



A Project of Heifer International

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Sessions Descriptions

*Sessions are listed in alphabetical order and are subject to change.
Continuing education credits available pending approval.*

Closing Plenary Session

The Future of Farm to School in Arkansas - Insights, Recommendations, Commitments

During this closing plenary session, conference participants will share insights that have emerged during the conference and make recommendations on the most important steps that need to be taken in order to advance Farm to School in Arkansas. There will also be an opportunity to make individual and organizational commitments to helping further the Farm to School movement in our state, including participation in an Arkansas Farm to School Steering Committee.

Cooking with Kids

“Teach kids to cook!” was the answer given by author and NYU professor, Marion Nestle, when asked on a recent visit to Arkansas about the most important thing a community could do to improve its nutritional health. In this hands-on session, we will follow Nestle’s advice and learn how to cook with children in a way that connects them with food, their choices and their own capabilities. The session will be led by Kids Cook! Founder and Director, Faith Anaya, who will help us view cooking as a vehicle to empower children to change their behavior around food choices. This session is limited to 15 participants due to its experiential nature.

Farm to School: A National Movement

Anupama Joshi, Program Director for the Center for Food & Justice, and Megan Lott, Policy Coordinator, Community Food Security Coalition, will discuss Farm to School as a national movement. We’ll learn about the National Farm to School Network, of which both Joshi and Lott are staff members; the latest research on the impacts of Farm to School programs; Farm to School resources; federal legislation that can significantly impact Farm to School programs; and key Farm to School efforts and initiatives from across the country. This session will be moderated by Arthur Getz Escudero, Director of Advocacy, Heifer International.

Farm to School: A Statewide Movement

What does it take to build a statewide Farm to School program? We will learn about key elements of successful statewide programs, including the story of how Farm to School evolved in Oklahoma – from initial Food Policy Council discussions to legislation that funds a state Farm to School Director in the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. We will also be presented with a snapshot of Farm to School in Arkansas – history, current projects, policies, partnerships and emerging initiatives. We’ll then discuss ideas for steps that can be taken to advance Farm to School in Arkansas. Panelists and resource persons include: Chris Kirby, OK Farm to School Director; Emily English, Arkansas Urban Gardening Educational Resources Board Member; Anupama Joshi, National Farm to School Network; and representatives of key Arkansas agencies and groups, including Wanda Shockey, Director of the Child Nutrition Unit, Arkansas Department of Education and Sylvia Blain, Arkansas Local Foods Initiative.

Farm to School Processing & Distribution in Arkansas: Current Examples, Future Possibilities

In this session we will learn about Farm to School processing and distribution models currently being used in Arkansas and will discuss possible strategies for building an infrastructure that has the capacity to supply school districts with local foods, including plans for a future Farm to School processing and distribution center. Panelists include: Cara CorbinMeyer, Assistant Manager, Fayetteville Farmers Market; Alan Bennett, Owner & Chef, Bennett's Catering; Stephan Walker, Board President, Tri-County Community Coalition; and Jody Hardin, Director, Certified Arkansas Farmers Market. This session will be facilitated by Marion Kalb, Program Director for the Community Food Security Coalition and Co-Director of the National Farm to School Network.

Farm to School Processing & Distribution: Examples from Florida & Oklahoma

Food can take many paths from the farm to the school lunch plate. During this session we will learn about Farm to School processing and distribution models being used in the Southern U.S. and in Oklahoma.

The first part of the session will feature Glyen Holmes, of the New North Florida Cooperative (NNFC) and Vonda Richardson, Farm Management Specialist, Florida A & M University. A pioneer of the Farm to School movement, NNFC has been working with school districts since 1995 to provide fresh produce for school meals. This group of innovative African-American farmers based in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas - has served more than one million students in 72 school districts and has doubled the income of farmers who fall below the poverty line.

Oklahoma is one of a handful of states whose agriculture departments have a State Farm to School Director. During the second part of this session, Oklahoma Farm to School Director, Chris Kirby, will share information about her state's two Farm to School processing and distribution models, which include value-added food products, such as beef jerky.

This session will be moderated by Emily English, Board Member, Arkansas Urban Garden Educational Resources.

Farm Visit Field Trip

Pre-conference activity Wednesday, Nov. 11th. \$30 charge includes lunch. 15-person minimum.

On this field trip we will visit Hardin Farms, a fifth-generation family farm in Grady that produces specialty crops like strawberries, blackberries, watermelon, cantaloupes, peas, beans, corn and pecans, to name a few. Hardin Farms also hosts a Fall Festival, an annual event held in the pecan grove that was introduced in 1991 as a way to introduce pre-school children to small-scale farming. Today, Hardin Farms receives thousands of students of all ages annually.

We will be accompanied on this visit by Glyen Holmes and Vonda Richardson, of the New North Florida Cooperative. A pioneer of the Farm to School movement, NNFC has been working with school districts since 1995 to provide fresh produce for school meals. This group of innovative African-American farmers based in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas - has served more than one million students in 72 school districts and has doubled the income of farmers who fall below the poverty line. Holmes, Richardson and several Arkansas farmers from the Tri-County Community Coalition, which is part of NNFC, will speak with us during lunch at the Hardin Farms Restaurant about what it takes in terms of infrastructure, coordination, training and relationship building for farmers to develop the capacity to sell to schools through the NNFC network.

Farmer-Food Service Exchange

In this session, farmers and school food service personnel will have an opportunity to hear each other's perspectives, ask questions and make connections. What are the most important things that Child Nutrition Directors/Food Service Directors need to know about Arkansas farmers? What are the most important things that farmers need to know about the jobs and requirements of school food service personnel? How can we best work together to get fresh Arkansas products into Arkansas schools? Panelists will include Jody Hardin, Director, Certified Arkansas Farmers Market; Glyen Holmes, New North Florida Cooperative; and Beverly Girard, Director of

Food & Nutrition Services, School Board of Sarasota County, Florida. This session will be facilitated by Marion Kalb, Program Director for the Community Food Security Coalition and Co-Director of the National Farm to School Network.

Food Matters: The Connection between Food & Well-being

Are we *really* what we eat? In this session, three food experts will explore the connection between food and well-being. Dr. Luke Howard, Professor, University of Arkansas, Department of Food Science, will discuss the health benefits of fruits and vegetables. Is fresh really better? What happens when nutrients are added back into foods? Penny Rudder, Chief Eating & Environmental Officer, naturalfoodscooking.com, will address the impact of food on our behavior and mental well-being. What exactly does food do to our brains? Sheila Brown, Assistant Director for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Child Nutrition Unit, Arkansas Department of Education, will share research that links nutrition and academic performance. What type of breakfast is best for students? What if recess came before lunch? How does the way students are spoken to in the lunch room influence what they eat? This session will be moderated by Joy Rockenbach, Act 1220 Coordinator, Arkansas Department of Education and Director, Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention.

Heifer Ranch Field Trip

*Pre-conference activity Wednesday, Nov. 11th. \$30 charge includes locally-sourced lunch.
15-person minimum/30-person maximum*

This session will take participants to Heifer Ranch, Heifer International's educational facility located in Perryville, 45 miles west of Little Rock. Chuck Crimmins, Garden and Forestry Coordinator, will serve as our guide on a hay wagon tour of the gardens and fields. This educational small farm tour featuring vegetables, livestock, beekeeping and processing, will explore the process farmers go through to get food to the kitchen. Through visits with educators and small farmers who work with students on a regular basis, we will spark our creativity and broaden our knowledge about where and how our food is grown. Then we'll visit the Ranch's food service director, Bobbie Hawkins, who has successfully made the switch from outsourcing produce and meat for the Ranch's cafeteria to many of those locally-sourced items grown right on the Ranch's property. Lunch will be provided at the Ranch where we'll enjoy one of those fresh, healthy, locally-grown meals.

Learning from the Land: Nutrition & Agriculture Education Activities

In this session we will learn about a variety of innovative educational techniques, programs, curricula and resources for helping students understand where the food they eat is grown and produced. When students understand the source of their food, they are more willing to try new foods and make better nutritional choices, and they grow into healthy Arkansans connected to and nourished by our local food system. Panelists include: Chris Kirby, Oklahoma Farm to School Director, Keith Richards, Board President of Apple Seeds; and Kay ShROUT, Montgomery County Extension Agent, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture. This session will be moderated by Dr. Rosemary Rodibaugh, Professor, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

Local in the Lunchroom: Creative Solutions to Common Challenges

This session will focus on creative solutions to some of the common challenges faced by Child Nutrition/Food Service personnel when trying to incorporate local foods into school lunches. Examples include cost, quantity, variety, processing, preparation, storage and equipment. The panel will include Alan Bennett, Bennett's Catering, who procures and prepares school lunches for several private schools; Adam Simmons, Child Nutrition Director, Farmington School District; Lisa Jenkins, Child Nutrition Director, Fayetteville School District; and Beverly Girard, Director of Food & Nutrition Services, School Board of Sarasota County, Florida. This session will be facilitated by Marion Kalb, Program Director for the Community Food Security Coalition and Co-Director of the National Farm to School Network.

The Lunch Box: A Web-based Tool for Schools

Chef Ann Cooper, Founder of Lunch Lessons LLC and Family Food Farming Foundation, and Nicole de Beaufort, the foundation's Executive Director, will introduce "The Lunch Box" – a new web-based tool for school food makeovers. The Lunch Box provides the

technical tools that practitioners need to transition from boxed and canned to fresh; the tools administrators need to successfully transition a school or district; and an on-line community space for exchanging ideas, information and resources.

Marion Nestle Private Reception and Public Lecture

Pre-conference activity Wednesday evening, Nov. 11th.

\$30 charge includes round-trip transportation to Conway and reception food.

15-person minimum/25-person maximum

Participants will visit the University of Central Arkansas in Conway for a private reception with Marion Nestle, followed by her public presentation. Nestle is the Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University. She has authored numerous books, including *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* and *What to Eat*. She will be in Conway as part of the UCA Honors College's Challenge Week: "Just Food: Farm to Fork Systems for 21st Century Communities."

Opening Plenary Session Featuring Keynote Speaker, Chef Ann Cooper

During the opening plenary session we will be introduced to leaders in the national Farm to School movement and meet fellow Arkansas leaders and stakeholders. Dynamic keynote speaker, Chef Ann Cooper, Founder of Lunch Lessons LLC; Founder of F3: Food Family Farming Foundation; and Interim Nutrition Director, Boulder Valley School District, will make the case for reforming our federal school lunch program and our nation's food system. "Chef Ann," also known as The Renegade Lunch Lady," will inspire each of us to take steps toward providing our children fresh food grown right here in Arkansas. In addition, the following people will participate in the opening session: Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe; Dr. Joe Thompson, Arkansas Surgeon General and Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation National Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity; Marion Kalb and Anupama Joshi, Co-Directors of the National Farm to School Network; and Emily English, Arkansas Urban Garden Educational Resources.

Joel Salatin Private Reception and Public Lecture

Be educated and entertained by the passionate and outspoken farmer, lecturer and author, Joel Salatin, of Polyface Farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Salatin, a leader in the local foods movement, was recently featured in the film, *Food, Inc.* and is the author of *Everything I Want to Do is Illegal: War Stories from the Local Food Front*, among other titles. This public event will be preceded by a private local foods reception for Mr. Salatin and Farm to School Conference participants. Both the private reception and public lecture will be held at the Statehouse Convention Center. This evening is co-sponsored by the University of Central Arkansas Honors College as part of their 2009 Challenge Week: "Just Food: Farm-to-Fork Food Systems for 21st Century Communities. "

Note: Organizations involved with Farm to School or local foods are invited to reserve tables to display information for the public to view before and after the Salatin lecture. To reserve a table, contact Kathy Findley (501) 907-2692 or kathy.findley@heifer.org.

School Gardens: Growing Food, Growing Minds

Being exposed to farms and gardens, and understanding where food comes from helps children become more informed consumers and healthy community members. This session will focus on creative techniques for engaging students in activities in the garden. In addition, we will learn about financial and educational resources, including curricula that meet state education frameworks. Panelists include Sylvia Blain, Founder and Director, Arkansas Local Foods Initiative; Katy Elliott, Co-Founder of Felder Farm and Founder and Director of Arkansas Sustainability Network; Kristy Kidd, Science Teacher, Pulaski Heights Middle School; and Tracie Hiller, Principal, Jonesboro's Health, Wellness & Environmental Studies Magnet School. This session will be moderated by Michelle Justus, Research Associate, Arkansas Center for Health Improvement.

Urban School Garden Field Trip

Pre-conference activity Wednesday, Nov. 11th. \$30 charge includes locally-sourced lunch. 15-person minimum

On this trip to two area school gardens, we will see examples of experiential outdoor learning at work. At Dunbar Garden Project (DGP), a two-acre outdoor “classroom,” Damian Thompson, Director of Programs, will demonstrate how vegetables, chickens, worms, and an electricity-generating windmill are incorporated into the 150 hands-on experiential education classes throughout the year.

At Felder Farm, on the campus of Felder Alternative Learning Academy, students help raise chickens and cultivate herbs, flowers and vegetables that are sold at market and made available to the school and surrounding community. Felder Farm educational programs connect art, science, math and reading to the most basic of human acts—growing and eating food. Founders, Katy Elliott, Nathanael Wills and Ragan Sutterfield, along with a few student gardeners, will tell us about the business training components of the program, details of their integrated curriculum, and their views on sustainability in the garden. Both Dunbar and Felder gardening programs integrate nutritional and agricultural education with state education frameworks.

All of this talk about growing food would not be complete without locally-sourced meal. Jody Hardin, Founder and Director of Certified Arkansas Farmers Market, will join us for a locally-sourced lunch to discuss a new Farm to School processing and distribution model he is developing for the state of Arkansas.