



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Vermont FEED receives \$476,000 from the Centers for Disease Control to Advance Farm to School programs encouraging Healthy Food Choices**

SHELBURNE, VT, October 12, 2009 – The U.S. Centers for Disease Control awards Shelburne Farms, partner and fiscal agent for VT FEED, \$476,000 for Farm to School efforts in Vermont. This award comes on the heels of a U.S. government study released last week showing that most Americans don't eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables. As a senior member of both the Appropriations and Agriculture Committees, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) was instrumental in securing this funding. Leahy said, "The funding I secured through the CDC will allow VT FEED to continue and expand Farm to School efforts throughout the state, giving kids the opportunity to eat more fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. With obesity prevention a national health priority, it is encouraging to see Vermont doing so much for childhood nutrition."

"We are deeply grateful to Senator Leahy for his long-time commitment to agriculture and education," said Megan Camp, Shelburne Farms Vice President and Program Director. "This grant will significantly advance Farm to School educational programs in Vermont." The funding enables VT FEED (Food Education Every Day) to provide professional development, technical assistance and training for teachers, food service and communities throughout the state. VT FEED is a collaborative partnership of three Vermont nonprofit organizations: Food Works at Two Rivers Center, NOFA VT, and Shelburne Farms. It offers a community-based approach to school food system change by cultivating links between the classrooms, cafeterias, local farms and communities.

During the year-long grant period, Shelburne Farms will convene regional Farm to School partners to explore promising practices in place-based education. Susan Coburn, Nutrition and Physical Activity Chief for the Vermont Department of Health, who is participating in this peer-to-peer learning, notes, "Farm to School programs increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, improving the health of students and supporting local farms. These programs offer a wonderful opportunity to further the progress towards objectives outlined in the Fit & Healthy Vermonters obesity prevention plan."

Another key activity of the grant is to more fully evaluate the efficacy of Farm to School programs in increasing healthy food choices among school children. This work will be conducted by PEER Associates, with UVM Center for Rural Studies and Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Information gleaned and toolkits developed through the study will be available on the VT FEED web site ([www.vtfeed.org](http://www.vtfeed.org)) and shared with policy makers, educators and Farm to School advocates nationwide.

The CDC award was announced during National School Lunch week. "Farm to School reconnects students to the food they eat," notes Abbie Nelson, Director of VT FEED, "while also increasing student health and the viability of local farms." In Vermont farmers are working side-by-side with parents, community partners, school officials, food service professionals and government agencies to get more fresh local food on school lunch trays. During National School Lunch week, VT FEED and Farm to School partners are pleased to highlight several programs across the state where students are enjoying fresh food from local farms in their cafeteria lunches. Please help us celebrate by visiting a Vermont school or farm during National School Lunch Week (see attached list.)

# **FACTS and STATS**

## **VT FEED and Farm to School & National School Lunch**

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### VERMONT

- A third of Vermont children receive more than half of their daily nutritional intake from school meals
- More than 95,000 children are enrolled in Vermont's school lunch programs and 17,000 eat a school breakfast
- Less than a third of Vermont children eat the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables
- \$31 million is spent each year by Vermont school food programs
- Vermont's 329 schools are potential clients for farmers seeking local markets
- Each year Food Works at Two Rivers' Farm-to-Table program delivers \$76,000 in local produce to institutions in Central Vermont. Schools account for 40% of this volume .

### OBESITY

- 26% of Vermont children are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight
- Among low-income children age 2-5 years, 29% were overweight or at risk of becoming so
- The prevalence of obesity among Vermont adults has doubled between 1990 and 2007
- Obesity and being overweight increase the incidence of at least 15 chronic diseases, including: Type II diabetes, osteoarthritis, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, gallbladder disease, and certain cancers (breast, colorectal, endometrial)
- Nearly a third of direct healthcare costs in the U.S. are related to 15 diseases linked to obesity
- Psychologically overweight teens may suffer lower self-esteem and higher rates of depression

### NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

- The average school meal travels more than 1,500 miles from farm to table, creating an enormous storage and transportation-related carbon footprint
- The National School Lunch Act in 1946 created the modern school lunch program
- The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in 101,000 schools and childcare institutions
- The National School Lunch Program served more than 30.5 million children in 2008
- Since the program began, more than 219 billion lunches have been served
- The National School Lunch Program cost \$9.3 billion in FY 2008

*\* Sources: VT FEED, Vermont Department of Health & USDA web sites*



# Farm to School Site Visits during National School Lunch Week

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## School Lunch Goes Local: Vermont Farm to School Partners Celebrate National School Lunch Week October 2009 with Locally Grown Style

National School Lunch Week is always celebrated the second full week of October. This year many Vermont schools are highlighting local foods during National School Lunch week. Please join VT FEED and regional Farm to School partners in visiting some of the many events occurring around the state this week:

### **Monday, October 12, 2009 – 9 AM**

#### **Hartland Elementary visits Cedar Mountain Farm**

Third graders at Hartland Elementary School are heading to Cedar Mountain Farm in Hartland Four Corners to provide bedding for dairy cows, prepare the asparagus patch for winter, and extract (and taste) honey. This school year students are taking monthly field trips to Cedar Mountain, located nearby at Cobb Hill co-housing, to help with chores, learn about farm life and harvest food for the school cafeteria. The Hartland Farm to School program is a model initiative for the Upper Valley Farm to School Network and one of 25 Farm to School programs in the country recognized with a National Victory Against Hunger Award in 2008. For more information, contact Peter Allison, Director, Upper Valley Farm to School Network, 802 291-2019, [Peterallisonvt@gmail.com](mailto:Peterallisonvt@gmail.com)

### **Tuesday, October 13- 11:20 AM**

#### **Harwood High School's Localvore Luncheon**

This day kicks-off the second year of monthly localvore lunches at Harwood High School. Chef Paul and Chef Gary do most of the cooking from scratch, sourcing local foods from more than 30 farmers or processors. Join this luncheon of turkey and biscuits, fall vegetables, and the unveiling of their new pumpkin bars. For more information, contact Paul Morris, Food Service Director, 802-882-1113, [pmorris@harwood.org](mailto:pmorris@harwood.org)

### **Tuesday, October 13- 5:00 PM**

#### **Milton Elementary School's Harvest Café Celebration**

Milton Elementary School is helping students develop lifelong healthy eating habits with support from a Community Health Foundation Grant from Fletcher Allen Health Care. The school-wide project, titled "Power Up with Fruits and Veggies," incorporates food and fitness education, culminating with a Harvest Café Celebration this week. There will be taste tests of local products from neighboring farms and fall harvest food prepared by Fresh Market of Burlington and the school's own Betsy Paya, food service director. Hands-on demonstrations, recipes, and raffle prizes. For more information, contact Sue Gower, nurse, 802-893-3215 x1323, [sgower@mtsd-vt.org](mailto:sgower@mtsd-vt.org)

### **Wednesday, October 14, 2009 – 11:30 AM**

#### **School Taste Tests at Sharon Elementary**

Join students and food service director, Lynn Ann Perry, at Sharon Elementary to first prepare (9-10 AM) a new seasonal recipe made with and local produce and then to Taste Test it (11:30 AM) with the whole

school. Sharon Elementary has been working with VT FEED for five years creating and using food, farm and nutrition curriculum for grades K-6. Vegetables harvested from the school garden often make their way into “Homemade Cooking and Locally Grown Produce” on the school menu. With the supportive leadership of principal Barrett Williams, and the entire school staff, Sharon Elementary is successfully weaving Farm to School into its culture. For more information, contact Sharon Elementary Principal Barrett Williams, [bwilliams.sharon@gmail.com](mailto:bwilliams.sharon@gmail.com) (802) 763-7425; or Abbie Nelson, Director, VT-FEED, 802-434-4122 [abbie@nofavt.org](mailto:abbie@nofavt.org)

### **Wednesday, October 14, 2009 – 5:30 PM**

#### **Harvest Dinner Celebration, Hunt Middle School, Burlington**

Join students, parents, family members, teachers, food service staff, farmers, and school administrators at a delicious Harvest Dinner Celebration that features the 2009 Jr. Iron Chef Middle School “Best in Show” one-pot-meal recipe using local ingredients. This event also highlights the efforts of the Burlington School Food Service to provide local foods daily from over 20 farmers or processors. For more information, contact Linda Carroll, Principal, [lcarroll@bsdvt.org](mailto:lcarroll@bsdvt.org); or Doug Davis, Burlington School Food Service Director, 802-864-8416, [ddavis@bsdvt.org](mailto:ddavis@bsdvt.org); or Abbie Nelson, VT FEED Director [abbie@nofavt.org](mailto:abbie@nofavt.org)

### **Thursday, October 15, 2009 – 5:30 PM**

#### **Family Farm to School Night, Academy School, Brattleboro**

Students are making desserts and salads with local foods for this special harvest meal to be shared with families and teachers from three elementary schools in Brattleboro. The feast takes place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Kids’ Localvore Challenge. After dinner there will be a short Vermont Farm to School Program video and presentation, followed by Q&A with the Farm to School Committee, Café Services, and VT FEED. For more information, contact Laura White, Brattleboro Farm to School Coordinator, 802-254-3737 x121, [Laura.White@wsesu.org](mailto:Laura.White@wsesu.org); or Richard Berkfield, Community Organizer, Community Food Security Project, 248-904-8347 [berkfieldr@gmail.com](mailto:berkfieldr@gmail.com); or Abbie Nelson, Director, VT-FEED, 802-434-4122 [abbie@nofavt.org](mailto:abbie@nofavt.org)

### **Monday, October 19, 2009 – 4:30 PM**

#### **Albany Community School Harvest Festival**

Join students, parents, teachers, school administrators, farmers and community members at the Albany Community School for a fun-filled Harvest Festival, co-sponsored by Green Mountain Farm-to-School and the Albany Community School. The celebration of the season will include a community meal featuring local foods, farmers' market with local vendors, live music, cider-pressing, and a display of pumpkins decorated by students. For more information, contact Katherine Sims, Executive Director, Green Mountain Farm to School, 802-334-2044, [ksims@gmfts.org](mailto:ksims@gmfts.org)

### **What does the Vermont Agency of Agriculture have to say about Farm to School?**

*“The Vermont Agency of Agriculture has been a strong partner in Farm to School since the 2006 legislation that created the Vermont Farm to School Mini-grant program. At the Agency, we believe that when children are able to connect with local food and farm culture it nurtures children’s health, cultivates viable farms, and builds vibrant communities. We look forward to our continued partnership with Vermont FEED and other Farm to School programs around the state during this exciting time.”*

- **Koi Boynton**, Agriculture Development Coordinator  
Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets  
802-828-2084 [koi.boynton@state.vt.us](mailto:koi.boynton@state.vt.us)