

Growing Participation in the Summer Food Service Program

Kansas Schools Tower to Table

Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does the need for good nutrition. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free, nutritious meals to help children ages 1-18 years old to get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow, throughout the summer months when they are out of school.

In the summer of 2021, Kansas State Department of Education, Child Nutrition and Wellness purchased Tower Gardens for 84 Summer Food Service Programs!

A tower garden is simply vertical garden. There are two different types of tower gardens, those that use soil and those that grow aeroponically. This means that plants grow using only water and air. Because of their design, several types of plants can be grown in a small space vertically.

The aeroponic tower gardens were used in summer educational programming and meal service to promote meal participation, create opportunities to provide nutrition education, and serve local foods to children. Programs grew leafy greens, herbs, tomatoes, and strawberries!



USD 254–Barber County North
We harvested our lettuce off our tower garden today and got over 3 oz and then went to our school garden and harvested the tomatoes so we could have these lovely salads.



Unified School District 306–Southeast of Saline shared a colorful picture of their harvest - Beautiful Greens ♥



A great story from **USD 475, Geary County Schools**–Lincoln Elementary received bagged lettuce with meals Wednesday. Shelly said–My server said kids were excited and ran to cars excitedly telling parents ‘we got fresh lettuce’. ♥

Watch Us Grow



USD 413 Chanute



USD 283 Elk Valley



USD 468 Healy



USD 384 Blue Valley



Towering Tales Of Success

“The Sunflower Kiwanis Challenger Club (boys 4-6 grade) are enjoying the tower garden so much that I had to order three more for all the Elementary Schools. We know that when the kids are involved they will be more interested in eating what they grow.”

–Summer Warren, USD 250 Pittsburg Food Service Director

“While our kids enjoy seeing the progress every day and it’s great to have them see how food is produced...one side benefit I have seen is boosting employee morale! When we first got the garden tower in I was scared to take it down to the kitchen to introduce one more thing just because they are drained and I didn’t want to add one more thing this summer but their faces lit up when I brought it in! Staff has been in crisis for so long and we were just going from one thing to another to get food out to kids--it’s nice to see them excited about a project again! Every time I go into the school that is the first thing employees talk to me about-excited about progress on the garden.

–Jennifer Tatro MS, RD, LD, Director Nutrition Services



Tower Garden Love from **Washington County USD 108** “We had our Summer Program, Power Zone, assemble, plant and maintain our grow tower. It was so fun to watch it grow! We are excited to see the students’ reactions when we do this during the school year. What a great opportunity this is!”

Rose and Lisa

Growing Participation in the Summer Food Service Program

Kansas Corn Education



"We Grow Corn" Book

This book, created by Kansas Corn, was written for teachers to use in the classroom and takes the students through the yearlong process of growing corn and highlights how agriculture plays an important role in our lives. This resource provided information on how to expand learning with hands-on activities, videos to watch the growing process of corn on the farm, and access to challenges students can do online.

"How Does it Grow" Summer Scientist Lab

This in this education kit, students worked like scientist to test their ideas about what plants need to grow and live by using corn plants as model organisms. Students tested growing conditions, such as light and temperature. The lesson is available online and can be conducted with materials that are easy to find—pots, bag of soil, bag of corn seed, measuring spoons! Learn more at <https://kscorn.com/wegrowcorn/>



Kansas Pork Education

The Kansas Pork Association has made several educational resources available.



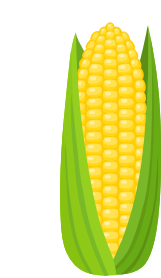
Farmer's Market Education



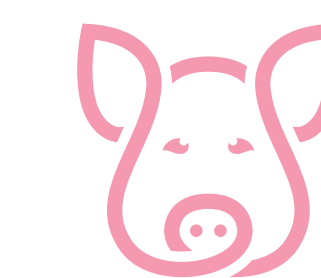
Locations of schools that utilized these great educational resources



Tower to Table



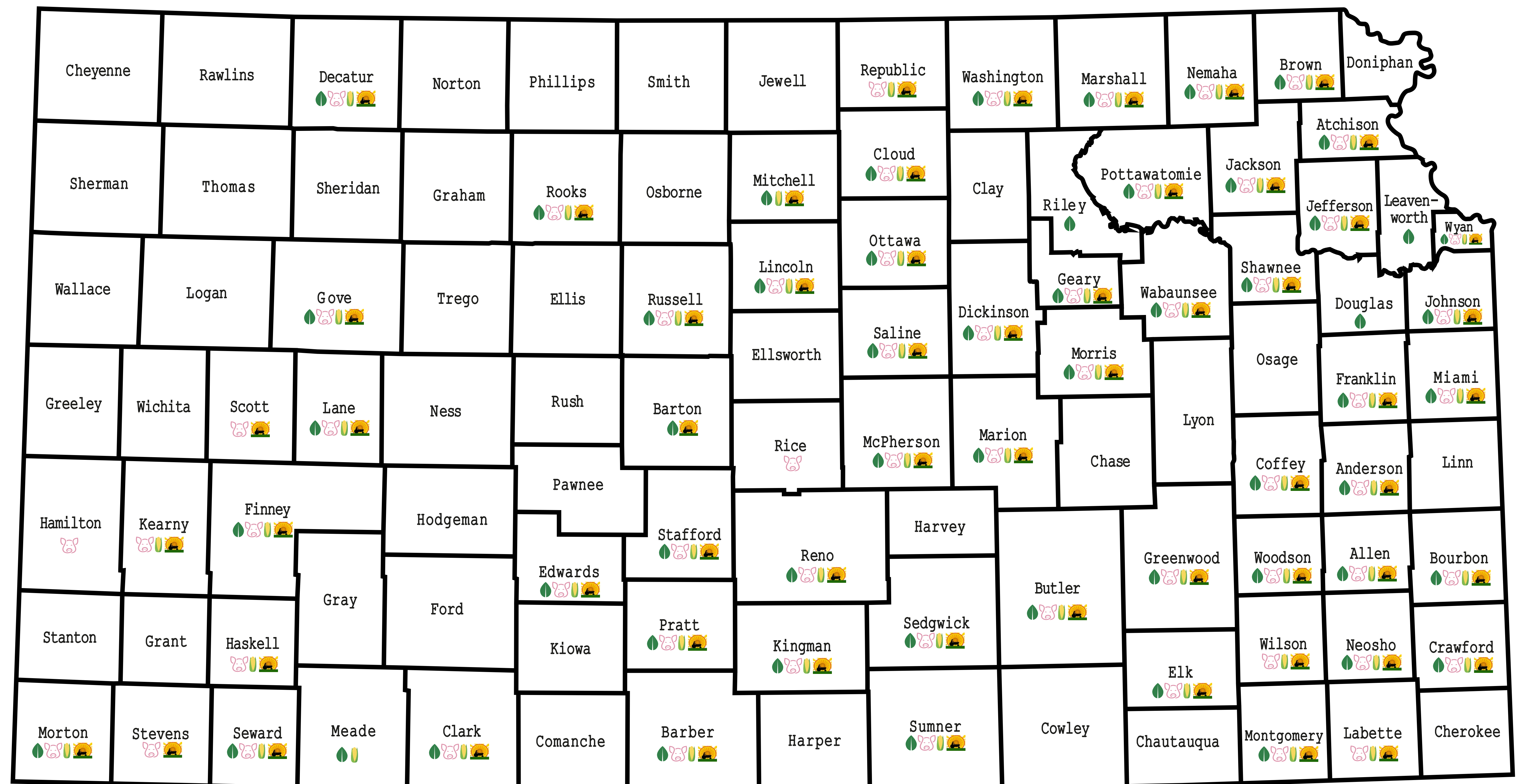
KS Corn



KS Pork



Farmer's Market



Have questions? Contact Barb Depew, Farm to Plate Director at bdepew@ksde.org



Farm to School USDA Grant Award funded Farm To School Sub Grants

The 2020-2021 grant recipients are completing a project to acquire tools to help their Child Nutrition Program improve access to local foods.



Child Care Links, CACFP Sponsor
Garden/Fruits & Veggies/ Local Bread
Home Provider Kits



**Fun Times in the
School Garden!**

Compost Bin
We built a compost bin
out of donated pallets.

Elk Valley, USD 283
Outdoor Classroom, Orchard



Geary County, USD 475
Greenhouse



Sunshine Learning, CACFP Sponso
Garden Supplies



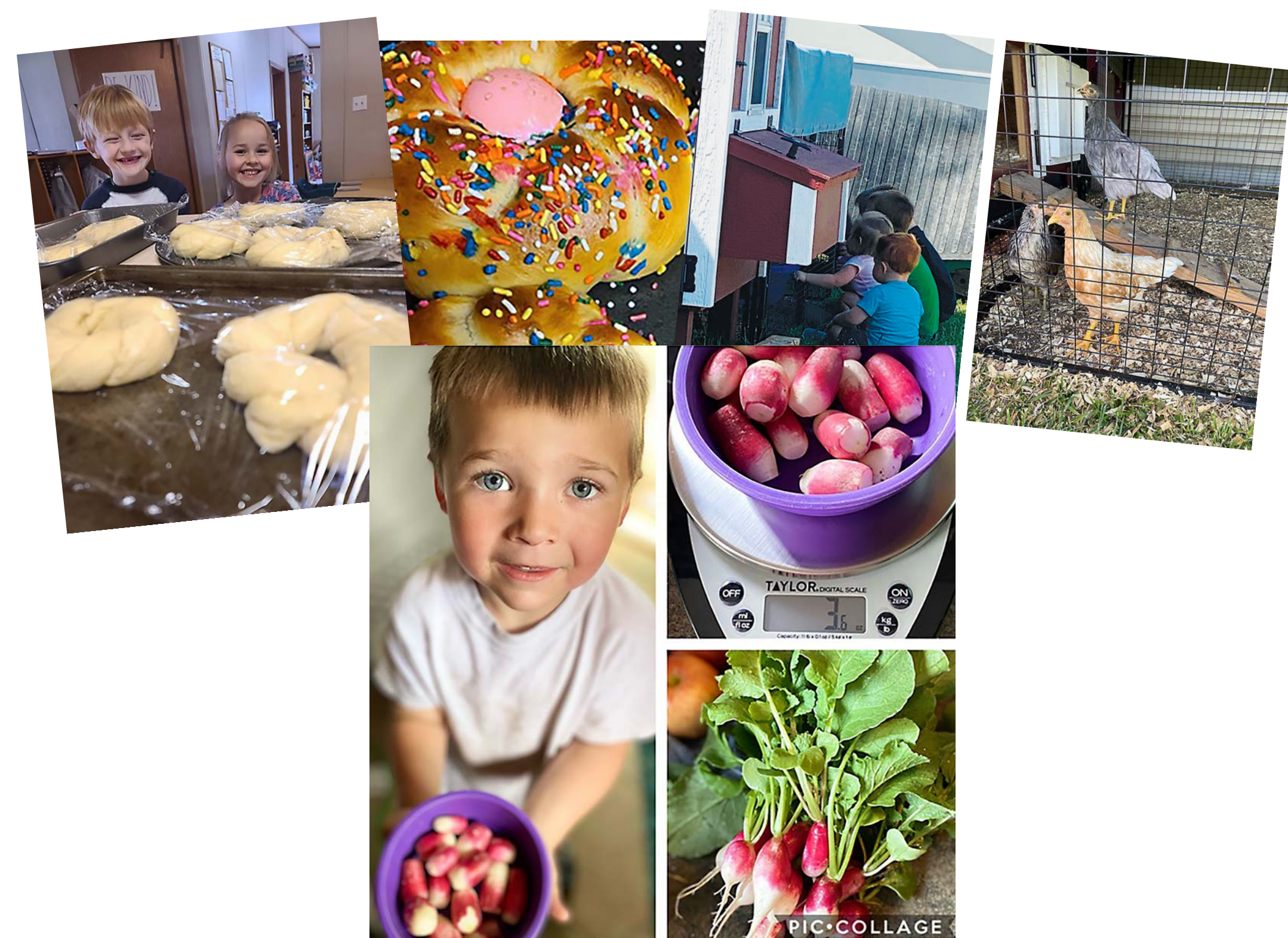
Barber County North, USD 254
Garden Items & Greenhouse Supplies



Logan, USD 326
Garden Supplies/Kitchen Equipment



Healy, USD 468
Greenhouse/Tower Gardens



Quality Care Service, CACFP Sponsor
Gardener/Baker/Chicken Coop Kits



Pretty Prairie, USD 311
Ag projects



Royal Valley, USD 337
Tower Gardens



Jefferson County West, USD 340
Tower Gardens



Blue Valley, USD 384
Tower Gardens

Sylvan Grove, USD 299
Gardening



USD 312 Haven – Farm to Table



SUNFLOWER SPOTLIGHT

USD 312, Haven's Farm to Table event is a great partnership event that has been held for four years. Sheree Jones, Food Service Director, explained 'This year we paired the event with the grade school field day. We opened up the event to parents and were amazed when over 300 parents, grandparents and siblings sent reservations.' A local cattle farmer donated beef for staff to make 639 burger patties. By contacting Shop Kansas Farms, Sheree found Dana Miller from Yoder who operates Rising Wild Sourdough to make the buns using local Hudson flour from Stafford County. Lettuce from the Haven High greenhouse was served as well as milk from the local Hiland Dairy. Local Community Responder Organizational Volunteers furnished the grill and staff to do all the grilling. Families were served veggies by Kansas State Board of Education representative Ben Jones. After the meal, families lined up for frozen rolled ice cream donated locally from Freezing Moo. Haven High AG students and FFA teams demonstrated agricultural products, livestock and farm safety at educational booths. Reno County Farm Bureau provided a giant stuffed cheeseburger that showed how farmers are responsible for cheeseburgers...right down to the pickles and onions. The Haven FFA greenhouse kids did a lesson in planting, growing, and harvesting romaine lettuce. The kids learned by planting their own lettuce seeds that they were able to take home. The rest of the day was filled with water games, relay races and at the end of the day snow cones (from a local business) and a hay rack ride. Sheree said, 'Not only was it a fun event, but to be able to share with families about the impact of our Kansas farmers and local small businesses was priceless!!'



Kansas Beef to School Projects & Shop Kansas Farms

Farm to School –Kansas Beef

The Farm to School initiative is an effort to connect K-12 schools with regional or local farms in order to serve healthy meals using local foods. Many Kansas schools are successfully serving local beef products in their school nutrition programs .



Photo courtesy of USD 320, Wamego Schools



USD 251 North Lyon County, Northern Heights High School FFA students were presented a \$7000 grant from Frontier Farm Credit. Jacob Lang, the agriculture teacher at Northern Heights, plans to have a production of beef, chicken, and fresh fruits and vegetables on campus, in part with the Farm to School initiative. The district will also work to implement a Beef to School project as part of the initiative. The grant will allow the opportunity for the FFA chapter to work with the District Nutrition program to add local products to the students' trays. Misty DeDonder, FCS/FCCLA instructor, reports, "It is great to have the Ag science class and FFA receive the grant opportunity that will directly impact the entire student body. My Family and Consumer Science classes will benefit greatly by introducing them to the fresh grown alternatives to grocery stores. Understanding the health implications in knowing what has been in or on your food is huge. I cannot wait to see how involved this way of learning changes the views of both students and staff." 2018



USD 350 St. John-Hudson implements Farm to Plate in many ways. Josh Meyer, Superintendent explained, "The school district is focused on providing an avenue for local producers to donate food to the schools. Community coordinators work with the Food Service Director to schedule a beef to be donated and processed on a rotating schedule. All of our lunch menu items containing beef come from locally donated and processed animals. When we started the program, students noticed a difference in the quality of food; especially on hamburger day. The fish we raise in science class is not connected to our nutrition program...yet. They only raise a few fish and use the fish waste to grow some produce. All of the whole white wheat flour used in the cafeteria is provided to us by Stafford County Flour Mills in Hudson, KS. This is a blended whole white wheat flour that meets nutritional specifications but has a better flavor than whole grain flour. They have also received donations of melons for school lunches as well as cash donations to help with the beef processing. All donors are recognized with plaques on the wall of the cafeteria. This shows appreciation to the producers, but also serves to showcase Farm to Plate. Next school year St. John plans to be even more purposeful about helping students understand the connection between the farm and what they are eating. This will be done with classroom lessons and field trips.

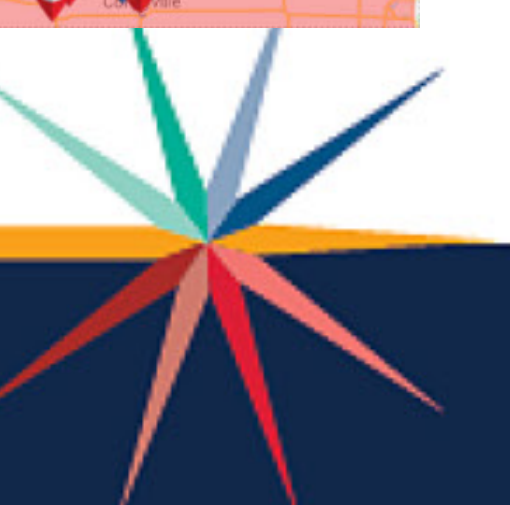
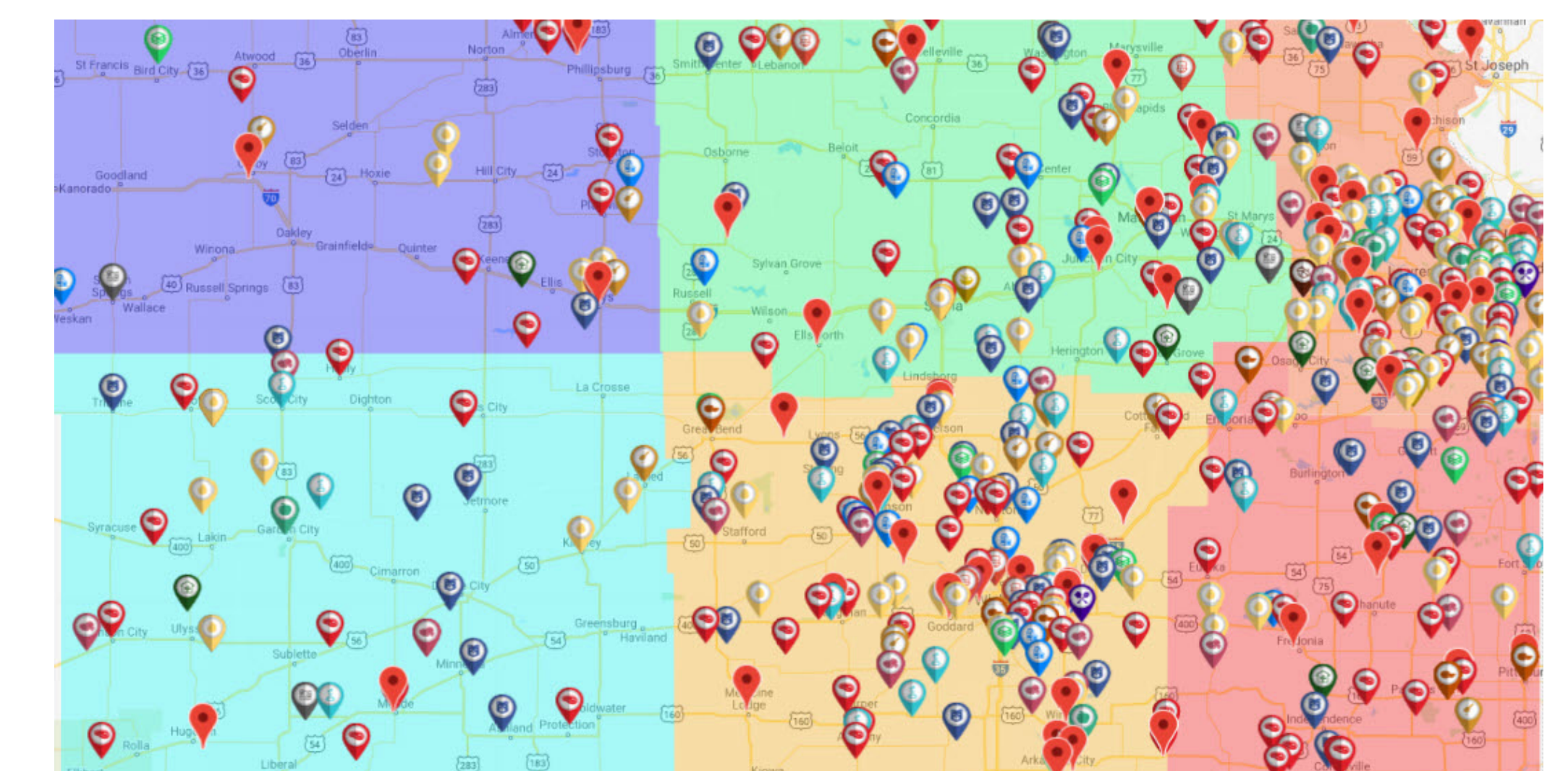
USD 220 Ashland is involved in the Beef to School Program. Eva Crouse, Food Service Director stated that this was started by a former Superintendent that contacted local farmers interested in donating a beef to the school. The donated beef is turned into bulk hamburger and patties. It is used in recipes, such as spaghetti with meat sauce, tacos, and chili. Eva stated, "The kids can definitely tell the difference in the hamburger patties as it seems the texture is very mushy when hamburger patties have been purchased from a vender. This is an awesome program. It helps our school financially as it cuts back on the amount of beef we have to purchase. We are greatly appreciative of this program!"

D0471 Dexter Nutrition Services Director, Wanda Waldeck is adding many local products to their menus. "We use milk, ground beef, apples, cucumbers, zucchini, and bread. Staff bake the bread and rolls fresh from Hudson Cream flour and purchase beef from Creekstone Farms, which has an inspected, processing plant 25 miles from us. Beef is donated by area ranchers. Dexter schools is using the Anchor Mobile Food Market to purchase cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes and other produce items for salad bars. Wanda's future goals include freezing fresh corn; pork products for breakfast items and tomatoes to dice and freeze for soups and sauce. The goal is to have 35-40% local foods in their Child Nutrition Programs.

Shop Kansas Farms is a Facebook group and website designed to connect you to the people who grow your food. The interactive Shop Kansas Farms map is a great resource that can help find products grown, raised, produced, and sold in Kansas. Search for local products by region, county or city.

A new partnership between the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and Shop Kansas Farms is a winning situation for schools, producers and students. The interactive map on the Shop Kansas Farms website allows school districts to find farmers and ranchers that will sell fresh, locally grown items to them. This helps producers make a profit. School districts have better access to producers, and students enjoy farm-fresh food items.

Check out Shop Kansas Farms at <https://shopkansasfarms.com/>



Mountain Plains Crunch Off Event & Team Up for Local Foods "Put our State on Your Plate" Fall 2021 Recipe Challenge



What is the Mountain Plains Crunch Off?

To celebrate Farm to School Month (October), States throughout the Mountain Plains Region (CO, MT, MO, KS, NE, ND, SD, WY) hold a friendly competition to see which State can get the most "crunches" into a local apple, or other local produce, per capita.

Crunch Off participants --including students, teachers, farmers, parents, community members, and local food enthusiasts -bite into local produce together (virtually or in-person) to celebrate the wonderful fruits and vegetables grown in Kansas.

When is the Crunch Off?

The Crunch Off takes place annually in October. **Kansas Teams can register to crunch ANY DAY in October!**

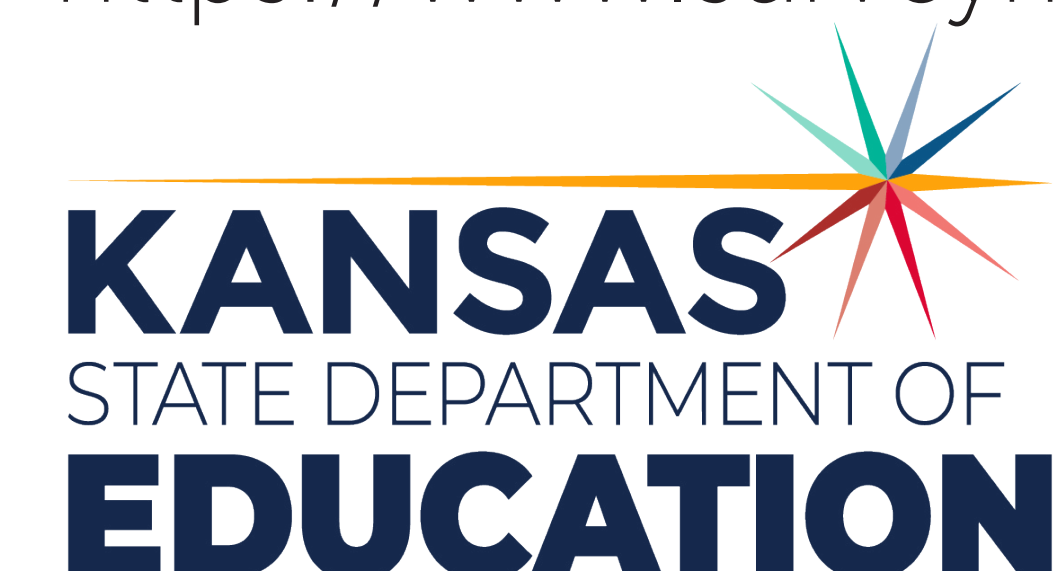
Why & How to Participate

Crunch Off events encourage healthy eating and support local agriculture while celebrating Farm to School Month and highlighting the strength a community gains from farmer-school food service partnerships.

To get more information, and get your team ready to crunch off versus other states in the region, contact: Barb Depew, Farm to Plate Project Director at bdepew@ksde.org or 785-296-0062.

Register your team here!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/79XXHNM>



Develop a recipe that includes a local Kansas food product as a main ingredient. To meet the challenge, build a team consisting of student(s), Family and Consumer Science or Culinary Educator, School Nutrition Professional and a Local Producer.

The winning teams will receive a banner for their school, and a Sunflower Spotlight award. Winning recipes will be featured in the Healthier Kansas Menus resource.

Letter of Intent due on or before **October 15, 2021**

Submit challenge application and recipe by **December 31, 2021**

All teams that complete the challenge requirements will receive a sub-grant of \$200.

If you have questions, please contact Kyleen Harris at kharris@ksde.org or 785-368-8039

Check out our website for more information,

kn-eat.org, School Nutrition Programs, What's New.

Scan or visit our website for more information



When local foods are included in the wholesome meals served to students, it is a **Win, Win, Win!**



Students WIN



Local Farmers and Producers WIN



Communities WIN