



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10/7/2016**

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## GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON DECLARES OCTOBER AS ARKANSAS FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH

Little Rock, Ark. – Governor Asa Hutchinson proclaims October Arkansas Farm to School Month, joining a nationwide movement led by the National Farm to School Network. In Arkansas, 47 school districts use Farm to School practices, which includes 197 schools and over 95,000 students. Farm to school practices enrich the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local farmers by changing food purchasing and education practices at schools and preschools.

“Farm to School programs are an excellent way to provide additional opportunities for Arkansas farmers and ranchers. The Arkansas Agriculture Department is proud to join Governor Hutchinson and our many partners in promoting these programs and celebrating October as Farm to School Month,” said Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward.

“Farm to school connections provide additional markets for Arkansas farmers, and give our students the freshest and best available ingredients. We hope that the Farm to School movement helps children establish healthy habits that will last a lifetime, and directs school food purchasing dollars into the Arkansas economy,” said Emily English, Program Administrator in the Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention at Arkansas Children’s Research Institute.

You can be part of Farm to School opportunities locally, in a variety of ways, including:

- Learn more about how your local school or preschool chooses food sources for school lunches.
  - Identify menu items that you would like to transition to local products.
- Help plan a school or community garden.
- Plan a local meal event.
- Take the family to visit a garden or farm.
- Bring a chef into the classroom.
- Help your school officials apply for a Farm to School grant, or seek other funding sources.
- Attend an Arkansas Farm to School event in your community.
- Find a farmer or distributor to connect you to local items.

"Farm to School is an important tool in the fight against childhood obesity and food insecurity," said Melissa Terry, co-chair of the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention's Healthy Food Access Workgroup. "In addition to improving child health, when schools buy local, they create access to new markets for local and regional farmers," she added.

The Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention at Arkansas Children’s Research Institute serves as the Arkansas State Lead Agency for the National Farm to School Network. Emily English and Jenna Rhodes serve as the state’s co-lead contacts, providing technical expertise, network development, and host the Arkansas Farm to School website and social media pages. To find fact sheets, training guides, success stories, and events happening near you visit [www.arkansasfarmtoschool.org](http://www.arkansasfarmtoschool.org) and follow Arkansas Farm to School on Facebook and Twitter. There, also find guidelines and school resources for beginning a

Farm to School initiative in your district. The National Farm to School Network also offers a variety of free resources at [farmtoschool.org](http://farmtoschool.org). Visit the National Farm to School Network blog throughout October for stories of Farm to School successes happening across the country.

The Arkansas Farm to School Month Proclamation is supported by a group of Farm to School state and private partners, including the Arkansas Children's Research Institute Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention, Access to Healthy Foods Workgroup of the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention, the Arkansas Department of Education Child Nutrition Unit, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension, Arkansas Minority Health Commission, Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas MarketMaker, and the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

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