



Webinar Wednesday Series: Montana Farm to School Successes - Education

Video Transcript

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AUBREE ROTH: Hello everyone and welcome to the Office of Public Instruction's School Nutrition Program's Webinar Wednesday. Today's topic is Montana Farm to School Successes, and we'll be focusing on the education component of that. So, this is our second webinar in this three-part series that highlights farm to school successes from around our state. The next webinar will be held on April 8th on school gardens, so I hope you join us for that as well. The webinar is being recorded, and we will post the recorded version and the slides on the OPI School Nutrition Program's webinar archive in maps, and then it will be on the Montana Farm to School website and social media channels as well, so multiple opportunities to watch that recording. I'm Aubree Roth and I'll be leading the webinar today. I'm the Montana Farm to School Coordinator for Montana Team Nutrition Program. Montana Team Nutrition works in close collaboration with Office of Public instruction's school nutrition programs to provide training and guidance to schools, and we're housed at Montana State University. I'm so excited to be joined by Ellie Ross and Jason Mandala.

This webinar provides snapshots of Montana farm to school successes to provide you inspiration and resources to start or grow your farm to school program. During this webinar I will discuss farm to school basics and share curriculum resources, Ellie and Jason will provide their experiences and tips for providing farm to school education and activities, and then we'll wrap up by discussing opportunities and answer your questions. So, let's dig in! Farm to School is an umbrella term or a movement to connect children to their food to improve their health, support farmers, ranchers, and food businesses, and strengthen communities through the three core elements shown here. Procurement - local foods are purchased, promoted, and served in the cafeteria or as a snack or taste test. Education - students participate in education activities related to agriculture, food, health, or nutrition, and school gardens - students engage in hands-on learning through gardening or raising food. Farm to school programs

generally work best when each of these three core elements are represented, as you will see throughout this webinar.

There are many ways to implement farm to school. Farm to school is not a program you sign up to do, and you build it to meet your school needs and resources that are available to you. So, let's take a look at each of these three core elements with examples. First, procurement, which includes buying and serving local foods in school and after-school meals and snacks. Schools are sourcing local foods across all five food groups, from apples to beef, and beyond. This can include special meals like this one at Manhattan Christian School that features as many local ingredients as possible, or you could feature a few local ingredients in meals throughout the school year. If you're interested more in buying or serving local foods, I recommend watching the recording of the webinar in this series, which is posted on our Montana Farm to School website and Montana Team Nutrition Program's YouTube channel.

Growing and raising food with students is a great way to engage them in the process and get them excited about unfamiliar foods. School gardens vary in size, type, and purpose. Gardens could be in ground gardens, raised beds, greenhouses, or indoor gardens. Located on the Highline, Hinsdale School boasts an incredible school garden with a passive solar greenhouse and root cellar, all of which the students helped build. The cafeteria uses the garden produce in school meals. Your garden could even be unconventional like Gallatin Valley Farm to School's Bob the Greenhouse Bus that provides mobile school garden education throughout the Gallatin Valley. Other schools have greenhouses, tower gardens, aquaponic systems, and many other forms. Definitely the broadest of the core elements, the education piece spans food nutrition and agriculture-based education, and it's the topic of today's webinar. Farm to school education can take place anywhere. Here, Gallatin Valley Farm to School provides in-classroom lessons at a Bozeman Elementary School. The Grow Program at Ennis School has been cooking up a Harvest of the Month storm! The students made heart-shaped beet ravioli. Family consumer science teachers, FCCLA advisers, Ag. Ed. teachers, and FFA advisors have been integrating farm to school into their curriculum and clubs through preparing local foods leading taste tests, cultivating school gardens and farms, providing education, promoting local foods, and more. The two students that I wanted to show you from Malta High School led efforts to grow a school garden and implement Harvest of the Month as a project for FCCLA. This education piece can also include farm field trips, bringing producers into the classroom, and more.

Farm to School is well rooted in Montana. 57.1% of Montana schools are participating in at least one of the farm to school core elements. This includes over 48% are serving local foods in their school meals, 22% are conducting nutrition AG and food-based education, and 19% are creating and tending school gardens. There are many benefits to farm to school programs, as you'll see through the examples in this webinar. Students can improve academic achievement through garden-based education, increase their awareness and acceptance of unfamiliar foods, support ranchers, farmers, businesses, and local economies, and more. I encourage you to check out the National Farm to School Network Benefits Fact Sheet, whose link is at the bottom of this slide for more information about the impacts of these initiatives and the research behind that. One opportunity for connecting the three core elements together is by participating in Montana Harvest of the Month. Montana Harvest of the Month is one way you can implement farm to school, and it provides an easy framework to follow, ready to use materials, and helpful resources. The Montana Harvest of the Month program features a different Montana grown or raised food each month. Shown here is our calendar for this school year. We strive to add new foods each year and change the calendar to keep it fresh. The program is open to K-12 schools and after-school programs, summer food service programs, early care and education sites, health care facilities, grocery stores, and food pantries. It is free to register, and participating sites will form a team upon registering, showcase the Harvest of the Month food in that month in a school meal or snack, educational activity,

and a taste test. Sites will promote the program using the materials provided, and lastly, of course, sites will participate in evaluation.

So, I'm skipping over the other required components for the sake of time, but I do want to feature the activity component. Each month, Harvest of the Month sites need to conduct an educational activity with at least one classroom or group of students. This could include one of the lessons we provide in the Classroom Bites handouts, or it could be something else of your making, like painting with beets shown here! Students could be cooking with the foods, growing them, going on a field trip to learn more about beets or other foods, and we encourage you to use the Harvest of the Month videos to support your educational activities, whatever they may be. It works best when an activity or taste test comes before the food is served in a school meal, so that students are more aware of and interested in actually eating that food when it's in front of them. It is free to register for Harvest of the Month. We will give you the printed materials, access to electronic materials, and provide training and support. While the program provides you a framework, we do not provide the food you need for meals, taste tests, or activities. We also do not require that you order from specific farms or vendors, as we want you to make relationships with your local producers and businesses. Lastly, we do not provide an educator to do the activities, as we hope that the lessons and activities will be built into the school day.

Each site receives one printed set of the materials, that includes the posters, Cafeteria Bites handouts, Classroom Bites handouts, home handouts and a static link. The Classroom Bites handouts includes activities for elementary students and home size recipes that make enough for a class to sample. It also has a list of relevant children's books. In addition to all the printed materials, all team members have access to the materials just mentioned in electronic form as well as many others, like guides and recipe cards. One of these resources is a document that links the activities in the materials to the Common Core and Next Generation Science standards. The Harvest the Month videos are the newest resources available. These are short farm to plate videos featuring each Harvest of the Month food. They are perfect for showing in the classroom, on video announcements, or shared on websites and social media. We currently have seven videos published with the rest on the way. New sites can register for free on the Harvest of the Month website, as shown here, any time during the school year. So, besides Harvest of the Month, there are many other ways to integrate food nutrition, agriculture, and garden-based learning into your classroom and the subjects you teach. And fortunately, there are many resources to support you, so you don't need to make this up from scratch. This is just a snippet from a resource that provides examples of standards that are met through cooking and tasting projects. For math, kids could count peas and pods or help count out how many cherry tomatoes are needed for a salad recipe. For language arts, recipes and seed packets provide many opportunities for reading and writing. So, this resource, as well as many others, are linked on the Montana Farm to School website, which is shown here. I want to show you a couple curriculum resources that can help you get started, but just know that there are many out there to help you. So, I'm going to switch over to actually show you this on the web.

So, first, here is the Growing Classroom book and this is fantastic and is paired with a database that connects to the lessons to relevant standards. You can search the database by standard to see what lessons fulfill that standard. The Edible Schoolyard database, which is this one, I'll just open that up, allows you to search lessons by place of learning, as you'll see here, by subject and grade level, as well as some other factors. USDA Team Nutrition offers free curriculum kits like the Great Garden Detective Adventure linked here, and if you scroll down, you'll see that we have suggested children's books, middle and high school curriculum resources, and additional resources to help you in your farm to school journey. There are so many more resources than this, so I encourage you to use this as a start to see what you need and expand from there. So, now that you have a foundation of farm-to-school basics and where you can start finding resources, let's take a look at examples of farm to school education that is happening throughout

the state. So, first up, we have Ellie Ross, who is the Farm to School Coordinator with Hardin School District. Take it away, Ellie!

ELLIE ROSS: Alright, no problem, thank you so much, Aubree, for letting me be here today and present. My name is Ellie Ross. I served in the Hardin School District as the FoodCorps service member from 2015 to 2017, and have been the Farm to School Coordinator since that time. I am from Saint Louis, Missouri, but have been in Big Horn County for the last seven years, so my perspective really covers growing community relationships and resources as part of a farm to school education. To give you a bit of context to our program, the Hardin School District resides in Big Horn County, which includes Hardin, Crowe, and Northern Cheyenne nations. Five of our schools, pre-k through 12, are in the town of Hardin, and two schools both K-5, on the Crow Reservation. Collectively, I've been at farm to school for five years, so I definitely don't have all the answers, but hopefully I can show you what we've done to build capacity for our students and community to engage with native foods and traditional food knowledge. Next slide, please.

Each school in our district has a different level of engagement and support for our farm to school. Today I will be focusing on how we've incorporated traditional foods in our farm to school curriculum, engaging high school students, and partnering with community entities. Although there are plenty of challenges and areas for improvement, education is the primary component of our program that has flourished over the years. My first year as a service member, I had about three classes once a month, which has increased to biweekly lessons for every single K-3 class across three schools. We also have monthly Harvest of the Month lessons for fourth and fifth grade students at Crow School. One of the most successful techniques has been to start small. We had tons of support for recipes with FoodCorps and Harvest of the Month. I like to say we had all the lesson plans but no lesson plants, mostly because we did not and do not really have school gardens at any of our schools, and as I mentioned, I'm not from Montana and I'm not native, so I'm definitely not the right person to be teaching about traditional foods. Rather than trying to recreate lessons and curriculum, we work to include or substitute traditional foods into what we were already doing in the classroom. One example of this is our fifth graders make beet ice cream for the Harvest of the Month lesson. As you can see on the slide, we include mint in the recipe. This allows us to talk about mint as a traditional food. On the recipe card, we highlight the medicinal properties as outlined by Alma Snell's book. This is also a great space to ask students where they have also used or tasted mint, and how it is used in Sun Dance ceremony. Next slide.

Oftentimes, due to cost, availability, or season, it's really difficult to purchase traditional foods for classes. Instead, our program often looks to resources from within the community to begin that conversation with students and staff around native grown foods. In this slide, you see the meat loaf meatballs, made with local beef, again for our Harvest of the Month taste test. Beef is not a traditional food, but the recipe came from Alma Snell's book "A Taste of Heritage," this recipe states that it's intended to be used with buffalo, but beef is a fine substitute. Finding recipes or food preparation techniques is another way to be conscious of traditional practices. The Lily Good Path books are also a series, created by students at MSU, we read this book during the beef Harvest of the Month lessons in kindergarten and first grade classes to remind students that bison is a traditional food that can also be eaten. Throughout the grades, kindergarten through fifth, students compare and contrast the taste, uses, and significance of beef and bison. Next slide. Each lesson, whether the classroom, cafeteria, or community, we look for new ways for students to interact and engage with food hands-on. It can mean tasting, growing, or playing, no matter the age. Our first year of lentil and legume sorting was pretty straightforward from the Harvest of the Month materials. One of the fourth grade classes finished early, and students started making lentil art totally unprompted. Students were really proud to show off their designs of teepees and the sweat lodge.

Interacting with your food never gets old, as you can see by the middle picture of Linwood Tallwood from Chief Bill 9th College, who is sharing dried foods with adults at a conference in Billings earlier this summer. Even adults find fascination in seeing and learning about foods. Mr. Tallwood's table is also a great example of incorporating traditional food practices. Drying foods, eating dried meat is a very common traditional food technique, therefore, when we have lessons that are tasting or using dehydrated foods, such as kale chips or fruit leather, we can draw parallels between these preparation techniques. Next slide. So since that time, I've always tried to leave room for students to play with their food during the lentil lessons, create art, and encourage storytelling. This can very easily tie into Indian Education for All standards, and we encourage teachers to continue the focus on storytelling, especially when we're out of time. Next slide. Lastly, one of my favorite ways of including culture and farm to school is through language. The picture on the right shows a project by the art classes and Crow language classes would show a plant and the Crow name for that food. Often in class, language builds this great opportunity for exchange, where I, as a non-native speaker, either attempt to say the word or ask students on pronunciation. This creates a great space for students to really step into the teaching role, telling me how to pronounce the word, and empower students to share their culture. On the left, you see how we've begun to include the Crow name and translation on any posters or class materials. Crow is a descriptive language and often, there's more to unpack about the history or significance of the food. My personal favorite is the Crow word for lettuce, which translates to rabbit food. Next slide please.

In my opinion, probably the most crucial aspect for a successful educational component of farm to school is finding ways of engaging the community. It is vital to build partnerships with those who hold the knowledge and are committed to the community. A lot of times it is people who have been at this a long time, or maybe approaching farm to school in a new way. Whether its language, agriculture, recipe development, it's always good to build a team. One example that always comes to mind is our work with Alma McCormick. We work together in a group called Absolute Abundance that works on food sovereignty issues throughout the county. In this picture you'll see Alma and her granddaughter leading a taste test at one of the biggest high school basketball games of the year, where we sampled lentil brownies. Often we have taste tests at basketball games, at community events, and the students will come up because they recognize me from class, however, having Alma there created a wonderful understanding of some of the barriers as to why only students who had who were used to trying new tastes were also tasting these. Having Alma there, she was able to communicate and speak Crow to elders in the community, who thought that we were selling the brownies. Because she was able to explain to them that it was just a taste test and it was a healthy recipe, more people were willing to try the lentil brownie taste test. Next slide. Probably our most successful tool in community engagement is the Rethink Your Drink tea tasting. This tea test, more than any other event or resource, has been the most beneficial in starting the larger community conversation around traditional foods. So, this is a curriculum developed by Valerie Segrest and Elise Krohn from the Muckleshoot Tribe. You can see the poster series on the wall, which is available online for purchase. But, we set the traveling tea up at parent-teacher conferences, health fairs, you name it. Next slide. How it works is you can see the different tea ingredients on the table, we list the name of the plant and how is good for you, the medicinal purposes of that plant, and then you're able to take a tea bag and fill up with whatever you think your body needs, and so it's the best way of engaging and hitting all of those points that we talk about in farm to school, anything from the parts of the plant we eat, how foods help our bodies in different ways, and it really gives the space to ask what else could be made into tea, that's native to this area, that's local to this area. So, as you'll see in this picture, we have elderberry and chamomile, and we talk about rose hips all being native to this area and expanding on that, where you can find those foods. Talking about harvesting practices as well as things that are not from here. Next slide please.

Another thing, focusing on this tea curriculum and trying to find ways of incorporating more traditional food access for students, there was a grant available through the National Farm to School Network. We took this to the school administrators and the principal at that time was not interested in having a school garden, as most schools think of a school garden with herbs, plants, instead he was much more interested in having a school orchard because mostly summer maintenance, however, it's been a wonderful experience to have a Crow School orchard, as you can see on the right, students are learning about the trees. We have, I believe, six or seven different native plant varieties planted in the back of the school. Next slide please. So, each grade is responsible for a different plant variety, and so it's something that they pass on to the next grade each year. There are a lot of challenges with this, although the orchard is planted, not everything is growing as we expected, because we had some problems with storage of the trees before planting, however, we're working to correct that, as well as continue to develop the infrastructure for the orchard and working towards creating a cookbook curriculum for students. For example, one part of this is working with the 5th grade students, who are in charge of chokecherries and they are working on their entrepreneurship skills, where they will work to harvest, learn from elders how to make chokecherry, and then label and sell that at the local farmers' market. When we first planted the orchard, we invited the community in to be able to see what their students, what their children, had planted and our plans for the orchard as well as begin to engage in that conversation about traditional foods, recipes, and knowledge, and so in doing that, we served a local salad while offering an orchard tour for parents during the field day at the end of the year. We really tried to keep in mind and create and keep a shared space and conversation in mind, so as you've seen, in most of the slides in the school setting, there are plenty of times where the community comes to us, just like at the Crow School orchard, but we also try to keep a healthy balance of farm to school in the community. One of the main ways we have found success and doing that, is with our High School Garden Club.

I believe three years ago we had a taste test and fundraiser at the local farmers' market, offering a taste test and painted pot fundraiser for individuals to take home. In the next few slides you'll see some of the things we do as a student organization. Speakers and recipe development are one of the key components of the High School Garden Club, especially during the winter months. Since we have limited access to gardens and a school garden bed, we try to make the most of partnerships within the community, so this is Cedar Bulltail describing and showing students her yarrow balm. She talked everything about the medicinal properties of the yarrow harvesting, and then students were able to help make and see her process of yarrow balm. Next slide. However, the most exciting part that most students join Garden Club for, is for the field trips! Each May, we take field trips with Garden Club students. We partner with three to four gardens and greenhouses throughout Big Horn County. Students learn about the organizations, the challenges, and successes they've found in gardening and growing in Montana, then work on a community project together. So, these are from the garden and greenhouse at Little Big Horn College. The high school students worked to plant at the end of the school year, and then in the beginning of the following school year, the kindergarten and first-grade students from Crow School come and harvest that produce and make a recipe the following year. Students learn about transplanting, harvesting. This is at the college greenhouse as well as we have a community garden bed that's right across from the school. And this student, Kiana Cuchara, she was so excited to harvest the carrots. She said she never seen carrots that grew like that before and so, we have since taken these pictures and put them up throughout our cafeteria. And so one of the things that we really focus on is educating and engaging the high school students is finding ways of showing what we're doing and engaging the community, so in partnership, the Hardin Garden Club and Art Club at the high school decorate the windows with Harvest of the Month artwork. They always include the Harvest of the Month pictures, how the plant grows, their favorite is to make sure that there are puns involved. At least one whole panel is dedicated just to Harvest of the Month puns, and as you can see on the far right, a lot of times these

drawings are in the wintertime and so that's during basketball season, and so students started always making fruits and vegetables that had a space for face in them and during the basketball games, a lot of the younger students will come up and take their picture with their face in the beet.

One of the things that we really work hard on in the education, especially from the high school level, is making sure that students feel represented and reflected in what we're doing in the community aspect, and so we created a poster series with high school athletes and honor roll students that were placed throughout the district, and so a lot of the times you'll hear the students say "oh that person's my cousin" or "oh that's my sister" and so they're just promoting access to healthy fresh foods. Next slide. And lastly, this is just some of our additional Harvest of the Month artwork that goes up at each school, and trying to keep that current. Some of it is designed by the high schoolers, often they come, the High School Garden Club will come, and help lead the taste tests and be sure to mark the results. Next slide please. And they always have fun getting to see the students and getting to see what we're doing in educational classes, from kindergarten through fifth grade. And so just some other resources that I found great for incorporating traditional foods, as I mentioned this is that "Taste of Heritage" book, that is my go-to for pretty much everything as well as the Rethink Your Drink and different tools and the Lily Good Path books. Next slide. And I am totally available, I know that we will be having a Farm to School Showcase in Hardin that you can come and learn more about our program as well, but I think that's about it, and I thank you Aubree, and I'm excited to hear what else is going on.

AUBREE ROTH: Awesome, well thank you so much, Ellie. If you have any questions for Ellie or any of our presenters, you can type them into the chat box at any time, and then we'll address those at the end. So, next up, we have Jason Mandala who's the Farm to School Director of Garden City Harvest to share his farm school experiences and tips. So it's all yours, Jason, go ahead.

JASON MANDALA: Great, thanks Aubree, thanks for having me and yeah, let's jump right in. The two programs I'm going to talk about today that Garden City Harvests runs, they are sub-programs of our farm to school program, our educational farm field trips and our in-class farmer in the classroom program. We will start with the farm field trips first. Even in Montana, where agriculture is still our number one industry, most kids don't know where their food comes from, and the goal of this program is to help them make that connection. So, our main focus on these educational goals are to introduce kids to where the food comes from, make the experience as interactive and hands-on as possible, try to make eating healthy a cool, fun thing for them to do, and then this last one I really, really want to stress and I'm gonna stress this throughout, is to have a really fun, memorable experience, and we'll talk a little bit more about why.

We start with rules to start an educational field trip, they're really simple rules. The most important rule, I think, beyond having fun is the five-chew rule, we want the kids to interact with the space, we want them to eat as much as possible, I'll talk a little bit about that in the future here, but the five-chew rule basically means I'm gonna make you eat everything and if you don't like it, since we're on a farm, you can spit it out on the ground. This has been super effective over the years, of really helping kids to change the way to think about vegetables. One area I think I would like to point out before we get into deeper, if you're gonna do this on a farm, that is your farm or another farm, a huge helpful tip is to have kids, and students, teachers, and yourself to wear name tags. This allows for just a much greater connection to occur between the students and their educators. So, goal number one: we want to introduce kids to where food come from. When we do this, we're focusing on Montana foods, now that means foods that we can grow in Montana, obviously, that's limited by our seasonality, but it's a great thing too. It's a great segue to talk about seasonality. We also focus a lot on plant life cycles. Most of our educational field trips at the farm are pre. through fifth grade students, so it's easy to fit these things in to their already existing science

curriculum, so plant life cycles is something we definitely focus on a lot, and then we're going to talk about where foods or foods that come from animals and how farmers make those things happen. I really believe the best way to do this as an educator, is try to let the farm teach itself, and what that means to me is that we are there to facilitate the experience of learning, as opposed to teaching certain things. That doesn't mean that we don't have an agenda or move as a group throughout the farm together, but my goal when we're doing these kind of things is to prompt lots of questions from the kids. We ask them many open-ended questions that are hoping to lead to more questions, we encourage them to ask any question they want, we encourage them to explore the space within the bounds of you know, staying together as a group, and make their own discoveries so that, you know, the place can teach them more than the educator, really, in my opinion. There's still a plan when we do these things, but we want to be as flexible as we can, which is why it's important for the educator to really know the space. I'm not saying you couldn't do this at any general farm, but when you have a connection to the farm you're teaching from, I really do think it makes teaching about what's there a lot easier and helps you be more adaptable. So, we want to make this experience as hands-on and interactive as possible. We want the kids to engage with the place physically. That means eating food that's there, that means allowing the kids to pick their own foods when you can, obviously, there are certain things we don't want to let the kids pick on their own, I can go more into details on that if you want afterwards, but when you see opportunities of something, you know, that the kids can pick, it really does take something from me handing you something to eat and you getting to pick it is a much more meaningful experience for them, something they're gonna remember a lot more, especially with things like carrots that come out of the ground and appear like magic.

We want the kids to definitely interact with the animals, if your farm doesn't have animals, no big deal, but they do love to interact with animals, and they're a great segue to talk about foods that come from animals, animal husbandry, ethical animal issues, stuff like that. We do focus a lot on plant parts, which you'd be surprised, even if we have college students up there, which we do quite a bit, they don't know their plant parts either. So, it's always good to talk about that kind of stuff so they know what parts we're eating. I had a picture but apparently it disappeared. Anyway, we're gonna make healthy eating cool, even without a picture. The way I can encourage you all to do this is with enthusiasm. If you are enthusiastic and match or exceed the students that are there and their enthusiasm, they're gonna have a good time and they're gonna think things are fun and interesting and cool. We talk a lot about superhero foods, foods it can give you superpowers, kale is one of those things that I like to harp on a lot, but you can do it with any of these foods. Having knowledge of what body parts individual foods help human beings with is a great way to talk about superheroes that you can get from vegetables. Use tricks, use stories, make up stories, I have lots of made-up stories that I use to help kids get excited about this kind of stuff. We want to make it kid friendly, we want to make it fun, we wanna make it cool. This goes for when you're talking about meat and eggs, too, I feel like it's a little bit easier to do with vegetables, you know, when you take something like sweet corn or beets and turn them into, you know, what we like to call farm candy, that makes things a lot more desirable. It's amazing how willing children are to eat things that you call candy, even if they're not.

And the whole meat and eggs thing, you know, we want when I say healthy eating, that is not limited to just the health effects on the individual, we want to look at this from a community standpoint, too, I know this can be a contentious issue, especially in Montana, but I do think it's important for us, as educators, to talk about it, with that, we don't need to have an agenda on it, it can just be, you know, an introductory level and lift up that veil a little bit about what it takes for these products to get from the farm to our plate. But, I do recommend keeping it age-appropriate and situation appropriate. We don't talk about meat, necessarily, with kids under the age of six, but I'm fully comfortable doing that with kids

seven and older. You just do need to use appropriate language level. Educational rule number four for us is have fun and really should be number one, number two, number three, and number four. If kids come up to the farm and don't have fun, they're gonna walk away with, you know, not to use a pun, but a bad taste in their mouth, and we don't want that. We want them to walk away excited and happy and, you know, have a new food that they never tried before and go home and tell mom and dad, or grandma and grandpa, or whoever about it and hopefully take that experience home and that that experience will lead to different eating habits at home. We know we only have them for about an hour to an hour and a half for field trips, well that's a very limited amount of time to make a huge impact, but we know if they have a good time, the opportunity for that is a lot bigger. I do want to comment on weather quickly. It's super important to do this on nice days. I know we don't have that many in Montana, but we do have sound children that are good at dealing with weather, but if it's rainy and miserable out, I would recommend canceling field trips. You don't want kids crying because they're cold and they're stuck outside, not to say that you can't adapt to the ever-changing weather in fall or spring here, but do be weather aware, because really, the main thing here is we want kids to walk away with a fun, memorable experience so that, you know, they want to eat more vegetables.

Farmer in the Classroom is something that we also do, it's in our sub-program of our farm to school program here at Garden City Harvest. It's similar to the Harvest of the Month program, but it's something we offer with our educators here in Missoula for public schools. Currently, we're only doing that for the Azul County School District One, but we hope to expand someday in the near future. It's a year-long program, it starts with a field trip in the fall to one of our farms and then each month, November through April, one of our farm educators will visit the classroom for forty-five minute lessons, and then in May or early June, the students will come back to the farm. It's a little bit backwards as far as the growing season goes, but that's the reality of the school year so that's how we do it. This is something we've been doing for about nine years now, it's gone through many iterations so I'm gonna talk about the most current one right now, but we do have a pretty big log of lessons of things we've tried to do. I've found it to be challenging as an outdoor educator to bring this kind of stuff into the classroom and make it still so fun and engaging, but we're getting better at every year, and I think we have some pretty good stuff going on right now. So, here's our lesson topics, again, we've changed these over the years, we start with apples, we move on to storage vegetables, wheat, bees, honey, cows, and then we do a year-end review and kind of wrap it all up in April before they come back to visit. So, this program came out of teacher demand, they wanted more education, obviously we only have a limited amount of time when we can do stuff outside during the school year, so how do we fill that gap? We go into the classroom. We wanted to bring that farm education into the classroom within the most engaging way possible, I do think it's quite challenging, especially with the limited amount of time you may have to do this as an outside educator, not as an individual teacher, if you are an individual teacher and you want to do this kind of stuff, I think it's a lot easier for you to do it with your class than it is for us to come in as an outsider with a limited amount of time, but we want to build on what those kids learned at the farm during their field trip.

We focus on Montana foods, again, but we put that in the global context and again, we want it to be fun, we want it to be enjoyable, we want them to go home and have memories from this, which is why we use journals and why we always eat when we go into the classroom. Since this came out of kids coming to the farm for field trips, we wanted to do our best to build on that and deepen our relationship that the kids, and teachers, and schools, all three of those, have with the farm in our organization, and the food that they eat, so we try to do that by bringing Montana foods in each month, continually putting into that context of Montana but with, you know, it moving out in concentric circles, which I'll talk about a little bit in the next slide that you can go to now. So, each lesson builds on the last lesson, we integrate all

these things, as I'm sure all of us do, into the second grade curriculum standards, which is partially where we've refocused with the Next Gen. Science standards. They are focused mainly on science, but they're certainly not limited to that. Most people associate this kind of work with science standards, it doesn't need to be, but that's where we kind of flutter ourselves in as an outside organization. We really hope that the year-long nature of the program fills a gap that exists in public schools with the lack of nutrition education without putting extra burden on teachers. We offer all these services for free right now, I do say right now because it might not always be that way. We would love it if it could be, but we want to fill that gap, we know that these things unfortunately are not as high a priority as we think they should be, so this is one way we try to do that.

So, our third educational goal is really focusing on Montana foods, but again, we want to put that in the global context. I'm a big proponent of place-based education and learning and concentric circles. I really, really think that's the most effective way to teach kids about this kind of stuff and really, most things in general. Give them a base to learn from, something they can understand, something that they can wrap their heads around, something that has context, and build out from there as they get older. We hope that this curriculum achieves that by really focusing on Montana and their experience at our farm, and if they have a school garden at the school, that experience as well, and then build out from there, not in a huge way, we're not talking about, you know, things that are happening in places thousands of miles away often, but we are joining them in there to give the kids you know some level of context. And again, I'm gonna go back to it one more time: fun, fun, fun, fun! Today I was just giving an example, today I taught a lesson on cows and grass for secondary classes, and we made butter and it was the most fun I've had in a long time, and the kids have a heck of a good time, too. They're gonna remember that, they're gonna remember all the stuff we talked about so much better because they had a great time doing it, and it was engaging, and the smiles, you know, are gonna lead to things going home and hopefully, to new potential habits.

I do encourage, if you're going to do this kind of stuff, having a journal that's going to last throughout the school year to document what they've learned and they can take home, and show mom and dad at home. I think that's an important thing, as well, and you gotta eat, because eating is fun. I had like five kids today come up to me and ask what we're eating and tell me that's their favorite part of when I come in, which doesn't surprise me but, you know, it's obviously very important to them. So, that's a brief overview of those things. I would happily talk to any of you more in depth about any of them or any of our programs at Garden City Harvest. All of our curriculum we have is free and is available, a lot of it's not currently on our website, the stuff on our website right now is old, but if you're interested in any of it, I'll gladly send it to you via email. Any schools that are in the Missoula area, meaning like if you're willing to make the drive, you're more than welcome. We've had schools from Polson, and Superior, and I think even Phillips here at one time came for field trips, so you're more than welcome to come, it's a free service, and we'd love to have you and again, we also offer our school garden consultations and just farm to school in general consultations, so if you ever need tips, ideas, or help with anything, I've been doing this like over 13 years now and I gladly talk to anyone about it. I still love doing it, and I'd love to help out. So, thanks so much!

AUBREE ROTH: Wonderful, thank you so much, Jason, for sharing all those great tips and resources. So, for all of you, if you have any questions for Jason, or Ellie, or myself, you can enter them into the chat box and we will address them here in a couple minutes. I'm just gonna do a quick wrap-up of a few things. 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 kids with agriculture and nutrition through education, support farmers and food producers, foster economic vitality, and strengthen communities. Our six working groups are now open to the public, so if you're interested in engaging in this work at the

statewide level, then please contact me. Just as a kind of PSA, FoodCorps service member applications are now open and closing soon, so if you know someone who's interested in serving as a FoodCorps service member, or as I like to call them, farm to school rock stars, please let them know. They can find the information on the FoodCorps website.

For those of you who are looking for extra help for your farm to school initiatives to get started or expand on what you're doing, we do have two farm to school coaches - Ginger and Faith. They're currently covering northeast and southeast Montana, and so if you're interested in their help, please contact them directly or let me know and I can connect you. We have our last Montana Farm to School Successes Webinar as part of the OPI Webinar Wednesday series coming up on April 8th as I said before and the topic is school gardens. The webinars are recorded and they are on MAPS, and our Montana Farm to School website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel. We're partnering with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services to offer a food safety and farm to school webinar on March 18th, and that will provide best practices and tips for navigating food safety considerations related to farm to school, including school gardens. And then we're also hosting two Montana Farm to School Regional Showcases this spring, as Ellie mentioned the Hardin one. These will be one-day events and they'll feature tours, training, and networking. The first will be in March 18th in Fairview and the second is May 6th in Hardin. Registration is open and the space is limited for each of these, so please register soon. We will have limited travel scholarships available and you apply for those in the registration form.

I also hope that you join us for our next Montana Farm to School Summit on September 23rd and 24th in Helena. This conference is held every other year and it moves locations, so don't miss out on this offering. Registration will open soon, and scholarships will be available. It's never too early to start planning your Montana Crunch Time Event, which is a fun way of celebrating National Farm to School Month. There are two important changes for Montana Crunch Time, since the usual date of October 24th is on a weekend this year. We are changing the date to October 22nd for 2020 and then in addition, rather than setting time of 2 p.m. as we've done in the past, we're changing it to encourage folks to crunch anytime on October 22nd, so you can still crunch at 2 p.m. if you'd like, or you can crunch any time during that day! I encourage you to share your farm to school stories. You can share them on the Montana Farm to School and Montana Harvest the Month websites and/or any of our social media pages. I also encourage you to use our hashtags, #MTharvestofthemonth or #MTfarmtoschool on your posts, so that we can find them and then share them with others. With that, we'll now answer your questions for any of the presenters. I'll give you a minute to type those into the chat box. I'll see if there's any in there currently, ok so our first question is for Ellie. Do you have some suggestions for native food recipes that school nutrition programs could consider making as taste tests or for incorporating into school lunches or breakfasts?

ELLIE ROSS: Hi, um yes, great question. I would definitely encourage some of the ones that I listed on the resources. The Alma Snell is my go-to because it has recipes, it has the scientific plant name, English name, and Crow name for the recipe and ingredients. I would also just encourage you to check out a lot of the tribal college libraries. A great resource here is Little Big Horn College library, as well as a lot of extension programs. I know that MSU Extension is working on native food recipes, I don't have too many of those, but I can see if I can get you some contact information. I also know that Washington State University Extension has a nutrition and food sovereignty calendar, so a lot of ones like that are great resources to look into.

AUBREE ROTH: Awesome, thank you. Looking for some other questions here. What are your favorite curriculum resources? We'll start with Jason and then go to Ellie.

JASON MANDALA: I think Ellie mentioned earlier, Edible Schoolyard is a great resource. We use a lot of stuff from Shelborn Farms still, it's a little bit more apt for our climate. Those are the two main ones that I

have referenced for a long time and then anything out of Montana Farm to School has been wonderful as well.

AUBREE ROTH: Awesome cool, and then Ellie.

ELLIE ROSS: Yeah, I love the Growing Classroom that's, I think, that top resource on the website that Aubree mentioned for farm to school education lessons in curriculum, I usually use that as kind of a starting point, and that's what we also used our first year of really building the Hardin School curriculum, was between that and the Harvest of the Month. And then each lesson going from one to the other, and then slowly incorporating more things that made more sense for this area and for not having school gardens, having what we could do in the classroom.

AUBREE ROTH: Awesome, great, so I'm not seeing any other questions, so I hope all of you got a lot out of this webinar, I sure did, I love hearing from these two individuals, they are always doing amazing things and give me lots of ideas, so I want to thank Ellie and Jason for sharing their experiences today, and if you're looking for more farm to school stories and resources, I recommend you follow Montana Farm to School on Facebook and Instagram, as we share those kinds of things out as much as possible and just as a reminder, these slides and the recorded webinar will be available on the Montana Farm to School website if you want to share it with others. So, if you have any questions following the webinar, please don't hesitate to contact me. I always look forward to hearing from you, your ideas, as well as your questions. So, I hope you all have a great day and thank you so much for joining!



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: www.montana.edu/mtharvestofthemonth.

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