



## **Statewide Coalition Applauds Historic Commitment in New York State Budget to Increasing Healthy Food Grown on New York Farms and Served in K-12 Schools**

PRESS RELEASE

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**March 30, 2018, Albany, NY** – New York Grown Food for New York Kids, a statewide coalition of school, farm, food, public health, anti-hunger and environmental organizations, applauds Governor Cuomo and the New York State Senate and Assembly for a historic commitment in the 2018-19 State Budget to bringing more healthy food grown in New York into K-12 schools.

“We thank Governor Cuomo and the state legislature for their leadership in helping our farmers while enabling them to produce more healthy, local food for our children,” said Samantha Levy, New York Policy Manager for American Farmland Trust. “The new state budget establishes a national model for keeping food dollars in the state, spurring local economic growth and opening up new market opportunities for our farmers while expanding access to healthy food for millions of school children.”

When signed by Governor Cuomo, the new state budget will make K-12 schools that purchase 30 percent of their lunch ingredients from New York farms eligible to receive a state reimbursement of \$0.25 per meal—four times the amount that is currently provided per meal. The 2018-19 State Budget also doubled state funding for Farm to School grants to \$1.5 million.

According to a [recent report](#) by American Farmland Trust and the New York Academy of Medicine, K-12 schools spend over \$400 million to buy food for 1.7 million schoolchildren across New York annually.

“The New York School Nutrition Association is excited to see this new program benefit our students, as well as our farmers. This is going to have such a positive impact on our state's economy. We applaud all involved for making this happen,” said **Jennifer Martin, MBA, Executive Director of the New York School Nutrition Association.**

“New York Farm Bureau is appreciative that the governor and the legislature successfully included Farm to School funding in the New York State budget. Our farmers made it a priority this session to increase the lunch reimbursement rate for districts that make sourcing food from New York a priority as well. Expanding market opportunities is especially important in a challenging agricultural economy, and both farmers and our young people will benefit by getting more fresh, healthy food onto school lunch plates across the state,” said **David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.**

“This incentive is the catalyst that both farms and school food service have needed to build a strong and sustainable infrastructure that will make bringing healthy New York State agricultural products directly to the students easier. This will be a financial boost for New York agriculture, while strengthening school food service programs in the areas of nutrition and prevention. New York State Child Nutrition

programs thank the New York State Assembly, Senate, and governor for their support of this endeavor, and of our nutrition programs," said **Mark Bordeau, SNS, Senior Food Service Director Broome Tioga BOCES & Vice President of New York School Nutrition Association.**

"We are pleased to have worked with coalition partners to achieve a Farm to School program that is both nutritionally beneficial to our students and fiscally sound for our school districts," said **Michael J. Borges, Executive Director of the New York State Association of School Business Officials.**

"We are very pleased that final state budget language includes increased meal reimbursement for expansion of the Farm to School Program, as well as language on breakfast after the bell and the prohibition on lunch shaming," said **Gracemarie Rozea, New York State Parent Teachers Association President.** "We look forward to working with our members and schools to continue to support initiatives that foster child nutrition and support."

"The New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics appreciates the leadership of Governor Cuomo and the legislature in recognizing the nutrition value of locally grown foods on a child's development," said **Julie Raway, MPH, RDN, CDN, SNS, President New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.**

"We thank Governor Cuomo and the state legislature for their strong support of Farm to School. Farm to School is a great chance for New York kids to eat, grow, and cook delicious local food and support our farmers at the same time," said **Claire Uno, Deputy Director of the Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food Education & Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University.**

"We applaud the governor and legislature for helping to get more fresh, healthy food to children facing hunger across the state," said **Margaret Brown, attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council.** "Too many children in New York struggle with where their next meal is coming from and their school cafeteria plays a critical role in feeding them every day. This new state budget will help the state's schools meet this critical need and boost the state's agricultural economy at the same time."

"New York's kids and farmers are big winners thanks to an increase in the state's investment in farm to school funding," said **Kumar Chandran, Policy Director for FoodCorps.** "With these additional funds, more kids in schools across the state will be able to enjoy healthy, fresh, and locally-grown food, while local farmers will benefit from expanded market opportunities. At FoodCorps, we have seen how farm-to-school programs get kids excited about healthy eating and we applaud the leadership of Governor Cuomo and state legislators in prioritizing this investment."

"Doubling funding for the Farm to School program and increasing the school meal reimbursement rate for locally grown food is a win-win that supports local agriculture and provides more nutritious food to school children, while also teaching children about where their food comes from," said **Marcia Bystryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters.**

"The Rural Schools Association is pleased that state leaders recognize the value of the Farm to School program, both to the rural economy and to the nutritional needs of our state's children," said **David Allan Little, Executive Director of the Rural Schools Association.**

**Julia Van Loon, President of Slate Foods Farm to School Beef** said, “The governor’s recognition, and action, will further strengthen the vital union of our local economies and the health of the foods we serve to our children. We are very grateful for this support.”

“Healthy Schools Network-NY program is immensely grateful to the governor and the legislature for supporting NY Food for NY Kids in the new state budget. A triple win: healthy kids, healthy school meals, and healthy farms!” said **Claire Barnett, Executive Director of the Healthy Schools Network**.

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**About American Farmland Trust:** American Farmland Trust is the only national conservation organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices and keeping farmers on the land. Since 1980 American Farmland Trust has helped to permanently protect more than 6.5 million acres of farmland and ranchland. Learn more at: [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org).

**About New York School Nutrition Association:** The New York School Nutrition Association (NYSNA) is a non-profit professional organization representing over 4,000 school nutrition professionals across the state. NYSNA and its members are dedicated to making healthy school meals and nutrition education available to all students. For more information on NYSNA, visit [www.nyschoolnutrition.org](http://www.nyschoolnutrition.org).