



**Farm to
Table**

*Promoting locally based
agriculture through
education, community
outreach and networking.*

November 13, 2014

To: Senator John Sapien,
Legislative Education Study Committee, Chair

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Re: New Mexico Grown Produce for School Meals

Dear Senator Sapien,

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Legislative education Study Committee on October 13th and for the Committee's thoughtful questions and deliberation. We followed up with our bill sponsors and they are committed to introducing the New Mexico Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetable for School Meals in the 2015 legislative session to continue to build resources for the program.

I am writing on behalf of Farm to Table, the NM Food and Agriculture Policy Council, NM School Nutrition Association and our public and private sector partners. **We are requesting that the Legislative Finance Committee consider the appropriation for \$1.44 million for "NM Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for School Meals. Senator Campos and Representatives Tripp and Hall are our sponsors. We also look forward to the Legislative Education Study Committee's continued support.**

Farm to Table and the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council's priority legislation for 2015 is our "New Mexico Grown Produce for School Meals (also known as the Healthy Kids – Healthy Economy Program). This year the State legislature appropriated \$240,000 recurring towards this program which is being administered by the Public Education Department. The Department of Agriculture is a key partner in this initiative.

It has been presented to several interim committees: Water and Natural Resource, Economic and Rural Development, and Legislative Education Study Committee – all with favorable discussions, questions, and outcomes. As the program has been developed, the agencies and organizations working in partnership request that a full-time position be carved out of the appropriations to administer, promote, and expand the program into the future.

As you know, over the last several years we have been, and continue to be, focused on children's health – linking New Mexico grown fresh fruits and vegetables to school meals as a way to more closely link kids to fruits and vegetables and a way to benefit the economic impacts of New Mexico's farmers. Our legislative sponsors of this program are Senator Campos and Representatives Tripp and Hall. We expect to have additional sponsors and have on-going support.

This program has continued to grow in New Mexico. There are more

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than 60 school districts purchasing NM grown produce and who are very interested in this expanding this program. We have over 30 farms involved that are building and/or expanding their businesses. At the same time school districts are more interested in the program than ever before and in purchasing from neighboring farms. The new federal School Nutrition Rules now require twice as many servings of fruits and vegetables daily in school meals – impacting New Mexico schools. This is the most important time to inform our New Mexico legislature about the positive impacts and the opportunity to invest in the health of our children and New Mexico's farming economy.

Thank you very much for your consideration. We look forward to your response and would be happy to meet to discuss it as well. I can be reached at 505-660-8403.

Warmest regards,



Pam Roy, Executive Director

Cc:

David Abbey, Director, NM Legislative Finance Committee

Representative Lucky Varela, Legislative Finance Committee, Chair

Senator John Arthur Smith, Legislative Finance Committee, Vice Chair

Representative Don Tripp

Representative Jimmie Hall

Senator Pete Campos

Representative Debbie Rodella, Economic and Rural Development Interim Committee, Chair

Senator Phil Griego, Water and Natural Resources Interim Committee, Chair

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BILL DRAFT

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - 2015

INTRODUCED BY

AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO PROVIDE NEW MEXICO GROWN FRESH
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR SCHOOL MEALS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION.--One million four hundred forty thousand dollars (\$1,440,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the public education department for expenditure in fiscal year 2015 and subsequent fiscal years for the public education department to distribute to school districts, charter schools, and juvenile detention centers for the purchase of New Mexico grown fresh fruits and vegetables for school meal programs, and to support a full-time position to administer and promote the program. The public education department, in coordination with the New Mexico department of agriculture, shall ensure that the appropriated funds are expended for the stated purpose. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a fiscal year

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Farm to School Education

Farm to School links school children with farm fresh food and educational activities that bring the whole world of agriculture to life and help instill lifestyle choices that nurture their bodies, their communities, and the planet.



Eating fresh, local foods AND having farm and food related education is the combination that turns kids into healthy eaters for a lifetime.

Farm to Table's new Produce of the Month program . . .



Over 20 schools and school districts are participating this year!

Schools across the state are committed to serving all students in their communities New Mexico grown fresh fruits and veggies on a monthly basis.

Schools are promoting nutrition, local produce, and local farmers in the cafeteria .

Our program will run from August 2014 – January 2015!

Farm to school educational curriculum engages k-12 students in experiential learning activities that include the following aspects and more!

- ◆ School garden planning, care, planting, and harvesting
- ◆ Agriculture and natural science based curriculum
- ◆ Incorporating local foods into school lessons, snacks, and meals
- ◆ Visits to Local Farms
- ◆ Cooking and Nutrition classes
- ◆ Farmer in the classroom
- ◆ Local food tastings and Harvest of the Month promotional programs

For more information about Farm to School educational activities and supporting policy initiatives happening across the nation please visit:

www.farmtoschool.org



New Mexico Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for School Meals

- Appropriation Request: \$1.44 Million -



What Legislative funding could do:

For our Children

- ◆ The purchase of New Mexico-grown fruits and vegetables will enhance the diets of school children, promoting healthier lifestyles and increasing academic achievement. Studies show healthy nutrition improves child well-being and learning ability.
- ◆ Legislative funding will stem the rise in childhood obesity in New Mexico and help to save the state an additional \$324 million in obesity related health care expenses and an additional \$1.2 billion for diabetes.

For our Schools

- ◆ Legislative funding will help ensure that school meal programs will have the budget to purchase local produce from New Mexico farmers.
- ◆ School food service directors will be in a better position to comply with recent federal rules requiring more servings of fruits and vegetables in the school meals.

For our Farmers and the Economy

- ◆ Legislative funding will expand school markets for the agricultural sector in New Mexico, particularly small and medium size fruit and vegetable farmers, they will build a new market and increase their chances to stay on the land and continue producing food for our communities.
- ◆ The new federal school meal rules—and their emphasis on fruits and vegetables—will help develop a strong market for New Mexico farmers as well as enhance rural and tribal economies.

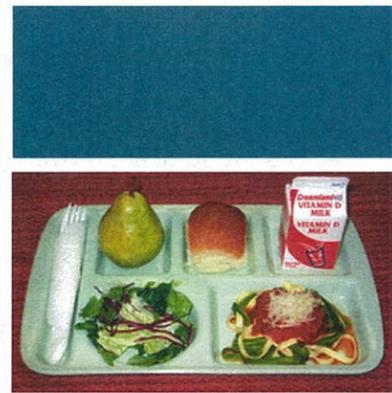
For our State

- ◆ Increasing economic farming opportunities will help to maintain family farming and conserve the unique heritage and cultural traditions of New Mexico.

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New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council
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New Mexico Grown Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for School Meals

Senate Sponsor:

- Senator Pete Campos -

House Co-Sponsors:

- Representatives Don L. Tripp and Jimmie Hall -

2015 Appropriation Request: \$1.44 Million

- Appropriated: \$240,000 Recurring 2014-

State investment could have sustainable impacts on the well-being of children and economic growth of communities across New Mexico.

How it Works for Schools

By purchasing New Mexico-grown fresh fruits and vegetables schools across the state are providing high quality produce to students; helping food service directors to meet updated Federal nutrition standards for school meals and encouraging kids to eat fresh fruits and veggies for the rest of their lives.



We work with schools to facilitate the purchase of locally grown fresh produce by :

- ◆ Connecting school food service with local farmers through dialogue, farm tours, and production planning.
- ◆ Helping school food service directors establish clear market requirements for local produce.
- ◆ Facilitating direct sales from local farmers.
- ◆ Working with school administration to adopt local bid processes.

Currently 60 schools and school districts across the state have purchased New Mexico-grown produce. This number has more than quadrupled since 2012!

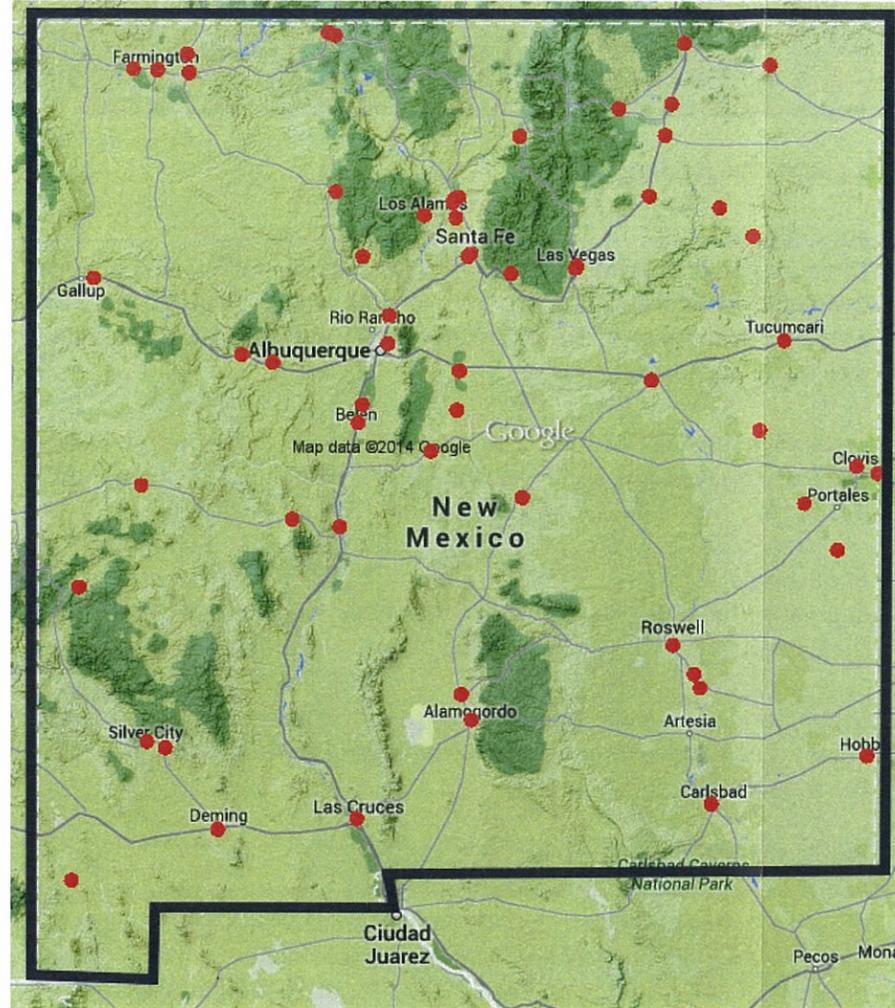
The success of New Mexico's expanding Farm to Cafeteria program is rooted in a public private partnership; state agencies, non-profits, and communities are working together to benefit children, farmers, and our state economy.

We are able to reach children all over New Mexico by working with the Human Services Department, to utilize the distribution system for the Food and Nutrition Services (FANS) USDA Donated Foods program. This generous partnership allows us to bring fresh product to schools in the furthest corners of our state, exposing youth to new foods and bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to communities that otherwise have limited access.

Among others, our partners include: Human Services Department Food and Nutrition Services (FANS) Bureau, New Mexico Student Nutrition Association, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association, New Mexico State University Co-operative Extension, New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, and Farm to Table.

Farm to Cafeteria

Connecting school communities with local farmers to bring farm fresh fruits and vegetables to the plates of children across New Mexico!



The points on this map represent school food authorities and districts who support the Farm to Cafeteria program by purchasing New Mexico grown fresh fruits and vegetables for their students.

Farm to Cafeteria Working Across New Mexico:

We are making an impact. 146,848 students across the state were served New Mexico grown produce from 2012-2014.

We are supporting farmers. Over 300,000 lbs of fresh fruits and vegetables have been sold to schools through Farm to Table alone since 2012!

We are strengthening the economy. Over \$240,000 of New Mexico grown produce was sold to schools through Farm to Table alone since 2012!

There is growing demand. Over 345,100 students across New Mexico could potentially be served New Mexico grown produce in 2013-2014.

How it Works for Farmers

Selling fresh fruits and vegetables to schools helps strengthen New Mexico's farming economy and agricultural heritage by increasing market opportunities for small and mid-scale producers across the state.



Since 2012, 23 New Mexican farmers have sold a total of over 300,000 pounds of fresh produce to schools!

Farmers enjoy selling to schools because they are contributing healthy foods to the plates of diverse children across the state, strengthening their communities by retaining cultural traditions, and growing and inspiring the next generation of farmers.

New Mexican farmers selling to schools are earning enough income to expand crop production, invest in infrastructure such as season extension and water conservation, and stop relying on farmers markets sales to make a living. In fact, producers would earn about \$6 million if every student in our schools ate two servings of New Mexico-grown produce per week.

Farmers are increasing their capacity by working with our partners to:

- ◆ Receive trainings on food safety and quality management.
- ◆ Develop farm management and documentation tools.
- ◆ Participate in production planning and marketing meetings.
- ◆ Train other farmers and work together to meet market demand.
- ◆ Inform programs and local bid design through evaluation.
- ◆ Engage with school food service, students, and communities by hosting on-farm educational activities.