

# Celebrating Annual Virginia Farm to School Week

SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

## *Local Food Hub to Provide Area Schools with Farm Sourced Foods from Virginia Producers*

Charlottesville, Va., Sep. 29, 2016 – Local Food Hub will partner with area schools to celebrate Virginia Farm to School Week, October 3-7. It will supply cafeterias in six public school districts and one private school 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 is a nonprofit organization that partners with more than 60 small family farmers in Virginia to increase access to local food. It serves as an aggregation and distribution point for farm sourced food, provides training and technical assistance to its partner farms, and works in the community to increase healthy food access for everyone. 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.

During Virginia Farm to School Week, Local Food Hub will provide schools with pastured beef, apples, apple cider, green beans, lettuce, broccoli, kale, peaches, butternut and kabocha winter squash, summer squash, zucchini, green peppers, red potatoes, and tomatoes. Schools will turn this bounty into dishes such as Italian baked spaghetti with beef meatballs, steamed broccoli, mashed potatoes with grilled peppers and onions, Italian baked squash, fresh salads, and more.

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

### **MONDAY, OCTOBER 3: ST. ANNE’S-BELFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Featuring an assortment of local pickled items, prepared by an eighth-grade cooking class.

### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4: TYE RIVER ELEMENTARY, NELSON COUNTY**

Featuring a three-variety apple tasting with Saunders Brothers Orchard of Nelson County.

### **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4: SHELBURNE MIDDLE, STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS**

Featuring an apple cider tasting, with UV pasteurized cider from Morris Orchard in Amherst County.

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5: CHARLOTTESVILLE HIGH, CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS\***

Featuring a three-variety apple tasting, an apple cider tasting, and a grape tasting, with a special visit from Local Food Hub partner producer, Seven Hills Meat Company (students will have their pastured ground beef meatballs with spaghetti for lunch).

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6: SMITHLAND ELEMENTARY, HARRISONBURG CITY SCHOOLS**

Featuring a grape tasting with Wenger Grape Farms of Augusta County.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7: MURRAY ELEMENTARY, ALBEMARLE COUNTY**

Featuring a three-variety apple and apple cider tasting.

Local Food Hub will also support City Schoolyard Garden and Charlottesville City School's Harvest of the Month Program on Thursday, October 6. Each month, students in Charlottesville City Elementary Schools are introduced to a fresh, healthy snack, grown by Local Food Hub partner farms. Students also participate in nutrition, garden, and culinary education. The program is connecting students to their food and helping them develop lifelong eating habits.

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. During the month of October, Whole Foods Market Charlottesville will donate proceeds from its Nickels for Nonprofits Program to our farm to school efforts. For every reusable bag customer's use for their groceries, Whole Foods Market will donate five cents to Local Food Hub.