

The Food Trust

Ensuring That Everyone Has Access To Affordable, Nutritious Food



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Field to Tray, the Inaugural Farm to School Conference for the Mid-Atlantic Region, Brings Together Innovators in the Field to Connect Communities with Fresh, Healthy Food

WHEN: November 4-5, 2015

WHERE: The Universities at Shady Grove
9630 Gudelsky Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

WHAT: *Field to Tray: Strengthening Farm to School Purchasing in the Mid-Atlantic*, the inaugural region-wide farm to school conference hosted by Philadelphia-based healthy food access nonprofit **The Food Trust** in partnership with the **United States Department of Agriculture**, will bring together farmers, food service directors, suppliers and other stakeholders for a day of digging in to local food procurement strategies. This conference, supported by a USDA Farm to School Grant, will be a sharing, learning and networking opportunity for key farm to school players in the Mid-Atlantic who are working to connect communities with fresh, healthy food.

“We are excited have the opportunity to bring together so many inspiring farm to school leaders under one roof,” says **Yael Lehmann**, Executive Director of The Food Trust. “We’ve seen firsthand how important it is for kids to understand where their food comes from and why healthy food is good for them, and we have always believed in creating strong communities by connecting local farmers to our schools.”

Adds **Anupama Joshi**, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the **National Farm to School Network**: “This is a movement built on innovative and cross-sectoral collaborations – partnerships that reach beyond one classroom, cafeteria or statehouse. For those new to farm to school and for experienced leaders, the Mid-Atlantic Farm to School Conference is a critical convening of practitioners and advocates working to improve child nutrition and support local agriculture.”

The convening will begin with the history of farm to school purchasing and programming, its impact and its potential to lift up child nutrition programs while supporting local and regional food systems. Afternoon workshops will focus on local food purchasing for preschool and school meals, as well as how farmers can make lasting, strong connections with the communities they serve. The conference will culminate with an overview of how farm to school policy can support and shape practices on the ground, with perspectives from the local, state and federal levels.

Featured speakers include:

- **Pat Dombroski**, Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator, United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS)

- **Joseph Bartenfelder**, Secretary, Maryland Department of Agriculture
- **Matt Benson**, Program Analyst, USDA Farm to School
- **Erin McGuire**, Policy Director, National Farm to School Network
- Keynote Speaker: TBA

As the Mid-Atlantic regional lead agency for the **National Farm to School Network**, The Food Trust supports farm to school efforts and coordinates advocacy and networking among states in the Mid-Atlantic region, and shares information, resources, needs and opportunities with the rest of the National Farm to School Network.

About The Food Trust

The Food Trust is a nationally recognized nonprofit dedicated to ensuring that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. The Food Trust is committed to fostering healthier communities and bringing healthy food retail to underserved areas. To learn more about The Food Trust, visit www.thefoodtrust.org.

About USDA Farm to School

USDA's Farm to School Program, housed in the Food and Nutrition Service's Office of Community Food Systems, was formally established by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The Program is dedicated to improving access to local foods in schools through research, funding, and a robust training and technical assistance program. The Food and Nutrition Service supports full-time farm to school leads in each of its regional offices as well as several national-level staff members. To learn more about farm to school at USDA, visit www.usda.gov/farmtoschool.

