

FARM TO SCHOOL

CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES BY
SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE

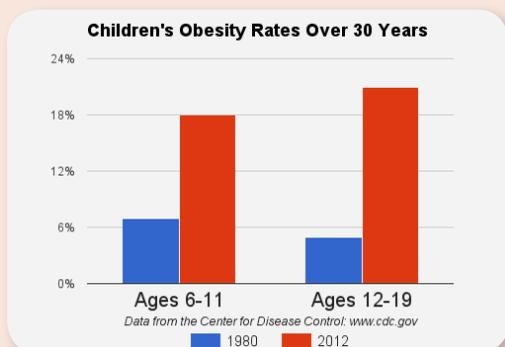
Why Farm to School?

1.) Rebuilding local food systems

Today, food travels between 1,500 and 2,500 miles from the farm to your table.¹ Altogether, Montana K-12 schools spend more than \$19 million annually on food, with \$1.6 million going to food produced by local farmers and ranchers. Farm to School programs are dedicated to restoring and rebuilding local food economies by keeping local dollars circulating in the local economy.



Overfed but undernourished



- In the United States, fewer than 50% of teens receive the necessary amount of vitamin A, magnesium, folate, and calcium.
- 80% of children and teens are not getting their daily recommended (5+) servings of fruits and vegetables.
- More than 67,000 students in Montana participate in free and reduced lunch programs, often relying on school for their primary nutritional needs.

2.) Learning beyond the lunchroom

Educating kids about where their food comes from enriches their learning and fosters a deeper connection to their communities. Farm to School programs provide kids with hands-on opportunities to work in school gardens, interact with local producers, and learn culinary skills that they can share with their families. These programs can be incorporated into school curriculum across multiple disciplines including science, geography, economics, history, and more. Teaching and empowering our kids to grow their own food creates a ripple effect that expands the reach of local dollars through the community as a whole.

3.) Stimulating local economies, uplifting family farmers

In 1910, farmers and ranchers received 60¢ of each dollar spent on food; today, they receive 7¢. As community-building institutions, schools have the opportunity to lead Montana's local food movement. By serving and growing locally produced food, schools strengthen their role as community leaders and influence other institutions — hospitals, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. — to follow suit. With farm income steadily declining and the average age of U.S. farmers increasing to 58, fewer young people are pursuing farming careers than ever before. Buying from local producers is an important component of Farm to School that helps keep family farmers in business and local economies healthy.

¹ Halweil, Brian. (2002, November). *Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*. Retrieved from: <http://www.worldwatch.org/globetrotting-food-will-travel-farther-ever-thanksgiving>



Farm to School in action

States across the country recognize the need to invest in our children, family agriculture, and our communities.

Harvest of the month

Many resources already exist to help schools build their own Farm to School programs without having to “reinvent the wheel.” Harvest of the Month, for instance, is a statewide program that schools across Montana have started to adopt. This program encourages schools to promote one local ingredient each month. The item is then featured in at least one meal or snack, used in an educational activity in the classroom, and is highlighted in a “taste test” of a new recipe.

Harvest of the Month has helped many schools take the first steps toward bringing more local food into our schools and into our communities!

All **50** states have enabled Farm to School programs.

46 states have passed policies supporting Farm to School.

Keep informed!
Take action!
Join 

Northern Plains Resource Council is a conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montanans to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and unique quality of life.

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