

## **Support For The Farm To School Act of 2015**

**Patrick Leahy, United States Senator:** “At a time when obesity rates among America’s youth continues to increase, we need to do everything in our power to educate families about the value of a healthy, nutritious lifestyle. One of the best places we can do this is inside our schools, a place where we know students form the foundation of lifelong eating habits.”

**Leahy Press Contact:** David Carle: (202) 224-3693

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**Chuck Ross, State of Vermont Secretary of Agriculture, Farm and Markets:** “Farm to School is an investment in agricultural literacy, local economies, and community stewardship which can connect us to a valuable understanding and appreciation of where our food comes from, while also influencing healthful eating habits. Senator Leahy recognizes the valuable opportunity that Farm to School offers in connecting schools, agriculture, education, and health, which is supported on a national level through the USDA Farm to School Grant Program. His lasting vision of how these connections improve community will allow every state the opportunity to experience the success that farm to school in Vermont has had over the past decade.”

**Press Contact:** (802) 828-2430

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**Rebecca Holcombe, State of Vermont Secretary of Education:** “Research on neurological and cognitive development demonstrates that children need to eat well to develop well. They don’t just need calories; they need good nutrition. Our farm to school initiatives use the strength of our farms to build strength in our children. This initiative ensures that every child in Vermont schools, no matter what his or her home circumstances, has access to the high quality food he or she needs to flourish.”

**Press Contact:** (802) 479-1060

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**Betsy Rosenbluth, Project Director for Vermont FEED, Northeast Regional Lead for the National Farm to School Network:** “We are proud that Vermont schools help lead the nation with groundbreaking Farm to School programs that build thriving local economies, healthy kids and stronger schools. The USDA Farm to School Grants Program is a wise investment; VT schools spent almost \$1.4 million on local products in 2013 and we see tremendous opportunity to put more dollars back into the local economy as programs grow. Our goal is to have Farm to School in every VT school district, and the support of Senator Leahy and our Congressional delegation has been instrumental in our progress.”

**Press Contact:** (802) 985-0318

**Steve Marinelli, Milton Town School District Food Director:** “Harnessing the potential of a 2013 national Farm to School grant, the Milton Town School District (MTSD) now has a full-time Farm to School Coordinator. With her expertise, we provide Farm to School education from preschool through twelfth grade and are developing sustainable recycling and composting programs, district-wide. MTSD has also established a coalition of community partners which has built a successful community dinner series, revitalized our farmers market, and now we have a Community Food Access Coordinator. Our regionally and nationally recognized work has become a model for other schools looking to develop their own Farm to School and “School to Farm” programs.”

**Press Contact:** (802) 893-3215

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**Greg Soll, Sol Farms, Grand Isle, Vermont:** “As a grower, farm to school programs have allowed me to transition from only growing wholesale for restaurant markets to working directly with schools and families in my community. At Sol Farms, our motto is ‘Vibrant Soil, Vibrant Community, Vibrant World’ because we care about our community and our lands. In farm to school we fulfill the goals of our motto. The connection between educating kids and the process of growing food encourages us to use the very best farming practices to improve food quality that will contribute to the health of students. Healthy students help make a vibrant community and ultimately a more vibrant world.”

**Press Contact:** (802) 343-8640

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