



WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL
JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

ANNUAL REPORT

WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION



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Letter From the Secretary

Wisconsin's agriculture industry has a \$116.3 billion impact in the state, and we are widely known as America's Dairyland. However, Wisconsin's agricultural diversity is one of our strengths, and our producers lead the nation in cranberries, ginseng, corn for silage, cheese, and much more. Due to this, Wisconsin's farmers and food system workers play an essential role in our rich heritage as a state.

Part of this heritage includes how we build and foster partnerships in agriculture and as a way to bridge gaps between communities. Wisconsin is proud to have Wisconsin Farm to School partners that engage local food businesses, community leaders, educators, policy makers, parents, caregivers, and students in creating resilient food communities throughout the state. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP's) Farm to School and Institution Program is proud to be part of this partnership with other state agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Department of Health Services.



I hope that you enjoy this report, which highlights just a few of the ways the Farm to School network in Wisconsin connects the dots between farm gates and lunch plates. I am eager for DATCP and our partners to continue to expand the work to positively impact communities across the state.

Sincerely,

Randy Romanski

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

Wisconsin Farm to School Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Farm to School and Institution program, Wisconsin Farm to School Advisory Council, and stakeholders collaborate to expand access to locally produced foods in schools and education institutions. Partners work to strengthen regional food system resilience, support community-based initiatives, expand statewide partnerships, strengthen food supply chain connections, and expand equitable access to Wisconsin-sourced foods.

Wisconsin farm to school network partners support the connections along the supply chain and expand access to nutrition and agricultural education, school garden developments, engagement activities, and Wisconsin-sourced foods.



Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers with representatives of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association at the 2024 Wisconsin Farm to School Grantee gathering.

DATCP Farm to School Program

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

FY24 DATCP Farm to School Program Engagement and Education Activities

- Marketplace Meetings (monthly meetings and site visits during the school year):
 - Producer and school food buyer technical assistance
 - Market connections
 - Support for local food producers and distribution companies to connect to school sales opportunities
- Wisconsin Farm to School Grant pilot program implementation, promotion, and community support to develop partnerships, implement initiatives, and strengthen Wisconsin's statewide farm to school network (details available in Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Program section of this report)
- School garden development, food safety, and procurement with Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), resulting in more standardized practices among other impacts
- Quarterly strategic conversations with Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to ensure complementary programming and cooperatively identify needs and impacts
- Technical assistance and program support for Wisconsin projects with Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub—five projects funded at \$250,000 each and three projects ranging from \$10,000 to \$75,000 each.
- University of Wisconsin Extension collaboration on Hmong-focused farm to school initiatives, Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch, Wisconsin Chili Lunch supply chain connections, Harvest of the Month partner connections, and FoodWise county coordinator connections
- Farm to School Council meeting facilitation
- Wello, REAP, FoodRight, Inc., Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, and University of Wisconsin FoodWise partner networking support
- Partnership on early childcare nutrition access and local procurement with Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), Kids Forward, and healthTIDE

Marketplace Meetings

Marketplace Meetings are a collaborative effort between DATCP and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). These meetings provide a venue for school nutrition professionals and Wisconsin food producers to make connections and ask questions about procuring and selling local foods. Marketplace Meetings take place monthly during the school year and involve up to 50 guests.

School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin Trade Show



DATCP and DPI sponsored booths and established a Wisconsin local food section at the School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin (SNA) 2024 Conference trade show. Over 250 school food directors and culinary staff had the opportunity to sample Wisconsin food, and local food vendors provided education to attendees on their products, ordering, and procurement. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant funding allowed Wisconsin farm to school vendors to attend the show, build awareness, and increase networks to Wisconsin school nutrition professional attendees.

The following Wisconsin farm to school vendors participated in the SNA Conference trade show:

- Olden Organics
- Potawatomi Farm
- Central Rivers Farmshed
- Doudlah Farms
- Red Door Family Farm
- WI Food Hub
- Tortillas Los Angeles
- Seasonal Harvest
- Chippewa Valley Produce
- Klondike Dairy
- Greenfield Farms



Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Program

With one-time funding from a USDA Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant, DATCP piloted the Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Program. The USDA-FNS Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program has the objective of improving access to local foods in eligible schools through comprehensive farm to school programming that includes local procurement and agricultural education efforts. The goal of the Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Program is to enable communities to develop farm to school partnerships, implement farm to school initiatives, and strengthen Wisconsin's statewide farm to school network.

In FY 2024, DATCP awarded \$250,000 through a competitive application process to eight projects, with individual awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$40,000. The projects have engaged more than 35 Wisconsin farm businesses, 55 schools and early childcare education sites, 200 community members and local partners, and 2,500 students.

2024 WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL GRANT SUBAWARDS



Wisconsin Farm to School Grant Recipient Programs

Hayward Community School District

The Northern Waters Environmental School (NWES): Digging into Local Food Systems project in Hayward is instructing students through field (on-farm) and lab (school). Students are learning about ecosystem nutrient cycling and the critical importance of living soil to produce nutrient-dense food. Pasture-raised meats from farms participating in soil analysis are procured and served to students.

Website: <https://www.hayward.k12.wi.us/>

Facebook: [@HaywardSchool](#)

Instagram: [Hayward Schools \(@haywardschools\)](#)



Kids Forward

Comida Buena: Supporting Spanish Speaking and Tribal Early Childhood Education (ECE) Providers' Access to Culturally Relevant Local Foods' project goals are to increase understanding of and access to fresh, local, culturally relevant, Wisconsin-grown foods. The project aims to maintain and expand statewide farm to early care coordination to increase equitable access to the benefits of farm to school by supporting the piloting and expansion of farm to ECE community teams in ECE sites across Milwaukee and the Tribal Nations.

Website: <https://kidsforward.org/category/early-education/>

Facebook: [@KidsForwardWI](#)

Instagram: [Kids Forward \(@kidsforward\)](#)

Madison Youth Black Excellence Life Readiness Cooking Class & Meal Kit Program, Pasture and Plenty (Mad Local Food Group, LLC)



Through two, four-week, afterschool classes, the Youth Black Excellence Life Readiness Cooking Class & Meal Kit Program (Youth BE Program) is providing meal kits containing locally sourced ingredients that highlight Wisconsin's harvest seasons, allowing students to explore, connect, learn, and create food culture. Each week, participants join a virtual class led by diverse instructors in the Madison food community. Classes include a kitchen science lesson and virtual field trip that introduces students to places and careers in local food systems.

Website: <https://pastureandplenty.com/>

Facebook: [@pastureandplenty](#)

Instagram: [Pasture & Plenty \(@pastureandplenty\)](#)

Nourish Farms, Inc.

The Expanding Farm to School Learning in Sheboygan County project is increasing food literacy for 600 additional students in three public school districts: Sheboygan Falls, Sheboygan, and Plymouth. Grant funds are helping grow capacity at Nourish Farms, Inc. to host additional field trips and deliver lessons to 22 more classes; increase equitable access to field trips and programs for three area low-income schools; repair garden infrastructure at partner schools; and deepen school stakeholder engagement.

Website: <https://nourishfarms.org/>

Facebook: [@nourishfarms](#)

Instagram: [Nourish Farms \(@nourishfarms\)](#)



School District of Eleva-Strum

The Eleva-Strum Sow & Grow Education Project is expanding and improving garden space with additional planting areas, a greenhouse, and a hydroponic tower to enrich the educational experiences of students. Enhancement of the existing curriculum provides an interactive environment and fosters community involvement. Harvested, fresh produce is implemented into school meals and the weekend meal program and is provided to the local community. By expanding the school garden, this project plants the seeds for a more sustainable future and nurtures the growth and development of students in lasting ways.



Website: <https://www.esschools.k12.wi.us/>

Facebook: [@SDofElevaStrum](#)

Instagram: [School District of Eleva-Strum \(@sdofelevastrum\)](#)

School District of Mauston



The School District of Mauston Farm to School Project is designed to increase student and family access to local foods, expand student-grown produce, and increase procurement of local foods used in school meals and culinary classes. Farm visits, farm to school activities for staff and students, and newsletters to engage district families and the community are creating strong connections between Wisconsin farmers and those who eat the food they grow.

Website: <https://www.maustonschools.org/>

Facebook: [@SDMauston](#)

Instagram: [School District of Mauston \(@sdmauston\)](#)

Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Inc.

The Farm to Early Childhood Education (ECE): Racine County Edible Gardens project is increasing the capacity to procure, prepare, and serve local foods in 10 regulated underserved childcare programs in Racine County. This is being achieved through installing edible gardens, providing technical assistance, and improving local foods infrastructure. Agricultural education and resources are also being made available to all regulated childcare programs in Racine County.

Website: <https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/>

Facebook: [@wisconsinearlychildhood](https://www.facebook.com/wisconsinearlychildhood)

Instagram: [Wisconsin Early Childhood Association \(@weca.earlyed\)](https://www.instagram.com/weca.earlyed)



Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative

Building Farm to School and ECE Networks and Procurement Systems in Waupaca County is building a collaborative network of farm to school and early childhood programs on a local level. The work supports nutrition and know-your-farmer education programming; helps food service staff develop recipes and menus; builds logistics, pricing models, and templates which support production costs for farmers; helps with the cost of aggregation and distribution; and fits within the parameters of school and early childhood provider budgets.

Website: <https://wifoodhub.com/>



DATCP Farm to School Advisory Council

[2009 Wisconsin Act 293](#) was created to promote the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks, grant rulemaking authority, and create the Farm to School Council.

DATCP Farm to School Advisory Council members are nominated by peers or themselves and appointed by the DATCP Secretary for up to two three-year terms. Council membership includes staff from DATCP, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), as well as agriculture supply chain leaders, child health and nutrition professionals, school food service authorities, educators, and community leaders. The Council makes recommendations to guide the development of farm to school in Wisconsin and create the Wisconsin Farm to School Annual Report.

Wisconsin Farm to School Advisory Council Members (appointed year)

Julie Lassa, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (standing)

Jessica Sharkus, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (standing)

Jennifer Ullsvik, Wisconsin Department of Health Services (standing)

Erin Badtke, UniPro Foodservice (2019)

Sarah Christman, Hunger Task Force Farm (2021)

Dave Cronauer, Forrest County Potawatomi Farm (2023)

Bobbie Guyette, Supervisor of School Nutrition, New Richmond (2023)

Cathryn Herlihey, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension - Council Co-Chair (2023)

Lisa Kingery, FoodRight, Inc. (2020)

Chiang Rai Lor, FairShare CSA Coalition (2023)

Jesse Padron, Oneida Nation Schools (2022)

Michael Tauscher, University School of Milwaukee - Council Chair (2023)

Jeremy Wahl, Klondike Cheese (2023)

Bridgett Wilder, Perseverance Wellness - Council Secretary (2021)

2024 Farm to School Council Recommendations

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 and/or agricultural and nutrition education.

INVEST IN LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

Continue local supply chain development and infrastructure for schools, including food purchases sourced from Wisconsin farmers, processors, and local businesses.

ENGAGE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Advance the relevance of culinary positions through competitive pay and benefits.

ADVANCE CULTURALLY RELEVANT MENU OFFERINGS

Support comprehensive training for culturally relevant food options across districts statewide, ensuring involvement at every stage of the supply chain—from local producers to frontline staff in schools.