



NATIONAL CENTER
FOR APPROPRIATE
TECHNOLOGY



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

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New Partnership Will Grow Farm to School Efforts

*National Center for Appropriate Technology and National Farm to School Network Awarded
USDA Cooperative Agreement to Help Producers Market to Schools*

The [National Center for Appropriate Technology](#) (NCAT) and the [National Farm to School Network](#) (NFSN) are pleased to announce their partnership with the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's [Office of Community Food Systems](#) (OCFS) to develop farm to school trainings for agricultural producers.

The goal of the partnership is to help agricultural producers build their capacity to launch or expand efforts to market to schools.

Gwen Holcomb, director of the project for OCFS, announced the farm to school training and curricula cooperative agreement on May 21. She noted that this is an important project for the agricultural producers who can grow, produce, and distribute food for Child Nutrition Programs in schools and school districts. "With more than 30 million students participating in the National School Lunch Program each day, schools provide a large, stable, long-term market for producers," said Holcomb.

To assist producers in entering this market, NCAT and NFSN will conduct a needs assessment among agricultural producers in collaboration with state agencies (SAs) and then develop curricula. They will promote and execute trainings that use a tiered, train-the-trainer approach.

This national three-year, \$1.8 million project will be co-managed by NCAT and NFSN. NCAT, headquartered in Butte, Montana, has over 40 years of experience providing training, education and technical assistance in sustainable agriculture, local food systems, and energy efficiency and conservation. NFSN is a national information, advocacy, and networking hub for communities working to bring local food sourcing, school gardens, and food and agriculture education into schools and early care and education settings.

Assisting with the needs assessment and project evaluation are independent evaluators from New York University.

“We are so pleased to be part of this national effort to help producers access and enhance their marketing to schools and to get more healthy, local farm products in school cafeterias,” said Devona Bell, NCAT’s Sustainable Agricultural Program Director.

“Schools across the country are eager to purchase from local producers and put more fresh food on students’ plates,” said Helen Dombalis, NFSN Executive Director. “This project provides a much-needed opportunity to educate and engage more farmers and producers in market opportunities with schools. When schools buy from local producers, it’s a win for kids, farmers and communities.”

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About National Center for Appropriate Technology

For more than four decades, NCAT has helped individuals and communities adopt local solutions that encourage self-reliance, prepare for uncertainties, and create a cleaner, healthier future for all. A national nonprofit organization with headquarters in Butte, Montana, NCAT has six regional offices that provide hands-on assistance. NCAT energy programs help businesses, communities, homes, and farms conserve energy, reduce pollution and costs, and maximize efficiency. Its agriculture programs help growers reduce costs, maximize profits, and preserve the land. Visit www.ncat.org to learn more.

About National Farm to School Network

National Farm to School Network is the leading voice for the U.S. farm to school and farm to early care and education movement, working as an information, advocacy and networking hub for communities to bring local food sourcing, gardens, and food and agriculture education into schools and early care and education settings. National Farm to School Network works at the local, state and national levels to expand and sustain the number, quality and impact of farm to school and farm to early care and education initiatives across the country. Learn more at farmtoschool.org.