



**Cornell University**  
**Cooperative Extension**  
**Seneca County**

308 Main St. Shop Centre  
Waterloo, NY 13165  
(315) 539-9251  
(315) 539-2784 fax  
[www.senecacountycce.org](http://www.senecacountycce.org)

**PRESS RELEASE**

*For Farm to School information contact: Moira Tidball at 315-539-9251 or [mmt65@cornell.edu](mailto:mmt65@cornell.edu)*

**Farm to School in Seneca County: Bringing Local, Farm-fresh Foods into the Schools**

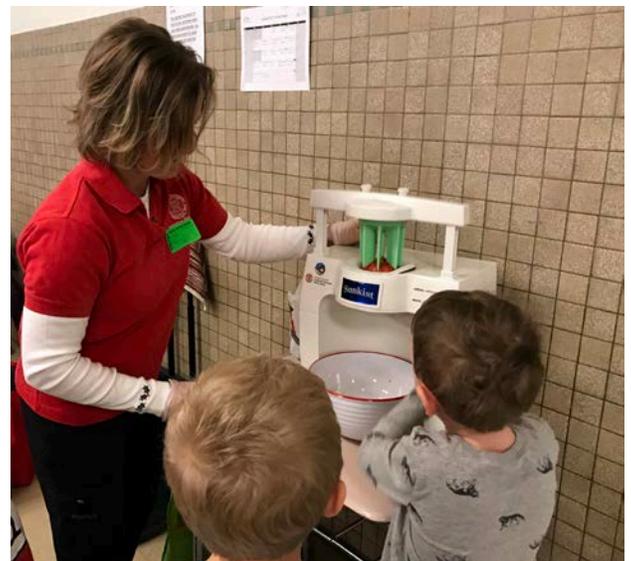
*February 6, 2017 for Immediate Release:*

What is Farm to School?

The New York State Farm to School Program was created by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to, “connect schools with local farms and food producers to strengthen local agriculture, improve student health, and promote regional food systems awareness”. All four school districts in Seneca County - Waterloo, Seneca Falls, Romulus, and South Seneca- were awarded one of six New York State Ag & Markets grants to develop farm to school programming with oversight from Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension. The goals of the grant are to increase consumption of local produce by the students for positive health outcomes, increase the variety of local products being offered on school menus, increase the number of local farmers selling to schools, and increase awareness of the local food system in the Finger Lakes area.

Here is what is being done so far:

1. Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) put together a Farm to School team to oversee the grant. This team consists of a Farm to School Coordinator, Moira Tidball, to make and execute a plan to fulfill the goals of farm to school in Seneca County. A Farm to School educator, Sue Petersen, to work directly in the schools with students and staff to introduce new local foods and offer food and nutrition education. And, the Seneca County CCE Agriculture Economic Specialist, Derek Simmonds, is assisting the team by strengthening the local farm supply chain.
2. Fruit Sectionizers were purchased for all of the school cafeterias in the Waterloo, Romulus, South Seneca, and Seneca Falls school districts. Research from Cornell’s Smarter Lunchroom program, showed that if students can slice their fruit they are more likely to eat it with less waste.



Most of the apples offered in the schools are locally sourced from New York State. The food service directors from Seneca Falls and South Seneca reported increased sales of fruit after the fruit slicers were put to use in the cafeterias.

3. Farm to School menu days that feature a local product were developed for each school district. Butternutty Macaroni and Cheese was the featured item for Seneca Falls in December, Romulus in January, and South Seneca and Waterloo in February. The Farm to School Educator provided taste samples to the students the week before it was offered on the menu and also provided recipes to go home. The idea was to add a local vegetable to a familiar food item which greatly increased the vitamin content. Many youth enjoyed the taste samples.
4. A training day for cafeteria staff is being offered on March 16<sup>th</sup> at the Waterloo cafeteria and open to staff in all Seneca County school districts. Chef Brud Holland, a renowned chef in the Finger Lakes area for utilizing local products, will be teaching knife skills and fresh food preparation techniques for cafeteria staff to use in farm to school menu items.



“Farm to school needs to be a community effort to succeed!”, noted Farm to School Coordinator Mo Tidball. “We need parents and other adults to encourage youth to slice and eat their NYS-grown apples, encourage them to buy lunch especially when local products are being offered, try a recipe that utilizes local products, and talk with youth about locally sourced foods, including dairy products and meat. Adults can be role models by eating local fruits and vegetables and supporting local farms by purchasing directly from roadside stands, farmers’ markets, and CSA’s. The Finger Lakes region is a cornucopia of delicious, local foods which we all should be enjoying from students to seniors!”

For more Farm to School information, contact Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension. The office is located at 308 Main Street Shop Centre in Waterloo. Phone: 315-539-9251, email: [seneca@cornell.edu](mailto:seneca@cornell.edu).

*For nearly 100 years, Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension has served the people of the County, putting to practical use the scholarship and research of Cornell University and the national land grant system in the areas of agriculture and food systems sustainability; families, nutrition, health and safety (human ecology); youth development (4-H); environmental and natural resource enhancement; and community and economic vitality. The office is located at 308 Main Street Shop Centre in Waterloo and the telephone number is 315-539-9251.*

### **Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities**

*Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities*