



FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Cafeteria Tour for Students / Faculty / Parents –
During Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week, although students are familiar with the food service personnel from a serving standpoint, students, faculty and even parents are not aware of what goes into the actual preparation of student breakfasts and lunches. A tour of the kitchen and the kitchen operations would help students understand how school meals are prepared.
- Take Your Parents to Lunch Day
A day can be set aside during the week to invite parents to have lunch with their children and experience the lunchtime meals and activities that their students partake in each school day. This is also an opportunity for school staff – Wellness Committees - to provide parents with information about healthy meal preparations and recipes, the [My Plate](#) concept and school lunch regulations.
- [Healthy Recipe Contest](#) for students using Jersey Fresh Fruits & Vegetables – Students can be encouraged to create or prepare a favorite recipe using Jersey Fresh fruits & vegetables. Student judges can rate the prepared dishes and those judged to be the winners can be served, included and/or added to the lunch menus later in the year. The students that entered the “winning” recipes can be rewarded by a week’s worth of free lunches or a minimal gift card. This is an opportunity to get the school PTAs involved as a sponsor through the donation of the prizes.
- [“You Are What You Eat”](#) Contest –
Students would draw a “self-portrait” using fruits & vegetables to draw themselves as well as write a short essay explaining why they chose the fruits & vegetables they did to draw the portrait.
- “How Many?”
Fill a jar/bowl/container with a serving of small fruits/vegetables and have the children guess the number of actual pieces. Peas, cut carrots, corn, blueberries, raspberries, lima beans, etc. can be used. The winning guess/guesses could win a free lunch(es), free snack(s) item, etc. ... a small nominal prize.
- Use the [school garden](#) to incorporate week-long lessons in all subjects. Check out some ideas from the [National Farm to School Network](#).
- Place signs on the serving lines about the farmers that provided the fresh produce.
- Advertise the usage of [Jersey Fresh](#) agricultural products in school meals.
- [Highlight local produce](#) in school meals and incorporate into all school activities.



- Bring the indoor classroom outdoors. Plant an [edible schoolyard](#).
- Send recipes and nutritional information home to parents.
Print out our [Seasonality Chart](#) to highlight what grows in New Jersey and when it is available. Connect this to lessons about history and why people in cold climates put food “up” for the winter or in science to teach about the Zones that span different regions of the country.
- [Taste-test](#) new fruits and vegetable varieties during lunch times
Provide incentives for students to taste (stickers, points, no homework!).
- Hold a Health and Nutrition Fair and strengthen the district’s [School Wellness Policies](#) around Farm to School practices, local procurement and school garden education.
- Read [food-related books](#) to younger children.
- Invite [farmers](#) to talk about their farms and the farming industry so children can meet a “real” farmer.
- Invite a local chef / [culinary school](#) students into the school to prepare local products.
- Work with nutritionists from local health facilities, such as [Rutgers Cooperative Extension](#).
- Show students how plants can grow without soil – hydroponics, seeds in glass/see-through containers.
- Encourage Language Arts and Creative Writing students to write a story using a fruit/veggie as the main character
- Ask the Art Department to do a still life with locally grown veggies and have the kids do [drawings or paintings](#) to put in the cafeteria or decorate the school hallways and bulletin boards.
- Host a Fall Salad Bar:
Items available in NJ in September/October include arugula, beans, beets, Bok Choy, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, Chinese cabbage, lettuces, onions, peppers, scallions, sweet corn and tomatoes. See the [Procurement](#) link at www.farmtoschool.nj.gov for local resources.
- Hold a [Farm to School Recipe Contest](#): send home a note to parents explaining what F2S Week is and asking them to send in a recipe with produce available in September for a competition. Provide the seasonality listing so they know what is in season. The winner could have their recipe featured in the cafeteria during F2S Week



- [Raise money for the school garden](#) or other food/nutrition related effort. Sponsor a fundraiser with apples from the school's normal distribution or go to an aggregator or far, that can source locally and sell apples for fall distribution. Take names and orders during Farm to School Week and schedule distribution in October when supplies are more ample. Visit the [NJ Department of Agriculture's Farm to School website](#) for more information about local produce procurement.
- Instead of French fries, feature roasted potato wedges or coins. Wash potatoes and cut into desired shapes. Place in bowl and douse with olive oil and kosher salt accordingly. Heat oven to 450 degrees and spread potatoes in sheet pans to cook for 30 minutes. Check to browning and to see if more time is needed, depending on type of potato and how thick they were cut. Flip and finish cooking to desired crispness. Check out the [USDA Recipes for Schools](#) for more ideas.
- Go on a field trip to a local farm that supplies you with your produce. Have the farmer explain the growing process and how food ends up on your plate. [Visit NJ Farms](#) has a listing of farms near you.
- Enlist the help of your school's television or radio station. Feature a kids-oriented food/cooking segment – kids talking to kids about easy recipes and other food features, OR, have the school communications class prepare this feature as a project.
- Encourage students to write about Farm to School activities in your school newspaper.
- Host an essay or poster contest on” ***Why I Should Eat More Fresh Fruits and Vegetables***

Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week was designated as the last week of each September by a law signed in 2010 by Governor Christie. During this celebration, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture showcases schools that connect with New Jersey farmers to purchase local produce for school meals and to increase student consumption of healthy produce through school garden, agriculture and nutrition education. Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week 2016 runs from September 26-30, 2016.

The ideas, suggestions and resources provided in this document can be utilized by school cafeteria professionals, teachers, produce distributors and farmers, and can be adapted according to each school's administrative, demographic, ethnic, economic and population's willingness. [National Farm to School Month](#) is celebrated during the Month of October around the nation and all of these suggestions can be carried out during this month as well.