

Celebrating Annual Virginia Farm to School Week

SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

Local Food Hub will partner with area schools to celebrate Virginia Farm to School Week, October 5-9. It will supply cafeterias in six districts with fresh, farm sourced fruits, vegetables, meats, and other products grown by Virginia family farms. The nonprofit will also host in-school demonstrations and meet-the-farmer events at select schools.

“This week celebrates small family farmers in our region, and creates greater connections among students to their food and how it was grown,” said Kristen Suokko, Executive Director for Local Food Hub. “Serving fresh, local foods in schools has benefits that go beyond the cafeteria. It makes a lasting impact on the health and eating habits of our next generation, and farmers benefit from these investments in the local economy.”

Local Food Hub has a strong track record partnering with schools to source local foods for cafeterias. Throughout the year, it serves more than 70 public schools in eight districts, as well as private schools and universities. More than 40% of students in participating public school systems qualify for free or reduced-price meals, making efforts to bring nutritious, fresh foods to school children all the more important. Virginia Farm to School Week is organized by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and coincides with National Farm to School Month, declared for the month of October by the U.S. Congress.

This year, Local Food Hub will provide grass-fed beef, sweet potatoes, Asian pears, apples, apple cider, broccoli, tomatoes, carrots, Swiss chard, black beans, cornmeal, potatoes, bell peppers, salad bar fixings, and more. A partnership with Seven Hills Food Company, a new Lynchburg-based processor focused on Virginia-sourced meats, will enable Local Food Hub to supply 1,000 pounds of local grass-fed ground beef. Schools will turn this bounty into dishes such as black bean chili with cornbread, roasted potatoes, zucchini and squash “fries,” fresh salads, meatloaf, lasagna, and more.

In-school events include meet-the-farmer demonstrations, taste-tests, and garden activities. Scheduled in-school events will take place during lunchtime, and are as follows:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6: WENONAH ELEMENTARY, WAYNESBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6: DIXON PRE-SCHOOL, STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7: TYE RIVER ELEMENTARY, NELSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7: JACKSON-VIA ELEMENTARY, CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8: CROZET ELEMENTARY, ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOLS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9: WILLIAM MONROE MIDDLE, GREENE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Local Food Hub is able to participate in Virginia Farm to School Week thanks to the generous support from its partner farmers, community partners, and individuals and local businesses.

A special thanks to the LeRoi Moore Fund for its generous contribution.