



Healthy, local food critical as students head back to school

While the feeling of uncertainty has become symbolic of 2020, the enthusiasm for the farm to school movement in Canada is stronger and more relevant than ever. Regardless of what school environments may look like as students head to class this September, farm to school offers flexible opportunities so that students can access healthy, local food and can engage in fun and immersive learning experiences.

We are pleased to share the following good news updates and are honoured to continue to lead and grow Canada's farm to school movement together to make it even stronger.



Congratulations to our 34 new Farm to School Canada Grant recipients!

In partnership with Whole Kids Foundation, we are so pleased to announce the recipients of the 2020 Farm to School Canada Grants program! Thirty-four schools across nine provinces and one territory have received grants of up to \$10,000 each that will help get an estimated 12,000 students growing, cooking, and eating healthy, local sustainable food at school!

While back-to-school will look very different this September, what has not changed is how much healthy food supports students' health and ability to learn. The farm to school grants will enable schools to develop a lunch service that features locally sourced food, in turn benefiting local farmers and suppliers. The grants also support farm to school activities, which bring curriculum to life through fun and flexible hands-on learning that can be done in the classroom, in a garden, at school or at home.

At its core, the grant program is designed to build capacity in school communities. The grants will engage students, farmers, and whole communities in growing farm to school programs - built by the community, for the community.

“The grants have always supported creativity, innovation and collaboration and this year we’re feeling the importance of those qualities more than ever,” says Jesse Veenstra, National Director, Farm to Cafeteria Canada. “We’re excited for schools to explore new possibilities through these grants, because we know they can be a real catalyst to transform school food environments to be healthier, more sustainable and more resilient.”

Participating schools will also receive access to regional and national-level training and access to on-going supports. While training would typically take place in-person, this year, we’re offering access to online resources, as well as a series of real-time virtual training conversations.

“We are so honored to have such a dynamic partner with Farm to Cafeteria Canada and applaud these efforts to ensure students can have fresh, local, and healthy foods to support their learning abilities – even during a pandemic!” said Kim Herrington, Programs & Finance Director for Whole Kids Foundation, which provides grant funding for the program. “We know when you increase access to fresh, local vegetables for our kids, we further enhance their ability to succeed. We are proud to be a part of this impactful work.”

This is the third grant cycle and the first offering open to all provinces and territories. This grant cycle runs from September 2020 to June 2022.

View the full list of grant recipients and learn more about the program [here](#).



NEW Farm to School Resources Centre launched!

Are you looking for resources to help you start or continue building your farm to school program? We've just launched a new Farm to School Resource Centre that points to video clips, how-to resources, stories and other tools that can help you answer your practical questions such as:

1. "What are some tips to start building our farm to school program?"
2. "How can we access local food and engage local farmers?"
3. "How do we fund our farm to school program?"

Check out our [Farm to School Resource Centre](#) and tell us if there's anything else you'd like to see added! You can email your feedback to info@farmtocafeteriacanada.ca



Outdoor education: a forward-thinking approach to back-to-school

According to a recently released United Nations [policy brief](#), education as we know it will be fundamentally different, not just today but into the future. Rather than going “back to school,” we need different and forward-thinking approaches. One that is growing in popularity is outdoor education.

COVID-19 disruptions are causing a dramatic increase in childhood trauma, creating additional strain on educators and families. Community-based environmental and outdoor education programs can help to address these dire needs and discrepancies through innovative partnerships and educational investments and policies.”

– North American Association for Environmental Education

Outdoor education can bring curriculum to life through hands-on learning and, in the time of COVID-19, it allows for physical distancing and can happen in flexible environments at school, home, or in the broader community. With no computers, tablets or other fancy equipment required, outdoor learning is being praised as offering an equitable approach to education. Connections to fresh air and nature support students’ social emotional wellness, and associated activities get kids moving more and sitting less. Not to mention, outdoor learning has been shown to help students develop eco-conscious attitudes, which is integral to combatting the ongoing and urgent climate crisis. [Click here](#) for the full blog and links to related resources.

Mark your calendars - October is Farm to School Month!

Farm to School Month is a chance to celebrate farm / local food to school activities happening across Canada, and everyone is invited!

farm to **School** **MONTH** *Canada*

This year we're celebrating the impacts of farm to school. Follow along on social media as we share inspiring and impactful stories, resources and more. Learn more about Farm to School Month and how you can get involved on our [website](#).



Developing a Farm to School Evaluation Framework for Canada

As a reminder, Farm to Cafeteria Canada is developing a **Farm to School Evaluation Framework / Toolkit for Canada** to enable practitioners, researchers and policy makers to better articulate, track, measure and communicate the impacts of farm to school activities and policies. [Learn more](#) about this process and how you can get involved.

Stay connected!

Join our **Facebook Group** to stay connected to stories about farm to school, farm to campus stories as well as stories that touch on the many facets of food systems. You can also pose questions, share resources. We are also on **Twitter**.

If you know a colleague or friend who would like to know more about our farm to school work, invite them to [sign up here](#).

Do you have a story to share for the next edition of our newsletter?
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