



# Montana Farm to School Annual Report

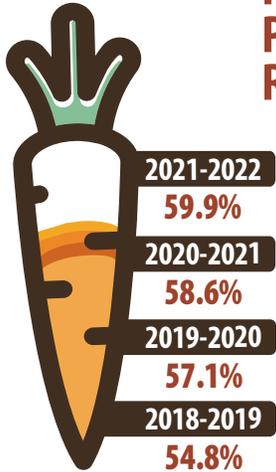
Academic Year 2021-2022

## 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



#### OVERALL PARTICIPATION

Sites participating in at least one F2S activity

51.6%

#### PROCUREMENT

Serving local products in school meals



21.7%

#### SCHOOL GARDENS

Creating and tending school gardens

23.5%

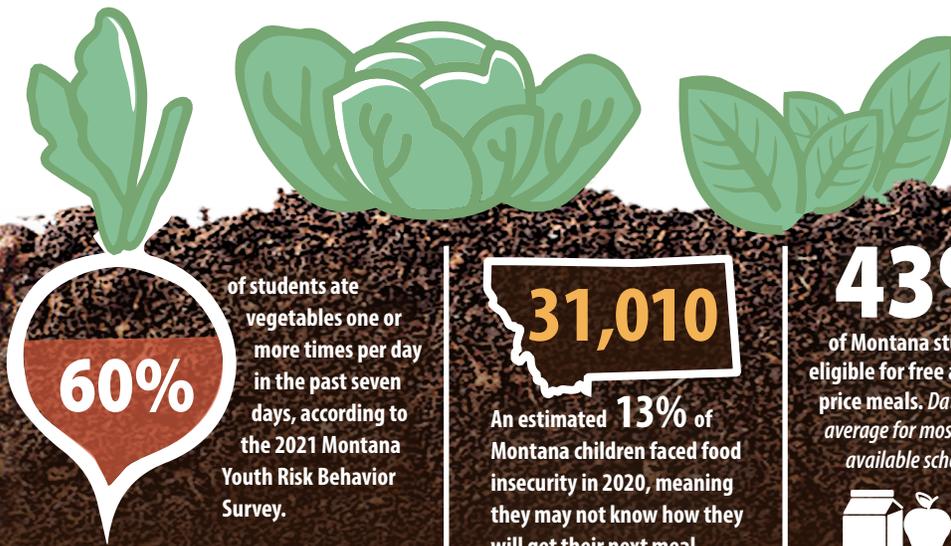
#### EDUCATION

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 resilient food systems. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for farm to school to solve food supply issues and support the local economy.



31,010

An estimated 13% of Montana children faced food insecurity in 2020, meaning they may not know how they will get their next meal.

43%

of Montana students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Data is a 5-year average for most recent and available school years.



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, foster economic vitality, and strengthen communities.

The Leadership Team consists of 15 member organizations with statewide focus and influence that are key to the success of farm to school in

Montana. The team has 7 working groups, 5 of which are open to the public. These meetings are a way for the Leadership Team to share updates, facilitate connections, gather input, and uplift local farm to school stories. To get involved, register for an upcoming meeting and/or 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.

### 2021 Member Organizations

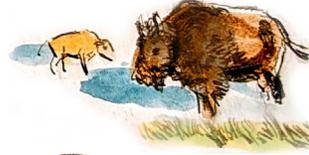
- AERO
- Mission West Community Development Partners
- Montana Agriculture in the Classroom
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Livestock
- Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Montana Farmers Union
- Montana No Kid Hungry
- Montana Office of Public Instruction
- Montana School Nutrition Association
- Montana Team Nutrition Program, Montana State University
- Montana State University Extension
- 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.

Bison was featured as the newest Harvest of the Month food! A special team was formed to create the Buffalo materials which include Native knowledge, cultural information, and languages. This exciting partnership demonstrates how farm to school initiatives can support Native food sovereignty efforts.



### In school year 2021-2022



84  
registered  
schools and  
afterschool programs

18,593

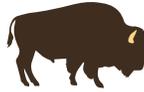
children reached at K-12 and  
Early Care + Education sites

24  
registered early care and  
education sites



104

local food producers  
sold to sites



\$244,716

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



12  
Trainings in  
2021-2022

### 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 trainings on the Montana Farm to School website.

The Montana Farm to School Summit is a statewide biennial convening geared toward farm to school implementers such as educators, school administrators, school nutrition professionals, parents, and food producers. In 2021, 144 people attended the summit in-person in Helena and 25 people attended virtually.



26+  
Hours of  
events

### SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

@montanafarmtoschool  
1,462 followers

@mtfarmtoschool  
1,334 followers

Montana Harvest of the Month  
2,639 views

### 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.



30,958  
people participated  
in Montana Crunch  
Time 2021

### MAKING MONTANA MARINARA

Montana Marinara is a new product developed in partnership with Montana Office of Public Instruction, Mission West Community Development Partners, and Northwest Food Hub. It enhances USDA Foods tomatoes with local veggies and herbs to create a kid-friendly, versatile, and affordable product. Schools across Montana sampled the sauce with their students in delicious meals from meatball subs to manicotti and beyond!



Mission West Community Development Partners

### GET INVOLVED + CONTACT

#### Website

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

#### Contact Us

Aubree Roth, Montana Farm to School Coordinator  
Montana Team Nutrition Program,  
Montana State University

[aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu)  
(406) 994-5996

#### SOURCES

National School Lunch Program Annual Sponsor Agreement Form 2021-2022, Montana Office of Public Instruction

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

Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity 2021, Feeding America  
Montana Agriculture Statistics, 2021

Montana Farm to School Leadership Team Participation 2021,  
Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Harvest of the Month Participation 2021-2022,  
Montana Team Nutrition Program

Montana Farm to School Professional Development and Technical Assistance Tracker 2021-2022, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Crunch Time Participation 2021, Montana Team Nutrition

