



## NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email ([david.jespersen@nebraska.gov](mailto:david.jespersen@nebraska.gov))

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 16, 2017

### **NDE RECEIVES USDA GRANT TO INCREASE LOCAL FOODS IN SCHOOL CAFETERIAS**

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) is one of 65 projects spanning 42 states and Puerto Rico receiving support this year through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm to School Grant Program. The program is an effort to better connect school cafeterias and students with local farmers and ranchers. NDE received a \$71,860 Support Service grant to impact all K-12 students across Nebraska.

"Increasing the amount of local foods in America's schools is a win-win for everyone," Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said. "Our children benefit from the fresh, local food served in their meals at school, and local economies are nourished, as well, when schools buy the food they provide close to home."

NDE Director of Nutrition Services, Sharon Davis, says it's important to support farm to school efforts in Nebraska. "As leaders for education in our state, we will demonstrate to schools, producers, and Nebraskans that farm to school efforts are attractive, achievable, and accessible. NDE strives to be an expert in the field and will provide a centralized resource and support system for farm to school programming in Nebraska."

The NDE will use support service funds to expand farm to school activities and programs in Nebraska schools through a statewide rollout of the "Nebraska Thursdays" program. In partnership with the Center for Rural Affairs and Omaha Public Schools Nutrition Services, this statewide campaign will bring schools together to serve a Nebraska-sourced meal in the cafeteria on the first Thursday of each month. Supporters of this project include Nebraska Dry Bean Association, Midwest Dairy Council, and Nebraska Beef Council.

“Nebraska schools want to bring local foods to the school lunch tray. This project will promote Nebraska foods and create a pathway for these foods to be available on school menus, providing resources and materials for schools to take a step forward into purchasing, processing, and promoting local foods in schools,” says NDE Farm to School Coordinator Sarah Smith.

Project partners will work with six pilot schools in year one and the program will be rolled out and promoted statewide in its second year.

####

*David Jespersen*  
*Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education*  
*402-471-4537*  
*david.jespersen@nebraska.gov*