“Seed Change” Brings Healthy, Local Food to Students in Three Key States
National Farm to School Network Launches $1.5 Million Investment in Ky., La. and Pa.

Chicago, Ill., March 12, 2015 – The country’s leading voice for the farm to school movement, nonprofit National Farm to School Network, announced today the launch of Seed Change, an initiative aimed at expanding farm to school activities within Kentucky, Louisiana and Pennsylvania to support better health outcomes for children and economic opportunities for small farmers.

“Seed Change will jump start programs to bring local food into schools and elevate food and nutrition education for more than 1.8 million school children in these three states,” said Anupama Joshi, executive director of the National Farm to School Network. “Farm to school has planted deep roots in communities across the country over the last decade, but a lack of awareness of how to integrate farm to school practices within the child nutrition programs and curricula of our nation’s schools results in real and perceived hurdles that can take significant resources to overcome.”

The 18-month, $1.5 million project funded by the Walmart Foundation will address the barriers to farm to school growth associated with lack of local partnerships and farmer connections, and infrastructure and knowledge gaps in states that are otherwise ripe for significant growth. Two school districts in each state will serve as farm to school training hubs, and 100 mini grants will support local food purchasing, school garden activities, nutrition education, retrofitted kitchens, food service staff training and more at emerging farm to school sites. Statewide outreach efforts, trainings and technical assistance provided by National Farm to School Network will create a vibrant and active farm to school network in each state for long term program sustainability.

“Schools play an important role in shaping child nutrition and health outcomes, both in the cafeteria and in the classroom. But school administrators face a multitude of systemic challenges blocking their ability to evolve healthy food programs,” said Robert Kenny, Senior Manager, the Walmart Foundation. “With this investment, we are providing critical resources and support for communities and schools to engage in innovative farm to school efforts to improve child nutrition.”

The Walmart Foundation shares National Farm to School Network’s commitment to improving child and community health through innovative partnerships. They recently exceeded a $2 billion goal to fight hunger one year ahead of schedule and have donated more than 1.5 billion pounds of food to those in need across the country.

Seed Change is managed by the National Farm to School Network and coordinated locally by partner organizations providing leadership in farm to school statewide. Work is currently underway to explore and engage existing partners and networks in the states, select the training sites, and launch the mini grants program to be announced in the spring. Learn more about Seed Change and whom to contact for questions in each state at www.farmtoschool.org/seedchange.

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About National Farm to School Network
The National Farm to School Network is the leading voice for the U.S. farm to school movement, providing information, advocacy and networking for communities working to bring local food sourcing and food and agriculture education into school systems and preschools. To meet your state lead and learn more about what farm to school activities are happening in your region, visit farmtoschool.org.

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