

ALABAMA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



THE LOCAL LUNCHBOX

An Alabama Farm to School Quarterly Newsletter



Spring is finally here, and we couldn't be more excited! This season brings an abundance of fresh, locally grown produce that we look forward to seeing our schools enjoy. From crisp greens and sweet strawberries, spring brings new flavors and new opportunities to connect students with Alabama agriculture.

This time of year is also filled with exciting school activities! Garden plantings, taste tests, farm field trips and hands-on learning experiences that bring classrooms to life. We are grateful for our farmers, educators, child nutrition professionals and partners who make these experiences possible.

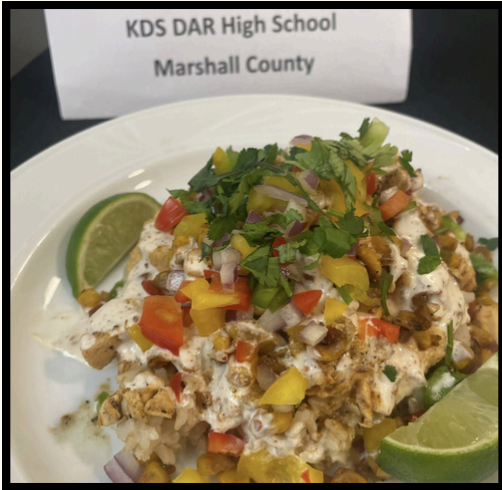
Here's to a season of growth, fresh beginnings and celebrating all the wonderful things spring has in store!



Recent Events

Alabama Junior Chef Competition

The Alabama Jr. Chef Competition showcased students' incredible talent and creativity with Alabama-grown ingredients! Congratulations to KDS DAR High School (1st), Valley Head High School (2nd), Fort Payne High School (3rd) and Appalachian High School (4th). Beth Spratt volunteered as a team leader. We're excited to see these students represent Alabama at the upcoming Regional Jr. Chef Competition!



AFVGA

Beth Spratt and Don Wambles attended the Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association Annual Conference in Gulf Shores, AL, February 4–6. At the conference, Don was honored with the Service to Horticulture Award, an achievement we're incredibly proud of! We're grateful for the opportunity to connect with our farmers each year!



ASNA Conference

Beth Spratt and Paxton Westbrook attended the ASNA Annual Conference in Montgomery, AL, where “Farmer’s Row” was a highlight of the vendor expo. The space provided a valuable opportunity for Child Nutrition Professionals and staff to connect directly with local farmers. Commissioner Pate was also honored with the ASNA Friend of the Year Award, recognizing his continued efforts for Alabama Farm to School.



The Common Market Buyers Meeting

Paxton Westbrook attended a buyer’s meeting with The Common Market in Huntsville, AL on March 4, where she had the opportunity to share a great meal while connecting with Alabama farmers. The Common Market is a nonprofit organization that connects schools, institutions and businesses with a reliable supply of locally grown products, partnering with farmers to distribute their goods to schools, hospitals, colleges, and more. At the conclusion of the meeting, they toured the warehouse for the Food Bank of North Alabama.



National School Breakfast Week

National School Breakfast Week (March 2-6) was a quest like no other! Pell City Schools celebrated alongside Alexander on his “Quest for School Breakfast,” making it a fun and engaging week for students. Stay tuned to see exciting news rewarding their efforts!



Clarke Washington Growers Meeting

Paxton Westbrook attended the Clarke-Washington Growers Meeting in Jackson, AL, hosted by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. She shared an engaging presentation on all things Farm to School!



Ashley Farms Visit

Beth Spratt visited Ashley Farms in Haleyville, AL, alongside CNP Director Emma Anne Hallman, where Jamie White gave them a tour of his operation. It was a great experience and a valuable opportunity to learn more about his cattle operation and how he supplies beef to Haleyville City Schools!



Pike County Agriscience Academy Visit

Paxton Westbrook, Beth Spratt, Don Wambles and Meredith Casey joined ALSDE's Justin Hope for a visit to the Pike County Agriscience Academy at Goshen High School. Ag teachers Christian Stanley and Cody Eiland led a tour showcasing their innovative programs, including the hydroponic lettuce container garden, fisheries and plant production. They do an excellent job giving students the opportunity to expand their skills and experience all things agriculture.



strawberries!



**It's everybody's favorite time of year,
strawberry season!**

**Be sure to contact your local farmer today
to order strawberries for your school lunch
trays! We have several farmers looking to
move berries to schools!**

Sweet Grown Alabama's U-Pick Guide!

Upcoming Events

South East Regional Offices (SERO) Jr. Chef Competition!

The SERO Junior Chef Competition will be held April 24th at Jefferson State Community College Shelby-Hoover Campus! We can't wait to cheer on the Alabama team!



Alabama Scratchworks!

ALSDE is hosting a scratch works event for CNP managers May 7-8 at Jones Valley Teaching Farm in Birmingham, AL. ADAI will be assisting by leading a farm tour at Boozer Farms!

AG In the Classroom!

Ag in the Classroom will take place in Prattville, AL this year June 10-12! Be sure to sign up!

Apply Here!





Flat Alexander

Have you met Alexander, the Alabama Farm to School mascot?

Just like Flat Stanley, he's ready to travel far and wide to learn more about where our food comes from, meet local farmers and visit your school cafeterias!

Take him on an adventure, snap some photos and tag us to share the journey. Let's see how far Alexander can go!

Click [here](#) to print your own Flat Alexander and let your students color them to get this journey started! The school with the most posts by the end of the year, will win something special!

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