

WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2022

ANNUAL REPORT





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LETTER FROM THE Secretary

Agriculture has a broad impact on our state and way of life. In Wisconsin, 14.3 million acres are dedicated to agriculture, and the industry provides 11.8% of the state's employment. Here, farmers serve as a significant economic driver, feed our families, and strengthen the fiber of communities across the state.

Wisconsin's Farm to School Advisory Council helps create key connections between educational institutions and farms in the state. I am thankful for the many Wisconsin farmers, processors, distributors, organizations, and programs that collaborate in this effort. Through these partnerships, our food supply chain is strengthened and students are provided with delicious, locally-grown foods. I look forward to the continued initiatives of the Farm to School Advisory Council and the impact of that work in communities across Wisconsin in the future.

Sincerely,

Randy Romashi

Randy Romanski Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021 and 2022, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) Farm to School and Institution program, Wisconsin Farm to School Advisory Council, and stakeholders collaborated to build new farm to school initiatives, strengthen food supply chain connections, mitigate disruptions and supply chain challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and assist schools in accessing food.

This group of industry stakeholders also worked together to create equitable food systems through innovative initiatives and creative partnerships with tribal food system partners. Strengthening local food supply chain connections supports Wisconsin farmers and local food businesses in providing a bounty for school, early child programs, and food security efforts.

Wisconsin's farm to school network continues to partner to provide connections and expand access to nutrition and agricultural education, Wisconsin-sourced foods, school garden developments, and engagement activities.

F2S WI FARM TO SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Farm to School (F2S) is an international movement supporting local producers in providing bountiful, nutritious school meals and snacks for all. Farm to School programs operate nationwide within three core elements: **Procurement, School Gardens, and Education.**

F2S programs are shaped through the collaborations of federal and state agencies and the work of farmers, food distribution businesses, processors, school teachers, chefs, food service staff, school boards, community organizations, community based businesses, parents, caregivers, and students.

The Wisconsin Farm to School Network seeks to strengthen communities by providing statewide access to Wisconsin-grown agricultural foods, school gardens, and nutrition education with an emphasis on increasing access for food insecure communities.

CONNECTING TO FARM TO SCHOOL EFFORTS

The Wisconsin School Garden Network and Rooted merged two previous newsletters and successfully started delivering Farm to School and School Garden news through a new outreach effort called *Growing Together*. The effort provides farm to school information through a newsletter with 5,728 recipients and social media.



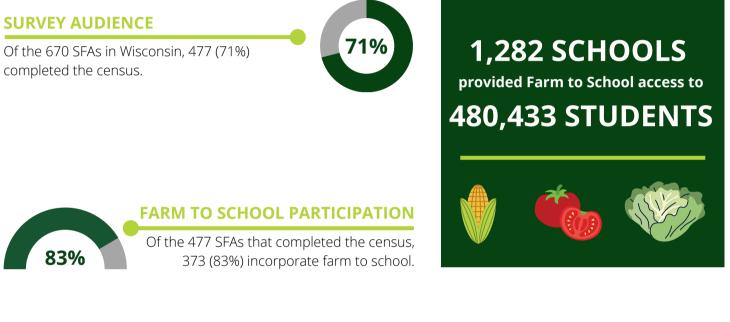




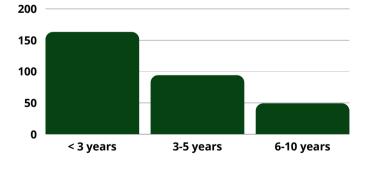




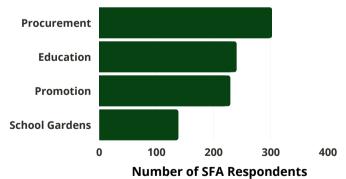
This data was collected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2019 from schools and districts that participate in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. Survey participants are called School Food Authorities (SFAs), an organizing unit that describes public districts and private schools. For more information on the census information, visit <u>https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/census-results/states/wi.</u>



NUMBER OF SFA RESPONDENTS AND YEARS OF PARTICIPATION



FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES USED BY SFA RESPONDENTS





F2S CENSUS |



LOCAL FOOD SOURCING

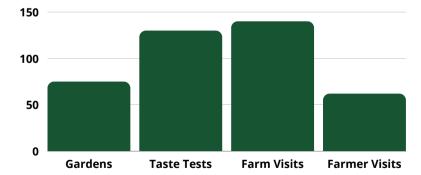
The most common definition of "local" was reported to be "Wisconsin."

AVERAGE SFA SCHOOL FOOD BUDGET

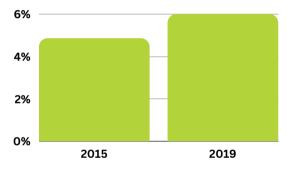
Of SFA respondents in 2019, 6% spent on local foods (up from 4.86% in 2015 Census) and 18.2% when including local milk.

\$75,598,496 total spent on school foods (includes milk)\$9,645,872 on local foods (includes milk)\$2,947,392 on local foods (does not include milk)

2019 SFA RESPONDENTS AND THEIR AG EDUCATION ACTIVITIES



PERCENTAGE OF SFA RESPONDENTS' SPENDING ON LOCAL FOODS BY SURVEY YEAR



NUTRITION & AG EDUCATION

SFAs reported participation in Nutrition and Ag Education through garden usage, taste testings, farm visits, and farmer visits.





DATCP provides services through a Farm to School and Institution Specialist. DATCP programs focus on procurement and economic development for farmers by supporting and facilitating connections along local food supply chains from producer to processor, buyer, and ultimately, to children's plates. Working with farmers, food distributors, and processors, DATCP supports farm to school and institution activities by identifying and reducing impediments to increasing the amount of Wisconsin-grown and produced foods served in Wisconsin schools.

PARTNER COLLABORATIONS

Marketplace Meetings

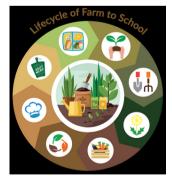
Marketplace Meetings are a collaborative effort between the School Nutrition Team at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and DATCP's Farm to School and Institution program. The meetings provide a venue where school nutrition professionals and Wisconsin food producers can build their networks and ask questions related to local food procurement. Meetings take place regularly throughout the year and host up to 50 attendees at each meeting.

Minimally Processed Vegetable Pilot

In 2022, DATCP received \$25,000 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funding to work with Edible Cuts in Kenosha for the processing and sampling of 8,000 pounds of school-friendly products to Wisconsin students. The University of Wisconsin - Division of Extension's Food Wise Harvest of the Month program partnered to share best practices, educational materials, and services. The project resulted in several schools transitioning potato purchases to Wisconsin from Idaho.

119 schools reached **15,500** students offered products **5,160** pounds of WI sweet potatoes

3,020 pounds of WI russett potatoes



Lifecycle of Farm to School Workshop Series

Developed in partnership with organizations and school food service professionals, the DPI School Nutrition Team is implementing a multi-model training project. Funded through a 2021 USDA Farm to School Grant, eight workshops highlight the lifecycle of school gardens. The project aims to expand school nutrition professionals' farm to school teams, provide opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring, equitably support farm to school activities, and sustain farm to school programming. (DATCP is creating and leading workshops on safe produce handling and how to implement school gardens to supply cafeterias, as well as making industry connections.)



UPCOMING INITIATIVES

DATCP has applied for \$100,000 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funding to promote specialty crop producers and products, offer food safety trainings and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification, coordinate education and procurement assistance, and foster stronger regional supply chain connections to increase farm sales of Wisconsin specialty crops to schools. This project will engage new partners and supply chain stakeholders, increase market access for underserved growers, and expand healthy local food options that feature specialty crops to school districts with high percentages of students that qualify for free or reduced meals.

DATCP FARM TO SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Members are nominated and appointed by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Individuals include staff from DATCP, DHS, DPI and various sectors that advance farm to school, including agricultural and local food supply chain leaders, child health and nutrition professionals, school food service authorities, educators, and community leaders. The council makes key recommendations that guide the development of Farm to School in Wisconsin and create the Wisconsin Farm to School Annual Report.

Standing Partners

<u>Krista Knigge</u> Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Jennifer Putzer Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Jessica Sharkus WI Department of Public Instruction

Child Health Professionals Daithi (David) Wolfe - Council Chair

Kids Forward

<u>Lisa Kingery, MS, RDN</u> FoodRight, Inc.

<u>Bridgett Wilder</u> Perserverance Wellness

School Food Service Personnel

<u>Michael Gasper</u> School District of Holmen

J<u>esse Padron</u> Oneida Nation

Farmers <u>Sarah Christman</u> Hunger Task Force

At Large <u>Nancy Dorman</u> Wisconsin Association of School Boards

<u>Erin Badtke</u> MaetaData

<u>Tatum Evans</u> Fifth Season Cooperative

<u>Chef Irene Pawlisch, CSC, SNS</u> WI School Nutrition Association





The Wisconsin Farm to School Advisory Council is committed to advancing racial and social equity and addressing disparities in access to the benefits of farm to school in Wisconsin. The council is working to reimagine existing support structures related to farm to school efforts in Wisconsin and revise them in a way that encompasses diversity, equity, and inclusivity. This team continues to work on building connections and relationships with people and organizations representing impacted communities. The short-term goal is to have more of these voices on the council.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES

Racial and ethnic disparities exist in our food system. Access to healthy food is a challenge, and there are disparities in the quality, variety, quantity, and price of food available in communities. More than one in five children are at risk of hunger. For Black and Latino individuals, the number is one in three. The USDA defines food security as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle. Food insecurity has health implications. Black and Latino youth have substantially higher rates of childhood obesity than their white peers. Native American individuals are twice as likely to lack access to safe and healthy foods than white individuals, which has led to higher obesity and diabetes rates. There are also racial and ethnic disparities related to income and land ownership.

EARLY CHILD CARE EDUCATION ACCESS CONCERNS



1 in 7 children in Wisconsin are food insecure.
Children that are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC) are food insecure at even higher rates.
(Feeding America, 2021)

FREE AND REDUCED MEAL PROGRAMS

Wisconsin's free and reduced meal programs are important avenues for improving food access equity. The chart to the right accounts for 422 Wisconsin K-12 school districts. The brackets show the percentage of students who received free or reduced meals in 2019. Of the 422 school districts shown in the chart, 228 (54%) have 40% or more of their student body receiving free and reduced meals.

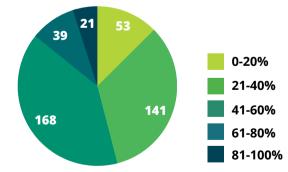
(Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2019)

27%

20% family providers

center-based teachers

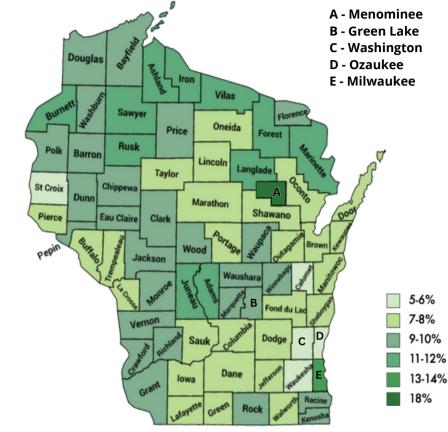
indicated being worried that **food might run out**in their household by the end of the month.BIPOC staff experience this at even higher rates.



Number of WI School Districts and the percentage of students receiving free and reduced meals



EQUITY |



FOOD INSECURITY COORELATION

In some cases, the meals that children receive at school are their only meals each day. Food insecurity plays a huge part in the need and equitable access for farm to school efforts in Wisconsin.

The map to the right portrays the food insecurity rates by county. While formulas include poverty, unemployment rates, and other benchmarks to calculate rates of food insecurity, they do not take community assets into account. The table identifies food insecurity rates by race and ethnicity.

This data is being used to develop priorities, commitments, and strategic efforts in farm to school. These efforts are aimed towards equitable access to farm to school benefits and increased food security and sovereignty.

Racial and Ethnic demographics of each food insecure percentage bracket shown

FOOD INSECURITY %	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE
5-6%	0.54%	2.18%	3.04%	6.52%	87.02%
7-8%	1.50%	2.00%	1.44%	7.20%	85.10%
9-10%	1.83%	1.50%	1.80%	6.24%	86.20%
11-12%	7.30%	0.54%	1.10%	3.54%	81.40%
13-14%	0.60%	3.50%	32.33%	20.90%	38.00%
18%	93%	0.00%	0.00%	6.00%	1.00%

*Other races accounted for in percentages include Native Hawaiian and 2 or more races

(Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2019)

Food Insecurity Rates by County



PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY CHAIN

USDA/DPI PROCUREMENT

There are regulated **procurement methods** from which SFAs choose including:

- micro-purchase (most common Wisconsin F2S procurement method)
- small purchase, also known as 3 bids and one buy
- Invitation for Bid (IFB), also referred to as "sealed bid" or "request for bid (RFB)"
- Request for Proposal (RFP)

There are several **programs** that schools can participate in to provide food for students including:

- National School Lunch Program
 - USDA Foods
 - Department of Defense Fresh
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)

- Wisconsin School Day Milk Program (WSDMP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Summer Meal Program Choices

USDA/DPI PROGRAMS	\$ SPENT ON FOOD	\$ SPENT ON WISCONSIN FOODS	% OF WI FOODS IN PURCHASING			
NATIONAL						
USDA Procurement	FY20: \$1,849,455,347	FY20: \$66,407,428	FY20: 3.59%			
(all national programs)	FY21: \$1,710,513,862	FY21: \$65,120,327	FY21: 3.81%			
USDA Procurement	FY20: \$1,135,127,948	FY20: \$40,889,960	FY20: 3.60%			
(child nutrition programs)	FY21: \$1,153,596,213	FY21: \$46,919,808	FY21: 4.06%			
WISCONSIN						
Department of Defense Fresh	FY20: \$3,224,456	FY20: \$1,545,632	FY20: 47.93%			
Fruit & Vegetable Program	FY21: \$4,896,863	FY21: \$368,929	FY21: 7.53%			
USDA Fresh Fruit &	FY20: \$2,888,527	FY20: \$151,070	FY20: 5.23%			
Vegetable Program	FY21: \$0	FY21: \$0	FY21: *			

*USDA Fresh Fruit & Vegetable program FY21 data unavailable at publishing

(Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2022)

The Wisconsin Farm to School Advisory Council recognizes that the data above is not all encompassing and procurement numbers may be higher.



SUPPLY CHAIN ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES LED BY THE CENTER FOR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS AT UW MADISON (UW-CIAS)

Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch

October 2021 marked the 8th Annual Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch, a celebration of Wisconsin orchards, the Wisconsin Farm to School Network, and National Farm to School Month.

Wisconsin school districts, early care sites, hospitals, colleges, and supporting partners participate in this event, which is a collaborative effort of six Upper Midwest states, including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.



185,490
apples crunched in 20211,000
sites across Wisconsin64
participating Wisconsin orchards

Wisconsin Chili Lunch

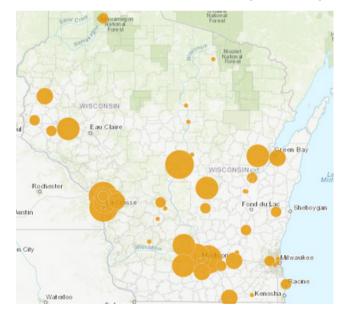
In 2017, a partnership of six public schools and two area hospitals piloted the Wisconsin Chili Lunch. The event was a huge success and launched statewide the following year with statewide farm to school partnership support. In 2022, over 48,000 chili lunches were served around the state.

The Wisconsin Chili Lunch is a great way to highlight farm to cafeteria efforts and provides an opportunity to practice sourcing local foods, supporting local farmers, and joining forces with cafeterias and kitchens to be "vocal for local."





2019 Wisconsin Chili Lunch Participation Map





PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TO BUILD RURAL PROSPERITY

The UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS) is researching wholesale food markets in Wisconsin. Food supply chains rely on volume sales so that they are efficient and profitable. This is especially true for foods that require refrigeration. Small purchasers, such as small grocery stores, restaurants, food pantries and school kitchens, may not be able to order enough volume to warrant truck load deliveries. Minimum deliveries are necessary to sustain strong business partnerships with multiple distributors so that minimum orders are met and prices are competitive. By collaborating with each other, or with larger businesses, smaller buyers can more effectively access wholesale products. Public investment in rural food infrastructure builds rural prosperity.

CIAS has four research projects examining how wholesale food is reaching Wisconsin businesses and school districts. Early findings document that citizens in some rural parts of the state are underserved by wholesale fresh produce markets for a variety of reasons. Routes are circuitous, truck loads are difficult to optimize, and delivery service to small buyers drops as volume drops. This drives the cost higher to distribute to low population areas and smaller buyers than distributing food to higher population regions. It also reduces the number of distribution companies that can serve a rural region leading to wholesale market concentration. The result is higher prices for rural consumers. At the same time, rural regions are suffering from low income. This combination of factors drives food insecurity, especially for children and the elderly.

In this research, researchers are finding examples of innovative ways that people are overcoming these obstacles through collaboration. A large employer in Dane County is partnering with a school district and their primary distributor to meet minimum purchases of locally grown products. In this win-win-win situation, the distributor is rewarded with steady purchases of items that may otherwise be insufficient to maintain a separate SKU. The school district can provide high quality, seasonal menu items to children, and the business is recognized for their community partnership.

Another example is the case of a charitable organization providing rural food pantries with funds to purchase items from local grocery stores. Some school districts are also considering this option of partnering with independent grocers so that together they reach the minimum order more quickly and receive fresh food deliveries more often. In this way, they support the existing rural supply chain, and thus improve food access for all in the community.

Business collaboration is one approach. Targeted infrastructure development is another. Food is delivered most efficiently on freight trucks, so the infrastructure for freight deliveries is important to ensure rural communities are adequately served. Maintaining and improving rural roads is a priority, especially for use during the freeze/thaw season and in anticipation of extreme weather events. Terminal markets are another type of critical infrastructure that can improve supply chain logistics. Such facilities are especially important for foods and medicine that require refrigeration. Terminal markets receive 53 ft truckloads of product, and efficiently unload and store products at the proper temperature. Pallets of fresh food may then be broken into smaller lots for delivery with smaller trucks that cost less to operate on short deliveries. This makes it possible for several distributors to serve more of rural Wisconsin and improves competition in the marketplace. Other necessary transportation infrastructure includes driver rest areas and "hook and drop" facilities. All of these approaches work together to improve food access and make supply chain logistics more efficient, especially in rural areas.

Michelle Miller - Associate Director, UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS)



EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (ECE) PROCUREMENT

The Wisconsin Early Care and Education System continues to strive to expand and strengthen farm to early care efforts. Rising food costs, childhood food security concerns, healthy food access concerns and childcare staffing shortages remain top challenges. Fresh, affordable food access is essential in serving healthy meals and snacks in child care programs. Fruit and vegetable consumption is an important indicator of a child's nutrition.







participate in an early care and education program.

Infants and toddlers

Challenges to Providing Local Foods in Programs

Although many programs and providers may be willing to purchase and use food from local producers, the perceived extra work needed is a hurdle. The top barriers include:

- Cost of Wisconsin-grown foods (51% in 2017, 41% in 2020)
- Finding local farmers (31% in 2017, 27% in 2020)
- Finding local foods through current distributor (30% in 2017, 27% in 2020)
- Delivery challenges (20% in 2017, 21% in 2020)
- Refrigerator, freezer, dry storage space (25% in 2017, 14% in 2020)
- Availability of minimally processed or pre-cut products (12% in 2017, 14% in 2020)

The COVID-19 pandemic increased pressures on the early childhood system in Wisconsin. While high staff turnover has always been a challenge in the field, the COVID-19 pandemic increased these rates. Many childcare programs have been forced to close classrooms due to staffing shortages, and staff are fulfilling multiple roles to keep programs open. These challenges, when combined with supply chain disruptions and staff shortages, have added barriers to Farm to ECE participation that were not foreseen at the time of either survey.

(Wisconsin Farm to ECE Surveys, October 2017 and Early 2020)

P's in a Pod Pilot

The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association is expanding their program to increase use of local foods in Early Care and Education (ECE) programs. The project will begin in early 2023, creating partnerships between producers and providers building new markets for local food producers, creating opportunities to teach children about producers, introducing children to new foods, and improving nutrition. P's in a Pod includes the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (WEESSN) and family care providers in nine counties, including Jackson, La Crosse, Sauk, Columbia, Jefferson, Dodge, Dane, Green, and Milwaukee counties.





The Wisconsin School Garden Network offers workshops and technical assistance to individuals and programs including finding appropriate curricular resources, helping to connect them with school garden support organizations in their region, and providing guidance on starting and growing a garden program. In addition, they provide a newsletter and mapping for networking around Wisconsin school gardens.

TEACHING IN NATURE'S CLASSROOM ONLINE COURSE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wisconsin School Garden Network developed and provided a free online, self-directed, garden-based professional development course for educators called Teaching in Nature's Classroom. The course was offered initially to educators during the summer of 2020, and due to positive feedback, it was offered again for educators in the fall of 2020. With hundreds of educators on waitlists for summer and fall sessions, the online course platform was expanded to accommodate more educators in winter 2020 and spring 2021.

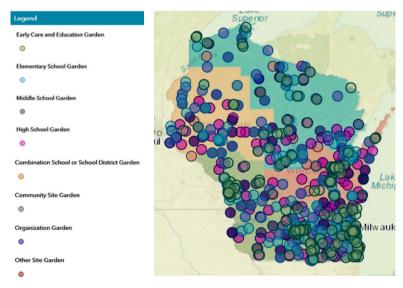
The course has served **more than 700 educators**. Over 90% of participants in the most recent course evaluation reported that they felt more knowledgeable about principles and best practices of garden-based education, available resources, and the work of other educators around the county. Attendees also reported feeling energized and inspired to promote garden-based learning at their site.

PUT YOURSELF ON THE MAP CAMPAIGN

The Wisconsin School Garden Network's 'Put Yourself on the Map' campaign recently asked schools and organizations to add their gardens and contact information to our school garden map.

The map continues to grow, and there are **approximately 850 Wisconsin school gardens** on the map, which is more recorded gardens than any other state in the country!

Wisconsin FFA programs were invited to join the Wisconsin school garden map, and now the map lists **more than 160 FFA garden sites.**



(Wisconsin School Garden Network, 2020)

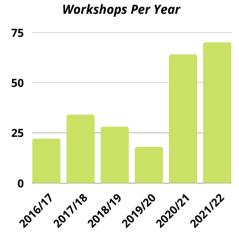


SCHOOL GARDENS |

WISCONSIN SCHOOL GARDEN DAY

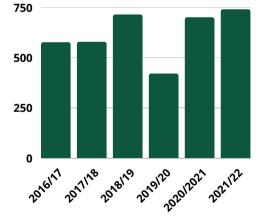
Every year since 2019, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers has signed a proclamation declaring the third Thursday of May as Wisconsin School Garden Day. In 2021 and 2022, thousands of students across Wisconsin celebrated the 3rd Annual Wisconsin School Garden Day. To celebrate the day, Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes visited Lake View Elementary School in Madison to learn more about their school garden program, Alice in Dairyland highlighted three school garden programs across the state, and other state officials visited schools in their communities.





(Wisconsin School Garden Network, 2022)







NUTRITION & AG EDUCATION

WISCONSIN AMERICORPS FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

This program, coordinated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, provides an innovative approach to building healthy communities by improving child nutrition through the implementation of educational farm to school activities for students and families. These activities: encourage healthy eating choices in an educational setting; develop strong communities by creating future community leaders and connecting schools with local farmers and food businesses; increase the capacity of communities to support sustainable F2S programs that encourage healthy behaviors, and improve the school food environment.





WISCONSIN HARVEST OF THE MONTH

This is a statewide campaign, coordinated by the University of Wisconsin - Division of Extension's FoodWise Program, that encourages kids and families to eat more fruits and vegetables. Each month, schools showcase one seasonal, Wisconsin-grown fruit or vegetable, allowing students to taste, explore, and learn about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.

Benefits of the campaign include:

- Encouraging kids to try new fruits and vegetables
- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among students
- Reduces food waste
- Grows school meal participation
- Supports Wisconsin farmers and the local economy





MENOMINEE HARVEST OF THE MOON PROGRAM

The Menominee Indian Reservation and what is now known as the State of Wisconsin are home of specific foods, and each is full of stories, relationships, and nutrition. The Harvest of the Moon program was created in 2020 to strengthen connections to food through the integration of Menominee language, Menominee Moons, Menominee art, and Indigenous recipes. Each of these components relates, and combined, a thriving and complex learning system exists. This program contains solutions to building a healthy and thriving community.

Through the Kemāmaceqtaq: We're all Moving project, Harvest of the Moon materials were developed with the intention that they can be used in a variety of community settings, including schools, afterschool programs, senior meal sites, 4-H meetings, recreation centers, and other sites.

The objectives of the program include:

- Increasing access to healthy and traditional Menominee foods
- Teaching about the nutritional value of the monthly harvests
- Drawing connections between food and Menominee language, stories, and culture to enhance knowledge and cultural pride
- Introducing traditional recipes to the community to encourage a healthy diet that features indigenous foods
- Support local and/or Native farmers and producers



FUND THE WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

The Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Program was created by 2009 Wisconsin Act 293. With approved funding, DATCP will distribute grant funds to schools and institutions to increase local food purchasing.

SUPPORT EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ACCESS

Support access for all students so all children have access to local foods or agricultural and nutrition education.

INVEST IN LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

With support, the Farm to School Advisory Council will continue local supply chain development and infrastructure for schools, including food purchases sourced from Wisconsin farmers, processors, and local businesses.





