



What's Farm to School?

Across the country, an increasing number of schools and districts have begun to source more foods locally and to provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition. This nationwide movement to enrich students' bodies and minds while supporting local economies is often referred to as "*farm to school*."

The term "*Farm to School*" encompasses efforts that bring local or regionally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as school gardening, farm visits, and culinary classes; and the integration of food-related education into the regular, standards-based classroom curriculum.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) supports such efforts through its *Farm to School Program*, which includes research, training, technical assistance, and grants.

Visit www.mifarmtoschool.msu.edu & www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool to learn more.

Benefits of Farm to School

- Students are provided with fresh, healthy, minimally processed local food.
- Students have the opportunity to interact with the farmers that grow the food being served in their cafeteria.
- Students are introduced to the idea of farming as a career choice.
- Schools provide new or expanded markets for local farms.
- The variety and volume of crops produced may increase, creating opportunities for local economic development.
- Money stays in the local community.
- Nutrition education is integrated and emphasized across disciplines
- Schools report an increase of 3-16% in meal participation when farm-fresh food is served. ["Going Local - Paths to success For Farm to School Programs" by Anupama Joshi, Marion Kalb, & Moira Berry]

What's Happening Locally

In December of 2013, a Michigan Farm to School training was held in Marquette. There was enough excitement about getting local food into schools that the Central U.P. (CUP) Farm to School Committee was born! This group is open to anyone interested in helping to get healthy, local food into schools in the Central U.P. Farmers, food service directors, dietitians, parents, and interested individuals are welcome. *Our committee meets monthly at the Marquette Food Co-op.* Let us know if you would like to be added to the CUP Farm to School e-mail list. Call us at 906.225.0671 x723.



Enjoying baby bells - Fuel Up To Play 60!
Student Leadership Team at Cherry Creek Elementary School, March 2014.
Photo credit: Lanae Joubert

Get Local Food In Your School Cafeteria

The UP Food Exchange has implemented an online system to help food service directors more easily order local food. This system, called the Online Marketplace, saves time by allowing buyers to simultaneously view products from multiple farms, order them all at once, and pay for the products with a single payment. Food service directors receive regular updates to the inventory of available products so they'll always have access to the freshest products. For more information, contact Courtney Dalman at 906 225-0671 x 726 or cdalman@marquettefood.coop.

Who Is Involved

People from the following farms, schools, agencies and businesses participate on the committee. Let us know if you are interested in joining us.

- *Superior Beekeeping Club*
 - *Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan*
 - *MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center North Farm*
 - *Gwinn Area Community Schools*
 - *Marquette Alger Regional Educational Service Agency*
 - *Marquette Area Public Schools*
 - *Marquette Food Co-op*
 - *Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program*
 - *MQT Growth*
 - *Upper Peninsula Health Systems*
 - *MSU Extension*
 - *NICE Community Schools*
 - *Northern Michigan University*
 - *Transition Marquette County*
 - *Sault Tribe Community Health Services*
 - *Partridge Creek Farm*
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Presentations/Classes

Agriculture provides many real life examples and hands-on opportunities for parts of a curriculum. Across the country teachers and students are examining the economics of farming, learning how to prepare fresh foods, or discovering the life cycles of a plant through seed saving. We can help bring farm to school curriculum to your classroom with the following programs.

Connecting the School Kitchen & the Classroom

UP Food Exchange

Extend the reach of your lesson to include the school cafeteria! This program option highlights a particular food grown by local farms and features it in the school meal prepared by the kitchen staff. It can be as simple as a snack of fresh apples to a lunch featuring local winter squash. The UP Food Exchange will coordinate the sourcing and delivery of the product to the school. The Exchange can also provide handouts, posters, and any other printed educational materials with information about the food, where it comes from, and why it's a healthy food option. A presenter can also come to your classroom to discuss the importance of local food and further highlight the food item in focus. This option requires coordination with the school's food service team.

Dates Available: Year-round

Duration: Variable to suit the scope of project

Location: Your classroom and/or school lunchroom

Grade level: All ages

Cost: Variable according to produce cost. Contact Courtney at 906.225.0671 x726

Starting a School Garden

The North Farm at the U.P. Research and Extension Center

School gardens allow teachers to create experiential learning experiences for their students and can provide fresh produce for school lunches. Because food touches almost every part of our lives, studying the garden leads to lessons in science, biology, environmental science, nutrition and health, history, art, and more! Thorough planning that involves the whole school is important for a sustainable program. We can show you how to create a school garden team and make a plan that will work for your school based on successful examples. Or, if your school garden already exists and you'd like to expand or improve the program, let us know!

Dates Available: Year Round

Duration: Variable to suit school needs

Location: Your school or The North Farm

Grade Level: All ages

Cost: Free. Contact Abbey at palmerab@msu.edu

Living Soil

The North Farm at MSU U.P. Research and Extension Center

Interested in the soil food web, composting, or vermiculture? An understanding of life in the soil is key to the future of food and global warming. We can bring soil alive in your classroom using a worm bin as an example and exploring how worms turn food waste into gardener's gold. If you'd like to start a worm bin in your classroom, look at how food (30% of the waste stream!) can be turned into a valuable product, or teach about the science of soil health, we can help!

Dates Available: Year Round

Duration: Variable to suit school needs

Location: Your school or The North Farm

Cost: Free. Contact Abbey at palmerab@msu.edu

Pollinators

Superior Beekeeping Club

Pollinators are an essential part of our food system. Without them, up to 35% of the world's food crops would be gone. In this presentation, students will learn how pollinators contribute to our food system, and how people play a role in pollinator health. Students will learn the ins and outs of beekeeping with actual equipment brought into the classroom. The presentation will also include information on how everyone, not just beekeepers, can help pollinators.

Dates Available: Year-round

Duration: Variable to suit class times

Location: Your classroom

Grade Level: Adaptable for all ages

Cost: Free. Contact Sarah at 906.225.0671 x723

Seed Saving Basics

The North Farm at MSU UP Research and Extension Center

Saving seeds, though not difficult, is an ancient practice that has been passed down through generations of gardeners and farmers. Start with the basics! How do you plan a garden for seed saving? When are the seeds ready to collect? What tools do you need? How should seeds be stored? How long do they last? An educator from The North Farm can prepare you and your students for successful seed saving. You can practice seed saving in your school garden, or you can come to The North Farm for a field trip. This is a good introduction to the Start Seeds/Save Seeds program for schools with gardens that want to try something new.

Dates Available: Year Round

Duration: Variable to suit school needs

Location: Your school or The North Farm

Cost: Free. Contact Abbey at palmerab@msu.edu

Garden Fresh Food Demonstrations

Marquette Food Co-op

Garden-fresh produce is delicious – especially in recipes that let real flavors shine through. A discussion of the nutritional benefits of local food, a food preparation demo with samples, and recipes for what's in season will be presented in a way that makes vegetables exciting. Options include green smoothies, Thai spring rolls, quinoa tabbouleh, or pudla, a savory Indian pancake. During the winter months the presentation includes information on how garden-fresh food can be stored to make local food available all year round.

Dates Available: Year-round, though options may be limited in the winter due to produce availability

Duration: Variable to suit class times

Location: Your classroom or Marquette Food Co-op

Grade Level: All Ages

Cost: 50¢ per student to cover materials for all demos except Spring Rolls, which are \$1 per student. Contact Sarah at 906.225.0671 x723

Farm Tours

Visiting a farm is a fantastic way to tie your curriculum to real-life examples. From the basics of how a plant grows and what it needs to thrive to the intricacies of compost systems, there are many features of a farm that could be highlighted to fit your classroom's tour. The following farms have expressed a particular interest in hosting school groups.

Hannah's Garden - Hannah, 906-226-2213

Treasa's Treasures - Treasa, 906-202-3030 or hortiholictreasa@yahoo.com

MSU North Farm- Abbey, 906-439-5058 or palmerab@msu.edu

Dates Available: May-October

Duration: Variable to suit class times

Grade Level: All ages

Cost: Free

Farm to School Fundraising

Marquette Food Co-op/UP Food Exchange

Schools often rely on external fundraising to pay for things like field trips or updated technology. These fundraisers include all kinds of items, from gift wrap to unhealthy foods. The Marquette Food Co-op and U.P. Food Exchange offer an alternative fundraiser to schools, one that features only items grown, raised, or produced in the Upper Peninsula. Students sell products that support U.P. agriculture and raise money for their school at the same time – everybody wins!

Dates Available: Year-round

Duration: Variable to suit the scope of project

Location: Any school, school group, or youth fundraiser

Grade level: All ages

Cost: Schools keep 42-46% of income earned. Contact Courtney at 906.225.0671 x726

U.P. FOOD EXCHANGE

growing local food systems

For more information:

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