# SNP Memo #2023-2024-11


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: August 10, 2023

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons Addressed

FROM: Sandra C. Curwood, PhD, RDN, ***Sandy***

## SUBJECT: 2023 October Farm to School Events and Opportunities

The Virginia Department of Education, Office of School Nutrition Programs (VDOE-SNP), encourages school divisions and community partners to celebrate Virginia farm to school events in October, including National Farm to School Month, Virginia Farm to School Week from October 2–6, 2023, and the Crunch Heard ‘Round the Commonwealth on October 5, 2023. The VDOE-SNP provides a free digital celebration toolkit and marketing materials to participants who complete the [Crunch Heard ‘Round the Commonwealth Registration Form](https://virginiadoe.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_429WePpIUaJ1iqG). Grant funding and educational opportunities are also available to support Virginia farm to school activities and are listed below.

**Virginia Farm to School Week**

House Joint Resolution No. 692 (2015) designates the first full week in October as Virginia Farm to School Week. Virginia Farm to School Week is taking place on **October 2–6, 2023**.

School divisions and community partners can celebrate Virginia Farm to School Week in countless ways, including with seasonal foods featured on school menus, poster contests, farm tours, standards of learning-based lessons that feature [Virginia Harvest of the Month](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/school-operations-support-services/school-nutrition/harvest-of-the-month-program) crops, and the Crunch Heard 'Round the Commonwealth.

**The Crunch Heard ‘Round the Commonwealth**

The Crunch Heard 'Round the Commonwealth occurs on **Thursday, October 5, 2023**, during Virginia Farm to School Week. Virginians will make noise for farm to school programs by simultaneously taking a bite out of a fresh Virginia grown apple. To register for the event and download the free digital 2023 Crunch Toolkit and marketing materials, complete the [Crunch Heard 'Round the Commonwealth Registration Form](https://virginiadoe.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_429WePpIUaJ1iqG). Participants are encouraged to share their celebrations on social media and use the hashtags #VACrunch and #VAFarmtoSchool and tag @vdoesnp.

**Virginia Farm to School Funding Opportunities**

In addition to celebratory events, there are several funding opportunities available to support Virginia farm to school programs. [Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom](https://virginia.agclassroom.org/teachers/grants/) offers grant funding to Virginia educators for a variety of creative projects to increase student understanding of the source of food and fiber inside and outside the traditional classroom. Grant applications are due **October 13, 2023**.

The Community Food Systems Division at the U.S. Department of Agriculture awards annual Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grants to local school divisions and community partners. Requests for Applications for the Fiscal Year 2024 Farm to School Grants will open this fall. Refer to the [USDA Farm to School Grant Program website](https://www.fns.usda.gov/f2s/farm-school-grant-program) for more information.

### Virginia Farm to School Program Support

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Farm to School Program Team will conduct a webinar on building school garden programs. The webinar will take place on **October 3, 2023,** at **2:00 p.m.** Additional information can be found on the [webinar registration page](https://virginiatech.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMsduyqrDgiHNDVSdsXVtREExZF2cSAg5SN#/registration).

### For More Information

For additional information on Virginia Farm to School initiatives, visit the VDOE-SNP [Farm to School website](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/school-operations-support-services/school-nutrition/programs-promotions-and-initiatives/virginia-farm-to-school).

Please direct any farm to school related questions to Bee Thorp, Lead Farm to School Specialist, via email at Brittany.Thorp@doe.Virginia.gov.

SCC/BT/cc