



## **VIRGINIA FARM TO SCHOOL Communication Toolkit**

Share your story and let the community know the good work you are doing nourishing students and incorporating Farm to School programs in your school.

Virginia was one of the first states to establish a Farm to School week in 2009. This prompted the 2010 Virginia General Assembly to officially designate the first week of November as Farm to School week. U.S. Congress followed in November 2010 by approving a resolution designating October as National Farm to School month!

Below are media pitches and a sample press release that you can send to your community media outlets to publish and encourage television, radio or local cable channels to feature a story.

### **MEDIA PITCHES**

Media professionals receive dozens of press releases every week so make yours stand out. Having a pitch or a unique story will capture attention and entice them to follow up. Take photos so you can submit your own story after your program. And don't forget to share using your organization's social media outlets and the hashtags #F2SMonth and #VirginiaGrown.

#### *Suggested story lines for Farm to School week:*

Farm/Chef visits

Volunteers to prepare fresh product for the lunch menu or sample table

Follow the trail ~ literally ~ from Farm to School

Interview students about where their food comes from

Feature a dress like a farmer day; decorate the cafeteria in a barn theme

School garden harvest party

Art students can focus on farm related drawings to decorate the school

***SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE***

{ LETTERHEAD }

{DATE}

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: {CONTACT NAME AND PHONE NUMBER}

HEADLINE SUGGETIONS:

**{YOUR SCHOOL} Celebrates Farm to School Week**

**\* Can You Dig It {YOUR SCHOOL} Celebrates Farm to School Week**

**\* Cultivating Success, {YOUR SCHOOL} Celebrates Virginia Farm to School Week**

**\* A Fresh Approach to School Lunch**

Students throughout Virginia will get a taste of life on the farm as schools celebrate the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Virginia Farm to School Week, November 10 – 14, 2014. {YOUR SCHOOL} plans to celebrate by featuring a {VIRGINIA GROWN MENU ITEM, FARMER VISIT, APPLE TASTING, ACTIVITY, VOLUNTEERS} throughout the week.

Schools have been working with local farmers to incorporate more Virginia Grown products on school menus to improve the health of our children and support local farms. Building connections between schools, students and agricultural producers throughout Virginia provides economic opportunity for Virginians and healthier options for our children. Virginia's Farm to School program not only promotes local foods, but encourages activities and conversations within schools about nutrition and agriculture.

{YOUR SCHOOL} not only celebrates Farm to School week, but expands Virginia Grown offerings throughout the year as much as possible. {ADD DETAILS...SALAD GREENS FROM FARMER(?) STRAWBERRIES IN SPRING FROM (?), SCHOOL GARDENS}. {ADD QUOTE FROM FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR, PRINCIPAL, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, FARMER}

The Virginia Farm to School program highlights the diverse products produced in Virginia and emphasizes seasonality, farm family heritage and land stewardship, which provides students with a greater appreciation and knowledge of agriculture in Virginia.

For more information on Virginia's Farm to School program, visit <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/marketing/farm.shtml>. Consumers may search for local farms, products, markets and more at [www.VirginiaGrown.com](http://www.VirginiaGrown.com).