



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, the Empire State places the highest priority on the health and well-being of our children, and strives to encourage youth to develop smart lifelong habits – including an awareness and understanding of proper nutrition, a healthy and well-balanced diet, and a commitment to positive choices – all of which help to ensure a long and productive life; and

Whereas, our state's schools provide an excellent venue through which to increase the amount and variety of farm products offered to children as healthier meal options and, this year, "Farm to School Month" is being celebrated throughout the entire month of October, kicked off by "Farm to You Fest Week," an annual celebration of local food and agriculture; and

Whereas, the New York State Farm to School Program was created to connect schools with local farms and food producers to strengthen local agriculture, improve student health, and promote regional food systems awareness; this program helps schools, farmers, distributors, and other supporting organizations provide students with nutritious, delicious, seasonally varied meals from foods produced by local farms and food processors; and

Whereas, the Farm to School Program serves youth from Pre-K through the 12th Grade, and its goals are to help schools procure and serve healthy, locally grown foods to students, and also to engage students through field trips to local farms and farmers' markets, participation in food-producing school gardens, and through related curriculum such as "Agriculture in the Classroom"; and

Whereas, the Farm to School Program enables schools and school districts to incorporate local food into their meals; across New York State, these programs have been awarded funding to help increase the use of healthy, locally grown foods on school menus; and

Whereas, New York State produces a wide range of crops, such as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, herbs, and spices, which rank high nationally in terms of production and economic value; an additional educational component of the Farm to School Program is an to increase students' knowledge of, and preference for, locally produced farm products; and

Whereas, since 2015, NYS has allocated \$850,000 for the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farm to School grant program; the New York State Office of General Services recently announced that school districts across the state have made a commitment to dedicate a minimum of \$2.5 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture funds toward the federal agency's Pilot Project for the Procurement of Unprocessed Fruits and Vegetables during the 2016-17 academic year, representing a 400 percent increase over the \$500,000 commitment by schools in 2015-16 for the pilot, administered by OGS on behalf of New York State; and

Whereas, all New Yorkers are encouraged to work toward the goals of this observance which is supported by the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets Farm to School Program, the New York State Education Department Child Nutrition Program, the New York School Nutrition Association, and the many partners on the New York Farm to School Coordinating Committee, as we are fully committed to our children and to ensuring their well-being through wise and nutritious food choices, a sensible and balanced diet, along with physical fitness and overall healthy lifestyle;

Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim October 2016 as

FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this seventh day
of October in the year two thousand sixteen.

Governor
Secretary to the Governor