

HB 2038 Vote 'Yes' for Farm to School and School Gardens!



Rather than cutting farm to school and school garden funding, as proposed in the Governor's 2017 draft budget, **every effort should be made to increase support** for this important work.

Oregon is a leader.

Oregon's nationally-recognized Farm to School and School Garden program provides funding for school districts to buy and serve local foods, and for districts and partner organizations to educate children about food, gardens, and agriculture. These programs have many benefits, including:

- Create market opportunities for Oregon's farmers, fishers, ranchers and food processors
- Increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables and shape life-long healthy eating habits
- Bridge urban-rural divides, and bring Oregon's coastline inland

53% of Oregon kids rely on schools for healthy meals.

For many of Oregon's most vulnerable children, school meals are the healthiest and most consistent meals in their day and week. Even when they do have money for food, low-income families often cannot afford vegetables, so introducing kids to new healthy vegetables through garden and cafeteria programs has a profound impact on their diets.

For every \$1 schools spend on local food, nearly \$2 are returned to the economy.

Schools that buy local have generated millions for Oregon's communities. With support from Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden grant program, schools can continue building relationships with producers all over the state, and bringing nutritious, local food to students.

Bend-La Pine Schools Go Whole Hog

Wellness Specialist Katrina Wiest sees program's positive effects on farmers, students

Bend-La Pine Schools serve 17,000 meals a day in 30 different schools, and we're growing fast and furious.

In Bend, we did a project called Pork to Fork with Mountainview High School Future Farmers of America students, during which they farrowed 32 hogs over the span of the two years. It was a full-circle agriculture education experience.

Raising the pigs was a bonding experience for the Mountainview High FFA chapter. The kids got really excited about the brand new learning opportunity. There were girls who walked in saying, "I'm not touching that thing, you're not going to make me do it," and by the end they were saying, "Let's get in there!"

Everyone really worked hard and was committed to the program. During their summer vacation, when the first sow started to farrow, 13 students came to the FFA teacher's house to watch and help out. A student even stepped in when some piglets got stuck and physically pulled them out.

When the pigs were at weight, we would take them to a USDA facility over in Prineville. We brought in Camas Davis from the Portland Meat



Collective as part of the grant, and she taught our students how to butcher. We got a smoker, and we smoked all the meat and put it back out into the program for the kids. Every day, these kids were getting pork carnitas in their meals using the smoked pork we were making.

Beyond all the benefits for the students, the district was forming relationships with farmers in the community. Thirty percent of the budget went to buying local products for school meals. We were putting Oregon dollars back into Oregon agriculture. We were saving farms. That's what it came down to.

It makes so much sense to start in the schools. Those kids are our future farmers. Two of the individuals who have graduated from this program are now working at local butcheries.

It's a great program, but we need the funding to keep it going. If the state's farm to school funding is gone, the program is gone.

In the 2016-17 school year, more than 140 school districts serving 90% of Oregon school meals are including healthy, local food with help from Oregon's Farm to School and School Garden grant program.

We could be doing so much more.

Imagine the benefits to our economy if more than a few cents per kid, per day was spent on local ingredients. Imagine if every school had a garden where kids could have a hands-on approach to STEM classes. Imagine if all kids grew up knowing where food comes from, and how to grow their own.

Every dime we spend on Farm to School and School Gardens makes a difference to Oregon kids who deserve a diet of healthy, local food, and to Oregon's farmers, ranchers, fishers, and food processors who depend on stable customers.

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