**WV Farm to School**

**Talking Points**

1. **Buying locally grown food is a good idea because it improves taste and nutrition, supports our community and creates West Virginia pride.**

* Incorporating locally-grown, farm-fresh produce as part of a school nutrition program creates a relationship that positively impacts the farm, the school, and most importantly, the students.

1. **Purchasing from farmers helps support the local economy.**

* West Virginia schools spend over $100 million on food annually.
* In 2012-2013, $350,000 was spent on local products in West Virginia schools.
* The economic and community development opportunities with the farm to school initiative are limitless and the impact is real.

1. **County Food Service Directors find that by purchasing locally, they can do so cost-effectively and provide higher quality fruits and vegetables to their students.**

* If fruits and vegetables are fresher and picked at their peak of flavor, children are more likely to eat them.
* Consequently, more students experience the nutrition and health benefits of fruits and vegetables than ever before.

1. **The West Virginia Department of Education’s Office of Child Nutrition is leading the way in growing farm to school in West Virginia by sponsoring 10 AmeriCorps members.**

* AmeriCorps members are helping counties with farm to school efforts at the grassroots level.

1. **The West Virginia Farm to School Community Development Group is the proud sponsor of the West Virginia Farm to School statewide initiative**.

* The group is a collaboration of West Virginia partners including: West Virginia Department of Education, West Virginia Department of Agriculture, West Virginia University Cooperative Extension – Small Farm Center, New Appalachian Farm and Research Center, and Collaborative for 21st Century Appalachia.
* The group is 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.
* For more information, go to [www.groweducatesell.com](http://www.groweducatesell.com).