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Event aims to connect Wisconsin farmers and schools in local food supply chains

Gathering for a hearty meal is a rite of the holiday season. However, given supply chain issues, some favorite staples may have been in shorter supply this holiday season. Households are not the only ones struggling with supply shortages; school food services have also been scrambling to secure items.

To address this shortage, Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) are connecting the dots and hosting a “Bridging the Gap: Connecting Farm to School” webinar at noon on December 14, 2021. Join farmers and supply chain partners for an overview on how schools and farmers can work together to enhance access to locally grown products.

The webinar will include presenters from both DATCP and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI); two state agencies that have identified needs and opportunities for education around producers and local food businesses in working with schools.

“The past year unveiled weaknesses along the supply chain and reminded us all of the value of strong local food systems,” said WFU Membership Engagement Director Kirsten Slaughter. “We’re glad to be able to bridge the gap and bring farmers together with school food service personnel to learn how we can get more nutritious, local food into school districts here in Wisconsin.”

Those involved in school food procurement, farmers, and local food suppliers interested in learning more about selling to local institutions are encouraged to attend. The program will provide information on Wisconsin School Procurement Methods, new policies and waivers to assist in sourcing needs, DATCP and DPI Farm to School resources, and tools and tips on accessing markets and developing relationship-based sales.

“Wisconsin local food producers help feed their communities.. Many schools are turning to our local food system partners because of their reliability and resilience. Our goal is to support these systems and collaborations between Wisconsin schools and producers in developing farm to school supply chains to provide nutrition through school meal programs,” said DATCP Farm to School and Institution Program Specialist April Yancer.

RSVP for the December 14 webinar at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events.

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