



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARM TO SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Harvest of the Season Promotion Toolkit

BACKGROUND

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce the Harvest of the Season promotional program, a free educational campaign that includes materials for schools to feature locally grown products in their cafeterias.

The goal of the Harvest of the Season program is to teach children about Arkansas grown foods. The program makes available local and seasonal food posters, materials featuring Arkansas farmers and distributors, and social media resources highlighting local Arkansas fruits, vegetables, proteins, and dairy products. Program materials are offered at no cost to public and private K-12 schools, early childhood education facilities, and alternative learning environments.

Harvest of the Season was developed using funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant Program to increase the production and consumption of specialty crops in schools. Specialty crops, as defined by the USDA, are fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops.

HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

The resources, graphics, language, and examples throughout this toolkit are intended to help promote your Harvest of the Season activities. Everything included has a downloadable version for editing and customization.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

1. Seasonal Poster
2. Product Posters
3. Farmer Feature Template
4. Social Media Resources
5. Template Language for Promotion

SEASONAL POSTER

The Harvest of the Season Seasonal Poster aims to teach children about Arkansas grown and made food products that are available during a specific season. Students can see an overview of seasonal fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy products. The Seasonal Poster can be displayed in the cafeteria, classroom, or other locations depending on the structure of the learning environment to bring children's attention to produce grown in the school garden, local items served in the cafeteria, or local ingredients featured in a taste test.



PRODUCT POSTERS

The Harvest of the Season Product Posters aim to teach children about specific seasonal, Arkansas grown foods. Product Posters highlight fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy products that can be grown and produced in Arkansas. The front of Product Posters displays the name and an image of a food product, and what seasons it is available to consumers in Arkansas. The back of the poster includes helpful tips and tricks for growing, preparing, and eating the food. You will also find nutritional and fun facts featured! Display Product Posters of seasonal, local food in the cafeteria, classroom, or other locations depending on the structure of the learning environment to feature produce grown in the school garden, local items served in the cafeteria, or local ingredients featured in a taste test.



FARMER FEATURE TEMPLATE

The Harvest of the Season Farmer Feature Template is a resource created to spotlight Arkansas farmers, producers, processors, and distributors that are essential to your farm to school program. The Farmer Feature Template provides space for users to share information, a photo, and a quote from a farm or business that supports your program. Display the Farmer Feature in the cafeteria, classroom, or other location depending on the structure of the learning environment. The Farmer Feature could also be shared on social media and printed as a handout for students to take home to inform their families about where ingredients in their school meals are coming from.



SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

Sharing your Harvest of the Season plans on social media is a great way to gain interest from the community! Participants can download images of the Seasonal Poster, Product Posters, and Farmer Features as JPG files on the Arkansas Farm to School website. Users simply The images can be shared on social media to introduce seasonal, Arkansas grown and made products being featured through taste tests, school menu items, school gardens, classroom curriculum, and other Harvest of the Season activities. Farmer Feature posters can also be shared on social media to promote the farmers, ranchers, processors, and distributors that are supporting your farm to school program and/or child nutrition program. Here are a few examples of how you could share Harvest of the Season materials on social media:

Image:



Caption: Today, December 21st, is the first day of winter! There are a number of food products that are available in Arkansas throughout the winter season. Keep an eye out for these products on the school cafeteria line during this winter season!

Image:



Caption: Did you know that kale is considered to be the “Queen of Greens?” This week Mrs. Parker’s class is planting the royal vegetable in the school garden! Check out this Harvest of the Season Product Poster for nutrition facts and quick tips on how to grow, prepare, and eat kale at home!

Image:



Caption: This week we are putting the spotlight on Barnhill Orchards! School nutrition staff at Henson Heights Elementary School will be serving strawberries to students to taste test the produce from the local farm on Wednesday, May 18th! Check out our Harvest of the Season Farmer Feature on Barnhill Orchards to learn more about their farm!

TEMPLATE LANGUAGE FOR PROMOTION

Sharing photos and updates on your farm to school activities and events is one of the best ways to create a school-wide culture of farm to school. The more people that see and hear about your farm to school program, the more likely that information will be shared, which could result in more community connections and collaborations to help support and sustain farm to school activities at your school, early childhood education center, or alternative learning environment. We encourage you to share about your participation in the Harvest of the Season promotional program. You may choose to publish a press release, send out an email blast, or reach out to a local radio station to share a public service announcement. Here is example language you may adapt to promote your Harvest of the Season activities.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION] is Celebrating Harvest of the Season

[CITY], AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture has announced the Harvest of the Season promotional program, a free educational campaign that includes materials for schools to feature locally grown products in their cafeteria. [YOUR ORGANIZATION] will be launching Harvest of the Season to teach children about Arkansas foods.

At [ORGANIZATION] we are doing [ACTIVITY] on [DATE] to celebrate Harvest of the Season. [PARAGRAPH WITH SUCCINCT DETAILS ABOUT ACTIVITIES. EX: FARMS AND SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING, TYPES OF LOCAL FOOD IN SCHOOLS, DATE/TIME OF CELEBRATORY EVENT, INVOLVED ORGANIZATIONS, ETC.]

["QUOTE ABOUT CONNECTING KIDS WITH LOCAL, SEASONAL FOODS AND THE FARMS AND BUSINESS THAT PRODUCE IT," said FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR / PRINCIPAL / OTHER.]

Schools, early childhood education centers, and alternative learning environments have the opportunity to serve local foods to children as a part of their farm to school program. Local foods can be served in the classroom, cafeteria, or other locations depending on the structure of the learning environment. Harvest of the Season makes available seasonal and local food posters, materials featuring Arkansas farmers and food makers, and social media resources for highlighting local Arkansas foods. Harvest of the Season is an impactful tool to educate children about Arkansas foods and the essential people that bring the farm to school.

For more information, contact [CONTACT INFORMATION].

More information about Harvest of the Season program can be found at <https://arfarmtoschool.org/cafeteria/harvest-of-the-season/>.

[YOUR ORGANIZATION'S MISSION]

[ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS (OPTIONAL)]