



MEDIA KIT

Congratulations on being selected for the 2015-2016 Northeast Farm to School Institute! Close to 6,000 Northeast schools are engaging in Farm to School activities. As one of thirteen new participating Institute schools, your team will be helping to lead this important national movement.

This simple media kit will help you spread the word about your school's plans and activities and your selection for the Northeast Farm to School Institute. Publicizing your participation in the Institute through local press and communication channels will help build support for your food, farm & nutrition work – now and long-term.

In this kit you'll find tips for media outreach and social media and a press release template. Please use and adapt them as you please!

Announcing Your Selection for the Northeast Farm to School Institute

Throughout this year, you'll learn critical skills and practices that will help your students make healthier choices, increase your staff's involvement in school lunch programs, and draw innovative connections between classrooms, the cafeteria, and the community. We also want to help you grow your communications capacity, which is a critical part of successful programs. Publicity helps keep the community involved and informed, and media coverage demonstrates support for your project – critical pieces of getting broad-based community support and future funding.

Consider announcing your good news in the following ways:

1. Sending a press release to local media outlets
2. Sharing the news on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or other social media avenues used by your community
3. Posting a message on local listserves (e.g., Front Porch Forum)
4. Putting an announcement in a community or school newsletter

5 Tips for Getting Press Coverage

A few simple tips will help you establish relationships with media and get your great stories out into the world.

1. Get to Know Local Press.

Read your local paper and other media to get a sense for what kinds of stories they cover. Find ways to connect your story to big local issues and themes. Learn your paper's editorial calendar and find out how far in advance (often three weeks!) they need to know about stories or announcements.

2. Get to Know Local Reporters.

Find out who covers the news for your town or school and reach out with an email or call. Meet up for coffee and tell reporters about your program, or invite them for a tour of the garden and lunch at school. Make yourself available to answer questions.

3. Offer Great Content.

Don't send a press release every week, but do reach out when you have great stories or events and include a "hook" to draw in the reader. Take photographs and share your multimedia. Send copies of posters, fliers, and other products. Develop an "elevator pitch" and arm yourself with great stories about impact & results.

4. Develop a Media Kit.

Make it easy for media to cover your project by developing a simple media kit. Pull together basic information about your project (which can include key quotes, stories that illustrate importance and impact of your program), sample photographs, your logo, and contact information. Have that ready to send out at a moment's notice, or even post it online so that a reporter can find it easily any time.

5. Share the Love.

Have students, community members and different people on your project write stories and editorials or contact the paper, demonstrating that it is truly a team effort. And tell the world about the coverage you've received! Develop a social media campaign – share your news and ask others to spread the word.

STAY IN TOUCH

We ♥ spreading the word!



"Like" our page at www.facebook.com/vtfeed. Mention or tag us, and we'll try to reciprocate and share information about your project. Use the hashtag #NEFTSInst on Facebook and Twitter.



VT schools, join the VT Farm to School Network listserve & website to get announcements and post events: vermontfarmtoschool.org. Look for similar lists in other states!



If you get any press coverage, please contact us so that we can help spread the good word. Feel free to get in touch with us if you need help with communications. info@vtfeed.org



FARM TO SCHOOL INSTITUTE 2015-2016

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Feel free to use and adapt the following template to create a press release announcing your selection for the 2015-2016 Northeast Farm to School Institute. We suggest personalizing underlined sections with facts, quotes and details about your program, and then sending it to press contacts in the body of an email.

Email Subject PRESS RELEASE: [TITLE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[DATE]

CONTACT:

[Name]

[Title]

[Organization]

[Phone]

[Email]

[School] Selected for Statewide 2015-2016 Northeast Farm to School Institute

[School] is one of thirteen teams recently selected for the 2015-2016 Northeast Farm to School Institute, hosted by Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED). The Institute is a year-long learning opportunity that will help [school] engage students in food, farm and nutrition education and serve healthy, local school meals.

Since 2010, VT FEED's Institute has helped more than 47 Vermont schools and school districts develop vibrant Farm to School programs that help students make healthy food choices, expand use of local products in cafeterias, create food and farm curriculum, build school gardens, foster community connections and more. 2015 is the first year that the Institute is open to teams throughout New England and New York, thanks to funding from a national United States Department of Agriculture Farm to School grant. This year's Northeast Farm to School Institute is offered free of charge to schools with

additional support from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont, Serena Foundation, Keurig Green Mountain, and the Farmhouse Group.

[Insert quote from School official, farm to school coordinator, or other spokesperson about why your team is participating in the Institute or what you hope to get out of it.]

[Consider inserting info about your current Farm to School activities and/or your plans. For example, how much local food is already served in your school, recent accomplishments, what your goals are and/or what farms you partner with.]

Beginning with a three-day summer gathering at Shelburne Farms from June 24-26, [school] will learn how to conduct Farm to School activities inside and outside of the classroom. The team will learn about elements of successful Farm to School programs, create action plans for their schools, and network with peers and other schools. [School's] team includes: [list team members and roles].

The team will work with a coach to create and carry out a Farm to School action plan for the 2015-2016 school year. Farm to School activities might include hands-on experiences growing and cooking food, opportunities to meet and learn from local farmers, integrating agriculture and nutrition into science, literacy and math lessons, strategies to increase nutritious and seasonal foods in school cafeterias, and events or programs that involve the community in growing and enjoying healthy, local foods.

According to the most recent USDA Farm to School survey, close to 6,000 Northeast schools are bringing the farm to school, engaging over three million students and spending over \$58 million on local foods. Strong farm to school programs are linked to increased school meal participation, increased consumption of vegetables, and better understanding of health, nutrition, and awareness of food, farm & community issues.

"Vermont and the Northeast are national leaders in the farm to school movement, creating changes in the food system by driving connections between education, health and nutrition, and local foods and farms," said Betsy Rosenbluth, Project Director of Vermont FEED and the Regional Lead for the Northeast Regional Steering Committee of the National Farm to School Network. "We expect the first regional Farm to School Institute will spark even more critical innovations that benefit our children and communities and that we can share with other schools."

School teams selected for the 2015-2016 Northeast Farm to School Institute are: Bradford Elementary in Bradford, VT; Champlain Elementary in Burlington, VT; Essex Town School District in Essex, VT; Falmouth Public Schools in Falmouth, ME; Guilford Central School in Guilford, VT; Hardwick Elementary in Hardwick, VT; Manchester Elementary in Manchester, VT; Milton High School in Milton, VT; Monument Valley Regional Middle School in Great Barrington, MA; Roundout Valley Junior High School in Accord, NY; South Burlington High School in South Burlington, VT; Somersworth Middle School in Somersworth, NH; and Waterville Central School District in Waterville, NY.

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[Insert your school's boilerplate language here – 1 paragraph max summarizing your organization, mission, and website or phone number. Add a separate paragraph for any additional partners on your Farm to School work.]

Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) is a partnership program of Shelburne Farms and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT). VT FEED's mission is to work with schools and communities to raise awareness about healthy food, good nutrition, and the role of farms and farmers. Visit www.vtfeed.org to learn more.