Spread the Word!
A Media Kit for Northeast Farm to School Institute Teams

Congratulations on being selected for the 2021-2022 Northeast Farm to School Institute!
As new Institute participants, your team will be helping to lead this important national movement, being among the growing number of Northeast students engaging in Farm to School activities.

Here are some tips that will help you spread the word about your school’s plans, activities, and your selection for the Northeast Farm to School Institute. Publicizing your participation in the Institute through local press, social media, and other communications channels will help build support for your food, farm, and nutrition work — now and long-term.

For content inspiration and posts that can easily be shared and customized for your school community, follow Vermont FEED on social media where we’ll be posting about the importance of Farm to School and the Institute’s role in this movement.

Facebook • Instagram • Twitter

Below, you’ll find tips for media outreach, social media, and a press release template. Please use and adapt them as you need!

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 local foods in the cafeteria, 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 news in the following ways:

1. Send a press release to your local media outlets (see following template)
2. Share the news on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or other social media channels used by your community
3. Place an announcement in a community or school newsletter
Tips for Getting Your News Picked Up

Know Your Local Press.
Find out who covers the news for your town on topics including education, agriculture, and reach out with an email or phone call. Offer to send them information, or invite them to come to your school to see your team in action. Offer them a tour of the garden or lunch at school. Make yourself available to answer questions.

Keep in mind that the media plans their calendar in advance (often one to two weeks!). If you get press coverage, please contact us (info@vtfeed.org) so we can spread the news.

Offer Great Content.
Reach out with great stories or events and include a “hook” to draw in the reader. The media likes a good visual, especially events, so if your students are going to be planting a garden, building a chicken coop, or creating another initiative/event, reach out to the media a week in advance and invite them to attend. Share photographs and video. Send copies of posters, fliers, and other materials. Develop an elevator pitch and arm yourself with great stories about impact and results.

Send a Letter to the Editor.
Make it easy for the media to cover your project by submitting a letter to the editor about your project, why it’s important, your goals etc. Include, photographs, logo, and contact information.

Share the Love.
Share your news and ask others to spread the word. Have students, community members, and project participants write stories or editorials and contact the paper. Tell the world about the coverage you’ve received! Join your state Farm to School listservs to post events. (Vermont schools can go to vermontfarmtoschool.org/get-involved. Look for similar lists in your state.)

We’ll help spread the word!

Use the hashtag #NEFTSI on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share information about the 2021-22 Institute. Example posts:

Twitter: Exciting news! We’re selected as a @VT_FEED 2021-22 NE FarmToSchool Institute team! Learn more at: v tide.farm/neftsi #NEFTSI

Facebook & Instagram: We’ve been selected as a 2021-22 Vermont FEED (Food Education Every Day) Northeast Farm to School Institute team! We’re excited to expand our work connecting students to local agriculture and the food they eat. #NEFTSI

Mention or tag us, and we’ll share information about your project.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(School Name) Selected by Vermont FEED
for the 2021-22 Northeast Farm to School Institute

(Your Town Name), VT (Month, 2021) — Shelburne Farms and NOFA-VT are offering a year-long professional development program through their Vermont FEED partnership: the Northeast Farm to School Institute and (School Name) has been selected as one of the ten schools to participate. This important initiative supports selected schools in designing and implementing effective Farm to School and Early Childhood programs that have proven more important than ever through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“After sixteen months of reimagining learning during the pandemic, some changes are proving to be more than simply a bandaid to ride out a tumultuous year,” explains Betsy Rosenbluth, Vermont FEED Project Director, “Shifts we came to rely on include: utilizing more outdoor learning spaces, increasing access to school meals, investing in a more resilient local food system that withstood pandemic-fueled infrastructure crises, and appreciating the power of community to effect change.”

The programs resulting from Northeast Farm to School Institute seek to create a culture of wellness, improve food quality and access, engage students in agriculture and nutrition education, and strengthen local food systems. In its twelfth years, the Institute has supported programs with well over 100 schools and districts, impacting tens of thousands of students in embedding farm to school into school communities.

According to (Spokesperson’s Name), (Your School Name), (Your town), VT (insert quote here. Sample quote….), “We are thrilled to have been selected to participate in the Northeast FTS Institute this year as we look to continue growing our Farm to Early Childhood program. We know that Farm to School & Early Childhood programs connect young children and families to needed resources, building community, and providing educators valuable resources and support to engage children in safe outdoor learning.”
(Add paragraph here about what initiatives your school plans to focus on with your participation in the program.)

Vermont FEED is a Farm to School partnership project of Shelburne Farms and Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT). Their “3C Model” catalyzes change through the Cafeteria, Classroom, and Community to improve knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward healthy eating, local purchasing, and our food system. This year’s Northeast Farm to School Institute is being presented in partnership with the New York Farm to School Institute, hosted by American Farmland Trust’s initiative Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS). Nine New York teams spanning from Brooklyn to Upstate New York will participate through the 2020-2021 school year. Adapted from Vermont FEED’s Institute model, the New York Farm to School Institute aligns the holistic 3C’s approach with specific needs and interests of New York school communities across the state.

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[insert general information about your school or organization]

Shelburne Farms is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to cultivate and inspire learning for a sustainable future. That means learning that links knowledge, inquiry, and action to help students build a healthy future for their communities and the planet. Shelburne Farms’ campus is a 1,400-acre working farm and forest.

NOFA-VT (the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont) is an association of farmers, gardeners, and consumers, promoting an economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all living things.

Farm to School Census Data -

- **65.4%** of school food authorities reported participating in farm to school activities in the 2018–2019 school year.
- **42.8M** students attended school food authorities that participated in farm to school activities in the 2018–2019 school year.
- **67,369** schools are featuring local foods on the menu or educating students.

Farm to School Census - The 2019 results come from 12,634 responding school food authorities (SFAs) in all 50 states, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Washington D.C. The school food authority is the entity responsible for school food service operations and may or may not correspond to a school district.
Media Contacts:

[Insert your name, email, and phone number for media to reach you]

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