May 2019

Farm Fresh Spotlight Story

Prepare School Garden for Summer Success!
It's hard to believe that the school year will be winding down in just a few weeks. If your school campus is lucky enough to have a garden, the summer months can be a great time to think creatively about how to care for it during the hot, but potentially productive, season.

Set up a Volunteer Calendar
Parents and students most likely love the garden as much as you do, so get them involved in caring for it during the summer months. TDA's Let's Get Growing: Connect provides resources for a school garden coordinator to easily recruit and schedule volunteers.

Coordinate with Summer Camps or Summer Meal Programs
When school is out for summer, TDA's Summer Meal Program partners at schools and nonprofits provide meals and snacks at no cost to children 18 years old and younger. Invite these partners to make working in your garden an enrichment activity for the participating children.

Visit SummerFood.org to find a meal site and partner near you!

Farm to School Spotlight

Sweeney ISD Takes the Farm Fresh Challenge to Encourage Students to Make Healthy Choices
Sweeney ISD first participated in the Farm Fresh Challenge in 2017 and found many reasons to pledge participation again in 2018.

Contact TDA
Emilee Case
Coordinator for Farm Fresh Projects
Email us or call (877) TEX-MEAL

Connect with Others
Texas Statewide Network
This LinkedIn Group is an online network connecting schools, child and adult care centers, producers, support organizations and community members with important information about expanding local food efforts in Texas.
Join Today!

Texas Farm Fresh Network
Use this tool to connect with Texas food companies that currently sell or are interested in selling to schools, child care centers and summer meal programs. Company listings include contact information, product availability and distribution radius.

Funding Opportunities
Financial support from
Before taking the challenge, a menu audit revealed that they were already serving multiple items grown and made in Texas! They also found the district's co-op offered Texas-sourced items such as milk, bread items, tortilla chips, pizza, sausage and a few fruits and vegetables.

During the challenge, they used the USDA DoD Fresh program to identify even more fresh items available from Texas farmers.

Sweeney ISD Child Nutrition Director Kathy Wolford said they started making plans for the challenge at the start of the school year. To celebrate the challenge in October and complete the Teach Local component of the challenge, Ms. Wolford sent teachers a list of Texas items they could incorporate into lesson plans. She said this increased the amount of excitement among students as they went through the lunch line.

To engage students while they were in the cafeteria, Sweeney ISD staff used TDA's Harvest of the Month Posters as well as stickers, buttons, and static clings provided to all participating districts.

Click here to download the full suite of Harvest of the Month materials for early learners and middle-high school students.

Pledge participation today to take the Farm Fresh Challenge and earn recognition for your efforts just like Sweeney ISD!

Tools provided to help each school celebrate

Participating schools will receive a toolkit of Farm Fresh materials, including a choice of buttons, stickers, or static clings for the celebration in October.

View all of the print ready files for bookmarks, posters, banners, stickers, and much more at Squarerecals.org/FarmFreshChallenge.

Register by July 15th to guarantee on-time delivery of Farm Fresh support materials

Farm to Child Care Spotlight

Eat Local. Teach Local. Be Social.

Child and adult care nutrition programs across Texas pledged to Eat Local. Teach Local. and Be Social. during March. Congratulations to all participants in the first ever statewide challenge! Your efforts will have a lasting impact, as young Texans learned how to choose foods grown close to home.

Submit your participation form by May 3 to receive statewide recognition! This form is short and easy to complete.

Farm to Summer Spotlight

Eat Local. Teach Local. Be Social.

TDA is bringing the 2nd annual Summer Farm Fresh Challenge to participants of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) statewide! The challenge will occur June 10-21, 2019. Pledge your participation in the Summer Farm Fresh Challenge by May 24th to receive supportive materials such as buttons and stickers. The Summer Farm Fresh Challenge encourages summer meal programs to serve more local foods, teach children about the importance of Texas agriculture, and share this message with families and community members.

SFSP and SSO contracting entities (CEs) interested in participating in this exciting challenge can register at Squarerecals.org/FarmFreshChallengeSFSP.
Producer Spotlight

Welcome to the Farm Fresh Network!

Two Texas agriculture businesses recently joined the TDA Farm Fresh Network - Acornios and Trinity Ranch.

Acornios Farm owner, Felicia Harris grows apples, peaches, pears, dragonfruit, avocados, apricots, garlic and onions. The farm has been in production in Terrell since 2017.

Trinity Ranch is owned and operated by the Stanley family in Seguin. They specialize in hydroponically grown lettuce, greens, herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers. They are currently vendors at the Big Red Barn Farmers Market in Seguin, and are also interested in providing their products to Texas schools and child care centers.

Visit Squaremeals.org/FarmFreshNetwork for more information about TDA’s Farm Fresh Network.