William H. Ross Elementary School. By connecting their school garden with their cafeteria and the surrounding community, their efforts exemplified the farm to school initiative.

As this school year is quickly coming to a close, now is actually the time to starting thinking about Jersey Fresh Farm to

School Week 2013, which will be held Sept. 23-27. Schools can start preparing by formulating September menus incorporating *Jersey Fresh* produce into the meal selections, meeting with school administrators about tying agricultural curriculums into classroom instructions, and creating or enhancing school gardens.

To assist with event ideas, NJDA has created an on-line Farm to School toolkit for ideas schools can use to incorporate farm to school activities. It is located at:

www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/fn/childadult/f2stoolkit.html

2013-2014 Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program

From more than 300 applications submitted for the 2013-2014 school year, 144 schools have been selected to participate in the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program. The USDA has allocated \$3,934,586 for NJ to provide fresh produce to students during the school day. Nutrition education

also is an important component of the program. By exposing children to healthy foods, and increasing their consumption of fruits & vegetables, lifelong dietary habits are instilled in the students.

Selected schools were required to have more than 50 percent of their students

eligible for free or reduced price lunches, plan to purchase as much locally grown produce as possible, publicize the program and partner with outside nutrition education organizations.

For information about the FFVP program visit:
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/ffvp

Grant & Award Opportunities

Grant and award opportunities are offered by various corporations, foundations and organizations relating to hunger issues and school gardens. Schools are encouraged to apply for these opportunities to help increase students' nutritional and gardening awareness, including:

www.kidsgardening.org

www.toolboxforeducation.com.hta.html

www.wholekidsfoundation.org/gardengrants.php

www.gannettfoundation.org

School Garden of the Year

Deadline: July 1, 2013

PreK - 12 schools with school gardens are encouraged to apply for this award sponsored by *Edible Jersey Magazine* and the NJ Farm to School Network. The prize includes a monetary award and a visit to the winning school during *Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week 2013*. Criteria includes garden-based learning, community involvement, sustainability, and a connection with the school's meal programs. For more

information visit:

www.njfarmtoschool.org

School Breakfast Challenge

Deadline: October 31, 2013

Advocates for Children of NJ is encouraging NJ school districts to apply for this challenge to increase breakfast participation within their schools. Three districts in North Jersey and three districts in South Jersey have the opportunity to win. For more information visit:

www.njschoolbreakfast.org

What's In Season

Welcome to the 2013 *Jersey Fresh* spring growing season! Many consumers patiently await the spring arrival of their favorite NJ produce. The list below indicates the current availability of fruits and vegetables. Weather and growing location may determine exact availability.

Asparagus - through mid June

Beets - starting in June

Broccoli - throughout June

Cabbage - starting in June

Cauliflower - through November

Cherries - throughout June

Greens - through mid June

Lettuce - through mid June

Peas - starting mid May

Peppers - starting end of June

Squash - starting beginning of June

Strawberries - mid May through mid June

Tomatoes - through mid-October

Turnips - through mid June

Remember to visit the many *Jersey Fresh* Community Farmers Markets located throughout NJ for these and other wonderful *Jersey Fresh* products!

Resources & Web Sites

Here you will find a variety of useful web sites for food service, teachers, parents and children. Many sites have health and nutrition information, consumer information, and games and activities that can be used in the classroom and at home to help reinforce the importance of including fruits and vegetables in daily meal planning.

www.fns.usda.gov/fns

www.uspears.com

www.nj.gov

www.usapple.org

www.njfarmtoschool.org

www.kidsgardening.org

www.njfarmmarkets.org

www.schoolnutrition.org

www.visitnjfarms.org

www.farmtoschool.org

www.dole.com

www.choosemyplate.gov

www.adadc.com

www.letsmove.gov

www.healthymeals.nal.usda.gov

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

KALE SALAD

serves 8 - 4oz. portions

Ingredients:

3 bunches kale, chopped

1 TSB garlic, minced

1 C dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, blueberries, etc, as available)

1 lemon, juiced, or 1/2 c lemon juice

3 TBS Oil

1 tsp salt

1 TBS red pepper flakes

Wash kale very well and dry. In a large mixing bowl, add kale, salt, lemon juice, toss well. Kale will turn dark green. Add all other ingredients and mix well.

Can be served immediately or refrigerate until time of service.

Can be prepared in advance and held for three days.

Recipe developed by Gary Giberson CEC—adapted by NJ Farm to School Network