



# Montana Farm to School Annual Report

## Academic Year 2020 - 2021

### WHAT

#### What is farm to school?

Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by influencing food purchasing and education practices at K-12 schools and preschools. Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities through such avenues as school gardening, cooking lessons, and farm field trips. Through community-driven approaches, farm to school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following core elements: procurement, education, and school gardens.

### Farm to School Participation Rates



**2020-2021**  
58.6%

**2019-2020**  
57.1%

**2018-2019**  
54.8%

#### OVERALL PARTICIPATION

Sites participating in at least one F2S activity

**20%**  
**SCHOOL GARDENS**  
Creating and tending school gardens



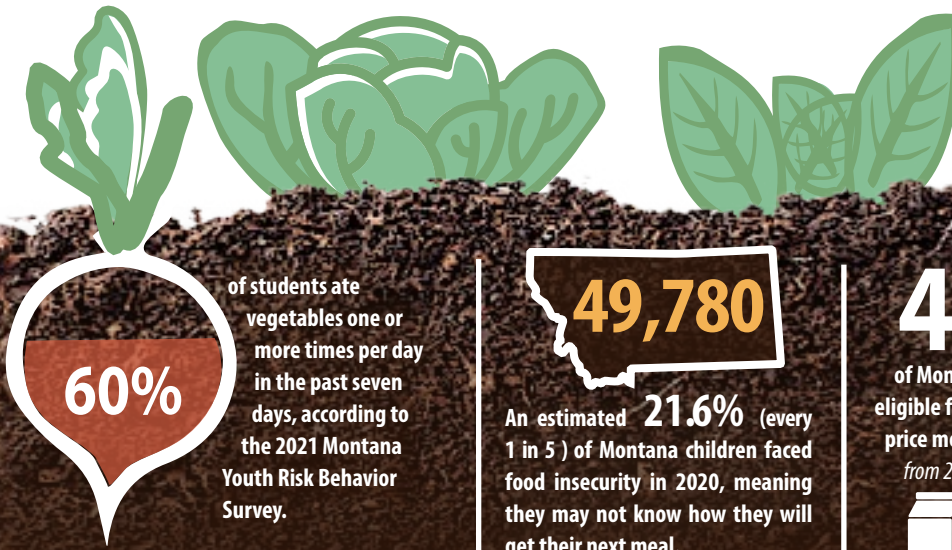
**51%**  
**PROCUREMENT**  
Serving local products in school meals

**23%**  
**EDUCATION**  
Conducting educational activities

### WHY

#### Why does farm to school matter?

Farm to school not only connects kids with locally grown food and food and nutrition education, but it helps foster more resilient food systems. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for farm to school to solve food supply issues and support the local economy.



**60%**

of students ate vegetables one or more times per day in the past seven days, according to the 2021 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

**49,780**

An estimated **21.6%** (every 1 in 5) of Montana children faced food insecurity in 2020, meaning they may not know how they will get their next meal.

**42%**

of Montana students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. *Most recent data from 2019-20 school year.*



Agriculture remains the leading industry sector in Montana's economy, with a value of **\$4.6 billion** in 2020. By

connecting children with agriculture and exposing them to agricultural careers, farm to school initiatives are helping to prepare the next generation of farmers.

### Montana Farm to School Leadership Team

The Montana Farm to School Leadership Team works through partnerships across the state to build farm to school initiatives that help kids eat healthy, connect with agriculture and nutrition through education, support Montana farmers and food producers, enhance local economies, and strengthen communities.

The Leadership Team consists of 14 member organizations with statewide focus and influence that are key to the success of farm to school in Montana. In 2020, the Leadership Team embarked on

a yearlong strategic planning process to identify priorities and activities for the future. Check out the [Montana Farm to School Leadership Team Strategic Plan Summary](#). The team has 7 working groups, which are open to the public. To get involved, contact the working group chair listed on the [Leadership Team webpage](#).

The Office of Public Instruction sponsors the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team. The team is facilitated by the Montana Farm to School Coordinator at Montana Team Nutrition Program.

### 2020 Member Organizations

- AERO
- Mission West Community Development Partners
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Livestock
- Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Montana Farmers Union
- Montana No Kid Hungry
- Montana Office of Public Instruction
- Montana School Nutrition Association
- Montana State University Extension
- Montana Team Nutrition Program, Montana State University
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- USDA Office of Community Food Systems, Mountain Plains Region

*The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## Montana Harvest of the Month

Each month participating sites focus on promoting one locally grown item (e.g., lentils) by serving it in at least one meal or snack, offering taste tests, conducting educational activities, and displaying or distributing Harvest of the Month materials.

Many sites reported barriers in HOM participation due to changes in school nutrition program operation, such as staffing shortages, changes to meal service, and overall uncertainty in program operation. Other challenges included changes in overall school district operation, such as in delivery of K-12 curriculum instruction.



## GET INVOLVED + CONTACT

### Website

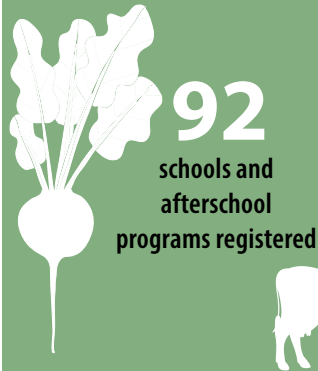
Find resources and information at:  
[www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool](http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool)

### Contact Us

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Montana Team Nutrition Program,  
Montana State University

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### In school year 2020-2021



**17,434**

children reached at K-12 and  
Early Care + Education sites

**98**

local food  
producers sold to sites



**22**

early care and  
education sites  
registered

**\$376,567**

local foods purchased  
(not including fluid milk  
for K-12)

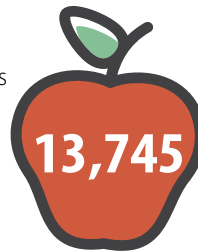
## Training + Resources

There are many ways to learn about farm to school and access resources! Montana Farm to School hosts farm to school webinars and in-person trainings as well as an archive of previous webinars on the Montana Farm to School website.



## Celebrating Farm to School Month

Montana Crunch Time is a statewide event to celebrate National Farm to School Month and 'buy local' initiatives in Montana by crunching into locally and regionally grown apples on a designated day in October.



people participated in  
Montana Crunch Time 2020



Garden City Harvest



Poly Drive Elementary

## SOURCES

National School Lunch Program Annual Sponsor Agreement Form 2020-2021, Montana Office of Public Instruction

2021 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Montana Office of Public Instruction

Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity 2019, Feeding America

Montana Farm to School Leadership Team Participation 2020, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Harvest of the Month Participation 2020-2021, Montana Team Nutrition Program

Montana Crunch Time Participation 2020, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Farm to School Professional Development and Technical Assistance Tracker 2019-21, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Agriculture Statistics, 2021

## Social Media Outreach



@montanafarmtoschool  
**1,382** likes during the  
2020-21 school year



@mtfarmtoschool  
**1,459** engagements during  
the 2020-21 school year



MT Team Nutrition and  
Montana Harvest of the Month  
**4,243** views during the  
2020-21 school year

