The WSDA Farm-to-School Program and the Washington School Nutrition Association have partnered with local schools to feature Washington-grown foods in their school meals. From fresh-dug potatoes in potato salad to just-picked lettuces in fresh salads, this statewide event is a great opportunity for students, teachers, and parents to consider where their food comes from, how it is produced and the benefits of a healthy diet.

Taste Washington Day offers our kids a chance to establish a deeper connection and develop a better understanding of our state’s food system, from farm to fork and each step in between. The more opportunities our children have to learn about the people, time, effort and resources necessary to turn a seed into a crop, the more they will appreciate the food on their plates. As the next generation, it will be up to them to continue our state’s agricultural heritage and history.

The valuable and delicious lessons learned through events such as Taste Washington Day will help them carry on our state’s proud traditions.

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**Taste Washington Day**

On September 29th, 2010 the WSDA Farm-to-School Program and the Washington School Nutrition Association (WSNA) partnered to sponsor Taste Washington Day, an annual celebration of Washington grown foods served in school meals. Traditionally celebrated in March, WSNA moved the event to September in order to time it with the bountiful harvest season and encourage more local sourcing.

Taste Washington Day has long encouraged school food service professionals to feature and highlight Washington grown foods. With WSDA’s additional resources and expertise to make region-specific referrals for farm partners, resolve distribution challenges, and develop cafeteria-based marketing strategies, 2010 Taste Washington Day attracted more participants and boosted the knowledge of farms and schools.

“Teaming up with you and the Washington State Department of Agriculture’s Farm to School Program helped make this such a successful event! The publicity you provided and the contacts with schools and farms that you were able to make was immeasurable to the success of the event. I hope we can continue the work that we have started.”

Raeann Ducar, Nutrition Services Supervisor, and Co-Coordinator of Taste Washington Day
Partnering with Washington Business to Bring Innovative Products to School Markets

Shepherd’s Grain, in partnership with three regional bakeries and Food Services of America (FSA), developed whole wheat rolls and breadsticks for school lunches. Schools purchased over 15,000 of the premium quality whole wheat and high gluten flour breadsticks. Though the product was developed especially for the event, it was so popular that it’s now part of FSA’s regular offerings. Bagel Brothers in Olympia was one of the participating bakeries, and they now sell that bread stick in their retail stores on a regular basis.

Survey responses indicate

$17,000 was spent on Washington grown products for that day’s lunch, and that schools plan to spend $90,000 more on Washington products during in the following six months.

Wenatchee School District Local Farm Partners

Enthusiastic School Nutrition Staff from the Wenatchee School District visited Cloudview EcoFarms in Royal City to gain some firsthand experience with this partner farm’s operations.

Later, Cloudview farmers Jim Baird and Zack Zink joined Wenatchee SD for lunch on Taste Washington Day to celebrate putting fresh local foods on school menus.

Ken Toevs happens to be not only the owner/operator of T & T Farms in Quincy, he is also a professionally trained chef.

Chef Toevs brought both skill sets to bear when he roasted and served his farm’s squash for Wenatchee School District’s Taste Washington Day menu.

Connecting Education to Washington Agriculture

Participating School Nutrition Directors shared feedback on surveys:

“The high school Future Farmers of America (FFA) club members visited each school in the district during lunch and handed out samples of the locally grown produce and talked with the students about the products. They were a very positive representation of agriculture and really helped to make the event a success at each school.”

“One farmer brought eggs in for the kids to incubate then watch hatch. Kids took a bus ride to her farm to see all the animals they raise and experience the wheat fields.”
October is National Farm to School Month

In last year’s session, the U.S. House of Representatives declared October National Farm to School Month.

Taste Washington Day is a great opportunity to make farm connections and launch Farm to School Month activities.

Institutional markets promising for growers

Individual farms reported sales as high as $8,250

and survey respondents reported spending more than $20,000 on Washington grown products for the day’s lunch.

Based on survey responses we expect all of the participating farms from 2010 to stay involved and to build upon relationships and supply chain solutions from this year’s effort.

“We are proud to be able to serve our school districts. We are an apple farm and they are the perfect market for our small apples.”

Eastern Washington Apple Grower

USDA’s Proposed Rules to Update Nutrition Standards for School Breakfast and Lunch Programs would require schools to offer more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, highlighting orange and red fruits and vegetables, dark leafy greens, and more beans and legumes. Washington state growers produce all of these in quantity, and they are available from local growers for much of the school year.

The farm-to-school team at WSDA helps match local schools to the farms near them that are interested in working with schools to supply them with these and other locally grown produce.

LaConner School District’s menu:

- Locally grown russet baked potatoes and ham julienne
- Cheese sauce made with cheese from Golden Glen Creamery
- Green onions, broccoli florets, and other produce from Hedlin Farms and Swanson Brothers Farm
- Jonagold apples from Gordon Skagit Farm
- Chocolate cake with raspberry buttercream, using raspberries from Swanson Brothers

Taste Washington Day—be a part of it September 28, 2011
Enthusiasm was high, with approximately 50 farms and 60 school districts responding to WSDA calls for participation.

### Farms

Alvarez Farms  
American Produce Express  
Bellewood Acres  
Black River Blues  
Blue Rose Dairy  
Boistfort Valley Farm  
Cloudview Ecofarms  
Dagdagan Produce  
Dickey Farms  
Dry Slough Orchard  
DV Farm  
Emtman Brothers Farms  
Full Circle Farm  
Growing Washington  
Harvest Jubilee  
Harvest View Gardens  
Hedlin Farms  
Hidden Meadow Ranch  
Holly Lane Gardens  
J&W Hutton  
Little Eorthe Farm  
Low Gap Produce  
Lubbe Farms  
Magaña Farms  
Mark Applebee Orchard  
Marshland Orchards  
Millingwood Organics, LLC  
Morgan Family Farm  
Nash’s Organic Produce  
Okanogan Producers Marketing Association  
Open Gate Farm  
Oxbow Farm  
Palouse Grain Growers, Inc.  
Ralph’s Greenhouse  
Shaw’s Fruit and Produce  
Shepherd’s Grain  
Smithson Ranch  
Stiebrs Farms, Inc.  
T & T Farms  
Tahoma Farms  
Terra Organics  
Township 18  
Viva Farms  
Wilson Banner Ranch  
Yaksum Orchard Heirloom Fruit  
Zepp Farm

### School Districts

Anacortes  
Arlington Public Schools  
Auburn  
Bainbridge Island  
Battleground  
Bellingham  
Bethel  
Bremerton  
Cle Elum-Roslyn  
Concrete  
Cosmopolis  
East Valley - Spokane  
East Valley - Yakima  
Enumclaw  
Everett  
Evergreen  
Freeman  
Grapeview  
Griffin  
Harrington  
Highline Public Schools  
Hockinson  
Hoquiam  
Kelso  
Kent  
King’s Schools  
Klickitat  
La Conner  
Lummi Tribal School  
Lyle  
Lynden  
Mary Walker  
Mercer Island  
Meridian  
Mill A  
Monroe  
Mt. Baker  
Nespelem  
North Mason  
Northshore  
Olympia  
Onion Creek  
Orcas Island  
Pasco  
Peninsula  
Port Angeles  
Pullman  
Quilcene  
Ridgefield  
Riverview  
Rochester  
Rosalia  
Seattle Public Schools  
South Kitsap  
Spokane Public Schools  
St. Joseph Catholic School  
Stanwood  
Stevenson-Carson  
Sunnyside  
Toppenish  
Union Gap  
Wahluke  
Wapato  
Waterville  
Wenatchee  
West Valley - Yakima  
White River  
Zillah

### Distribution and Production Partners

American Produce Express  
Bagel Brothers  
Dagdagan Produce  
Duck Delivery  
Food Services of America  
Okanogan Producers Marketing Association  
Pacific Coast Fruit Company  
Rosella’s  
Shaw’s Fruit and Produce  
Sound Produce  
Terra Organics  
Waldman’s Produce

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**TASTE WASHINGTON DAY**