



NJ Farm to School News

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NJ Department of
Agriculture
Division of Food &
Nutrition

Fun-filled Farm to School Week

Did you know?

Many NJ farmers allow visitors to visit their farms at various times during the year to experience farm-related activities such as pick-your-own produce, hayrides, winery tours, horseback riding, and other educational experiences. That is why NJ is the Garden State!



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Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week 2013 kicked off with NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher visiting John Fenwick Academy in Salem City on September 23 to observe the school's Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP). Farm to School Week highlights efforts to connect schools with local farmers to bring more local produce into school meal programs. The Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program fits perfectly into the week-long farm to school activities providing students with the opportunity to snack on healthy, nutritious fruits and vegetables.

During the week-long event, School Nutrition

staff also visited Lounsberry Hollow School in Vernon, Deerfield School in Mountainside, and Audrey W. Clark School in Long Branch.

At Lounsberry School, 5th and 6th grade students were given the opportunity to sample squash recipes offered by the school's food service company, and listened to farmer Nicole Anderson from Anderson Farms in Branchville teach the students about squash and the importance of farming.

School gardens were highlighted at Deerfield School where 3rd - 5th grade students had the opportunity to plant seeds for their theme gardens.

The garden project is part of the curriculum to teach students the full cycle, from seed to harvest, to cooking and eating.

Finally, in Long Branch, elementary school students were treated to an information lunch-time program where "Farmer John Hayden of J. Ambrogi Foods talked to the children about local fruits and vegetables. Accompanied by guests from USDA and the NJ Farm to School Network, NJDA staff visited a classroom during their FFVP service. The students enthusiastically spoke about the characteristics of apples, the fruit of the day, and their appreciation of the FFVP.

School Garden of the Year Awarded

The 2nd Annual School Garden of the Year Award was announced on October 21 with William J. McGinn Elementary School in Scotch Plains being chosen as the Overall Winning Garden by the NJ Farm to School Network. The award was open to any NJ Pre-K - 12 school that was able to document, through photo-

graphs, the educational uses and existence of the garden, as well as sustainability and community involvement. The school will receive a \$1,500 award on during the award ceremony. Congressman Rush Holt, author of the National Farm to School Month legislation, attended the award ceremony.

Additionally, three other schools received acknowledgements for their gardening achievements: Mullica Township School, Hillside School and Greater Newark Charter School.

The School Garden of the year award is sponsored by Edible Jersey Magazine, Applegate Farms and Guarino Sons Produce.

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
www.wholekidsfoundation.org/gardengrants.php
www.gannettfoundation.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



2014 Youth Garden Grant

Deadline: December 6, 2013
National Gardening Association is offering a grant to schools or organizations that plan to garden in 2014 with at least 15 children, ages 3 - 18. There will be 20 awardees selected based on the demonstrated relationship between the program and education of the garden as it relates to the environment, health and nutrition issues, character education, and entrepreneurship in the US. Winners receive a \$500 award to the Gardening with Kids online store.

www.kidsgardening.org

What's In Season

Just because fall is upon us and there is a chill in the air, it doesn't mean that New Jersey's produce season has come to an end. There is still an abundance of fruits and vegetables available throughout the Garden State.

The list below indicates the current availability of fruits and vegetables. Weather and growing location may determine exact availability.

Apples - through mid-December

Beets - through November

Broccoli - through November

Cabbage - through November

Cauliflower - through November

Greens - through November

Lettuce - through November

Parsnips - through December

Potatoes - through mid-December

Pumpkins - through November

Spinach - through November

Turnips - through November

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

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.visitnjfarms.org
www.uspears.com
www.njfarmtoschool.org
www.kidsgardening.org
www.choosemyplate.gov
www.farmtoschool.org
www.healthymeals.nal.usda.gov

www.nj.gov
www.dole.com
www.usapple.org
www.adadc.com
www.njfarmmarkets.org
www.schoolnutrition.org
www.letsmove.gov
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

What's New?

- ◇ NJ Farm to School Network welcomes 7 FoodCorps Service members and 1 fellow that will be working closely with Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the NJ Farm to School Network to bring farm to school and science-based educational programs to communities throughout NJ.
- ◇ School Nutrition staff and NJ Farm to School Network personnel hosted an informational display at the NJ School Board Association Conference in Atlantic City October 22 - 24, 2013 to stress the importance of farm to school programs to those responsible for making important school related decisions. Many district's school board members expressed genuine interest in the Farm to School initiative.