



WISCONSIN FARM TO SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Instruction Manual


Thank you for your interest in the Wisconsin Farm to School (F2S) Recognition Program! The goal of this program is to gain recognition and to celebrate your F2S accomplishments.

How Does it Work?

Any Wisconsin school may register to participate in the Program using the [Wisconsin Farm to School Recognition Program Sign-up Form](#). Each school must sign-up individually and awards are given at the school level (versus the district level). There is no limit to the number of schools that can participate in one district.

On the Sign-up Form, the school will designate a primary contact and secondary contact who will gain access to the Wisconsin Farm to School Recognition Program Tracker. If you need an accessible version of the Recognition Tracker to use with a screen reader, please email DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov. The Recognition Tracker cannot be copied, only the original version can be edited. The primary and secondary contacts will be the only individuals with access to edit the Recognition Tracker and enter data. Activities may be recorded on the Recognition Tracker anytime between October 2024 – May 2025, with award levels determined in May 2025. Schools may continue building on their previous activities to “level up” starting June 2025 through the 2025-26 school year.

When the school is ready for DPI F2S staff to review their Recognition Tracker, select “Yes” from the dropdown under the Current Harvest Level and # Of Increased Levels boxes on the righthand side of Recognition Tracker (see screenshot) and send DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov an email notifying us that the Recognition Tracker is ready to review.

F2S MENTORSHIP	
Proposal Submitted	Proposal Approved & Implemented
No	No
STARTING HARVEST LEVEL	
None	
CURRENT HARVEST LEVEL	
	
# OF INCREASED LEVELS	
2	
When you are ready for DPI to review your tracker, select YES below.	
Yes	

Recognition Levels

There are four levels of recognition with an additional bonus level for F2S champions! Recognition levels are awarded based on completion of activities in the **three core levels of F2S: procurement, school gardens, and nutrition and agricultural education**. Details of qualifying activities can be found in the Example Activities section.



LEVEL 1: Required Activities

- Complete the Wisconsin Farm to School survey (available starting October 2024 – December 2024).
- Join the [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#), [School Nutrition Director](#) section as a school or district. This section of the database is used by local producers to find schools interested in buying local products and/or to provide agricultural education to students. Each school in the district can count this activity if the entire district joins at once.
 - Join by completing the [School Information Sign-up Form](#). If your school or district is not interested in being contacted by farmers/producers about local products, please skip the questions related to product and delivery preferences. You may sign-up with interest only in agricultural education for students.
- Complete at least *one activity* in at least *one core element* (procurement, school gardens, or education).



LEVEL 2: Required Activities

- Complete everything in level 1.
- Complete at least *one activity* in at least *two core elements* (procurement, school gardens, or education).
- Complete at least *one promotional activity* in at least *two core elements*.
- Establish at least *one partnership*.



LEVEL 3: Required Activities

- Complete everything in levels 1 and 2.
- Complete at least *one activity* in *all three core elements* (procurement, school gardens, and education).
- Complete at least *one promotional activity* in *all three core elements*.
- Establish at least *two partnerships*.



LEVEL 4: Required Activities

- Complete everything in levels 1, 2, and 3.
- Complete at least one activity in *all three core elements* (procurement, school gardens, and education) with a total of *five activities*.
- Complete at least one promotional activity in *all three core elements* with a total of *five activities*.
- Establish at least *three partnerships*.
- Create a F2S Sustainability Plan.



BONUS LEVEL: Required Activities

- Complete everything in levels 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Submit a proposal for how your school will mentor other schools in F2S work.

- Complete at least one activity in *all three core elements* (procurement, school gardens, and education) with a total of *six activities*.
- Complete at least one promotional activity in *all three core elements* with a total of *six activities*.
- Establish at least *four partnerships*.
- Active implementation of your F2S Sustainability Plan.
- Carry out your approved proposal to mentor another school (i.e., host a training, create a shared resource, etc.).

Core Element Activities

Below are examples of activities in each of the three core elements (procurement, school gardens, and nutrition and agricultural education). If you have an idea for an activity not on this list, please contact DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov for approval.

Education Activities

- **Incorporate Nutrition Education** – Incorporate at least 150 minutes of *nutrition* education per class for at least 25% of enrolled students (can be split up into multiple sessions and can be incorporated into existing curriculum). Find nutrition curriculum for a variety of ages/grades on [Team Nutrition, Nutrition Education webpage](#) or utilize [Harvest of the Month](#) educational resources. Example: 1000 students enrolled students x 25% threshold = 250 students. Divide the number of required students by average class size to determine the number of classes that need nutrition education: 250 students/25 student average class size= 10 classes
- **Incorporate Agricultural Education** - Incorporate at least 150 minutes of *agricultural* education per class for at least 25% of enrolled students (can be split up into multiple sessions and can be incorporated into existing curriculum). Find classroom lessons for a variety of ages/grades on [Wisconsin Agriculture in the Classroom, Classroom Lessons webpage](#). Example: 1000 students enrolled students x 25% threshold = 250 students. Divide the number of required students by average class size to determine the number of classes that need nutrition education: 250 students/25 student average class size= 10 classes.
- **Incorporate Culinary Education:** Incorporate at least 150 minutes of *culinary* education per class for at least 25% of enrolled students (can be split up into multiple sessions and can be incorporated into existing curriculum). Each session should have a local food focus. Example: 1000 students enrolled students x 25% threshold = 250 students. Divide the number of required students by average class size to determine the number of classes that need nutrition education: 250 students/25 student average class size= 10 classes.
- **Utilize Harvest of the Month Education-** Utilize at least three months of [Harvest of the Month](#) activities in the cafeteria. Choose which activities work best for you.
- **Plan a Farmer Visit** - Invite a local farmer or producer to speak to at least one class and/or during at least one meal period. Utilize the [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#) to find farmers willing to be guest presenters during lunch or in the classroom.

- **Plan a Farm to School Field Trip** - Take at least one class on a field trip to a local farm. Utilize the [Wisconsin Local Foods Database](#) to find farmers willing to host a field trip to their farm/facility or contact producers who sell to your school meal programs.

Procurement Activities

- **Conduct a Local Food Taste Test** - Hold at least one local food taste test. All students present at the school must have the opportunity to participate in the taste test. Taste tests can be held during the breakfast, lunch, or snack period. [Harvest of the Month](#) foods and materials may be utilized.
- **Menu Local Foods**- Menu a local food item at least three times during the breakfast, lunch, or snack period for all students present. This includes items purchased from a local source, grown in the school garden or hydroponic grow tower, or donated from a local producer. [Harvest of the Month](#) foods and materials may be utilized.
- **Procure New Equipment to Process Local Foods** - Purchase at least one new equipment item to aid in processing or preparing local foods. Examples include: a commercial food processor such as a Robot Coupe, immersion style or commercial grade blender, Tilt Skillet, slicer, or cutting tools.
- **Process Local Food** - Process or prepare at least three local food items for service to students (i.e., cooking raw meat, peeling, chopping, roasting etc.).
- **Participate in the [Great Apple Crunch](#)** - Obtain locally grown apples, [register](#) your Crunch, and give all students present at school the opportunity to participate.
- **Participate in the [Wisconsin Chili Lunch](#)** - Utilize one or more chili ingredients grown or produced locally in a chili recipe, [register](#) your Chili Lunch, and give all students present at school an opportunity to participate.
- **Participate in the [Cucumber Crunch](#)**- Obtain locally grown cucumbers (or other in-season vegetable), [register](#) your Crunch, and give all students present at school an opportunity to participate.

School Garden Activities

A school garden includes all the following: field grown/traditional garden bed, raised bed, container, straw bale, hoop house/high tunnel/greenhouse, hydroponic grow tower, or aquaponics system.

- **Build or Expand a School Garden**- Build a new school garden space or add to an additional one (garden types defined above). Access the [Building and Planting In a Nutshell](#) for more information on types of gardens and gardening methods.
- **Actively Maintain a School Garden** - Actively maintain a school garden space (garden types defined above) from planting to harvest.
- **Compost** - Implement or maintain an active composting system (i.e., pile/bin, vermicompost, compost digester, or contract with a commercial composting company). Access the [Composting In a Nutshell](#) for more information on composting methods.
- **Develop or Actively Maintain a School Garden Volunteer Program** - Develop or actively maintain a school garden volunteer program for help with building and/or maintenance of the school garden. Consider developing a sign-up form and regular schedule for volunteers.

- **Incorporate School Garden Education** – Incorporate a total of at least 180 minutes (can be split up into multiple sessions) of active school garden education (indoor or outdoor). Find school garden curriculum for a variety of ages/grades on the [Farm to School in the Classroom webpage](#).
- **Form or Actively Maintain a School Garden Club** – Form or actively maintain a school garden club for students to help with garden (garden types defined above) building and maintenance.
- **Participate in Wisconsin School Garden Day** - Participate in [Wisconsin School Garden Day](#) by planning a promotional school garden event or activity. Wisconsin School Garden Day is the third Thursday in May.

Promotion

Below are examples of promotional activities in each of the three core elements (procurement, school gardens, and nutrition and agricultural education). If you have an idea for a promotional activity not on this list, please contact DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov for approval.

Education Promotion

- **Promote F2S in Newsletter** – Develop a new or contribute to an existing parent newsletter, incorporating a nutrition education article on at least a quarterly basis.
- **Farmers' Market Education**– Incorporate nutrition or agricultural education materials and resources at a table/booth for at least one local farmers' market.
- **Take Home Activities for Families** – Send home print or electronic F2S activities for families to complete together to all enrolled student families at least quarterly during the school year.
- **Promote Education on Social Media** – Develop at least quarterly social media posts that share reliable F2S education with the community. Include photos with your posts when possible. Share the link in your Recognition Tracker and send an email to DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov and/or tag @WisconsinDepartmentofPublicInstruction on Facebook and @wiscdpi on Instagram.
- **Create an Educational Bulletin Board** – Create at least one bulletin board that focuses on F2S education.
- **Contribute to a School Assembly**– Host or contribute to at least one school assembly highlighting F2S activities and/or nutrition/wellness.
- **Participate in an Education Event** – Plan or participate in at least one education event (i.e., wellness conference) sharing F2S education.

Procurement Promotion

- **Highlight Local Foods on the Menu** – Highlight all local foods utilized in the school meal program(s) on the monthly menu. Ideas include placing an icon or asterisk next to local menu items and/or bolding local menu items.
- **F2S Signage on the Serving Line** - Place local food/F2S signage on or nearby the serving line. Examples include utilizing the Local Foods box on the [DPI Menu Signage](#), posting the

[Producer Highlight poster](#), F2S window clings, magnets, stickers, and/or [salad bar labels](#). Request free, F2S promotional materials via the [Promotional Items Order Form](#).

- **Promote Local Foods on Social Media** - Publish at least quarterly social media posts highlighting local foods used in menu items or taste tests. Include photos with your posts when possible. Share the link in your Recognition Tracker and send an email to DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov and/or tag @WisconsinDepartmentofPublicInstruction on Facebook and @wiscdpi on Instagram.
- **Share a Farmer Story** - Submit at least one story to the [Wisconsin Local Foods Database, Farmer Spotlight page](#). The story should include the name of the local food business, the foods they provided to the school, any other fun facts, and a photo of the farm or how the producer was highlighted at school.
- **Create a Local Procurement Bulletin Board** - Create at least one bulletin board promoting local foods used in your school meal programs or for taste tests.
- **Showcase Local Foods on the School Website** - Use the school website to spotlight all local foods used. Share a link to the website in your Recognition Tracker.
- **Participate in a Local Foods Event** - Plan or participate in at least one event related to local food, such as a family dinner night utilizing local products.

School Garden Promotion

- **Post Garden Signage** - Post signage promoting the school garden or hydroponic grow towers in at least two locations (i.e., in the garden and the cafeteria).
- **Promote School Garden in Newsletter** - Develop a new or contribute to an existing parent newsletter, sharing school garden updates on at least a quarterly basis. You may use this outlet to ask for parent volunteers to help with the garden as well.
- **Promote the School Garden on Social Media** - Develop social media posts on at least a quarterly basis sharing about the school garden(s). Include photos with your posts when possible. Share the link in your Recognition Tracker and send an email to DPIF2S@dpi.wi.gov and/or tag @WisconsinDepartmentofPublicInstruction on Facebook and @wiscdpi on Instagram.
- **Participate in a School Garden Event** - Plan or participate in at least one event that highlights the school garden. Examples include hosting a community meal featuring school garden produce, offering a tour of the school garden(s) at parent teacher conferences, offering local produce to families, or planning a school fundraising event to raise money for the school garden.
- **Create a School Garden Bulletin Board** - Create at least one bulletin board highlighting the school garden(s).

Partnerships

The key to sustainable F2S programs is strong partnerships with members throughout the school and larger community. Continuously work to build these partnerships as you grow your school's F2S activities. Partnerships can occur within the school - interdepartmental or within the community. See examples of partnerships in each of these categories below.

Community Partnerships

- Master Gardener

- Local hardware store
- Farmers and producers
- Parents and grandparents
- Culinary/Foodservice Professionals (i.e., restaurants, grocery stores)
- Culinary Arts programs
- Dietetic interns
- Registered Dietitians and Dietetic Technicians
- Health Educator (i.e., FoodWise educators)
- Food Scientists
- Food processors
- Industry Partners - Wisconsin Beef Council, Wisconsin Pork Association, Wisconsin Berry & Vegetable Growers
- Non-profit organizations
- Churches
- Hospitals
- State agencies

Interdepartmental Partnerships

- Special education students and teachers
- Agricultural, science, or environmental teachers and classes
- Family and Consumer Science (FACE) teachers and classes
- Student clubs – sustainability, environmental, wellness-related
- FFA
- Student Agricultural Experience (SAE)
- Facilities
- Tech Ed
- Staff with a passion for gardening
- School Administration – school board, principal, superintendent
- Food service/school nutrition

F2S Sustainability Plan – Crown and Flowering Levels

Creating a Sustainability Plan helps ensure continuation of an active Farm to School program. Creation of a Sustainability Plan is *required for the Crown and Flowering levels*. Utilize the Sustainability Plan template located **in the Sustainability Plan** tab in the Recognition Tracker. Please add at least *one activity in each core element* to the template and complete the associated fields.

F2S Mentorship – Flowering Level

A proposal for how your school will mentor other schools in F2S work is *required only for the bonus, Flowering level*. Submit your school’s mentorship plan in the **F2S Mentorship** tab in the Recognition Tracker. Examples of ideas for how to mentor other schools in F2S work include hosting a training, creating a shared resource, offering one-on-one call or email assistance, sharing connections, etc.).