



Montana Farm to School Annual Report

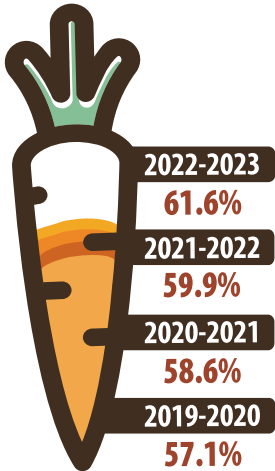
Academic Year 2022-2023

WHAT

What is farm to school?

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by influencing food purchasing and education practices at K-12 schools and preschools. Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities through such avenues as school gardening, cooking lessons, and farm field trips. Through community-driven approaches, farm to school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following core elements: procurement, education, and school gardens.

Farm to School Participation Rates



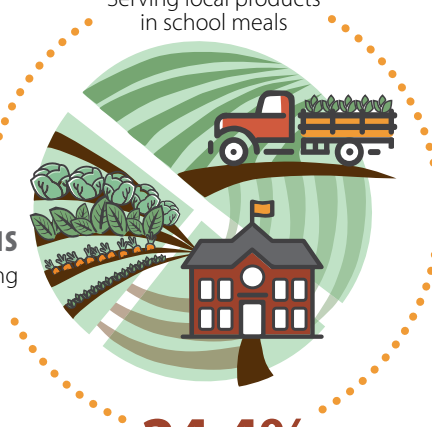
OVERALL PARTICIPATION

Sites participating in at least one F2S activity

53.1%

PROCUREMENT

Serving local products in school meals



21.7%

SCHOOL GARDENS

Creating and tending school gardens

24.4%

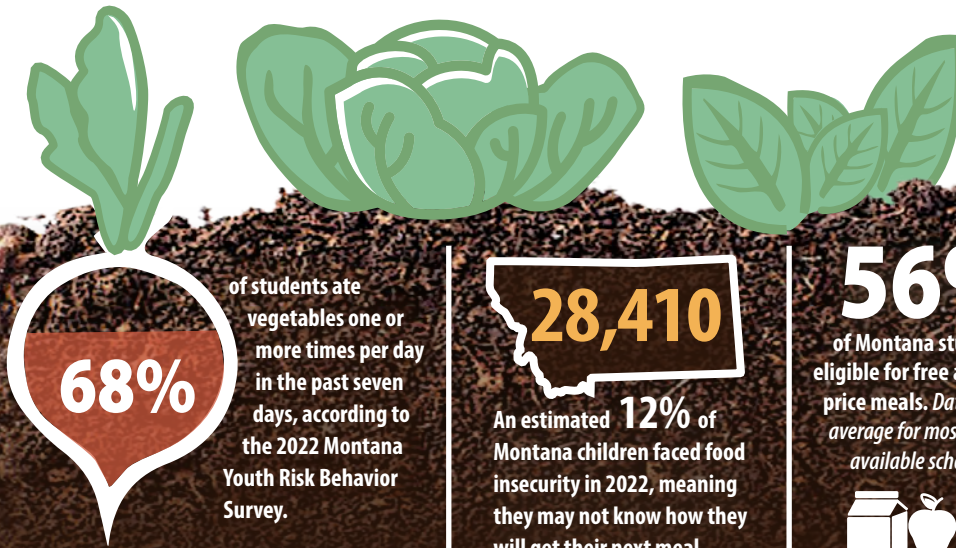
EDUCATION

Conducting educational activities

WHY

Why does farm to school matter?

Farm to school not only connects kids with locally grown food and food and nutrition education, but it helps foster resilient food systems. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for farm to school to solve food supply issues and support the local economy.



68%

of students ate vegetables one or more times per day in the past seven days, according to the 2022 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

28,410

An estimated 12% of Montana children faced food insecurity in 2022, meaning they may not know how they will get their next meal.

56%

of Montana students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Data is a 5-year average for most recent and available school years.



Agriculture remains the leading industry sector in Montana's economy, with a value of

\$4.0 billion

in 2021. By connecting children with agriculture and exposing them to agricultural careers, farm to school initiatives are helping to prepare the next generation of farmers.

Montana Farm to School Leadership Team

The Montana Farm to School Leadership Team works through partnerships across the state to build farm to school initiatives that help kids eat healthy, connect with agriculture and nutrition through education, support Montana farmers and food producers, foster economic vitality, and strengthen communities.

The Leadership Team consists of 15 member organizations with statewide focus and influence that are key to the success of farm to school in

Montana. The team has 7 working groups, 5 of which are open to the public. These meetings are a way for the Leadership Team to share updates, facilitate connections, gather input, and uplift local farm to school stories. To get involved, register for an upcoming meeting and/or contact the working group chair listed on the Leadership Team webpage. The Office of Public Instruction sponsors the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team. The team is facilitated by the Montana Farm to School Coordinator at Montana Team Nutrition Program.

2023 Member Organizations

- AERO
- Mission West Community Development Partners
- Montana Agriculture in the Classroom
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Livestock
- Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Montana Farmers Union
- Montana No Kid Hungry
- Montana Office of Public Instruction
- Montana School Nutrition Association
- Montana Team Nutrition Program, Montana State University
- Montana State University Extension
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- USDA Office of Community Food Systems, Mountain Plains Region

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Montana Harvest of the Month

Each month, participating sites focus on promoting one locally grown item (e.g., lentils) by serving it in at least one meal or snack, offering taste tests, conducting educational activities, and displaying or distributing Harvest of the Month (HOM) materials.

Herbs were featured as the newest Harvest of the Month item with Potatoes coming up next! Bison was a popular topic featured in past HOM handouts. A special team was formed to create the Buffalo materials which include Native knowledge, cultural information, and languages in order to be as inclusive as possible when promoting it in our outreach to schools.



MAKING MONTANA MARINARA

Montana Marinara is a new product developed in partnership with Montana Office of Public Instruction, Mission West Community Development Partners, and Northwest Food Hub. It enhances USDA Foods tomatoes with local veggies and herbs to create a kid-friendly, versatile, and affordable product. Schools across Montana sampled the sauce with their students in delicious meals from meatball subs to manicotti and beyond!



Mission West Community Development Partners

In school year 2022-2023



87
registered schools and afterschool programs

21,721

children reached at K-12 and Early Care + Education sites



31
registered early care and education sites



130 local food producers sold to sites



\$304,721

local foods purchased (not including fluid milk for K-12)



12
Trainings in 2022-2023

Training + Resources

There are many ways to learn about farm to school and access resources! Montana Farm to School hosts farm to school webinars and in-person trainings as well as an archive of previous trainings on the Montana Farm to School website.

This year, The Montana Farm to School Summit is being held in conjunction with the MT School Nutrition Association conference. This event, June 24 – 27, 2024, will include focus topics like Local Procurement, School Gardens, and F2S Education in the classroom. There will also be a focus on Local Producers at the Vendor show.



28+
Hours of events

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

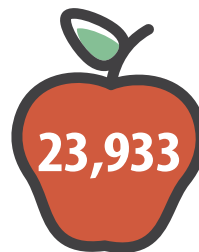
@montanafarmtoschool
1,500 followers

@mtfarmtoschool
1,438 followers

Montana Harvest of the Month
2,892 views

Celebrating Farm to School Month

Montana Crunch Time is a statewide event to celebrate National Farm to School Month and 'buy local' initiatives in Montana by crunching into locally and regionally grown apples on a designated day in October.



23,933
people participated in Montana Crunch Time 2023

GET INVOLVED + CONTACT

Website

Find resources and information at:
www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool

Contact Us

Jay Stagg, Montana Farm to School Coordinator
Montana Team Nutrition Program,
Montana State University

jay.stagg@montana.edu
(406) 994-5996

SOURCES

National School Lunch Program Annual Sponsor Agreement Form 2022-2023, Montana Office of Public Instruction

2022 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Montana Office of Public Instruction

Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity 2022, Feeding America

Montana Agriculture Statistics, 2022

Montana Farm to School Leadership Team Participation 2022, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Harvest of the Month Participation 2022-2023, Montana Team Nutrition Program

Montana Farm to School Professional Development and Technical Assistance Tracker 2022-2023, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Crunch Time Participation 2023, Montana Team Nutrition

