WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?
Farm to School centers around efforts to offer local foods in school cafeterias, but applies to a variety of initiatives in Michigan, including school garden programs, fundraisers using local agricultural products, farmer visits to school classrooms and cafeterias, school field trips to nearby farms and other curriculum connections.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL?
Food service professionals, farmers and distributors have been working together in communities to overcome challenges and improve availability and distribution of local foods for school food service programs. Survey responses show that the number of Michigan school food service directors participating in Farm to School nearly tripled between 2004 and 2009. In 2013, 68% of school food service directors reported purchasing local foods through one or more channels, and 82% were interested in purchasing local foods in the future.

State government agencies, community organizations, agricultural commodity groups, universities, school administrators, parents and community members support efforts to make Farm to School a reality. The Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems hosts the Michigan Farm to School website, a portal for information and a venue for sharing ideas, tools and resources to support these efforts to link schools with local food and agriculture in Michigan.

WHY FARM TO SCHOOL?
While practitioners face issues that can make Farm to School challenging, these programs offer important benefits, such as fresher food, increased variety, greater ability to specify the needs of school food service programs, and support of local farmers and the local economy. Responses from a 2013 survey of Michigan school food service providers show that limited seasonal availability, food safety concerns and budget constraints were the top concerns in implementing Farm to School programs, but fresher food, supporting the local economy, and helping Michigan farms and businesses were the top three factors motivating them to purchase local food.

Increasing and expanding Farm to School programs can help meet one of the goals of the Michigan Good Food Charter: that Michigan institutions purchase 20% of their food from local growers, producers and processors by 2020 (see www.michiganfood.org for more information).
On the Michigan Farm to School webpage, you can sign up for the Michigan Farm to School listserv and access our freely available resources (below). You will also find information about the MI Farm to School Grant Program, which provides mini-grants to Michigan Pre-K/early care programs and K-12 schools to start and/or expand Farm to School programs. Funds for this grant program and Michigan Farm to School activities are provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

- **Purchasing Michigan Products: A Step-By-Step Guide** helps school food service directors purchase Michigan foods from local farmers and suppliers. Resources to link with local farmers, templates of forms to request quotes for local food and a summary of the regulatory environment are included.

- **Marketing Michigan Products: A Step-By-Step Guide** helps Michigan farmers market their products to local schools. Information about food safety, school food budgets and templates food service directors may use to request quotes for local food are included.

- **Putting Michigan Produce On Your Menu: How to Buy and Use Michigan Produce in Your Institution** provides purchase and use equivalencies, storage tips, and a seasonal availability chart to help institutional food service professionals use local food.

**ADDITIONAL MICHIGAN FARM TO SCHOOL CONTACTS**

- **Michigan Department of Education** | www.michigan.gov/mde
  - Jamie Malnar, 517-335-3792, MalnarJ1@michigan.gov

- **Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development** | www.michigan.gov/mdard
  - Lori Yelton, 517-335-3853, yeltonl@michigan.gov

- **Michigan Department of Community Health** | www.michigan.gov/mdch
  - Krystal Quartermus, 517-241-0947, quartermusk@michigan.gov

- **Michigan State University Extension** | www.msue.anr.msu.edu
  - Beth Clawson (southwest Michigan), 269-657-8213, clawsonb@anr.msu.edu
  - Becky Henne (statewide liaison with Health & Nutrition Institute), 517-543-4468, henner@msu.edu
  - Alan Jaros (Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties), 248-347-0269, jaros@anr.msu.edu
  - Kaitlin Koch (southeast Michigan), 586-469-6088, kochkait@anr.msu.edu
  - Terry McLean (Genesee County), 810-244-8530, mclean@msu.edu
  - Rob Sirrine (northwest Lower Michigan), 231-256-9888, sirrine@anr.msu.edu
  - Michelle Walk (Upper Peninsula), 906-635-6368, walkmich@msu.edu
  - Kendra Wills (west Michigan), 517-930-0928, willsk@anr.msu.edu

- **Michigan Land Use Institute** (northwest Lower Michigan) | www.mlui.org | www.localdifference.org
  - Diane Conners, 231-941-6584 ext. 16, diane@mlui.org

The Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems engages the people of Michigan, the United States and the world in applied research, education and outreach to develop regionally integrated, sustainable food systems. Our vision is a thriving economy, equity and sustainability for Michigan, the country and the planet through food systems rooted in local regions and centered on food that is healthy, green, fair...