October is National Farm to School Month

Loosely defined, Farm to School is “a program that connects K-12 schools and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in schools, improving student nutrition, and providing agriculture, health and nutrition opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.” 1 Sounds like Extension work at its best doesn’t it? Nutrition education, agriculture and youth are at the heart of Extension programming. UGA Cooperative Extension agents in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H have conducted numerous programs on this initiative. County and state Extension personnel have played a vital role in connecting schools with local farmers, providing curriculum and education to students on nutrition education and assisting with the implementation of school gardens to teach young people about nutritious food. To increase the capacity of Cooperative Extension in this area, a team of agents and specialists attended a Regional Farm to School Extension Conference coordinated by SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education) in August 2011. As a result of this conference, the team conducted a Winter Conference training entitled “Extension Resources for Farm to School”. In August, a sub-committee of the F2S team received scholarships from the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project to attend the National Farm to Cafeteria in Burlington, VT enabling them to share UGA Extension’s F2S work and gain additional resources to bring back to the state. In addition, Julia Gaskin, Melanie Biersmith, Sheldon Hammond and Judy Ashley are members of the Georgia F2S Alliance.

If you are interested in introducing the Farm to School message to your community, October would be a great time to plan an event. October is National Farm to School month. For some great resources, go to: http://www.farmtoschoolmonth.org/
Also, feel free to contact me for names of the Extension Farm to School Team members who are willing to share information as well.

As a related sidebar, GA 4-H is working with Dr. David Knauf in the development of resources related to School Gardening. More details to come on this as things develop.

1. Farm to School Network  http://www.farmtoschool.org/

Past School Matters are archived on the County Operations page on our intranet at http://www.caes.uga.edu/intranet/coextop/. Just follow the path to Strategic Initiatives found in the left sidebar.

Judy Ashley
Extension Coordinator for School Relations
311 Hoke Smith Bldg.
University of Georgia
Athens, GA  30602
(706)542-1098 office
(770)527-9435 cell