



**MASSACHUSETTS
FARM TO SCHOOL**

Farm to School 101

September 10, 2025



Agenda

- About Mass. Farm to School
- 3 C's of Farm to School
- Harvest of the Month Program
- Procurement
- School Garden Food Safety
- Promoting Farm to School Excellence
- Professional Learning Opportunities
- Advocacy
- Resources/Questions

Today's Presenters:

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Massachusetts Farm to School

Who and what Is Massachusetts Farm To School?

Mission

Massachusetts Farm to School strengthens local farms and fisheries and promotes healthy communities by increasing local food purchasing and education at schools.

Vision

All Massachusetts schools consistently teach about and serve local foods, supporting vibrant local farming and fishing communities and healthy schools, students and families.



The “3 Cs” of Farm to School



Classroom

Farm to School education provides real-life context for learning across all disciplines inside classroom and outside in school gardens.



Cafeteria

Farm to school programs strive to show that school nutrition and the cafeteria are integral to the school day and the education of the whole student.



Community

Farm to school strengthens the community and local economy. "Local" is defined by YOU and your school community!

How does Massachusetts Farm To School operate?

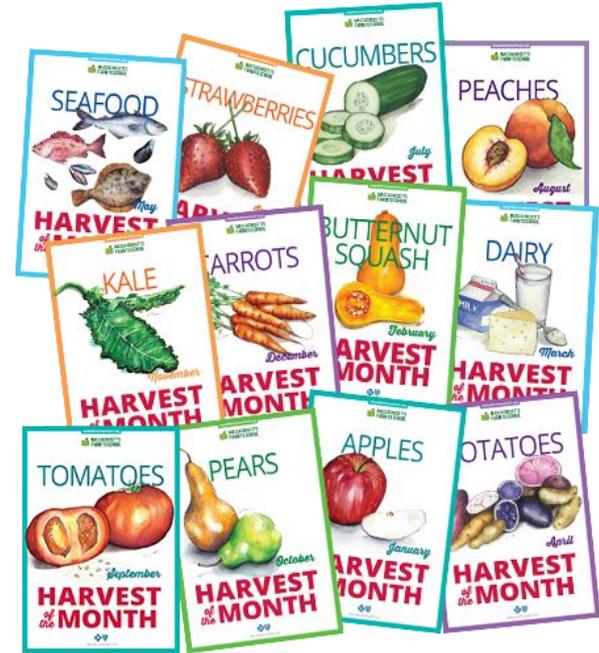
- Marketing
- Curriculum
- School Food Procurement
- Training & Technical Assistance
- Networking
- Advocacy



Harvest of the Month

Harvest of the Month

- **For Educators:**
Designed specifically for the elementary and secondary classroom supports students to learn about local farming, healthy eating, and to celebrate local foods and farms, by highlighting a different locally grown crop each month.
- **For School Nutrition Programs:**
Celebrate local abundance, experiment with new foods and recipes, and get some positive recognition for your school district and/or school. Encourage healthy food choices by increasing students' exposure to seasonal foods while also supporting local farmers and building excitement about school meals.



Crop Calendar

[Cafeteria Registration Form](#)

[Educator Registration Form](#)

Harvest of the Month Materials, Continued

Educators:

- (3) grade-level specific newsletters (early education, elementary, secondary)
- Crop information
- Standards-based curriculum across subject matter
- Recipes
- Garden Resources

Food Service:

- Monthly newsletters highlighting 1 local food per month (12 main items and 8 alternatives)
- Posters, trading cards, stickers, line signage
- Templates for social media, family newsletters, press releases, etc.
- Scaled recipes

MASSACHUSETTS FARM TO SCHOOL
June HARVEST of the MONTH STRAWBERRIES

Harvest of the Month promotes a different MA-grown crop from local farms each month in school cafeterias across the state. To learn more, visit: massfarmtoschool.org/hotm

Strawberries are the first locally-grown fruit of the year to ripen, a sign of the bounty yet to come!

Healthy Serving Ideas

Yogurt Parfait: Combine yogurt with strawberries & granola.

Strawberry Salsa: Chop strawberries, kiwi, avocado, red onion, cilantro, jalapeno, and lime juice and mix together. Serve with tortilla chips.

Strawberry-Orange Ice Pops: Blend 1 cup of strawberries with 1 cup of orange juice. Pour into popsicle molds, or paper cups with popsicle sticks, and set in the freezer.

Fun Facts

- It takes 30 days for each strawberry to grow from flower to fruit.
- There are 7 towns named "Strawberry," 6 are in the United States and 1 is in Jamaica.

At-Home Activity

Mindful Eating: the practice of paying close attention to your food and how you are eating it.

Eat a strawberry and answer these questions by writing or drawing:

- Did you notice anything new about the strawberry that you ate? Describe its color and size.
- Smell the strawberry before taking a bite. What does it smell like? How did taking a bite make you feel?
- Was this different from how you normally eat? How?

Source: Edible Schoolyard

Find Local Strawberries

MassGrown Map (MDAR)
massnrc.org/farmlocator

Month Book Club

Strawberry Grow, by Kirsten Chang
Dilemma: Young Readers Edition
Garden of Eatin', by Fanny Flanagan
Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer

MDAR
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
Protects Blue Shield of Massachusetts and the Department of Agricultural Resources for helping Harvest of the Month possible.

Strawberry Purchasing Pointers

- Look for plump berries with a rich color, bright green leafy tops, and a sweet smell.
- Store unwashed berries in the fridge in a container for up to 3 days. It is best to eat them as soon as possible!
- Gently wash berries with cool water with their green tops still on.

July Preview: Cucumbers!
www.massfarmtoschool.org

Menu Card Template:

MASSACHUSETTS FARM TO SCHOOL
June HARVEST of the MONTH

NAME OF LOCAL ITEM

OF LOCAL ITEM NAME, TOWN)

FROM SCHOOL (IF KNOWN)

Meal Highlight
Local Producer Name & Location

MASSACHUSETTS FARM TO SCHOOL
June HARVEST of the MONTH

Sample Templates



Supporting school & district procurement

While many schools and programs want to source local, they may not know where to start. Mass. Farm to School has resources and expertise in state procurement process and relationships with farmers and distributors to support more local purchasing.

- [Local Food Map](#)
 - Searchable by product or location
- [MAPC Northeast Produce RFP](#)
 - Schools/Districts can work with one of the awarded distributors/food hubs to source produce by issuing a contract and setting up delivery schedule
 - Schools/Districts are responsible for issuing a contract under the RFP
- Support with procurement solicitations & 3 Quote process

School Garden Food Safety



Webster Public Schools Students enjoyed the bounty from their school gardens during lunch in May & June 2024.

[School Garden Food Safety Manual](#)

[School Garden Food Safety Webinar](#)

Farm to School Northeast: Podcast!



- Monthly podcast exploring creative ways that local food is getting into school cafeterias and how food system education is playing out in classrooms and school gardens across the northeast region (New England & New York State)
- 20-30 min episode
- Highlights the innovative work of educators, food service staff, school garden coordinators, policy makers, farmers, and more.

Recognizing & Amplifying Exceptional FTS in Massachusetts

Terrific Tray Competition:

Mass. Farm to School and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education hold a monthly to celebrate the local offerings on fabulous school lunch trays across the Commonwealth.

Kale Blazer Award:

Our Annual Kale Blazer award recognizes an individual or group of individuals who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in farm to school activity in Massachusetts.



Professional Learning



Prospect Hill Academy 9th graders preparing food during their field trip to The Farm School in Athol, MA in Spring 2024.

- [Professional learning calendar](#)
- [MFTS Institute](#)
- [SEEDS program](#)
- [Podcast on FTS Northeast](#)
- [HOTM newsletters](#)
- [Curriculum/classroom lessons](#)
- [Elementary Health Lessons](#)



Farm to School is a comprehensive strategy with a goal of helping students establish lifelong positive relationships with food while supporting a more just food system. The strategies used to achieve this shift include:

- serving healthy local food in schools,
- improving student nutrition,
- providing hands-on food systems learning opportunities,
- developing meaningful relationships between community partners, schools and students.

The Massachusetts Farm to School Institute is a year-long professional learning opportunity for a select number of school/district teams from across Massachusetts that works to support school teams to achieve these goals and more!

Learn more here: [Mass Farm to School Institute](#)

SEEDS

“The SEEDS: Building Your Farm to School Team” is an introductory program designed for schools that would like to build an integrated and thriving farm to school program. This program will help you identify individuals across your school-wide community to support local food sourcing and education efforts. Participants will finish the year well positioned to attend the Mass Farm to School Institute in the next school year.

Quarterly virtual meetings will provide you with support to build your FTS team.

[Apply to the 2025-2026 cohort.](#)



Northampton Public School holds a local crop taste test in the cafeteria..

Massachusetts Farm to School leads the MA Food for MA Kids advocacy group to increase available funding for farm to school efforts throughout the Commonwealth.

Join the coalition today!
www.mafoodformakids.org



**Support
Farm to School
Efforts Today**

MASSACHUSETTS **FOOD** *for* MASSACHUSETTS **KIDS**

mafoodformakids.org

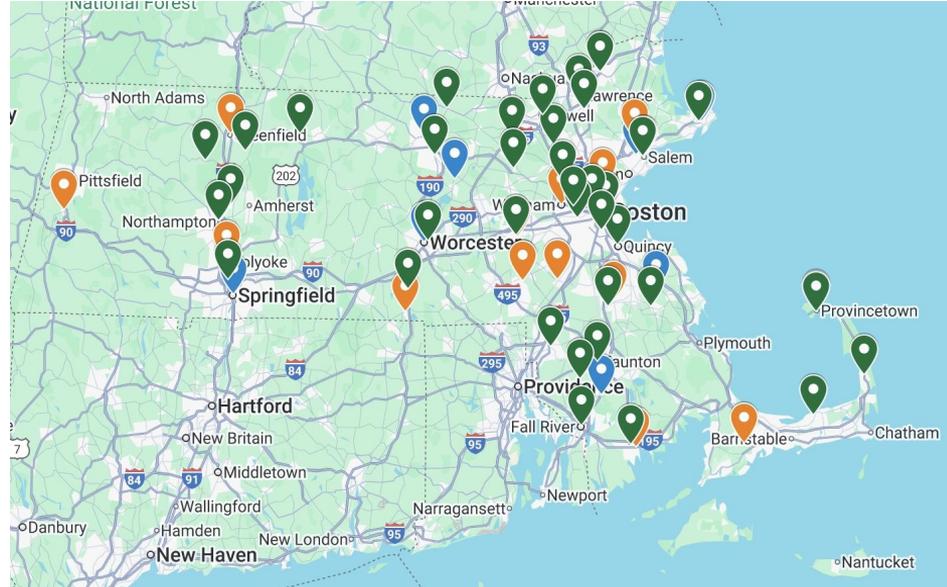
MA FRESH Grant

MASSACHUSETTS FRESH

The Massachusetts FRESH (Farming Reinforces Education and Student Health) Grant is a statewide farm to school and farm to early care grant program.

The program is designed to support K-12 *and* licensed early education and care centers to start up or expand their local foods purchasing and education efforts.

MA FRESH grants are administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).



As of July 2025, \$1,960,000 MA FRESH Grants Awarded to 67 Recipients

Mass. Farm and Sea to School Conference



March 18th at Smith College

Field Trips Throughout Western Mass. March 17th

Request for Proposals:

Currently being accepted

Join us for a robust, multi-sector conference including hands-on workshops, experiential learning, networking, and youth-specific track.



STAY IN TOUCH!



Pre-K Students from Assonet Child Development Center tend to their plants in their new school garden, Spring 2023.

Register for our Newsletter:
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