

## USDA Farm to School Team Monthly Report September 2010

### Site Visits:

In September of 2010, the USDA Farm to School Team visited the remaining three (of nine) areas selected by the Team. These three areas represented six of the fifteen school districts selected for a farm to school site visit. The six school districts the Team visited in the month of September include:

- Riverside Unified School District, Riverside, CA
- Ventura Unified School District, Ventura, CA
- Morrison Public Schools, Morrison, OK
- Union Public Schools, Tulsa, OK
- Chilton Public Schools, Chilton, WI
- Hilbert School District, Hilbert, WI

As of September 2010, the USDA Farm to School Team completed the farm to school site visits to fifteen selected school districts. These school districts represented nine areas across the country and were selected based on a variety of variables to include, but not limited to: regional representation; rural, urban, suburban and tribal schools; school district size; school food service operations; distribution; stages of farm to school implementation; and schools practicing new or novel ideas to implementing farm to school that would be transferable to another school with similar characteristics. The school districts the Team visited throughout the 2010 fiscal year include:

- Independence Community School District in Independence, IA (May 2010);
- Burlington Public Schools in Burlington, VT (May 2010);
- Eugene School District in Eugene, OR (May 2010);
- Bethel School District in Eugene, OR (May 2010);
- Jefferson County Public School District in Louisville, KY (May 2010);
- Montgomery County Public School District in Mount Sterling, KY (May 2010);
- Harrisonburg City Public Schools in Harrisonburg, VA (June 2010);
- Boston Public Schools in Boston, MA (June 2010); and
- Jamestown Public Schools in Jamestown, RI (June 2010).
- Riverside Unified School District, Riverside, CA (September 2010)
- Ventura Unified School District, Ventura, CA (September 2010)
- Morrison Public Schools, Morrison, OK (September 2010)
- Union Public Schools, Tulsa, OK (September 2010)
- Chilton Public Schools, Chilton, WI (September 2010)
- Hilbert School District, Hilbert, WI (September 2010)

The Team met with school district administrators, local farmers, distributors, local and state authorities, students, teachers, parents, and community partners to analyze and assess variables that support or deter farm to school activities, both from the school and farmer perspective.

With the site visits complete, the USDA Farm to School Team is currently consolidating the observations, challenges, possible solutions, and best practices learned during the visits. The Team will offer recommendations to the Department based on the site visits, as well as develop and/or reissue appropriate resource materials, guidance, and technical assistance for both schools and farmers. The full summary of observations, challenges, possible solutions, and best practices will be shared on the USDA Farm to School Website.

#### Policy Development/Technical Assistance:

- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency is developing the final rule on *Geographic Preference Option for Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs*, which is scheduled to be issued later this year.
- Team members are editing additional farm to school webpages that will focus on the operation and support of farm to school activities. The webpages will include information on working with farmers and schools, distribution models, impacts of farm to school, food safety, lessons learned and best practices, grants that support farm to school activities, school and community resources, and supporting activities (e.g., school gardens).

#### Meetings/Conferences/Presentations:

- On September 2, 2010, the lead for the Farm to School Team met with representatives of the National Farm to School Network to discuss co-hosting a future webinar geared at accessing farm to school resources.
- On September 8, 2010, members of the Farm to School Team met with the National Farm to School Network to continue dialog regarding related farm to school research needs.
- On September 13, 2010, a member of the Farm to School Team presented an update on the Team's progress at the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Advisory Committee which was hosted by AMS in Washington, D.C.
- The Team is working together with the National Farm to School Network to provide a webinar for state agencies, school food service personnel, farmers, and non-profit organizations on available farm to school resources. The webinar will be held on October 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm ET. More information on the webinar (including registration) may be obtained from the USDA Farm to School website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/sightsoundsstories.htm>.
- Members of the Farm to School Team continue to meet regularly with the National Farm to School Network and other Farm to School stakeholders to discuss future collaborations on Farm to School activities.
- Regular meetings/conference calls are scheduled with core and resource team members.

#### **Upcoming Events (First Quarter FY2011):**

1. Digging Through the Farm to School Resources Webinar with the National Farm to School Network (October 7, 2010)
2. Presentation on Farm to School at FNS's Conference with Regional Program Directors, Boston, MA (November 2010)