

## ***Cafeteria, Classroom and Community*** **Five Ways to Celebrate Local Foods** **at School and Home**

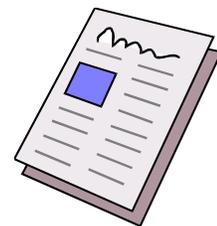
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Dear Educator/School Food Service Professional:

Helping school-age children make healthy food choices is at the core of Farm to School programs. By serving healthy, locally produced foods in the school setting, connections are being made between the cafeteria, the classroom and the community. These connections will help to support healthy children, healthy agriculture and healthy communities.

The following is a list of activities, events and suggestions on how to better connect the cafeteria, the classroom and the community through local food.

- Local food marketing in the cafeteria:
  - Announce local menu items on erasable board next to the lunch line.
  - Decorate your cafeteria walls with local food related art – it helps to complement the food-tasting discoveries occurring in the cafeteria.
- Host a monthly taste-testing event for a “new” local menu item
  - Taste-testing events help to connect the cafeteria to the classroom.
  - Students can take part in serving and tasting!
  - Surveying student opinions can be a classroom activity.
- Center school fundraising events around local food
  - Raise funds for school by selling healthy Montana food products. See the OPI School Nutrition Programs Farm to School website for more information about the “Montana Farm to School – School Fundraising Program.”
  - Create and sell a school cookbook featuring local and/or seasonal items and recipes.
  - Have a fall “Harvest Dinner” as a fundraising event.
- Get the word out on all of your local food endeavors!
  - Publish your menus in your school newsletter/newspaper and on your school website - designate local items with a symbol or special “look” on the menu.
  - Contact local media (newspaper, radio, TV) when you are having an event or simply to encourage them to do a story covering local foods in your school.
- Organize a farm field trip. This is a great way to connect the students and teachers to farmers who are providing local food options for your school meals programs.



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***For More Information on Connecting the Cafeteria  
to the Classroom and the Community...***

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National Farm to School organization: <http://www.farmtoschool.org/>

Montana OPI School Nutrition Programs: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/fts.org>

Montana Department of Agriculture (Food & Ag Products Directory):  
<http://agr.mt.gov/business/foodbev/FBindex.asp>

Alternative Energy Resources Organization (Abundant Montana Guide): <http://www.aeromt.org/>

Vermont FEED: <http://www.vtfeed.org/>