



Welcome to Our Annual
FLORIDA FARM TO SCHOOL CONFERENCE

ROOTED IN COMMITMENT

APRIL 7-9, 2026 | TAMPA CONVENTION CENTER



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WELCOME



Florida's strength has always been rooted in the people who grow, harvest, and nourish our communities. Far too often, we overlook the hard work and commitment of the people who grow our food and the partners who ensure that what we grow reaches the next generation. A secure food supply is not just an agricultural priority; it is a foundation of our state's strength, stability, and sovereignty.

This year's theme, Rooted in Commitment, reminds us that Farm to School success doesn't happen by chance. Farmers, distributors, educators, and school nutrition leaders each play a vital role in connecting students with fresh, locally grown Florida foods. When those partnerships thrive, our children eat healthier meals, and our agricultural producers gain stronger markets.

A lifetime spent in agriculture has taught me that supporting our farmers is one of the most powerful ways to secure our future. Your work strengthens the food supply chain that feeds our students, empowers the next generation, and keeps Florida-grown products at the heart of Florida schools. It's not easy, but it is vital to our future.

Thank you for your dedication to this mission. I hope you use this conference to exchange ideas, build new relationships, and spark innovations that move us forward. Together, we can continue building a stronger, more resilient future for Florida.

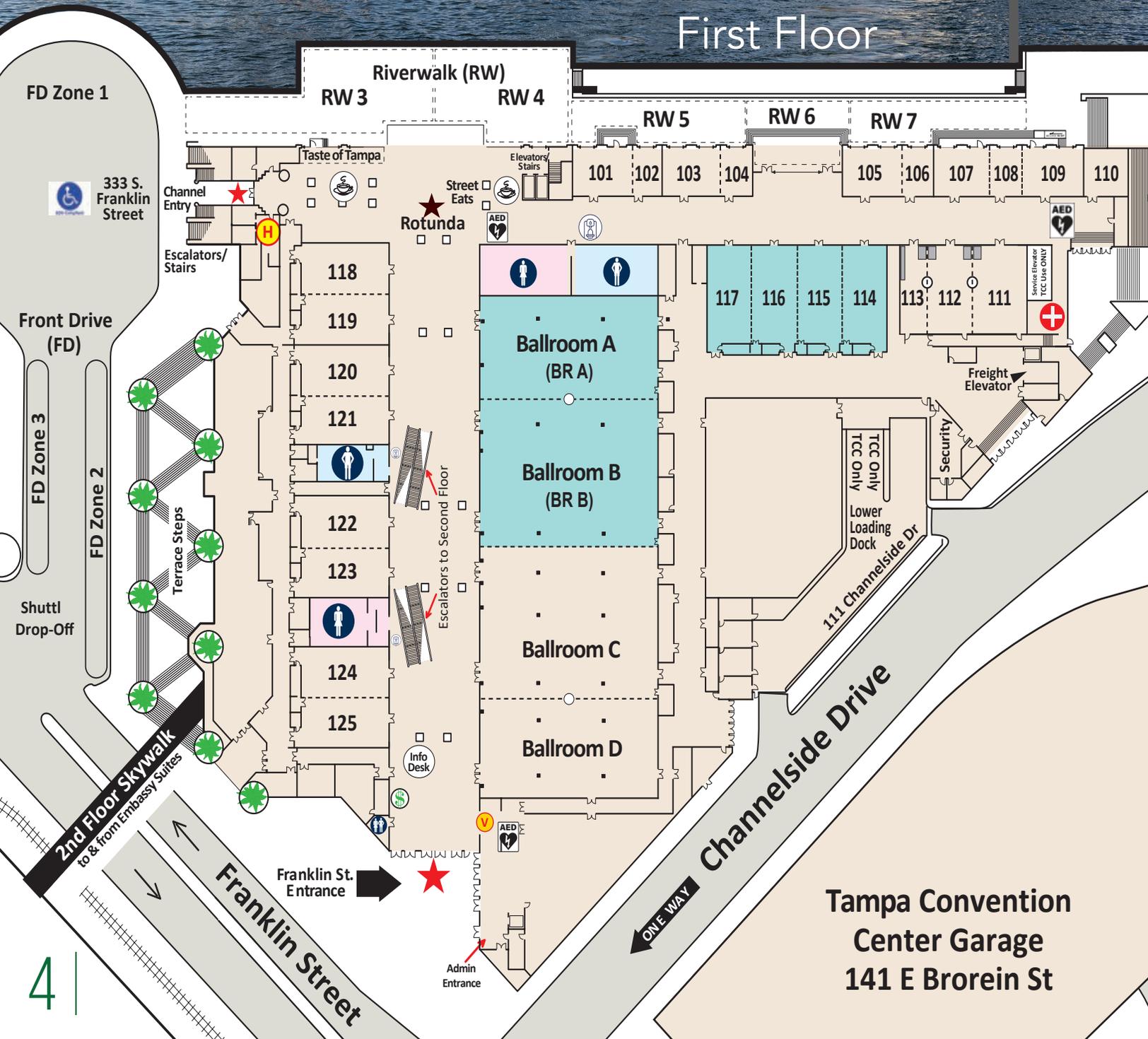
Wilton Simpson
Florida Commissioner of Agriculture





TAMPA CONVENTION CENTER

First Floor



Tampa Convention Center Garage
141 E Brorein St

WHAT IS FARM TO SCHOOL?

Florida's Farm to School initiative works to increase Florida agricultural products served in schools, offer healthier meal options for Florida's children, and get students involved with nutrition and agriculture education through school garden activities.

KEY ELEMENTS:

EDUCATION

Teaching students about Florida agriculture, nutritious foods, and healthy eating habits

SCHOOL GARDENS

Engaging students in hands-on learning through gardening activities and workshops

PROCUREMENT

Increasing school access to nutritious, locally sourced Florida foods

2024-2025 FARM TO SCHOOL STATS



During the **2024-2025** school year, Florida schools purchased over **\$67 MILLION** in Florida products.



Florida districts purchased almost **\$8.2 MILLION** in Florida fruits and vegetables, representing more than **5.7 MILLION POUNDS** of Florida produce.



Schools spent approximately **\$2.3 MILLION** through the USDA's DOD Program and **\$5.9 MILLION** through LFS grants.



Nearly **\$82,000** of Florida beef products were sourced for school meals, representing more than **21 THOUSAND POUNDS** of meat and **517 dozen** eggs.



Cafeterias served **\$51.3 MILLION** worth of local milk, which equates to almost **179 MILLION HALF PINTS**.

FARM TO SCHOOL PURCHASES IN FLORIDA CONTRIBUTED TO:

515
jobs



\$25.6 MILLION
in labor income



\$10.7 MILLION
in local, state & federal taxes



\$135 MILLION
in total economic impact



FarmToSchoolFL.com

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Tuesday, April 7th

7:30am – 6:00 pm	REGISTRATION & INFORMATION DESK
5:00 – 6:30 pm	Rotunda FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORKING KICKOFF

Wednesday, April 8th

7:30 am – 6:00 pm	REGISTRATION & INFORMATION DESK
8:00 – 9:00 am	BR B BREAKFAST & OPENING SESSION
9:00 – Noon	FD FARM TOURS: Meacham Urban Farm, Sweetwater Organic Community Farm, or Wish Farms
9:30 – 11:00 am	RM 117 VIRTUAL FARM FIELD TRIP
11:30 am – 1:15 pm	LUNCH (<i>Grab and Go Option</i>)
1:30 – 2:30 pm	WORKSHOPS RM 114 Interactive Water Science for the Classroom RM 115 Agroecology Design for Abundant Nature, Food, and Community RM 116 From Waste to Wisdom: Engaging Students in Food Waste Solutions RM 117 A Deep Dive in Local Procurement
2:30 - 2:45 pm	NETWORKING BREAK
2:45 – 3:45 pm	WORKSHOPS RM 114 Fungi Foundations: Hands-On Mushroom Growing for Educators RM 115 Planting Knowledge: Hands-On Learning in the Food Forest RM 116 Bridging the Gap: Connecting Farms and Schools RM 117 Beyond the Plate: How Real Food Standards Showcase Commitment to Nutrition and Farm to School Success
3:45 - 4:00 pm	NETWORKING BREAK
4:00 – 6:00 pm	BR A FARMERS MARKET EXPO

Thursday, April 9th

7:30 am – 3:00 pm	REGISTRATION & INFORMATION DESK
7:30 – 9:00 am	BR B BREAKFAST & AWARDS
9:15 – 10:15 am	BREAKOUT SESSIONS RM 114 Farm to School in Action: Real-World Implementation RM 115 Strategically Approaching School Gardens from a District Perspective RM 116 Trash Talk: Tackling Hunger, Food Waste, and Recycling RM 117 Bringing the Farm to School: A History of Movement, Leadership, and Opportunity for Producers
10:15 - 10:30 am	NETWORKING BREAK
10:30 - 11:30 am	BREAKOUT SESSIONS RM 114 4-H and Extension: Enhancing Farm to School Through Resources, Programs, and Partnerships RM 115 The Promise of Scratch Cooking in Schools RM 116 From Tray to Table: Scaling Food Waste Solutions Through Share Tables and Collaborations RM 117 Farming with Schools
11:30 am - 1:30 pm	BR B LUNCH & KEYNOTE
1:30 - 2:30 pm	BREAKOUT SESSIONS RM 114 Hive Minds: Beekeeping for Education and Community Engagement RM 115 It's About Quality: Fresh for Our Guests RM 116 Cultivating Farm to School with Staying Power in the Classroom, Cafeteria, and Community RM 117 Lettuce Learn: The Produce Pro Quiz Show - Where Fresh Facts Meet Friendly Competition
2:30 - 2:45 pm	NETWORKING BREAK
2:45 - 3:45 pm	BREAKOUT SESSIONS RM 114 Virtual Farm Field Trips: Bringing Agriculture to the Classroom RM 115 A Farm at School, Roosevelt Farms' 31-Year Journey RM 116 Robust Farm to School Programming in a Rural K-12 Setting RM 117 Back by Popular Demand: Food Safety Information, Activities, and Games
3:45 - 4:00 pm	NETWORKING BREAK
4:00 - 5:00 pm	BR B CLOSING SESSION WITH LIGHTNING TALKS District Changemakers: Effecting Change with Farm to School

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Presenter bios are available on the WhoVa app.

Tuesday, April 7th

7:30 am - 6:00 pm **REGISTRATION & INFORMATION DESK**

5:00 - 6:30 pm **FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORKING KICKOFF**
Join us for the official kickoff for the conference!

Wednesday, April 8th

8:00 - 9:00 am **BREAKFAST & OPENING SESSION**
BR B Welcome to the 2026 Farm to School Conference

9:00 am - Noon **FARM TOURS**



Meacham Urban Farm | 1108 E Scott Street, Tampa, FL 33602 | www.meachamfarm.com

Meacham Urban Farm is a two-acre vegetable production farm located in downtown Tampa. Guests will enjoy an in-depth guided tour of the small organic farm, including walks through the fields and a visit to the chicken coop and apiary. During the tour, we will discuss our sustainable growing practices, farm management techniques, and target customer base. Guests will also gain a clear understanding of how our small operation functions on a day-to-day basis.



Sweetwater Organic Community Farm | 5521 Hanley Rd, Tampa, FL 33634 | www.sweetwater-organic.org

Discover the heart of our urban six-acre farm on a guided tour that brings our mission to life — building community through education, food accessibility, and serving as a model of responsible land stewardship and sustainable agriculture. As you stroll through our lush, hand-tilled beds, you'll see how careful, chemical-free cultivation supports both healthy crops and a thriving ecosystem. Our composting system and worm farm will show you how food scraps and plant matter are transformed into nutrient-rich soil, closing the loop and giving back to the earth. Along the way, you'll learn about sustainable techniques like crop rotation, water conservation, and natural pest management — practical skills that can be applied in any garden.



Wish Farms | 2262 Pixie Way, Plant City, FL 33563 | wishfarms.com

Experience the Wish Farms Headquarters in Plant City, FL! This exclusive tour takes you inside our 125,000 sq. ft. warehouse, complete with blueberry packing, and strawberry cooling and processing. You will explore their modern office space, complete with a treehouse, slide, and other creative features that make their headquarters truly unique. Learn how sustainability and innovation drive everything we do, from repurposed wood accents throughout the property, to our powerful 1.2-gigawatt rooftop solar system. As a special treat, you'll visit our u-pick blueberry farm, where you are welcome to pick fresh berries right off the plant.

9:30 - 11:00am **Virtual Farm Field Trip** | RM 117



If you're not able to make it to one of our farm tours, we'll bring the farm to you with our Virtual Farm Field Trip. Join us for an exciting way to teach students in grades K-5 where their food comes from while exploring the world of Florida agriculture.

11:30 am - 1:15 pm **LUNCH** (Grab & Go Option)

1:30 - 2:30 pm

WORKSHOPS

RM 114

Interactive Water Science for the Classroom

Becky Sponholtz, Executive Director & **Jennifer Morgenthal**, Programs Manager, Florida Agriculture in the Classroom

Water connects life from clouds to crops. In this interactive workshop, participants will experience two hands-on lessons that build understanding of the water cycle and how water quality affects plant growth. Participants will become “water molecules,” moving through evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and runoff stations while collecting beads to represent their journey. Then, they’ll design a plant-growth investigation using saline, acidic, and alkaline water, observing results over time to connect water science with environmental systems and data analysis.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain a practical understanding of the water cycle by engaging in interactive activities and learn how water quality impacts plant growth through hands-on experiments.

Target Audience: Educators, school administrators, and curriculum specialists interested in teaching water science in the classroom.



RM 115

Agroecology Design for Abundant Nature, Food, and Community

Zack Brym, Associate Professor, University of Florida (UF), Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Agroecology informs design where agriculture meets nature. Production, conservation, and community are essential features to sustain. The goal is to produce food in a way that enhances the health of nature and local communities. This workshop will first introduce the principles of agroecology and resources for plant selection and management, then it will draw on participants’ perspectives to map plans for agroecology. Guides will be provided for commercial farms, small farms, food forests, community gardens, and urban spaces that help envision how to cultivate food, biodiversity, and soil health in their area.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain a foundational understanding of agroecology principles and how agricultural practices can be thoughtfully designed to benefit both nature and local communities.

Target Audience: Farmers and growers of all scales, community garden organizers, urban agriculture practitioners, conservationists, environmental educators, school garden leaders, and anyone interested in sustainable food systems.



RM 116

From Waste to Wisdom: Engaging Students in Food Waste Solutions

Caitlyn Goree, Youth Programs Manager & **Brianna Rodarmel**, Director of Programs, 4 Roots

How can participants help students break down food waste and empower them to be part of the solution? In this workshop, 4Roots will share how they collaborate with the World Wildlife Fund’s Food Waste Warriors program to turn food waste education into engaging, action-oriented learning experiences. They will explain their collaborative efforts and their lasting impact in schools, highlight student-led food waste initiatives, and model curriculum and interactive activities used during our farm-based field trips.



Key Takeaways: Participants will leave with practical ideas, adaptable activities, and inspiration to bring food systems and food waste education to life with students of all ages.

Target Audience: Educators, school administrators, youth program coordinators, and anyone interested in empowering students to address food waste and promote sustainability within educational settings.

RM 117 **A Deep Dive in Local Procurement**

Bertrand Weber, Farm to School Innovator & **Andrea Alma**, Owner of Rootstock Consulting LLC

Bertrand Weber will team up with former USDA Farm to School Regionalist Andrea Alma to host an interactive local procurement “deep dive” workshop. This session is designed primarily for participants who already have some experience with local procurement. Building on the concepts that will be shared in the keynote address, the workshop will highlight large-scale local procurement innovations from around the country and translate them into practical, actionable strategies.

Key Takeaways: Participants will be guided through a structured process to assess the current state of their local procurement efforts and identify realistic next steps—starting with manageable “small bites” that intentionally lead toward longer-term, large-scale (“whole tray”) transformations.

Target Audience: This session is intended for school nutrition leaders, cafeteria staff, and food service teams in K-12 settings.



2:30 - 2:45 pm **NETWORKING BREAK**

2:45 - 3:45 pm **WORKSHOPS**

RM 114 **Fungi Foundations: Hands-On Mushroom Growing for Educators**

Gabriella Soto-Velez, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, National Center for Appropriate Technology (ATTRA)

This is a hands-on workshop where participants will build oyster mushroom grow bags using classroom-friendly materials. The presentation and activity will cover substrate prep, inoculation, incubation, fruiting conditions, food safety considerations for schools, and simple recordkeeping.

Key Takeaways: Participants will see live examples at different stages and leave with a kit and a step-by-step guide for classroom replication and cafeteria use.

Target Audience: K-12 teachers and garden educators interested in integrating hands-on activities into their curriculum and school food programs.



RM 115 **Planting Knowledge: Hands-On Learning in the Food Forest**

Eddie Recinos, Program Director & **Debi La Belle**, Senior Program Manager, The Education Fund’s Food Forests for Schools Program

Food Forests for Schools engages students with hands-on learning and supports well-being. This interactive workshop shows participants how to use a school food forest or garden as a living classroom. Participants will explore strategies for engaging students in outdoor learning while building curiosity, responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

Key Takeaways: Through a fun STEAM activity that’s ready to bring to the classroom, participants will gain tools to integrate food forest lessons into science, math, and resiliency, supporting both academic learning and healthy habits.

Target Audience: Educators interested in outdoor learning, hands-on teaching methods, and enhancing student well-being through garden-based education.



RM 116 **Bridging the Gap: Connecting Farms and Schools**

Elliott Smith, CEO and Co-Founder of Kitchen Sync Strategies

Schools and farms often wish to connect for purchasing but cannot overcome logistical hurdles. Kitchen Sync Strategies fills the gaps between small farmers and big buyers, keeping a sharp focus on supporting farmers and food hubs while building up regional food systems. In this session, participants will explore how food hubs, buyers, suppliers, and other third-parties can help facilitate farm to school connections that support local food procurement.



Key Takeaways: Participants will understand how food hubs, buyers, suppliers, and third-party organizations can bridge the logistical challenges between schools and small farms, enabling more effective local food procurement and strengthening regional food systems.

Target Audience: School food service professionals, farm to school coordinators, local farmers, food hub managers, and anyone involved in or interested in facilitating farm to school purchasing connections.

RM 117 **Beyond the Plate: How Real Food Standards Showcase Commitment to Nutrition and Farm to School Success**

Greta Allen, Program Manager, Eat Real & **Jenna Kaczmarek**, President and Co-Founder, Locally Grown

School meals matter—but how do we help others see it too? This session shows how districts can measure and share the impact of farm to school programs on child health, local economies, and food literacy. Through evidence-based standards, peer-reviewed science, and real-world school experience, participants will explore tools, examples, and talking points to celebrate successes, leverage data, and engage their communities.



Key Takeaways: Participants will learn practical ways to measure and communicate the positive effects of farm to school programs, including improvements in child health, boosts to local economies, and enhanced food literacy.

Target Audience: School nutrition professionals, administrators, educators, community partners, and anyone interested in demonstrating the value of farm to school initiatives.

3:45 - 4:00 pm **NETWORKING BREAK**

4:00 - 6:00 pm **FARMERS MARKET EXPO**

BR A Discover the incredible world of Farm to School at the Farmers Market Expo! This unique session is dedicated to forging meaningful partnerships between farmers, schools, community partners, and advocates to create a pipeline of fresh, nutritious food directly from local farms to student lunch trays.

Whether you're a farmer interested in expanding your market, a school representative looking to enhance your meal program, or simply a community member passionate about supporting local agriculture, this session offers valuable insights and opportunities for collaboration.

FARMERS MARKET EXPO

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING EXHIBITORS

- Brooks Tropicals
- Bonnie Blue Ranch and Grove
- C&B Farms, Inc.
- Dakin Dairy Farms
- Division of Fruit and Vegetables, FDACS
- The Dudes Freedom Food Farm LLC
- Eaton Marketing
- Eat Real
- Ferpher Farms LLC
- Florida Agriculture in the Classroom
- Fort McCoy Meat LLC
- Fresh From Florida, FDACS
- Huapilla Produce Inc.
- Jim Rash Inc.
- Kai Kai Farm
- M & B Products, Inc.
- National Cater for Appropriate Technology
- Nature Coast Citrus of Florida LLC
- New North Florida Cooperative
- Nourish to Flourish/University of North Florida
- The Permaculture Guild
- RC Hatton
- Real Good Fish
- Society of St. Andrew
- Sustainable Urban Agriculture Coalition
- Traders Hill Farm
- Verti-Gro, Inc.
- What Chefs Want



SESSION DESCRIPTIONS CONT.

Thursday, April 9th

7:30 - 9:00 am **BREAKFAST & AWARDS**
BR B

9:15 - 10:15 am **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

RM 114 **Farm to School in Action: Real-World Implementation**

Jamie Dicks, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Alachua County Public Schools & **Chrystal Baker**, F2S Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Services, Alachua County Public Schools

This session highlights real-world examples of successfully implementing farm to school programs in a public school district, from sourcing local foods to engaging students and staff.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain practical strategies for building relationships with educators and farmers, integrating local foods into menus and distribution, establishing school gardens, and creating sustainable, scalable programs.

Target Audience: School nutrition professionals, educators, administrators, farmers, and community partners who are interested in launching or enhancing farm to school programs within public school districts.



RM 115 **Strategically Approaching School Gardens from a District Perspective**

Jeannine Rizzo, School Garden Strategist, School District of Palm County – Food Service Department

School gardens offer more than just green spaces; they serve as powerful platforms for learning, wellness, and workforce development. This session introduces a clear, district-wide framework to help schools establish and maintain meaningful, sustainable garden programs, and explores how to align garden initiatives with district-wide strategies, departmental priorities, and individual school goals. Learn how to build effective cross-department collaboration, integrate gardens with curriculum, and craft targeted messaging to engage key stakeholders—from students and teachers to parents, administrators, and operations teams.

Key Takeaways: Participants will leave with practical strategies and tools for building and sustaining impactful school garden programs, learn how to align garden initiatives with district and school priorities, and discover effective methods for engaging diverse stakeholders and integrating gardens with curriculum.

Target Audience: School administrators, food service and facilities staff, educators, and district leaders interested in establishing, enhancing, or managing school garden programs within a district-wide framework.



RM 116 **Trash Talk: Tackling Hunger, Food Waste, and Recycling**

Kelly DeAngelis, Facilitator, Rhode Island School Recycling Project

The RI School Recycling Project addresses issues of hunger and food waste with our student-led sorting stations in school cafeterias. Learn how to engage with school communities, empower students through project-based learning, and work toward a cost-neutral solution to the problems of hunger and food waste in schools. This session teaches participants how to educate future generations to be mindful of the food they take, be considerate of others, and be responsible stewards of the environment.



Key Takeaways: Participants will learn actionable strategies for reducing hunger and food waste in schools by implementing student-led sorting stations in cafeterias and discover effective ways to engage school communities through hands-on, project-based learning.

Target Audience: School administrators, teachers, and sustainability officers who are interested in addressing hunger and food waste issues within school communities.

RM 117 **Bringing the Farm to School: A History of Movement, Leadership, and Opportunity for Producers**

Hakeem Holmes, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist, NCAT

This workshop delves into the history of the farm to school movement in the U.S., highlighting an early case study where small-scale farmers pioneered efforts, creating opportunities for all producers to engage. The session will feature an exercise from the “Bringing the Farm to School Curriculum” to help producers evaluate the farm to school market’s potential for their operations.

Key Takeaways: Participants will learn about the origins and evolution of the farm to school movement in the United States, discover how small-scale farmers have created new engagement opportunities, and gain practical tools for assessing the viability of the farm to school market for their own operations.

Target Audience: Producers and child nutrition providers interested in exploring or expanding their involvement in farm to school initiatives.



10:15 - 10:30 am **NETWORKING BREAK**

10:30 - 11:30 am **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

RM 114 **4-H and Extension: Enhancing Farm to School Through Resources, Programs, and Partnerships**

Chris DeCubellis, 4-H State Specialized Agent, UF/IFAS, Florida 4-H Youth Development; **Ashley Stonecipher**, Agriculture and Food Systems Extension Agent, UF; & **Laura Valencia**, Flagler County Extension Director, Family and Consumer Science Agent II, UF

The University of Florida has Extension offices in all 67 counties and partners with Florida A&M University to administer 4-H programs across the state. Participants will learn about the mission of Extension, how agents and specialists can enhance classroom programs, and how 4-H offers enrichment opportunities through school programming and local clubs. Explore practical ways Extension can support sustainable, high-impact farm to school efforts: classroom resources, alignment with educational standards, culinary and nutrition education, engaging students through 4-H Co-Program and service-learning projects, supporting school gardens and animal science programs, and assisting with grant writing and resource development.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain an understanding of how Extension agents and 4-H specialists can enrich classroom instruction and enhance sustainable farm to school initiatives through tailored resources, curriculum alignment, and support for school gardens and animal science programs.

Target Audience: K–8 educators, school nutrition professionals, farm to school coordinators, district leaders, and anyone interested in integrating agriculture, nutrition education, and hands-on learning experiences into school programming.



RM 115 **The Promise of Scratch Cooking in Schools**

Lori Nelson, Chief School Food Operations Officer, Chef Ann Foundation

Learn why scratch cooking matters for students, school kitchen teams, and the communities they serve. Take a walk through the Chef Ann Foundation Scratch Cooking Continuum and see how some of the most common lunch dishes can be shifted toward simple scratch approaches that districts can start working toward right away. Dig into the real impact scratch cooking has on student health, school culture, and day-to-day operations, then hear a few success stories from districts in the Get Schools Cooking (GSC) program that prove what's possible when teams lean in. The session will close with a look ahead and a discussion on GSC 7 applications, which will open in August 2026.



Key Takeaways: Participants will understand the value of scratch cooking in schools, learn how to transition common lunch menu items toward scratch-prepared methods, and discover the positive impacts on student health, school culture, and operations.

Target Audience: School food operations leaders, nutrition program supervisors, and food service teams interested in improving student nutrition and school meal quality through scratch cooking initiatives.

RM 116 **From Tray to Table: Scaling Food Waste Solutions Through Share Tables and Collaborations**

Nathalie Montenegro, Nutrition Program Supervisor, Miami Dade County Public Schools Department of Food and Nutrition

Explore how to expand share tables across your district through practical strategies, lessons learned, and real examples. This session covers the challenges and accomplishments of scaling food waste prevention efforts, emphasizing the importance of collaboration with school sites, district leadership, and community partners.



Key Takeaways: Participants will gain actionable insights to build, improve, or sustain share tables that support both students and food recovery goals.

Target Audience: School nutrition professionals, district administrators, educators, and community organizations interested in implementing or enhancing food waste reduction initiatives.

RM 117 **Farming with Schools**

Charlie Hogan, Food Service Sales Director, RC Hatton Farms & **Paul Allen**, Co owner - R.C. Hatton Inc. FL, Performance Packaging LLC. FL, Performance Napa LLC., FL and D&D Ag. LLC. GA

See what farm to school looks like from the farm side. This session will include a detailed explanation of the process from planning and planting to harvesting and delivering, including the importance of keeping the cold chain from leaving the farm to preparation in the kitchen. The presentation will also include a video to help visualize the process.



Key Takeaways: Participants will gain an understanding of the entire farm-to-school process from the farmer's perspective, including planning, planting, harvesting, and ensuring proper cold chain management from farm to kitchen.

Target Audience: School administrators, food service professionals, teachers, and anyone interested in learning how farms partner with schools to supply fresh produce.

11:30 - 1:00 pm **LUNCH & KEYNOTE - From Swiss Farms to School Cafeterias: Why Schools Must Lead Food System Change**

BR B **Bertrand Weber**, Farm to School Innovator

In his deeply personal and practical keynote, Bertrand Weber shares his journey from growing up in Switzerland, to navigating cultural contrasts after moving to Florida as a teenager, to building a career in hospitality, and ultimately transforming K-12 school nutrition after his son Eric's Type 1 diabetes diagnosis. Through storytelling and systems thinking, Weber challenges attendees to see schools not just as feeding sites but as powerful agents of change within local food systems.



1:30 - 2:30 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

RM 114

Hive Minds: Beekeeping for Education and Community Engagement

Abbey Matusik, Sustainability Project Coordinator, City of Orlando Office of Sustainability & Resilience

The presentation seeks to outline the curriculum, objectives, and logistics of the Apiary Education Program. The speaker will share insights into managing urban beekeeping education, highlighting both successes and challenges. Attendees will learn about the basics of beekeeping, including necessary supplies, bee behavior, honey harvesting, and safety procedures. Overall, the presentation hopes to emphasize the positive impact the Apiary Education Program has on residents and the environment.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain foundational knowledge of beekeeping in an urban setting, including essential equipment, bee behavior, honey harvesting, and safety practices.

Target Audience: Educators, community organizers, urban agriculture advocates, and anyone interested in integrating beekeeping education into schools or community programs.



RM 115

It's About Quality: Fresh for Our Guests

Richard Miles, MS, RDN, Assistant Director & **Kari Brown, MHS, RDN**, Coordinator of Nutrition and Wellness, Red Apple Dining, Seminole County Public Schools

Discover how to transform campus dining into a fresh, flavorful experience that nourishes both body and mind. In this interactive session, participants will learn practical strategies to champion fresh fruits and vegetables in their menus, tackle common challenges to implementation, and build a roadmap for success through smart partnerships, streamlined preparation, and effective team collaboration.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain actionable methods for incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into school menus, overcome typical barriers in food service operations, and foster success through effective teamwork and strategic partnerships.

Target Audience: School nutrition leaders, cafeteria staff, and food service teams in K-12 settings.



RM 116

Cultivating Farm to School with Staying Power in the Classroom, Cafeteria, and Community

Betsy Rosenbluth, Farm to School Director, Shelburne Farms, Vermont FEED

Ready to cultivate a thriving farm to school program? Explore a whole-school approach that connects the cafeteria, classroom, and community. Discover how to develop values-based action plans, build diverse cross-school teams, and engage stakeholders.



Key Takeaways: Participants will leave with a foundational understanding of the VT FEED 3C's model of change, practical strategies for building diverse and effective farm to school teams, a framework for developing values-based farm to school action plans, and an understanding of available resources.

Target Audience: Educators, school nutrition professionals, farm to school coordinators, and anyone interested in strengthening farm to school initiatives by connecting the cafeteria, classroom, and community.

RM 117 **Lettuce Learn: The Produce Pro Quiz Show - Where Fresh Facts Meet Friendly Competition**

Tracy Nazarro, President & General Manager, Traders Hill Farm

Join Game Show Host Tracy Nazarro of Traders Hill Farm for an interactive and entertaining session: "Lettuce Learn: The Produce Pro Quiz Show." Participants will test their knowledge of Florida's seasonal fruits and vegetables while exploring the real-world benefits of building a robust farm to school program. Through fast-paced questions, lively discussion, and practical insights, they will dig into what it really takes to implement and sustain successful farm to school initiatives, from procurement and logistics to menu planning and community impact. Come ready to play, learn, and level up on local food IQ!



Key Takeaways: Participants will gain a deeper understanding of Florida's seasonal produce, learn practical strategies for building and sustaining farm to school programs, and explore how procurement, logistics, and community engagement contribute to local food success.

Target Audience: School nutrition professionals, educators, farm to school coordinators, and anyone interested in enhancing local food initiatives within educational settings.

2:30 - 2:45 pm **NETWORKING BREAK**

2:45 - 3:45 pm **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

RM 114 **Virtual Farm Field Trips: Bringing Agriculture to the Classroom**

Denise Conway, School Garden Specialist, School Food Service, The School District of Palm Beach County & **Alicia Standish**, Kindergarten Teacher, Loxahatchee Groves Elementary School, The School District of Palm Beach County

Learn how Palm Beach County educators used Florida's Virtual Farm Field Trips to create engaging, curriculum-aligned learning experiences. This session covers program structure, lesson integration, and the use of high-quality videos and activities that connect students to local agriculture. Hear from a classroom teacher who completed all three field trips, sharing practical insights into planning, coordination, and classroom application.

Key Takeaways: Participants in the session will learn practical strategies for integrating virtual farm field trips into their classroom instruction, ensuring these experiences align with curriculum objectives.

Target Audience: K-8 educators, school nutrition professionals, farm to school coordinators, district leaders, and anyone interested in agriculture, nutrition education, or hands-on learning.



RM 115 **A Farm at School, Roosevelt Farms' 31-Year journey**

Ray Cruze, Agriculture Teacher, Roosevelt Academy, Polk County Public Schools

This workshop shares the inspiring story of how a 31-year-old school-based farm grew into one of the state's largest and oldest multi-crop production programs and will provide practical guidance for participants eager to start or expand their own school farm. The session highlights how ESE student's IEP goals are integrated into farm-based learning and emphasizes the importance of vocational



and employability skills in preparing students for future success.

Key Takeaways: Participants will learn how to launch a school-based farm, select and market crops, build business partnerships, and explore production methods including aquaponics, hydroponics (coir bags), and nursery production.

Target Audience: New teachers, educators seeking to scale up their school gardens or increase crop production, individuals who aim to integrate vocational and employability skills into student learning, and anyone interested in launching or expanding school-based farms.

RM 116 **Robust Farm to School Programming in a Rural K-12 Setting**
Caroline Ideus & Samantha Smith Goyret, Co-Directors,
Northwest Tennessee Local Food Network

This session will offer turnkey solutions that cater to the needs of busy educators and cafeteria staff. Attendees will gain practical insights into implementing these strategies in their own schools, making farm-to-cafeteria efforts more accessible and sustainable. The presenters will discuss their efforts in driving systemic change within rural school food programs.

Key Takeaways: Participants will leave with ready-to-use strategies that simplify and strengthen farm-to-cafeteria initiatives, tailored for the fast-paced environments of schools.

Target Audience: Educators, cafeteria staff, and school food program leaders working in rural K–12 settings who are seeking practical and sustainable methods to enhance their farm-to-school efforts.



RM 117 **Back by Popular Demand: Food Safety Information, Activities, and Games**

Billy Mitchell, Education and Training Specialist for Produce Safety, UF Produce Safety Extension & **Kirby Quam**, Assistant Bureau Chief, Support Services, FDACS - Division of Fruit and Vegetables

This session offers an engaging introduction to produce safety topics for produce farmers, school procurement specialists, school garden managers, and school garden educators. Participants will learn about foodborne pathogens, germs, best practices to reduce risk, helpful resources, practical next steps, and whether or not it's risky they've not been washing their reusable water bottle every day.

Key Takeaways: Participants will gain foundational knowledge about produce safety, including understanding foodborne pathogens and germs, and learning best practices for risk reduction.

Target Audience: Produce farmers, school procurement specialists, school garden managers, and school garden educators seeking to improve or reinforce their produce safety practices.



3:45 - 4:00 pm **NETWORKING BREAK**

4:00 - 5:00 pm **CLOSING SESSION WITH LIGHTNING TALKS**

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District Changemakers: Effecting Change with Farm to School
Shani Hall, Student Nutrition Services General Manager, Hillsborough County Public Schools; **Alicia Blackford**, Food & Nutrition Specialist/District Chef, Columbia County Schools Food & Nutrition Department; & **Susie Hasset**, Environmental Education Resource Teacher, Lee County Schools

Why should you stay until the last minute? Because the 2026 Florida Farm to School Conference will be closing with this session jam-packed with farm-fresh ideas from District Changemakers! Before we say goodbye, we will foreground district representatives to share how they have been successful, who they partnered with, and what you can do to have similar success when you leave. No matter where you work, you should glean valuable knowledge from this inspirational trio.



MEET OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Bertrand Weber

Farm to School Innovator & Former Director of Culinary and Wellness Services for Minneapolis Public Schools

Bertrand Weber is a nationally recognized leader in school food system transformation with more than 40 years of experience across hospitality, large-scale food operations, and public education.

In 2004, he launched one of Minnesota's first farm to school programs, helping connect schools with local farmers and seasonal foods. From 2012 until his retirement in 2026, Bertrand served as Director of Culinary and Wellness Services for Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), leading a return to scratch cooking and positioning MPS as a national model for high-quality, sustainable school meals.

He has held leadership roles with national school nutrition and Farm to School organizations and has received numerous honors, including the IFMA Silver Plate Award and multiple FAME awards.

Bertrand is a true Farm to School pioneer, and we're honored to welcome him as this year's conference keynote speaker!



FNW LEADERSHIP



VIANKA COLIN

Division Director, Food, Nutrition
and Wellness, FDACS



LASHA WILLIAMS-POTTS

Assistant Director, Division of Food,
Nutrition and Wellness, FDACS



JEREMY EASON

Bureau Chief, Education &
Outreach, FDACS



BELA DELGADO

Director of Outreach, FDACS

POWERHOUSE EVENT SQUAD



MICHAEL CARTER

Farm to School Coordinator and School Garden Specialist, FDACS
Co-Program Lead



JASON DIAL

Farm to School Coordinator and Producer Training Facilitator, FDACS
Co-Program Lead



VIVIANE ABUABARA

Outreach Coordinator, FDACS



KATHERINE GUZMAN

Event Coordinator, FDACS
Event Lead



LESLIE HILLEARY

Outreach Coordinator, FDACS
Whova Officer & Your Cruise Director



DOUG RYAN

Events and Logistics Officer, FDACS
General Event Lead



NATHAN SMITH

Strategic Partnerships Coordinator, FDACS
Farmers Market Expo



MAKEL YOUNG

Outreach Coordinator, FDACS

ROOM HOSTS



SANDER DOMINICK

Director of Education and Program
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BROWE MERRIWEATHER

Government Analyst, FDACS



ERIC PARKS

Government Analyst, FDACS



FELIPE PRIETO RIOS

Government Analyst, FDACS



WENDY RUDE

Government Analyst, FDACS
Room Host Lead



ANGIE ZABALA

Government Analyst, FDACS

REGISTRATION & INFO



JALISA BRYANT
Program Specialist, FDACS



JAMIE BURCH, RDN
Nutrition Specialist, FDACS



KRISTIN GONZALEZ, RD
Nutrition Specialist, FDACS



ALEXA KELLENBERGER
Outreach Coordinator, FDACS
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SYDNEY KELLY, RD
Nutrition Standards Program
Specialist, FDACS



ALFRED MENJOR
Property Analyst, FDACS

CONTINUING EDUCATION

School Nutrition Professionals attending the 2026 Florida Farm to School Conference are eligible to receive 4 hours of Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits. These valuable credits can be applied toward fulfilling your annual CEU training requirements, helping you stay up-to-date with the latest practices and advancements in the field of school nutrition.

Attendees can gain insights from experts, participate in hands-on workshops, and engage in meaningful discussions that will enhance their professional skills and knowledge. This is an excellent opportunity to network with peers, share best practices, and explore innovative ways to connect students with nutritious, local food.

To fulfill these CEU credits and receive a notice of completion, as well as session recommendations tailored to your needs, please reach out to Bela Delgado at Bela.Delgado@FDACS.gov.



JOIN US ON OUR OFFICIAL EVENT APP

We're using *Whova* as our official event app to facilitate networking, host the event agenda, distribute documents, and send announcements!

The event invitation code is:
farmtoschool2026



**Florida Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services**

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