



News Release  
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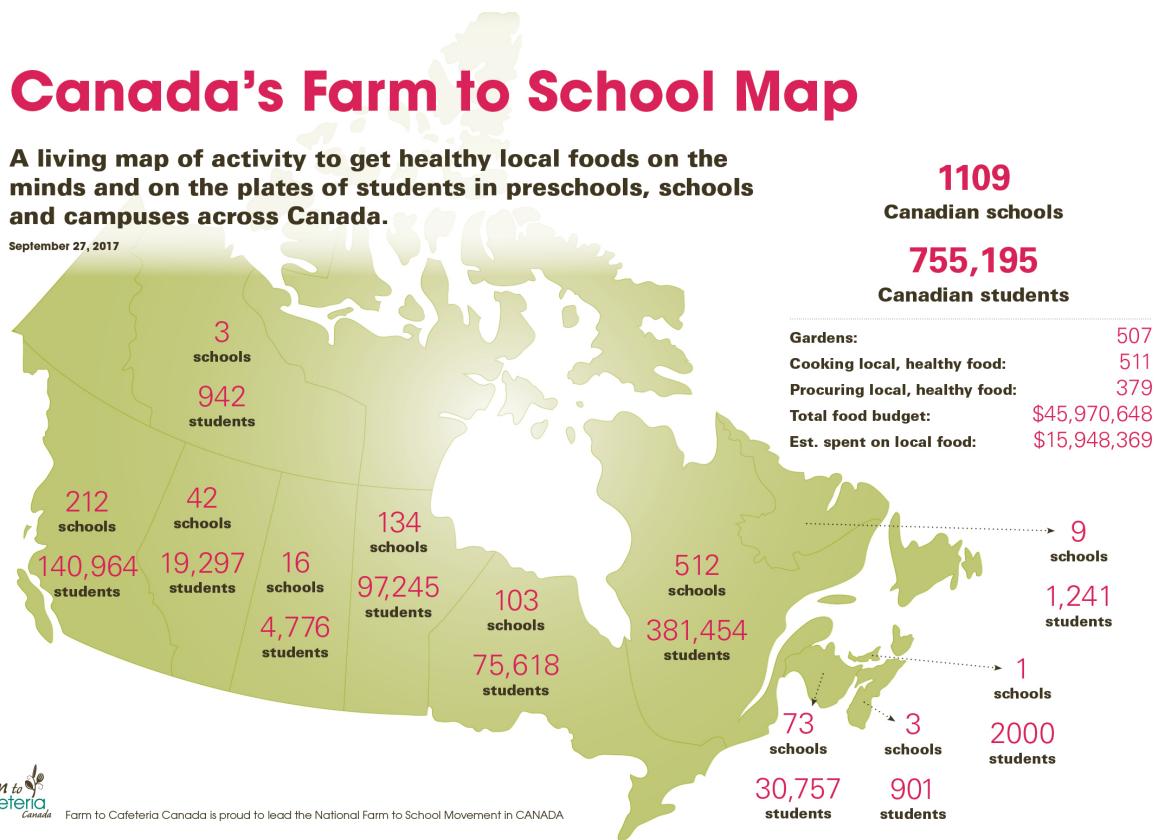
October 2, 2017    Burnaby, British Columbia    Farm to Cafeteria Canada

## Farm to School Takes Root in Canada

Inspiring a new generation to bring the local harvest into school cafeterias

October is [Farm to School Month in Canada](#). Today and throughout the month of October Canadian farmers, parents, chefs, students, and teachers will be engaged in festivities to celebrate and to inspire Farm to School. They will meet in farmers' fields and in school and campus gardens, kitchens and cafeterias. There they will pick up a spade or a spatula to dig into Farm to School. Activities will be captured on a Canada-wide living map of school food.

According to [data](#) tracked by Farm to Cafeteria Canada, the organization spearheading the Canada-wide Farm to School movement, Farm to School is thriving. More than 755,000 students in more than 1100 preschools, schools and campuses have an opportunity to experience Farm to School in Canada. 507 schools report they have an on site garden or green house and 511 report they offer local foods cooking classes. Approximately one third (or 313) are serving up the local harvest in school meals or snacks. Together these preschools, schools and campuses report they are spending nearly \$16 million on local foods annually.



*“It is exciting to see this movement unfold in Canada and the positive impact it is having on student nutrition and student learning while at the same time supporting farmers the local food system. Perhaps the most thrilling aspect of Farm to School is the way it is embraced by students of all ages. When pea pods trump the i-pod in school cafeterias you know that are witnessing transformative change.”* Joanne Bays, National Manager Farm to Cafeteria Canada, Burnaby, BC.

Canada’s Farm to School movement was given a significant boost when the Whole Kids Foundation partnered with Farm to Cafeteria Canada, to create a Farm to School Canada Grant process that would see over \$722K in funds delivered directly to BC and ON schools. An announcement of additional funding is anticipated on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, during an event to officially launch Farm to School Month in Canada at Norman Johnson Secondary School in Ottawa, Ontario.

*“We’re thrilled to be partnering in this comprehensive and innovative approach to bringing harvest to the cafeteria and supporting schools to serve healthy local foods,”* said Kim Herrington, Director of Programming, Whole Kids Foundation. *“And we are proud to be a part of this incredible public-private collaboration - excited about what we are growing together!”*

Emerging impact and benefit assessments of Farm to School in Canada reveal trends similar to neighboring US studies. Students who participate in Farm to School eat a wider variety of foods than their peers – including more fruits and vegetables. Students are also more knowledgeable about their foods and they are more likely to try new foods.

*There is nothing more empowering than teaching children how to grow food. The act of planting a seed is simultaneously an act of hope for the future, the developing of the means for personal food security and an act of community and bringing people together with food.”* Jamie Richards, Farmer, Primrose Elementary School, Mulmur, Ontario

For more information about Farm to School or the Farm to School month CANADA campaign, contact a [regional lead](#) at Farm to Cafeteria Canada. [www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca](http://www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca)

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[Farm to Cafeteria Canada](#) is a pan-Canadian Organization that works closely with partner organizations to educate, build capacity, strengthen partnerships, and influence policy to bring healthy local and sustainable foods into Canada's public institutions.

Farm to Cafeteria Canada is proud to lead the Canada-wide Farm to School movement

The lead agencies spearheading provincial Farm to School activity in Canada include: The Public Health Agency of British Columbia' Farm to School BC program, Growing Food Security in Alberta, Sustain Ontario's Edible Education Network, Equiterre, NB Department of Agriculture Aquaculture Fisheries and Food First NL.

The lead agency in Canada mobilizing campus students is the Meal Exchange