West Virginia schools spend over $100 million on food annually.
Approximately 95 percent of West Virginia farms are family-owned; the highest in the U.S.
The Farm to School Community Development Group is a collaboration of WV partners working toward two primary goals:

1) Grow the next generation of farmers in West Virginia and
2) Increase the amount of local foods served in our schools.

How do we accomplish these goals?
GROW-EDUCATE-SELL

**GROW**

- Respond to the demand for local products in WV schools
- Engage local farmers in growing for schools
- Create and expand agricultural enterprises
- Incorporate new and innovative production practices

Capitalizing on a demand for local food products and their inclusion in school lunch menus, West Virginia farmers have an opportunity to be a true partner in the farm to school movement. In order to meet the demand, West Virginia’s agricultural sector needs to grow more food and encourage more farmers. The Farm to School Community Development group is working with schools and students statewide to increase awareness that farming is a viable, sustainable profession for young people in West Virginia. The Group assists farmers and agricultural organizations to collaborate, expand capacity and creatively find solutions specific to their individual communities.
EDUCATE
• Provide food safety training
• Integrate agriculture and gardening into the school curriculum
• Facilitate conferences, workshops and new farmer training
• Initiate on-going technical assistance for production and marketing success

The West Virginia Farm to School Community Development Group collaborates with statewide resource providers and educators to assist farmers and students to network and utilize information and technology. Through modeling, mentoring and access, farmers of all ages are engaged in on-going training and instruction to grow more efficiently. Students are provided hands-on experience through school gardens, classroom instruction, integrated curriculum and career exploration.

SELL
• Market West Virginia Farm to School as a real opportunity
• Build a community-based marketplace
• Encourage school-based entrepreneurial enterprises
• Increase Farm-based income

Schools have become a viable market niche creating a rich platform for entrepreneurship.

The West Virginia Farm to School Community Development Group has opened the door to local economic and community development. In communities across West Virginia, farmers are stepping up to capitalize on the economic opportunities that Farm to School offers.