

Legislature Approves and Funds Iowa Farm to School Program

1000 Friends of Iowa Applauds Future Benefits for Local Economies and Farmland
With news of the last minute approval of legislation that will bring fresh Iowa foods to Iowa school students, spirits are soaring at the 1000 Friends of Iowa office. Senate File 452, introduced by Senator Joe Bolkcom from Iowa City, was stalled out for many weeks at the legislature but ended up being amended onto other legislation at the end of the session last week.

Policy language creating the program and establishing a Farm to School Council was added to the “standings bill,” SF 601, the last bill of the session. An \$80,000 appropriation to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) was added to Agriculture and Natural Resources budget bill, Senate File 551. IDALS will administer the program with two full-time staff.

The Farm to School program was established to encourage and promote the purchase of locally and regionally produced or processed food in order to improve child nutrition and strengthen local and regional farm economies. A seven-member Farm to School Council will seek to establish partnerships with public agencies and non-profit organizations to foster communication between farmers and schools, and will seek financial or in-kind contributions to support the program.

The Farm to School Program is a wonderful starting point that will address many of 1000 Friends of Iowa's concerns about how we use our land in Iowa and pass the benefits of that knowledge on to our most precious resource...future generations.

1000 Friends of Iowa staff followed the legislation and engaged people along the way, even when legislators said it was a dead issue. 1000 Friends of Iowa worked with other organizations and supporters including health professionals, faith-based organizations, and farmers. 1000 Friends of Iowa members and others weighed in at key times in the legislative process about how this program will boost local economies and advance sustainable agriculture.

Big thanks should go to Senator Joe Bolkcom from Iowa City and Senator Robert Dvorsky from Coralville for getting the policy language in the standings bill.

Representative Mark Kuhn from Charles City advanced the \$80,000 appropriation and Senator Staci Appel from Carlisle was a persistent supporter during key times in the legislative process.

You can email and thank them at the following email addresses:

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1000 Friends of Iowa will stay involved as the next steps of this program develop and we will keep you updated. Establishing and growing this program means

- More dollars will circulate locally due to the expansion of markets for local foods
- Infrastructure for local food distribution will be advanced
- Connections between farmers and local communities will strengthen, furthering potential for farmland preservation and local planning for food security

The Policy Language about the Iowa Farm to School program is below:

Sec. 85. NEW SECTION. 190A.1 FARM=TO=SCHOOL PROGRAM.

41 16 A farm=to=school program is established to encourage and
41 17 promote the purchase of locally and regionally produced or
41 18 processed food in order to improve child nutrition and
41 19 strengthen local and regional farm
economies.

41 20 Sec. 86. NEW SECTION. 190A.2 FARM=TO=SCHOOL COUNCIL.

41 21 1. A farm=to=school council is established and made up of
41 22 seven members representing the following associations or state
41 23 departments:

41 24 a. One member representing the Iowa school nutrition
41 25 association.

41 26 b. One member representing the Iowa association for
41 27 health, physical education, recreation and dance with
41 28 expertise in health.

41 29 c. One Iowa fruit or vegetable producer.

41 30 d. One Iowa organic meat producer.

41 31 e.

The director of the Leopold center or the director's
41 32 designee.

41 33 f. The director of the department of agriculture and land
41 34 stewardship or the director's designee.

41 35 g. The director of the department of education or the
42 1 director's designee.

42 2 2. The members listed under subsection 1, paragraphs "a"
42 3 through "d", shall be selected by the governor without senate
42 4 confirmation and shall serve at the pleasure of the governor.

42 5 Sec. 87. NEW SECTION. 190A.3 GOALS AND STRATEGIES.

42 6 1. The program seeks to link elementary and secondary
42 7 public and nonpublic schools in this state with Iowa farms to
42 8 provide schools with fresh and minimally processed food for
42 9 inclusion in school meals and snacks, encourages children to
42 10 develop healthy eating habits, and provide Iowa farmers access
42 11 to consumer markets.

42 12 2. The farm=to=school program may include activities that
42 13 provide students with hands=on learning opportunities, such as
42 14 farm visits, cooking demonstrations, and school gardening and
42 15 composting programs.

42 16 3. The farm=to=school council shall seek to establish
42 17 partnerships with public agencies and nonprofit organizations
42 18 to implement a

structure to facilitate communication between
42 19 farmers and schools.

42 20 4. The farm=to=school council shall actively seek
42 21 financial or in-kind contributions from organizations or
42 22 persons to support the program.

42 23 Sec. 88. NEW SECTION. 190A.4 AGENCY COOPERATION.

42 24 The department of agriculture and land stewardship and the
42 25 department of education shall provide information regarding
42 26 the Iowa farm=to=school program in an electronic format on the
42 27 department's internet website.