



NEWS RELEASE

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Waterford School District Receives USDA Grant to Increase Local Foods in School Cafeterias

December 2, 2014 Waterford, Mich. – The Waterford School District is pleased to announce that they are one of 82 projects spanning 42 states and the Virgin Islands receiving support this year through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm to School Program, an effort to better connect school cafeterias and students with local farmers and ranchers. The Waterford School District received a \$98,227 Implementation Grant to impact all students across the District.

“USDA is proud to support communities across the country as they plan and implement innovative farm to school projects,” said USDA Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. “Community partners are coming together to ensure a bright and healthy future for students, and local farmers and ranchers. These inspiring collaborations create long-term benefits for students, as they develop a meaningful understanding of where food comes from, and support our farmers and ranchers by expanding market opportunities for local and regional foods.”

USDA Farm to School grants help schools respond to the growing demand for locally sourced foods and increase market opportunities for producers and food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers, and distributors. Grants will also be used to support agriculture and nutrition education efforts such as school gardens, field trips to local farms, and cooking classes.

The Waterford School District will use implementation funds to increase the quantity and variety of locally sourced foods, including the installation of three new school gardens and two greenhouses; increase the amount of locally sourced foods that are consumed by students through taste tests to determine which foods are

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preferred; expand curricular integration of Farm to School concepts in the classroom; and increase hands-on, experiential learning in nutrition education.

“We’re excited that we have received the implementation grant award which will allow the Waterford School District to institutionalize Farm to School concepts within the District, says Rhonda Lessel, Project Director. The Waterford School District received a USDA Farm to School Planning grant in 2012.

USDA is focused on improving childhood nutrition and empowering families to make healthier food choices by providing science-based information and advice, while expanding the availability of healthy food. USDA's [Farm to School Program](#) is part of the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#), which authorized USDA to provide grants and technical assistance to help schools gain better access to local foods. For a complete list of fiscal year 2015 Farm to School grant recipients, please see:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/grant-awards>

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