



## USDA Farm to School Initiative Facts Sheet

### Description

The Farm to School initiative is an effort to connect schools (K - 12) with regional or local farms in order to serve healthy meals using locally produced foods. Farm to School activities may vary from community to community depending upon demographics; however, the basic goals remain the same:

- To meet the diverse needs of school nutrition programs in an efficient manner;
- To support regional and local farmers and thereby strengthen local food systems; and
- To provide support for health and nutrition education.

### Background

Recently, the initiative titled "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" was formed as a USDA-wide effort to create new economic opportunities by better connecting consumers with local producers. The initiative focuses on the importance of understanding where our food comes from and how it gets to our plate. One of the goals for this initiative is to break down barriers and support policies that focus on the connection between farmers and consumers. Out of this goal, and in response to the growing demand for Farm to School activities, the "USDA Farm to School Team" was established. To learn more about the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food initiative visit: <http://www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer>.

USDA's Farm to School Team was established in September of 2009 to support local and regional food systems by facilitating linkages between schools and their local food producers. The Team is comprised of both Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) staff, and is working with local and state authorities, school districts, farmers, and community partners to develop mechanisms to 1) assist schools in accessing local markets, 2) enable food producers to effectively service their local schools, and 3) facilitate communication between interested stakeholders.

The USDA is supporting Farm to School efforts through a number of initiatives, and continues to look for ways to help facilitate this important connection. Schools and communities may initiate and support a variety of Farm to School activities, including nutrition education, agriculture-related lessons and curriculum, school or community gardens, farm tours, taste testing, and parent/community educational sessions.

### Contact Information

Learn more about USDA's Farm to School Team online at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/>. To contact the Farm to School Team email us at: [farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov](mailto:farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov).