



Northeast Iowa Farm to School Pilot Program



WHY FARM TO SCHOOL?

- One-third of U.S. children are obese and overweight.
- The typical food item in the U.S. travels 1,500 to 2,400 miles from farm to plate.
- With only 2.2 million farmers, the U.S. has more prisoners than farmers.

EXPECTATIONS:

Create a school based Farm to School Team that meets regularly to achieve the following activities:

- Report on local food purchases (dollars spent and vendors) for 2008-09 school year and 2009-2010 school year.
- Develop a plan for Homegrown Lunch Week, October 5-9. (Schools are encouraged to participate at a level comfortable to them.)
- Send team members to the Regional FFI Fall Conference, October 20 in Decorah
- Work with Americorp volunteers to develop a lesson plan for F2S lessons for K-3 students led by High School students (Jan- May).
- Food service staff will participate in a planning process with local producers to plan for the 2010 growing season.
- Develop a plan to address needed policy changes around food procurement.
- Select a location and develop plan to support a school garden (spring 2010).
- Send representatives to participate in the month County Planning Team meetings.

BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL:

- The choice of healthier options in the cafeteria through Farm to School meals results in consumption of more fruits and vegetables with an average increase of 0.99 to 1.3 servings per day, including at home.
- Schools report a 3 to 16 percent increase in school meal participation when farm-fresh food is served through farm to school programs.
- The major aims of the Farm to School approach are healthy children, healthy farms, and healthy communities. Farm to School programs are based on the premise that students will choose healthier foods, including more fruits and vegetables, if products are fresh, locally grown, and picked at the peak of their flavor and if those choices are reinforced with educational activities.
- Your school will benefit from assistance of Americorp workers and ISU Extension staff to guide and support the school based team with their activities.
- More than 15,000 children in NE Iowa eat a school lunch five days a week, 180 days a year. If school lunch can taste great, and support the local community, it is a win-win for everyone.