



## 5 A Day and School-Age Children

# Farm to School Program

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The **Farm to School Program** works to incorporate healthy, nutritious, local produce into school lunches, snacks and salad bars. Anyone who has picked a tomato right off the vine knows that a great tasting tomato is synonymous with freshness. We want kids to know that fresh produce tastes great! When combined with nutrition education, farm visits, school gardens and education in the classroom, children can develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime.

In North Carolina, the Farm to School program was formed through a partnership with the **Markets and Food Distribution Divisions of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Department of Defense**. The Food Distribution Division automatically sends a survey to each Child Nutrition Manager to determine the quantity of fruits and vegetables the school can use. They then turn the total quantities over to the Department of Defense who works with the Markets Division to locate the **local farmers** to procure the product. Food Distribution picks the product up from the farmers and delivers it to the schools. The Department of Defense then bills the school for payment.

This program has been well received. The schools like buying directly from the farmers because they are getting **locally grown produce**. The farmers like this because it has opened up another market for them and increased their income. The **children** enjoy tasty fruits and vegetables, while connecting with farms - the source of their food.

Any fruit or vegetable grown in NC is available through the program. The most popular foods in the program are **salad greens, sweet potatoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberries, apples and collards**.

If your school is not already participating in the program, encourage your school's **Child Nutrition Manager** to participate. They may want to start by ordering local fruits and vegetables that they already order from another source. Consider working with the district's Child Nutrition Director to implement a policy requiring participation in this program. For more information, visit [www.ncagr.com/fooddist](http://www.ncagr.com/fooddist).

For more **information**, contact Tommy Fleetwood with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 252/331-4772 or [tommy.fleetwood@ncmail.net](mailto:tommy.fleetwood@ncmail.net)

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