



# COUNTY OF YOLO

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## Successful First Year for Farm to School Yolo

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Department of Agriculture is pleased to have completed a successful first year of Farm to School Yolo. The program, under the leadership of Agricultural Commissioner John Young, aims to increase the amount of fresh, local produce served in Yolo County school lunches. It is part of a three-year California Department of Food & Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant which also supports the Harvest Hub Yolo website, professional development cooking classes for schools in Yolo County and a farmer workshop on selling to school food service.

“We are excited about the broad support the Farm to School Yolo program has received over the past year,” said Yolo County Board of Supervisors Chair Duane Chamberlain. “The program has already improved the quality of food served in county school lunch programs and has created new marketing opportunities for local farms.”

Harvest Hub Yolo was created to connect the people of Yolo County with the products and events happening in their backyards. The website ([www.harvesthubbyolo.org](http://www.harvesthubbyolo.org)) features information on Yolo County farms, wineries, restaurants featuring local produce and a community event calendar listing agricultural and art related events. The school food service page includes recipes featuring fresh produce and contact information for local farms interested in selling to food service. A food hub is also included on the site and acts as a virtual marketplace connecting the community to local products.

The cooking classes, led by Georgeanne Brennan and Ann Evans, have taught food service staff how to incorporate more fresh produce into school lunch menus. Forty recipes, already adopted by many school kitchens, were developed for the classes and are now available on [www.harvesthubbyolo.org](http://www.harvesthubbyolo.org).

In April, Yolo County hosted a farmer workshop to educate growers and producers on the process of selling to school food service. The event sparked a dialog between food service directors and growers to find new ways of reducing the often higher price of local produce. As a result, school districts and local farms will explore cooperative buying in the coming year. School districts will also post their produce bids on [www.harvesthubbyolo.org](http://www.harvesthubbyolo.org), increasing reach to local farms and distributors.

The Farm to School Yolo program has also developed a produce aggregation model which allows smaller farms without the capability of delivering to multiple locations the opportunity to aggregate their products at the Capay Organic warehouse. The concept increases both the diversity of products and the amount of local foods in school lunches.

Year two of the grant will include more school food service staff development classes, another farmer training to further the developing aggregation model and work on a Farm to School guidebook. Growers, restaurants featuring local produce and producers interested in selling to school food service can contact Nicole Sturzenberger at [info@harvesthubbyolo.org](mailto:info@harvesthubbyolo.org) to [www.harvesthubbyolo.org](http://www.harvesthubbyolo.org). All are invited to follow Harvest Hub Yolo on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/pages/Harvest-Hub-Yolo/463980273622659](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Harvest-Hub-Yolo/463980273622659)) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/harvesthubbyolo>).

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