



## **2024 Florida Farm to School Essay Contest**

**Winner: First Place**

**Prompt: If I Were a Farmer**

### **My Farmer Duties**

Every morning, as I stand in my fields, I watch the sun's rays illuminate my glorious fields with miles and miles of greens. I can envision the beauty of my vegetation filling the Styrofoam plates, reaching millions of students worldwide. These fields, alive with carrots, lettuce, strawberries, and grapes, are more than crops—they are a symbol of health and opportunity, providing students in my community with the fresh, nutritious food they need to grow and thrive. As I watch the leaves poke from the ground and sway in the breeze, they reflect the variety of fruits and vegetables every child, regardless of background have, offering equal access to the nourishment needed to shape their futures and generations to come. Although these foods start from little seeds in the ground, they will play a major role in fostering a brighter and healthier future.

After weeks of watering and caring for my vegetation, the bright colors that once lay beneath the soil are now visible, marking the significance of my crops. Though carrots and lettuce seem like everyday vegetables, they represent something more impactful—offering security and diversity. These vegetables thrive in my farm's soft soil, representing the importance of being grounded and developing in a stable environment. Children in my community would gain a sense of security as these foods fill their plates; they wouldn't have to worry about their well-being and survival, but this sense of security allows them to focus on their goals, dreams, and education. Furthermore, carrots and lettuce come in different sizes, shapes, and colors. For example, carrots can be orange, purple, or even red. There is iceberg lettuce, red leaf lettuce, or the most known: romaine lettuce. As students hear the crunch of my carrots and lettuce, they are given a sense of inclusivity, showing that there is always room for representation no matter how simple things seem.

In contrast, strawberries and grapes offer a sweet taste warming the tongues of my community. They are brightly colored, and their natural sugars represent the little wonders of life. As I see the brightly colored fruits, it reminds me of the importance of my duty as a farmer to manifest a happy and enjoyable community to those around me with my crops. Though some may see them as just fruit, these little wonders inspire people to savor life and pursue their passions. As grapes ripen, I walk through my vines, carefully snapping

clusters to share with the world. Growing in close-knit bunches, grapes symbolize unity—a reminder that acknowledging and supporting each other strengthens our community. Like a grapevine, a connected community lays the foundation for growth across generations.

If asked why I cultivate these specific crops, I would point to these symbolic reasons—but carrots, lettuce, strawberries, and grapes also provide health benefits that directly impact the community. Packed with essential vitamins, these foods support physical development, boost energy, and lay the foundation for children to pursue their passions. By promoting strong immune systems, healthy skin, and sustained energy, they help students show up as their best selves, ready to learn and grow. A healthy mind and body are essential for individual growth and, in turn, for the progress of society as a whole. Through these crops, my farm doesn't just nurture; it empowers each person to contribute to a healthier, more resilient community.

Considering these motives, my role as a farmer cultivating the finest carrots, lettuce, strawberries, and grapes will strengthen and uplift my community. Students would be empowered by the symbolic messages this vegetation offers, reminding each and every one of them of the power of security, diversity, and unity within a community. With the rich nutrients that my community will receive, they will be able to embark on their unique journeys to shape the future of this world. As my crops feed and provide strength to each student, I will sit back on my rocking chair admiring my green fields, knowing that my foods will go on and have lasting impacts on the lives around me.