



NATIONAL  
FARM to SCHOOL  
NETWORK



NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE  
AGRICULTURE COALITION

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**Farm to School Act of 2019 Introduced with Bipartisan, Bicameral Support**

*National Farm to School Network and National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition urge support for the Act, emphasizing farm to school's proven impacts on health and economic outcomes*

Washington, D.C., June 27, 2019 – Farm to school activities – including procurement of local food for school meals, school gardens, and food and agriculture education – have been proven to help students build healthy eating habits and support family farmers by expanding market opportunities. Today, a bipartisan group of Congressional leaders demonstrated their support for growing farm to school programming across the country by introducing the [Farm to School Act of 2019](#) (H.R. 3562, S. 2026). The bill, sponsored by [Senators Patrick Leahy](#) (D-VT), David Perdue (R-GA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) and [Representatives Marcia Fudge](#) (D-OH) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), will expand funding for and programmatic scope of the highly successful [USDA Farm to School Grant Program](#).

“While more than 42,000 schools across the country – about 42% – are already finding success with farm to school, there’s significant room to grow in ensuring that all students and communities can participate,” said **Chloe Marshall, Policy Specialist with National Farm to School Network (NFSN)**. “The USDA Farm to School Grant Program offers essential training, funding resources and technical assistance that help communities grow new, sustainable farm to school efforts. This bill will give more communities – especially those with less access to resources for implementing farm to school – a competitive opportunity to participate in this valuable program and launch new farm to school activities.”

“Food is fundamental to our very existence, and learning about food – where it comes from, who grows it, and how it feeds our bodies and minds – should be a fundamental part of all students’ educational experience. Over the last 15 years, farm to school programs in the U.S. have helped thousands of schools to connect their students with real, healthy foods. These programs have also served as powerful economic drivers, generating hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue for family farmers each year, according to the most recent USDA Farm to School Census,” said **Wes King, Senior Policy Specialist with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**. “The Farm to School Act is the cornerstone of a series of bills supported by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition that, if included in the next Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization, would help improve health outcomes for our children and economic outcomes for family farmers across the country.”

The USDA Farm to School Grant Program provides funds on a competitive basis to schools, farmers, nonprofits, and local, state and tribal government entities to help schools procure local foods – including fruits, vegetables, proteins, grains, dairy and other products – for school meals and to support farm to school activities like farm field trips, hands-on science classes and new food taste tests. The program was originally funded as part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Since making its first awards in 2013, the program has received more than 1,900 applications requesting over \$141 million in support. With only \$5 million in mandatory funding available annually, the Farm to School Grant Program has been forced to turn away roughly 80 percent of qualified applications. The *Farm to School Act of 2019* would allow more impactful projects to be realized by increasing annual mandatory funding to \$15 million. The proposed legislation will also: increase the maximum grant award to \$250,000; prioritize grant proposals that engage beginning, veteran and socially disadvantaged farmers and serve high-need schools; fully include early care and education sites, summer food service sites and after school programs; and, increase access among Native and tribal schools to traditional foods, especially from tribal producers.

NFSN and NSAC applaud the bipartisan and bicameral efforts of the bill sponsors to strengthen farm to school efforts across the country. The organizations together urge all Members of Congress to show their commitment to the well-being of our nation's kids, family farmers, and food-producing communities by fully supporting the *Farm to School Act of 2019* and including it in the next Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization.

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#### **About National Farm to School Network (NFSN)**

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. Learn more at: <http://farmtoschool.org>.

#### **About the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)**

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is a grassroots alliance that advocates for federal policy reform supporting the long-term social, economic, and environmental sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. Learn more and get involved at: <http://sustainableagriculture.net>.