

ALABAMA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



THE LOCAL LUNCHBOX

An Alabama Farm to School Quarterly Newsletter



Happy Farm to School Month!

The school year is in full swing, and October is here, which means it's time to celebrate Farm to School Month! This month, we're shining a spotlight on the connections that bring Alabama-grown foods from the farm to the school cafeteria and give students a closer look at where their food comes from. Farm to School is about more than what's on the lunch tray. It's about fresh, nutritious meals, supporting Alabama farmers, strengthening local communities and creating hands-on learning opportunities for students.

From the classroom to the cafeteria and even the farm, there are so many ways to get students excited about agriculture and healthy, local foods. Whether you're a teacher, child nutrition professional, farmer, or parent, you're an important part of the Farm to School story! Thank you for all you do to help grow healthy students, thriving farms and stronger Alabama communities. We're excited to celebrate, learn and grow with you throughout the month!



Recent Events

Auburn City Schools and The Dairy Alliance Smart Swaps

Auburn City Schools cafeteria managers participated in a training with the Dairy Alliance's Smart Swaps program to learn student-approved recipes and creative ways to incorporate dairy into breakfast and lunch menus. The training focused on meeting updated USDA sugar and sodium limits while keeping meals appealing, nutritious and fun for students.



SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAMS

Summer feeding was a big hit for schools across the state! Students were able to receive fresh, local produce in their summer take home meals from several school systems this year. Thank you to every farmer who participated! It truly makes a difference when students can have nourishment over the summer.

Pictured: Haleyville, Bullock, Elmore and Autauga Counties.



(Pictures continued on next page)

Summer Feeding Continued

Several school districts across the state provided produce to students from farms such as: Extreme Green, Boozer Farms, Penton Farms, Scott's Orchard and Riley Creek Farms.



Farm to School Tip

When serving an Alabama-grown item, consider adding a small sign or menu note telling students where their food came from. A simple “Grown in Alabama!” message can help students make the connection between their lunch tray and local farm. Find free downloadable versions for all products on our [website](#).



FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH PROCLAMATION

We are thrilled to celebrate Governor Kay Ivey's proclamation recognizing October as Farm to School Month in Alabama! This recognition shines a spotlight on the importance of connecting Alabama schools with local farmers and increasing access to fresh, Alabama-grown foods for students throughout the year. ADAI was joined by Elmore County Schools' Child Nutrition Team (our top incentive recipient from last year), ALSDE and Alexander.



Harvest to Hallways

We're so proud Elmore County Schools was recognized as one of six cohort awardees selected for the USDA's Harvest to Hallways initiative, focused on bringing real food to every cafeteria! Through the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant, Elmore County Schools will establish a regional Farm to School Processing Hub to expand year-round access to Alabama-grown foods while addressing challenges such as frequent deliveries and limited cold storage. We're excited to see this investment strengthen Farm to School and Alabama's local food system. Congratulations, Elmore County Schools, on this incredible opportunity to make a lasting impact for Alabama students!



Up to \$25M Farm to School Grants

A third round of awards to schools, allowing them to incorporate locally sourced foods via the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program.

Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program — 6 Cohort Awardees

ALABAMA	Elmore County School District	\$500,000
		Wetumpka, AL - Cohort 1

Elmore County Schools will establish a regional Farm to School Processing Hub designed to expand year-round access to Alabama-grown foods for child nutrition programs, addressing barriers like frequent deliveries and limited cold storage.

Farm to School Farm Tour

Follow the Yellow Brick Road and join us for this year's Farm Tour! Along our journey, we'll visit several unique farms across the land, discovering the people, places, and products which make our agricultural community so special. After a day of adventure, we'll gather for a delightful dinner before making our way back to the hotel. As a special keepsake from our trip around "Oz", each participant will receive a commemorative sweatshirt.

We can't wait to travel down the Yellow Brick Road with you!

\$55*

***In addition to your conference registration**



**Mike McKenzie,
Mckenzie Farms**



**Craig Goolsby,
Silverhills Farm**



**James Sirmon,
Sirmon Farms**



**Dinner at The
Waters Edge**

Bus Leaves Hotel at 3:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events

Dress Like a Farmer

Please participate in Dress Like a Farmer Day! We look forward to seeing you in your overalls, flannel, hats, boots, etc.



(Example from last year)



National School Lunch Week



National School Lunch Week is October 12th-16th. Please participate in our special challenge by sharing your tray, showing your farm connection or decorating your cafeteria!

Upcoming Events

Apple Crunch Day!

Apple Crunch Day is October 13th! We will be live on Facebook!

Please sign up and join in on the fun!



Satsuma Season is Approaching!

Satsumas will be available in November. Reach out to your distributors or us at Department of Ag to get them ordered!

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