

PA Farm to School Network Media Toolkit

We have created this toolkit for Pennsylvania farm to school practitioners to use when sharing their farm to school stories and activities with partners, parents, collaborators, school community members, and others. Below, you will find social media captions and images, blurbs to include in newsletters and blog posts, an email template, media pitch tips and samples.

Social Media Sample Content

Caption for Schools/ECE Sites:

Check out how [SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION NAME] celebrates farm to school! [INSERT STORY/FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITY]

[INSERT PHOTOS OF YOUR PROGRAM IN ACTION]

Caption for Farmers/Producers:

Check out how we at [INSERT FARM NAME] participate in farm to school to ensure students are connected to local agriculture!

[INSERT WHO YOU SELL TO/WHAT YOU SELL/HOW THE PARTNERSHIP BEGAN]

Newsletter and Blog Sample Content:

At [INSERT SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION NAME] students participate in farm to school activities like [INSERT FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.] Farm to school connects children to local agriculture through **procuring locally** grown foods for meals and snacks, growing food in **school gardens** and **hands-on learning** through farm field trips, cooking in the classroom and more.

[INSERT STORY/FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITY]

[INSERT PHOTOS OF YOUR PROGRAM IN ACTION]

Email Sample Content:

Hello _____,

At [INSERT SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION NAME] students participate in farm to school activities like [INSERT FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.] Farm to school connects children to local agriculture through **procuring locally** grown foods for meals and snacks, growing food in **school gardens** and **hands-on learning** through farm field trips, cooking in the classroom and more.

[INSERT STORY/FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITY]

[INSERT PHOTOS OF YOUR PROGRAM IN ACTION]

We are excited to continue this work by [INSERT FUTURE PLANS OR 2024 GOAL].

Media Pitches

Adapted from the 2023 National Farm to School Month Toolkit

Press releases are a great way to share your story. Having a great pitch or angle always helps make your story more unique and allows the editor to better visualize the final product. We have provided a sample press release on the next page.

Here are some suggested pitches for sharing your Farm to School Successes:

- Follow the food: Invite news crews to follow your local foods from the farm or the producer all the way to the cafeteria.
- Schedule a field trip to a farm, farmers market, fishery, or any of the sites that are part of your farm to school program and invite the news media to follow along.
- Kids' views: Invite a news outlet – radio / TV/print – to talk to kids about where their food comes from. Kids can be unpredictable, but they could be balanced out by interviews with school nutrition directors, teachers, the principal, etc.
- Invite an elected official to school lunch, and invite the media to cover it. This is a great time to build support for farm to school among key decision-makers with media coverage.
- Op-ed: Have a teacher or school nutrition director write about the changes they have seen in the classroom/cafeteria since the farm to school program started.
- Harvest parties are a great way to celebrate your school garden's fall harvest. Invite media to join as students harvest the produce they've worked to grow all spring and summer.

Tips for Working with Media Professionals

- Make your pitch easy. Develop a clear story idea, highlight the visual opportunities, and offer sources and interview connections.
- Keep it short. Focusing on one story idea makes it easier for the media to say yes. Include just enough detail and context to spark interest.
- If you don't have a media list already, do an online search to find the news media, reporters, or bloggers who have covered local food, schools, the environment, agriculture, food, and food-related businesses in your area. Email your press release to your media list. Emphasize the local angle and timeliness in your headline.
- Keep in mind that children will need permission slips before being photographed. It might be necessary to set up a small photo-op with students who have the proper forms.

Sample Press Release - National Farm to School Month Example

This press release can be adapted to fit your program and future activities.

For Immediate Release—[MONTH, DAY, YEAR]

[LOGO]

Media contact:

[NAME]

[EMAIL]

[PHONE]

[ACTIVITY] celebrates fresh, nourishing foods with kids at [YOUR SCHOOL] on [DAY]
[ACTIVITY] spotlights local success of thriving national farm to school movement.

Throughout the year, [YOUR SCHOOL/ECE/COMMUNITY] engages kids in a variety of activities to help them create meaningful connections to their local food systems.[PARAGRAPH WITH SUCCINCT DETAILS ABOUT LOCAL PROGRAM: FARMS AND SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING, TYPES OF LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS, DATE/TIME OF CELEBRATORY EVENT, INVOLVED ORGANIZATIONS.]

["QUOTE ABOUT CONNECTING KIDS WITH PEOPLE WHO GROW THEIR FOOD OR OTHER BENEFITS OF FARM TO SCHOOL," said FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR / PRINCIPAL / OTHER.]

Since 2010, the farm to school movement has exploded across the United States, reaching millions of students in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and U.S. Territories. From school gardens and farm field trips to local food on cafeteria trays, farm to school practices help children learn about where food comes from and make healthier choices while also creating new markets for local and regional farmers.

"Farm to school is an important tool in creating a just food system that provides nourishing food to all kids and supports our local communities," said Sunny Baker, Senior Director for Programs and Policy with the National Farm to School Network, "We call it a triple win. It's a win for kids. It's a win for farmers, it's a win for schools and the community."

Here in Pennsylvania, The PA Farm to School Network helps connect educators, school cafeteria staff and community members with local farmers and producers and provides professional development opportunities and resources to help practitioners implement farm to school activities. Visit pafarmtoschool.org to learn more about what the PA Farm to School network can offer your community.

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The PA Farm to School Network's mission is to leverage and build upon our state's collective resources and shared vision to cultivate farm to school and farm to early care and education (ECE) initiatives that: create opportunities for all children across the state to grow, learn about, and enjoy eating Pennsylvania foods; increase market opportunities for Pennsylvania producers and connect growers, schools, ECE sites, and community members around food.