

The Pennsylvania Farm to School Network Success Story:

DAVIS GROWN AND BLOOMSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Columbia County, PA



Crystal Davis is committed to bringing her family farm into the cafeterias of the Bloomsburg Area School District. Crystal is passionate about getting high-quality, local foods in schools and has been working with the Bloomsburg school district to do so since the beginning of the 2023 school year.

When Crystal's oldest son began attending elementary school, she became more interested about the quality of food served

in the cafeteria. In December of 2022, Crystal attended the PA Department of Agriculture's workshop, Wholesaling to Institutions. It was here she learned about the farm to school movement and was compelled to get quality, local food into the Bloomsburg school district's cafeterias.

While still at the workshop, Crystal contacted **Melissa Everhart**, Bloomsburg school district's food service director, and the two began working on getting Davis Grown meat and produce into school lunches. Bloomsburg School District is no stranger to purchasing local food. Melissa has been sourcing from local farms for over five years and worked with local farmers to supply seasonal produce like tomatoes, peppers, and watermelons until 2020. After taking a pause for the last few years due to the pandemic and an abundance of government-provided food, Melissa was ready to bring back local food in 2023.





For their first featured produce item, Crystal suggested sweet corn. Initially, Melissa was unsure of how the schools could serve local sweet corn, which needed to be shucked and cleaned before it was cooked, a time-consuming task considering the district serves over 1,000 meals per day. Davis Grown helped solve this problem by shucking most of the corn, and together, Crystal and Melissa overcame this challenge and turned it into an engaging activity for the kids by having the 5th-grade class at Beaver Main Elementary shuck 50 ears of corn for the school. The event was a hit, and it is still talked about months later.



In October, Crystal and Melissa decided to serve Davis Grown beef. To accommodate the cafeteria staff's limited time, Crystal supplied cubed beef and the students were able to try beef stroganoff. To celebrate National Farm to School Month and the district's PA Preferred Day, Beaver Main Elementary invited the Mayor, Justin Hummel, and the school board president, Stephanie Andreacci, to join first- and second-grade classes for their locally-sourced lunch.

Melissa is excited about working with local farmers and will continue to do so in the future. "It's a win-win," Melissa said about local food purchasing, "The food is better, the kids can learn more about local food, and the farmers earn more". Melissa plans to keep working with Davis Grown and plans on working with more farmers. Crystal also has plans to keep working with the Bloomsburg School District to provide local meat and produce and hopes to work with more districts in the future.

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