

ALABAMA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



THE LOCAL LUNCHBOX

An Alabama Farm to School Quarterly Newsletter



Welcome back! We've thoroughly enjoyed the past few months, filled with exciting opportunities to connect with schools and farmers across the state. As we look ahead to the new year, we're eager to continue supporting local agriculture and bringing fresh, nutritious food to school lunch plates, while creating more opportunities for students to engage with the food they eat. Let's take a look at what's been going on in Farm to School!



Recent Events

Governor Ivey Declares October Farm to School Month



Governor Kay Ivey proclaimed October as Farm to School Month! The program was proud to announce that Alabama schools have served over 5.2 million meals that featured a locally grown product since 2020! Keep serving those delicious local products in 2025!



Apple Crunch Day

Alabama Farm to School celebrated Apple Crunch Day on October 10th with a visit to Scott's Orchard in Hazel Green, AL. Students and staff from Huntsville City Schools enjoyed a tour of the orchard, allowing participants to learn about apple production firsthand while enjoying locally grown apples. This event was also live streamed on Facebook, so schools across the state could join in on the fun!



Region 5 ASNA Meeting

Alabama Farm to School Specialist Beth Spratt spoke at the ASNA Region 5 meeting at Demopolis City Schools, where she shared an engaging virtual farm tour of Scott's Orchard in Hazel Green, AL. Everyone enjoyed samples of three Harvest of the Month recipes skillfully prepared by the cooks at Demopolis City Schools, as well as fun door prizes!



Sweet Grown Alabama Plate Day

The Farm to School Program, in partnership with Sweet Grown Alabama, hosted a "Sweet Grown Alabama Plate Day" in Montgomery County. All Montgomery County Public Schools participated in "Sweet Grown Alabama Plate Day." The students enjoyed a lunch featuring products sourced directly from Alabama farmers. Roughly 18,000 pounds of Alabama grown and produced products were distributed throughout the cafeterias of the schools. Items served were beef from Mason Hills Farm in Grand Bay, grape and slicer tomatoes from Boatwright Farms LLC in Steele, lettuce and cucumbers from Extreme Green Farms in Auburn, satsumas from GCC&P Cooperative in Fairhope, and sweet potatoes from Sirmon Farms in Daphne, processed into fries by Glyen Holmes in Webb. ADAI staff attended lunch at Booker T. Washington Magnet High School and enjoyed this local meal!



Anniston City Schools Garden Program



Anniston City Schools hosted ADAI, ALSDE and USDA to celebrate the kickoff of their new school garden. Students heard from a local farmer and received hands-on experience working in the garden, learning about planting and the importance of growing their own food.



Bainbridge Block Party

Sweet Grown Alabama, the Alabama Cattlemen's Association, Alabama Forestry Association and Alabama Poultry & Egg Association hosted the Bainbridge Block Party in downtown Montgomery! Everyone in attendance enjoyed free burgers, wings, live music and a pop-up farmers market! It was a fun-filled day with all things agriculture!



Feeding Change Conference

The Farm to School team had an incredible two days at the Feeding Change Conference, hosted by Auburn University in Montgomery, AL! The event was packed with opportunities for networking and meaningful discussions. We were also thrilled to hear presentations from two of our own, Don Wambles and Beth Spratt!



Fall Farm Tour

In November, the Alabama Farm to School team hosted a farm tour. Our team took ALSDE staff and school CNP directors to Cassebaum Farms in Lillian and Mason Hills Farm in Grand Bay for an engaging day of learning about produce and beef production. The day ended with a delicious dinner at Waters Edge, a working farm in Robertsdale!



ALSDE Farm to School Symposium

ALSDE with the support of ADAI hosted a Farm to School Symposium! It featured a farmer meet-and-greet designed to connect farmers with CNP directors. We heard from our very own Beth Spratt about the procurement of local products!



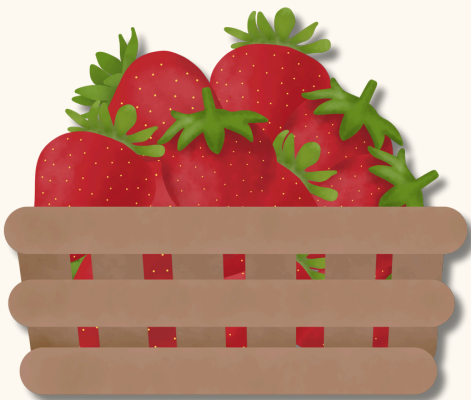
Upcoming Events

The Alabama Junior Chef competition is right around the corner! It will take place at the Jefferson State Shelby-Hoover Campus on January 17th, 2025.



Farm to School Specialist, Beth Spratt, will be speaking at the Georgia Organics SOWTH: A Regional Small Farms, Big Community Conference on February 5th & 6th!

Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association conference is coming up on February 5-7!



Strawberry season is coming soon! Have you placed your orders with your local farmer?



Check out our Harvest of the Month materials – they're packed with fun, fresh and flavorful ways to celebrate local products each month!

Also, don't forget to visit our website for updated free resources!



Be sure to check out our Facebook page for updates around the state.

If you know of any events coming up that you would like us to share, please email Paxton at: paxton.westbrook@agi.alabama.gov