



National Farm to School Network CORE VALUES

The National Farm to School Network is bound together by the vision that vibrant local and regional food systems are essential to the health of our children, farms, environment, economy and communities. The National Farm to School Network was established in the spirit of inclusivity and collaboration to promote farm to school programs by leveraging shared resources, ideas and strategies, and engage in creative problem solving. In representing the National Farm to School Network, participating individuals and organizations share these core values:

1. Local and regional¹ food systems, which use environmentally sound, sustainable and just approaches to food production, processing, transportation and marketing, are an essential part of the efforts to create healthy schools, healthy foods, healthy economies and healthy communities.
2. Local foods, sustainably produced and processed, should be available in all schools to nourish every child, regardless of race and ethnicity, economic standing or geographic location. In order for children to develop to their full potential, they need access to local and healthy foods, the opportunity to learn how to eat healthfully and to develop a connection to their source of food.
3. Those involved in the production, processing, packaging, distribution and serving of food deserve living wages, safe working conditions, equal opportunities for marketing, value-addition and distribution, regardless of race and ethnicity, economic standing, size of operations or geographic location.
4. Our goal is to strengthen the national farm to school movement, while keeping intact the unique flavor and diversity of individual farm to school program sites across the country. As such, the National Farm to School Network does not recommend, prescribe or impose a list of practices or products for farm to school. We recommend establishing relationships between local foods and school children by way of including one or more of the following:
 - Procurement: Local foods are purchased, promoted and served in the cafeteria or as a snack or taste-test
 - Education: Students participate in education activities related to agriculture, food, health or nutrition
 - School gardens: Students engage in hands-on learning through gardening
5. We strive to operate democratically in making decisions that affect our collective work. We seek to build mutual trust and respect for everyone within and outside the network.

¹ Individual programs define "local or regional" to fit their conditions for implementing a farm to school approach.