

FARMS for School Meals Social Media Toolkit

Background

Funds to Advance Rural Markets (FARMS) for School Meals invests in North Carolina farms, rural economies across the state, and North Carolina school children. Today, we are sure that only about 2% of funds spent on produce in North Carolina's public schools is for produce grown in North Carolina. North Carolina's agricultural sector is the state's largest economic driver and largest employer, and yet many schools are not able to put local products on their menus because their budgets are very tight; they spend just over \$1/meal. FARMS for School Meals will give schools what they need to buy more North Carolina grown food for our kids and give schools flexibility to provide meals to students who are unable to pay. In receiving funds, schools will purchase North Carolina grown products where they are currently using products from out of state. That keeps money in North Carolina, feeds our kids local food, and supports North Carolina farmers.

Sample Facebook Posts

- More than 400,000 children in North Carolina go hungry sometimes. School is a key place for them to get nutritious food. Shouldn't we make sure all students get a school meal no matter their ability to pay? Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Kids who eat healthy meals do better in school. Healthy, local, and adequately funded school meals are an important part of improving student performance. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- North Carolina has the 7th largest school meal program in the country, and agriculture is our largest industry. By providing state funding for more North Carolina grown foods in schools, we could make a big difference for our farmers. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Buying food from local farmers keeps money in our communities. Let's help make it easy for schools to buy local. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Almost 60% of our kids rely on school meals to meet their needs. Shouldn't we be doing more to invest in them? Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- More than 850,000 children participate in school meal programs in NC every day. Shouldn't they have the opportunity to eat fresh, local food? Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Nearly 60% of children participating in NC's school meal programs qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches. Shouldn't all NC students get a nutritious meal, regardless of their ability to pay? Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Given current federal reimbursement rates, school food authorities only have about \$1 to spend on ingredients per day per lunch for students. Can you make a delicious, nutritious meal for yourself for \$1?! Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.

- School lunch debt happens when either reduced-price or full-priced families are not able to pay for the school meal. There are many reasons why working families may struggle to make these payments. Regardless, the outcomes for the student and the district are challenging:
 - Some districts opt to refuse a child a meal if they owe money on their account. In this case, the district does not accrue much lunch debt, but the child receives no meals until the debt is paid.
 - Some districts opt to give an alternative meal after a child's account reaches a certain level of debt. This identifies the child as owing money on their account, stigmatizing the child and their family. We know that some children refuse to accept the alternative meal to avoid being identified by peers as a student with lunch debt, meaning they go hungry.
 - Some districts opt to provide a standard school lunch to the children who cannot pay, which builds up a substantial amount of debt in the child nutrition program. If the nutrition programs are in the red at the end of any school year, the school board is on the hook for those debts. Debt in the school nutrition program means there is less money available for teachers, teacher assistants, STEM programs, school improvements, and more.

Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.

- Increasing money available from the state for school nutrition programs to purchase local products results in many wins:
 - Increased funds available for child nutrition programs to spend on quality food and programs that in turn attract greater participation.
 - Greater participation in school meals resulting in more revenue for child nutrition programs.
 - More flexibility in school nutrition budgets to ensure that each student receives a nutritious meal, regardless of their ability to pay.
 - Stronger financial position for school nutrition programs, reducing the need for programs to make a choice between fiscal responsibility and providing students with nutritious meals regardless of students' ability to pay.
 - Smaller number of school nutrition programs in need of funds from their local boards of education to address deficit spending, so school boards are less often called upon to move funds designated for salaries, technology, books or other important items to the school nutrition program.
 - Increased revenue for local farmers and producers.
 - Supporting family farms by providing consistent, large institutional purchases.
 - Increased money circulating in rural economies.

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Sample Twitter Posts

- More than 400,000 children in North Carolina go hungry sometimes. School is a key place for them to get nutritious food. FARMSforSchoolMeals.org
- Kids who eat healthy meals do better in school. Healthy, local, and adequately funded school meals are an important part of improving student performance. FARMSforSchoolMeals.org

- NC has the 7th largest school meal program in the country & ag. is our largest industry. Let's keep more school meal funding in NC. FARMSforSchoolMeals.org
- Buying food from local farmers keeps money in our communities. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org
- Almost 60% of our kids rely on school meals to meet their needs. Shouldn't we be doing more to invest in them? FARMSforSchoolMeals.org
- More than 850,000 children participate in school meal programs in NC every day. Shouldn't they get eat fresh, local food? FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Shouldn't all NC students get a nutritious meal, regardless of their ability to pay? Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Schools only have about \$1 to spend on ingredients per day per lunch. Can you make a nutritious meal for \$1?! Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school nutrition programs to purchase local products means more money available to spend on quality food. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school nutrition programs to purchase local products means greater participation and more revenue for schools. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school nutrition programs to purchase local products means every student can eat regardless of their ability to pay. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school meals means schools don't have to choose between fiscal responsibility and feeding every child. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school nutrition programs to purchase local products means increased revenue for local farmers and producers. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school nutrition programs to purchase local products means supporting family farms. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.
- Increased funding for school nutrition programs to purchase local products means increased money circulating in rural economies. Learn more at FARMSforSchoolMeals.org.



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