

GREAT APPLE CRUNCH



NATIONAL
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK



ILLINOIS
FARM to SCHOOL
NETWORK

2016 Great Apple Crunch Report

A Project of the Illinois Farm to School Network, in collaboration with the Illinois Farm Bureau and Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom

About the Illinois Farm to School Network

The Illinois Farm to School Network (IFSN) has 314 members as of November 2016, and through the Network membership we have a much larger number of indirect beneficiaries. One-hundred and twenty-three of those members are teachers, who join the network to access resources including curriculum and school garden resources. Two-hundred and seventeen of the Network members are engaged in school garden work. Twenty-nine of the Network members are school administrators and 57 are non-profit partner members. Their reach into schools has a major impact on whether or not schools are able to begin farm to school programs.

The IFSN includes a ten-member Advisory Board that meets quarterly in order to effectively mobilize the Network membership. The main goal of our program has been to increase farm to school programming through network building activities, including holding conferences, webinars, sending newsletters and distributing resources to members.

Two programs of the IFSN are the Illinois Great Apple Crunch and the Illinois Harvest of the Month. Both programs have educational features, alongside tools to make local food procurement easier for school districts of all shapes and sizes.

The Crunch

This year's Illinois Great Apple Crunch took place on October 13th, 2016. The Great Apple Crunch is an annual event in it's second year here in Illinois, coordinated by the IFSN and a part of the larger Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch across the Great Lakes states. It's an easy way for schools to participate in farm to school through purchasing local apples and 'CRUNCH'-ing into them all at the same time! It's a fun celebration of a food that students already like, and it has brought local farmers from Illinois into the school food system for the first time.

The 2016 Illinois Great Apple Crunch included participation by 339,103 children at around 1,080 Illinois schools. Students in this number are from 100 districts across the state, an increase from 34 districts in 2015. High participation numbers came from districts including Springfield District 186, Chicago Public Schools and Rockford District 205. In the registration form, schools were also asked for the number of adult participants. This year, that number was 4,763.



Apples from Rendleman Orchards in Alto Pass, Illinois were served in schools through a partnership we orchestrated by the IFSN with the Illinois Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program vendor. Photos of schools from up and down the state crunching into local apples can be found on the Illinois Great Apple Crunch website.



The Illinois Harvest of the Month (IHOM) program builds on the Apple Crunch and makes this local celebration a monthly event. While still in it's pilot year (2016-2017 SY), the IFSN is currently engaging five school districts with 108 schools total (77,739 students) in the program.

The IHOM program works by creating a calendar of local food items available each month, and supporting schools in buying and serving those items in school lunch. Our website, www.harvestillinois.org, includes tools for schools including activities and drag and drop language for each food. By assisting schools with program implementation, we have increased the number of schools across the state that teach farm to school curriculum activities. We have also increased the amount of local food served in schools across the state.

