

Article

What is Farm-to-Table?

“Farm-to-table” is a phrase many people use to describe how homes, restaurants, schools and other organizations get their food, so it’s about connecting people to where their food comes from. It includes **every step** food goes through to get to people to nourish them, like animal care, crop management and transportation. Many people embrace this concept as they’re eager to learn more about where their food comes from.

Let’s explore some ways farmers get food to your table, whether the table is your dinner table or a table in your child’s school lunchroom. Here are a few examples illustrating innovative ways farms connect to your table:

Farm to Your Dinner Table

Your regular trip to the grocery store is a great place to think about where your food comes from, whether it’s seasonal produce from a local farmer or a favorite food from another part of the store. Ask the store manager or visit the website from your favorite stores to learn more about their community involvement and social responsibility work. If you also like to visit farmer’s markets, that’s another opportunity to interact with a local farmer and **ask questions** about the foods they grow and raise and about local agriculture from their perspective. Then brush up on your culinary skills and hunt for new ways to take the seasonal bounty of the farm and transform it into delicious meals for your family. Check out the delicious, straight-from-the-farm-families recipes in “**The Dairy Good Cookbook**” – including some that are featured in my **blog post** for June Dairy Month.

Farm to School

The “farm to school” conversation is growing across America, too. Through farm to school programs, many schools purchase and serve fresh, local foods in the school lunchroom. Students also have unique opportunities to learn about how food is grown and produced, how farmers take care of their land, how to tend a school garden -- or they may take a field trip to a local dairy farm to learn where milk, yogurt and cheese comes from.

Farm to Food Banks

Food banks, like those in the **Feeding America** network, may work with local farmers to rescue unharvested and unsold food to package and distribute to hungry families in their area. Working through food banks, the **Great American Milk Drive** connects hungry families to much-needed nutrient-rich milk from regional dairy farms by using donations to provide coupons for a gallon of milk.



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