

National Farm to School Network

Southeast

Update from the Atlanta Listening Session: Child Nutrition & WIC Reauthorization Act

In 2009, Congress will review the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (CNR Act). This legislation includes all the Federal child nutrition programs, including the School Breakfast and the National School Lunch Programs, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). These policies affect the lives of millions of people as they impact their access to healthy food.

In preparation for the 2009 Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs, the USDA has been holding listening sessions through out the country where citizens can give input on what sorts of policies they would like to see enacted. In August, representatives from state agencies, advocacy groups, and concerned parents attended the listening session in Atlanta. Georgia Organics testified and commended the USDA for including "access to local foods, "farm to cafeteria, " and "school gardens " in the 2004 CNR Act. They recommended mandatory funding for 2009, as well as increased reimbursement rates for meals and the inclusion of "local food " language in additional sections for training, management, and infrastructure.

The meeting gave parents a chance to advocate on behalf of their children for healthy food in schools. The United Fresh Produce Association highlighted the story of one parent, Charles Wingard, on their website.

"Inspired by his 6 year old daughter, Mary Grace, who loves the salad bar in her elementary school and who passionately believes that every boy and girl should have a salad bar in their cafeteria, Charles traveled eight hours to Atlanta last week to testify at the Child Nutrition Listening Session. Charles told the USDA officials, 'Today is a big day for me because my daughter is starting first grade and I wanted to walk her to school. But when I asked her what I should do, she told me to go to the meeting in Atlanta to help other boys and girls get salad bars in their schools.' "

So that is just what Charles did. On a mission for both his daughter and the produce industry, Charles urged USDA officials to establish a national policy that encourages salad bars in all schools and to make funding available so schools can buy needed refrigeration and salad bar equipment so they

In This Issue

Atlanta Listening Session for the Child Nutrition & WIC Reauthorization Act

School Foodservice: Get Smart

National Farm to Cafeteria Conference

Calendar

November 14
Eatonton, GA

Outdoor Classroom Council Symposium. Farm to School workshops offered. Click [here](#) for more info.

December 3
Asheville, NC

Laurie's Catering will be hosting a chef demo for youth from *Caring for Children*

Upcoming Conferences

January 13-15
Mt. Pleasant, GA
SC School Nutrition Association Industry Conference

February 28
Swannanoa, NC
[Marketing Opportunities for Farmers Conference](#)

March 19-21
Portland, OR
[National Farm to Cafeteria Conference](#)

[National Farm to School Events Calendar](#)

*** Please send your upcoming events to [Molly Nicholie](#) ***

National Farm to School Network Southeast Regional Steering Committee

Vanessa Mercer

can serve students more fresh fruits and vegetables. Charles, whose family farm grows collard greens, reinforced that school meals fall far short of the fruits and vegetables recommended in the Dietary Guidelines and urged everyone to work together to improve this situation in the 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. When he was done testifying, more than 150 advocates and concerned parents in the audience burst out into applause. " Click [here](#) to read the rest of the article.

People who wanted to express their opinion of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act but could not attend a listening session, were able to submit a letter. Bailey Damiani, a student at Morningside Elementary in Atlanta, GA did. She used to go to a school in Portland that had a school garden, but there is no garden in her school in Atlanta and she really misses it. The letter demonstrates how influential school gardens can be in connecting children with their food and promoting healthy eating habits. To read the letter, click [here](#).

School Foodservice: Get Smart

With budgets as tight as regulations are abundant, school foodservice directors start the year with energy, enthusiasm, good intentions, and a desk full of innovative ideas.

By Cheryl Sternman Rule, Special to R & I -- Restaurants and Institutions, 9/1/2008

As another academic year unfolds, school foodservice directors are bracing for what's in store: calls for more-healthy fare, climbing food costs, and requests for more excitement and variety in the cafeteria. None of the challenges are new, but each is more acute this fall. Fortunately, many K-12 operators are now a step ahead of the game, having crafted strategies to both meet their young customers' evolving needs and cut costs without sacrificing nutrition or quality.

In rural Gainesboro, Tenn., Jackson County Schools' Brenda Hawkins treads carefully as she chooses new menu items, especially those that slant fully to the healthful side. "I'm seeing more interest in fresh salads," she says, "but the bean-sprout culture hasn't gotten here yet." As the school nutrition program supervisor, Hawkins has overseen the relatively easy transition to using whole-wheat bread and whole-grain rolls and pizza crusts. She has employed a gradual bait-and-switch with french fries, mixing in baked with regular fries over the course of three years and slowly increasing the proportion to favor the baked fries. She also developed the KISS Off Fat healthy-living program, one highlight of which has been the addition outside of schools' main cafeterias of a cold bar offering cereal and milk, premade salads, sandwich trimmings, fruit, yogurt, and cottage cheese. Students can bypass the main line and opt instead for this lighter, grab-and-go fare.

Forsyth County Schools students in Cumming, Ga., see a

Crabtree Farms of Chattanooga, TN

Erin Croom
Georgia Organics
Atlanta, GA

Wendy Carlin
Coalition for a Fit Kentucky
Frankfort, KY

Matt Vargas
Florida Organic Growers
Gainesville, FL

Mark Swanson
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY

Susan Frost
DHEC Bureau of Community Health
and Chronic Disease Prevention
Columbia, SC

Lynn Hoggard
NC Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, NC

Allison Schaum
Palmetto Agricultural Consultants
Woodruff, SC

Steve Hodges
Jubilee Project
Sneedville, TN

Michelle Futrell
Division of Public Health, NC Fruits
and Veggies Nutrition Coalition
Raleigh, NC

Diane Beth
Division of Public Health, NC Fruits
and Veggies Nutrition Coalition
Raleigh, NC

Todd Bedenbaugh
SC Department of Education
Charleston, SC

REGIONAL LEAD AGENCIES
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture
Project

Emily Jackson and Molly Nicholie

Community Farm Alliance
Nathan Brown

special symbol at the point of service next to a weekly "star " fruit or vegetable. Framed displays on the serving line offer nutrition information and trivia for the item to highlight it further. Susan Woods, director of food and nutrition services, says this extra effort-also expressed via newsletters and an "Eat Healthy " logo on staff aprons and uniforms-has helped emphasize a commitment to student nutrition. The work hasn't gone unnoticed: Forsyth County Schools received a USDA Best Practices Award in 2007. For the 2008-2009 school year, the district is adding more whole-grain and low-sugar cereals at breakfast and expanding vegetarian entrée selections at lunch.

Armed with grant money and a partnership with the local health department, the Pinellas County School District in Largo, Fla., has implemented a unique program to get teens interested in the connections between health, cooking, and school food. School nutrition educator Catherine Gerard and colleagues combined forces with two local chef organizations to produce a teen-focused cooking show that was shown on the school district's local cable channel. Gerard and a colleague provided nutrition analysis for the items that students and chefs prepared on the show and crafted the Health Tip of the Month, which is displayed in schools' cafeterias, around the featured foods.

Going the Distance and Shortening It, from Farm to Cafeteria

The 4th National Farm to Cafeteria Conference

March 19-21st
Portland, OR

If you want to learn what exciting things are going on in the farm to school arena across the country, and share what you're doing in your hometown, then join us at the National Farm to School Conference in Portland, OR.

http://www.farmtoschool.org/event-detail.php?event_id=227

More details to come!

Please share your stories and upcoming events with us. Thanks for all your work!

Sincerely,

Brook Thompson
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's Growing Minds Program