



# NJ Farm to School News

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N Department of Agriculture  
Division of Food & Nutrition

## WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL

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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 has become an integral member of New Jersey's Farm to School Network and is bringing together two of its divisions, Marketing & Development and Food & Nutrition. Through this cooperative effort, more *Jersey Fresh* farm products are becoming part of our children's daily school food choices.

On the national level, the Farm to School Network developed from the desire to support community-based food systems while sustaining family farms and improving the quality and choices of student's meals. Farm to school programs also connect school meals with local agriculture by purchasing directly from local farmers in a strategy that improves the quality of school meals, increases farming profitability, and recreates relationships in communities among consumers and farmers. Increased interest in Farm to school interests have been seen both nationally and locally.

Nationally, USDA has

launched its *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* initiative for better understanding of where food comes from and how it reaches the consumer. Recently there has been much media attention on First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative emphasizing nutrition and physical activity in an effort to combat childhood obesity. Serving healthy meals in school cafeterias plays an important role in improving student nutrition and provides a basis for health and nutritional education during the school day.

In New Jersey, through the National School Lunch, *Cont'd on Page 2*

### Tid-"Bites"

The NJ Farm to School Network has created the following video on the importance of the Farm to School movement:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ql0Sh1pQuqI>

## NJDA, Rutgers Receive Federal Grant for F2S Project

Along with Rutgers Food Innovation Center in Bridgeton, NJDA has been awarded \$51,215 to create new food items derived from NJ agricultural products for use in the National School Lunch Program.

The grant is part of a

matching funds grant offered by the USDA Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP). These grants focus on developing innovative ways to benefit the agricultural sector.

Portion-controlled products

will be developed to meet nutritional & portion requirements; convenient for cafeteria personnel; be tasty & appealing to students; meet school costs & enable farmer profitability; and meet shelf requirements. More info to follow.

## Welcome Back *(Cont'd from P.1)*

the School Breakfast Program, After-school Snack Program, Summer Food Service Program, and Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, students can be offered healthy food choices.

For the 2010-2011 school year, 101 schools will participate in the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program, almost double the amount of schools from 2009-2010.

Participating schools purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and serve them as a snack during the day, outside of the regularly scheduled breakfast or

lunch times. Produce purchases for this program are made outside of any contracted food service agreements and creates the greatest opportunity for schools to obtain in-season local produce items.

Another aspect of the Farm to School concept is school garden programs. This program helps teach students where their food comes from by growing it themselves on school property. By growing the products themselves, students benefit by learning the science behind farming, understanding nutritional values of fresh products,

and gaining a greater understanding and appreciation of the environment. By having educators use creative methods, a school garden program can be used to teach any subject: math, science, language arts, health & nutrition, social studies and even physical education.

To see how your school can participate in Farm to School programs, contact Jacqueline Bricker, Marketing Specialist, NJDA Division of Food & Nutrition, (609) 292-0692 or

[jacqueline.bricker@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:jacqueline.bricker@ag.state.nj.us).

## Jersey Fresh Farm to School Legislation

Staff members in the Division of Food & Nutrition have been working with Assemblyman John McKeon's District 27 legislative office of to permanently recognize farm to school efforts within school meal offerings. Assemblyman McKeon has sponsored a bill, A2854, to annually recognize the last week of September as **Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week**. This bill, which passed the Assembly, has been submitted to

the NJ Senate's Economic Growth Committee for approval.

Once presented and approved by the Senate, then signed into law, this legislation will further highlight and promote the value and importance of New Jersey's agricultural products, as well as emphasize the need for fresh farm foods for the health and success of our school-aged children.

Further program details are being considered and more information will be available if the bill receives final approval.

How does a bill become law?  
Find out at  
[www.njleg.state.nj.us/kids/howbill.asp](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/kids/howbill.asp)

## What's In Season

There is still plenty of time to enjoy many of the **Jersey Fresh** fruits & vegetables that have been available all summer. The list below indicates which summer favorites are still available through the fall. Weather and growing location may determine exact availability.

Apples - yearlong

Beans - through October

Beet - through mid October

Broccoli - through December

Cabbage - through December

Cauliflower - through November

Cranberries - through early Nov.

Greens & herbs - through December

Peppers - through October

Potatoes - through February



Squash - some varieties through mid-winter

Sweet Corn - through October

Sweet Potatoes - through spring

Tomatoes - through mid-October

Zucchini - through October

## New Jersey Ag in the Classroom - Learning Through Gardening

**Learning Through Gardening** supports teachers' use of gardening and agriculture in the classroom. This project's goal is to increase the students' understanding of many science, social studies, mathematical, and literature concepts using the garden for a hands-on approach and problem solving techniques.

Whether we grew up on a farm or in the city, agriculture and gardening play an impor-



tant and enriching role in all of our lives. The New Jersey Agricultural Society and Agriculture in the Classroom is proud to offer programs to support the agricultural education and experience of participating schools.

For the 2010-2011 school year, five new schools were added to the program: West Freehold Elementary, Allamuchy Elementary, Nicolaus Copernicus Elementary in Jersey

City, PS #3 in Paterson, and Ethel McKnight in West Windsor. Applications for the program are accepted up until May of each year for the following school year.

If your school is interested in obtaining an application or for more information, please contact Suzanne Macauley, Program Director at:

[niagsociety@optonline.net](mailto:niagsociety@optonline.net).

Did you know????

NJ ranks 3rd in the US in the production of cranberries, peaches & bell peppers.

## Grant & Award Opportunities

The National Gardening Association is offering the following grant opportunities. Visit their web site at [www.kidsgardening.org/grants.asp](http://www.kidsgardening.org/grants.asp) for more information:

### 2010 Subaru Healthy Sprouts Awards

Deadline: October 1, 2010

School or organization must plan to garden in 2011 with at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18. Winner selection is based on the demonstrated relationship between the garden program and education related to environmental, nutrition and hunger issues in the U.S.

### 2011 Mantis Awards

Deadline: March 1, 2011

Each year, Mantis presents the Mantis Awards to charitable and educational garden projects that enhance the quality of life in host communities. NGA selects 25 outstanding applicants to receive Mantis tiller/cultivators.

Additional grant opportunities:

### Fuel Up to PLAY & General Mills Breakfast Grant

Deadline: August 15, 2010

School breakfast participants can ap-

ply for a \$3,000 per school breakfast grant. Visit their web site at: [http://enroll.fueluptoplay60.com/funds/Breakfast\\_Grant.php](http://enroll.fueluptoplay60.com/funds/Breakfast_Grant.php) for more details.

### Back to Football Friday,

**September 10, 2010**

Event week September 10 - 17, 2010

Celebrate your NFL team pride and give your Fuel Up to PLAY 60 School the chance to win a \$10,000 NFL PLAY 60 health and wellness grant and a visit from an NFL player.

For more information visit: [www.NFLRUSH.com/backtofootball](http://www.NFLRUSH.com/backtofootball)

## 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](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns)

[www.nj.gov](http://www.nj.gov)

[www.njfarmtoschool.org](http://www.njfarmtoschool.org)

[www.njfarmmarkets.org](http://www.njfarmmarkets.org)

[www.visitnjfarms.org](http://www.visitnjfarms.org)

[www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

[www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)

[www.healthymeals.nal.usda.gov](http://www.healthymeals.nal.usda.gov)

[www.uspears.com](http://www.uspears.com)

[www.surfnetkids.com](http://www.surfnetkids.com)

[www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org)

What did the apple skin say  
to the apple?  
I've got you covered!



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Are you part of the Chefs Move to Schools program?  
<http://bit.ly/9BhtIf>

More than 1,600 chefs across the country are volunteering their time to help generate excitement about nutritious foods in schools through school gardens, cooking demonstrations, taste tests and more.

Participating chefs:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Chef/ChefsMap.php> are using this map to find interested schools, like yours, in their area. A chef will use the information provided to contact you about working together. Please sign up:

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Chef/SchoolsForm.php>

**Chefs Move to School at SNA:**

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Chef/>

## Commodity Distribution Program

The New Jersey Commodity Distribution Program provides approximately 30 million pounds of USDA food commodities valued at nearly \$20 million to over 700 participating school districts, child and adult day care centers, summer feeding programs, camps and charitable institutions throughout New Jersey. A wide variety of foods are available, ranging from frozen beef and chicken, canned, dried and fresh fruits and vegetables and grains, oils and peanut products.

For the 2010-2011 school year, \$2 million in fresh fruits and vegetables will be ordered through the Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. The prime contracted vendor for this program orders domestic product nationwide.

In September, schools can expect to receive apples, apple slices, baby car-

rots, green beans, cantaloupes, honey dew, oranges, green bell peppers, grape tomatoes and watermelon. The delivery dates into our warehouse will be August 30 and 31, September 7, 8, 13 and 14.

Since the produce is procured through federal DOD, it might be local, but not necessarily grown in New Jersey. In the past, portions of the green bell pepper and grape tomato supplies have been grown in New Jersey.

For more information about the Commodity Distribution Program, call (609) 292-0337.

