

**From:** Bushong, Linda (MDE) **On Behalf Of** Leikert, Howard J (MDE)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 08, 2012 4:17 PM  
**To:** MDE-SchoolNutrition  
**Subject:** Tuesday News from MDE 050812

Yes, I skipped a week. Busy week. We had the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) doing a review of our office. I can more closely identify with those schools that have had Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) Reviews recently the nerves are shot and I am glad it's over (actually, I think we did well)!! Anyhow, some news:

- 1) New Meal Pattern Q & A – We have already sent out the original version of the meal pattern update memo from USDA but here is an updated one with additional questions and answers. There is a lot of additional information, especially on fruits, vegetables and grains so be sure to check it out!!  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2012/SP10-2012osr2.pdf>.
- 2) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program - The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is pleased to announce that the application for the 2012-2013 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Grant is now available. The application is due Friday, May 25, 2012. For more information visit  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FFVP\\_Grant\\_Application\\_384304\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/FFVP_Grant_Application_384304_7.pdf)
- 3) Grains – We also have a link to a USDA memo on the new grain requirements. There have been many questions related to what qualifies as whole grain rich products so this should help clarify a lot of those questions.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2012/SP30-2012os.pdf>.
- 4) USDA Newsletter – The attached newsletter distributed from the Midwest Region of USDA includes a lot of interesting information related to child nutrition and mentions some Michigan related news.
- 5) The 6 Cent Rule – We have just received our first guidance on the 6 Cent Rule for certifying menus in order to receive the additional 6 cents in reimbursement to begin October 1, 2012. Here is a brief summary of what we know:
  - a. Your lunch meals must be in compliance with the new meal pattern beginning July 1, 2012.
  - b. Schools that are K-12 will need to submit lunch and breakfast menus for all 3 grade groups. If not K-12, the applicable grade groups for the district.
  - c. You will also be required to submit the details of these menus – ingredients, portion sizes, etc. – in order to complete a basic nutrient analysis.

- d. There will be tools available to help School Food Authorities (SFAs) submit this information and help them to make sure their menus can be certified.
- e. Our office will certify menus in order for SFAs to qualify for the additional 6 cents in reimbursement.
- f. The new meal pattern must be followed, there are no options if you want to insure receiving full reimbursement.
- g. "Pre-approved" menus MAY be provided for SFAs use by USDA or MDE. Currently these menus are not developed.
- h. Members of the School Nutrition Programs unit will be attending a Midwest Regional Office (MWRO) conference this week and one of the topics will be the 6 Cent Rule. We hope to have more information for you soon.
- i. At this time, I realize there may be many questions left unanswered but as I stated, we are just learning about the rule now. We will be providing more information and training when we have enough information.

6) Competitive Food Sales – I have been asked for clarification on this topic occasionally. Competitive food sales are any sales outside the school meals program so even a la carte sales are considered "competitive foods." USDA does not prohibit the sale of these or other competitive foods during any part of the school day, including lunch time. So fundraisers, school stores, etc. are all "legal" under regulations. The exception to this is Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) cannot be sold in or near the cafeteria area. FMNV include frozen ices, licorice, hard candy, cotton candy, sugar coated popcorn, carbonated beverages, etc.... basically foods that other than calories don't provide any nutrients. Notice most candy bars, potato chips, etc. are OK as a competitive food. Having said all this, districts are required to have a Local Wellness Policy (LWP), which they post publically (online), and are expected to follow it. Here is a link to guidance on an LWP - [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP42-2011\\_os.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP42-2011_os.pdf). The sale of most "junk" foods would hopefully be prohibited or controlled in a reasonable LWP. Needless to say, it would be preferable to have a t-shirt sale to a cookie dough sale. We expect USDA to shortly come out with their proposed Competitive Food Rule which will control the sale of all foods on the entire school campus during the school day. I expect this rule will move toward eliminating the sale of foods that are (while better than FMNV) still not nutrient dense and don't provide quality nutritional value. This rule will likely not be a final rule until School Year 2013-2014. It is important that all parties (FSDs, principals, superintendents, business managers, parent/teacher groups) concerned understand that the sale of competitive foods, especially during meal periods, will likely have a negative financial impact on the School Meals Program. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the fact that the sale of some of the typical "competitive foods" (cupcakes, donuts, candy bars, cookie dough, etc.) will also have a negative impact on the health of our children at a time when most people agree that childhood obesity is a national problem. It also sends an

inconsistent message if teachers are discussing nutrition with their students while at the same time a school group is selling sugary baked goods. In the end, at this time, competitive foods as I have described are a local decision. I understand different school groups need for funding. Let's find ways to fund these groups without impacting the health of our children.

- 7) Training Opportunities - Get your staff trained through [SNAM's Statewide Training Program courses](#). Sign up today by going to the School Nutrition Association of Michigan (SNAM) website at [www.michigansna.org](http://www.michigansna.org) (Statewide Training Program). The summer months are a great time to advance your program with training not possible during the regular school year! SNAM is pleased to announce the [summer 2012 schedule of classes](#). One of the most frequently offered courses, "Introduction to School Food Service 100," has been updated to include the revised meal pattern. In addition, "Sanitation and Food Safety" and "Managing for Success" are now available electronically for 24/7 access by computer! Registration is open to all those working in Child Nutrition Programs including both members and non-members of SNAM. The deadline for registration is always two weeks prior to the start of a class to avoid a late fee and assure availability of class materials. Complete a [registration form](#) to enroll in a desired course. The Statewide Training Program offers the required courses for School Nutrition Association (SNA) certification. Selected classes are part of the Michigan School Business Officials Child Nutrition Director (CND) Certification track. Those who participate in certification involve themselves in learning opportunities that directly apply to their workplace and avail themselves of the most current knowledge and practices in the school food service business. Additional classes may be scheduled with a qualified instructor for at least eight participants. To learn more, visit the SNAM website at [www.michigansna.org](http://www.michigansna.org) (Statewide Training Program). Resources include the program brochure, class descriptions and fact sheets, currently scheduled classes, a roster of instructors and their qualifications, class scheduling form, and class registration form. For information about the Statewide Training Program, contact Member Care Specialist, Sarah Klemish, by e-mail [Sarah.Klemish@etc-1.com](mailto:Sarah.Klemish@etc-1.com) or phone 800-677-8955 or 989-631-FOOD. Or you may contact Janet Gaffke by phone 989-390-1712 or e-mail [janetgaffke@gmail.com](mailto:janetgaffke@gmail.com).
- 8) MDE New Meal Pattern Training – Stay tuned, in a separate e-mail you will be receiving a hold the date e-mail from this office for training on the new meal pattern and other updates from USDA.
- 9) Asparagus Month - May is Michigan Asparagus Month! The Michigan Farm to School Committee has collaborated to provide you with tools to celebrate this event! Attached is a Proclamation signed by Governor Snyder. Please share with students, teachers, and parents! In celebration of Michigan Asparagus Month, we encourage you to add Michigan asparagus to your menu. You can work with your broadline or speciality distributor to source Michigan asparagus throughout May and most of June, or order directly

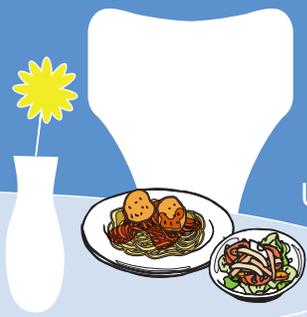
through a local grower or distributor. A list of Michigan asparagus distributors is attached, to help you make connections or check on pricing. The list also includes fresh market handlers and farm markets that may be able to provide fresh asparagus for your area. We have also attached three recipes for you to use this month. If you plan to purchase and serve Michigan asparagus in your school meals program and would like some promotional posters mailed to you, please contact Colleen Matts with the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems at [matts@msu.edu](mailto:matts@msu.edu) or phone 517-432-0310 by Friday, May 11, 2012. Please indicate the number of posters you would like and the address to send them by mail. Posters will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis while supplies last and will be mailed the week of May 14.

This was a longer Tuesday News than usual but I felt it included a lot of important information. Hold on for the ride as we implement the new nutrition standards. I hope we are all able to work together to best make these changes happen.

*Howard Leikert, MBA, SMS*

Supervisor  
School Nutrition Programs  
Michigan Department of Education  
517-373-3892  
517-373-4022 Fax

*Supporting achievement for EVERY student through a Proficiency-Based system of education.*



# At The Table

USDA nutrition assistance news and information for partners and community organizations

## Spring 2012

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## Integrity: Providing a Firm Foundation for SNAP

The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), or SNAP, our country's safety net and first line of defense against hunger, has been in the news often lately. The mission of SNAP—to help low-income people get the nutritious food they need while they work to get back on their feet—has never been more important than it is today.

Over 46 million low-income Americans count on SNAP to help them put healthy food on their families' tables every month. But to meet that mission effectively, we must earn and maintain the public's trust through the proper administration of the program—including accurate payments and appropriate use of benefits.

I'm happy to report that our state and local partners in the Midwest Region are working closely with us to prevent and pursue fraud by SNAP retailers and participants. And here at USDA, we're renewing our efforts to prevent and pursue retailer fraud (see [page 10](#)). While fraud rates remain very low, any evidence of fraud undermines support for the program. And for this reason, we appreciate the efforts of all of our partners in discouraging and pursuing fraud.

By preventing and pursuing fraud, we will help ensure that this important program continues to enjoy the bi-partisan support it has long received. Widespread support for the creation of the program was spurred by a 1968 CBS documentary, "Hunger in America," which featured an opening scene of an infant dying of hunger. The hour-long documentary went on to highlight cases of extreme hunger from Virginia to Arizona and stirred many Americans. In response, Congress created the [Food Stamp Program](#).

Because of the existence of the program today, many Americans don't experience hunger. And with your help, this program will continue to exist and to eradicate hunger across the Midwest and this great country of ours.



Ollice Holden  
FNS Midwest Regional Administrator



## First Lady Applauds Two Years of Progress

In February, First Lady Michelle Obama made a three-day nationwide tour to celebrate the [Second Anniversary of Let's Move!](#), her groundbreaking initiative to solve the problem of child



overweight and obesity in America. In Dallas, Texas, she held an event with students, chef contestants

and the Dallas Cowboys to highlight the [HealthierUS School Challenge \(HUSSC\)](#). There she announced that 2,862 schools had met the HUSSC, surpassing her initial goals for this key component of [Let's Move!](#) And the numbers continue to grow. As of April 3, 2012, 3,098 schools are certified HUSSC schools.

We are proud of all our Midwest winners!

- [Illinois HUSSC Winners](#)
- [Indiana HUSSC Winners](#)
- [Michigan HUSSC Winners](#)
- [Minnesota HUSSC Winners](#)
- [Ohio HUSSC Winners](#)
- [Wisconsin HUSSC Winners](#)



Students in Sunnyside Elementary School in New Brighton, MN (a HUSSC Silver school) participate in a Midwest Dairy Council [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) program. Photo credit: Sunnyside Elementary School.

### New HUSSC Criteria Announced

The [HealthierUS School Challenge \(HUSSC\)](#) is USDA's national award program recognizing excellence in school nutrition and fitness. The HUSSC is one of the pillars of the First Lady's [Let's Move!](#) initiative. In light of the recently published new school meals standards ([page 3](#)), FNS has revised its nutrition criteria for the HUSSC. The new HUSSC criteria go above and beyond the new school meals standards. One significant addition is a requirement to operate the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and to serve a higher number of fruits, vegetables and whole grain-rich foods in the SBP.

Similarly, the new HUSSC criteria for lunch have additional weekly requirements for the vegetable subgroups (dark green, red and orange, and dry beans and peas) and for fresh fruit and whole grain-rich foods. Schools must also meet "Other Criteria for Excellence," depending on the award level for which they apply. Here are examples of criteria schools can choose to implement:

- Breakfast in the Classroom
- Participation in the *Chefs Move to Schools* initiative
- Partnerships with community organizations to promote school wellness
- Use of attractive displays and signage to encourage students to select fruits
- Use of creative/descriptive names of vegetables on school menus to encourage selection
- Incorporating student input into school food and physical activity options.

Learn more at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/HealthierUS/2012criteria.html>

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## New School Nutrition Standards Mean Healthier Meals

Beginning next school year, kids will notice more plentiful fruit, vegetables and whole grains on their school lunch trays. As part of a major effort to fight childhood obesity and align school nutrition standards with the most current *Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs)*, First Lady Michelle Obama and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the new and final nutrition rules for school breakfast and lunch in January. The rules, a key component of the [Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#), will impact what 32 million children eat on a given school day.



By Samia Hamdan, MPH, RD  
FNS, Midwest Region

*USDA Under Secretary Kevin Concannon eats lunch with students at the School for Creative and Performing Arts in Cincinnati January 31. The Cincinnati Public Schools have already implemented virtually all menu changes required by the new school nutrition rules. Starting this school year, all 53 public schools now have salad bars. Salad is a choice with every school lunch.*

There are several key changes that will significantly modify menus. Schools will now have to offer **both fruits and vegetables every day** to help ensure that children increase their intake. The new rules also emphasize variety with a **weekly requirement for different vegetable types**: dark green, red/orange, dry beans and peas, starchy, and all other vegetables. Each type offers a unique nutritional profile. In addition, **half the grain foods offered must be whole-grain rich in the first two years. Beyond that, all grains offered must be whole-grain rich.** Schools must also adhere to a **calorie range**, as well as **restrictions on trans fat, saturated fat, and sodium.** In doing so, schools are likely to see children consume a more “nutrient-dense” meal – one of the major recommendations in the *2010 DGAs*.

Additional changes include allowing schools to incorporate **tofu and soy yogurt as a meat alternative**, thereby expanding vegetarian and protein options. State agencies will also begin reviewing school menus more frequently (every three years instead of every five), and will include the breakfast program as part of the review process.

Many schools have already begun implementing these changes across the country. Programs like the [HealthierUS School Challenge](#) have encouraged schools to adopt similar practices. In addition, schools have utilized many of the nutritious foods available through USDA Foods. For example, schools now feature USDA’s whole grain tortillas in sandwich wraps and USDA’s low-sodium black beans for salsa.

USDA received over 130,000 comments on the proposed rule published in January 2011. In response to the comments and legislative changes, USDA made several changes, including eliminating the limit on starchy vegetables and providing an additional year for schools to reach the second sodium reduction target.

More information on the [new school nutrition rules](#) can be found at the FNS website.

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# Feeding Kids (and Creating Jobs!) in Ohio

*by Joree Jacobs, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks*

USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides vital, but underutilized, funding for free, nutritious meals for children during the summer months. The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF), along with many partners, including the USDA, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), is using a variety of creative ways to increase awareness and provide more meals to hungry children.

Many SFSP providers struggle to translate the meal reimbursements provided by the USDA into full-fledged summer programming that is attractive and accessible to children. They may not have the resources to staff a site, purchase supplies for fun activities, recruit volunteers, spread the word to local families, or even reserve a physical location. Sometimes these challenges can be insurmountable without support from USDA partners like OASHF, ODE, and CNCS.

Fortunately, current and potential SFSP providers in Ohio were invited to learn and network with



*Under Secretary Concannon joins OASHF Executive Director Lisa Hamler-Fugitt at SFSP Summit.*

program administrators and peers at the second annual Ohio Summer Food Service Program Summit on January 30. USDA Under Secretary Kevin Concannon

encouraged attendees in their efforts, alongside state legislators and representatives from the office of Senator Sherrod Brown. Thanks to ODE, SFSP mascot Munch the Fox and Power Panther even stopped by to say hello and motivate SFSP providers to reach more children this summer!

Shortly following the event, OASHF was thrilled to learn that CNCS had awarded them with 165 AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associates to strengthen and support Ohio's SFSP network. OASHF first placed 50 AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associates at SFSP sites in 2009. In 2010 and 2011, OASHF placed around 100



*A VISTA Summer Associate and kids at a summer feeding site.*

Summer Associates at SFSP sites, increasing the number of children served by over 43 percent in 2010 and another 15 percent in 2011! The continued support from CNCS is sure to prove vital to SFSP providers this year as they strive to serve more eligible children.

The Summer Associates serve their communities full-time for eight weeks. Not only do they serve nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks, but they engage children in educational and recreational activities, recruit volunteers, provide grassroots marketing support, and more! Not surprisingly, OASHF received requests from SFSP providers for more than 250 Summer Associates within just two weeks, a clear indication of the staffing and support needs facing the network. OASHF looks forward to sharing the positive effects of this vital public-private partnership on childhood hunger in Ohio!

*For more information, contact: [jjacobs@oashf.org](mailto:jjacobs@oashf.org)*

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# New Partnership Tackles Hunger in Milwaukee

## ***Kohl's is a Milwaukee Hero!***

*by Dana Hartenstein and Jonathan Hanson  
Hunger Task Force, Milwaukee*

Last year Kohl's Department Stores knew what a tough year it was shaping up to be in Milwaukee. There were a ton of government funding cuts to important food programs that Hunger Task Force (HTF), Milwaukee's Free and Local food bank, relies on. We're talking about hundreds of thousands of pounds of food suddenly disappearing from the food bank! Kohl's knew a lot of families would be hurting, especially kids.

So on December 15, they stepped forward in the biggest way possible: they made the single largest donation in Hunger Task Force's history – \$800,000! The donation will help provide appropriate food supplies throughout the year for the 35,000 people that rely on food pantries and soup kitchens in the area each month. Over half those receiving assistance are children. In fact, Hunger Task Force is going to buy a whopping 18 truckloads of kid-friendly foods, and keep the network's meal programs stocked with nutritious milk all year round, thanks to this amazing gift. The donation is funded through the Kohl's Cares® cause merchandise program, which sells special items, including plush toys and books, and donates 100% of the net profit to benefit children's health and education initiatives nationwide.

This \$800,000 gift was in addition to the partnership created last year when Kohl's made a 3-year commitment to fund the summer meals program, now titled “Kohl's Serving Up

Supper for Kids.” Kohl's partnered to donate \$1.5 million over three years, through Kohl's Cares, to ensure children would be fed over the summer in Milwaukee.

“We are overwhelmed by the generosity of Kohl's,” said Sherrie Tussler, Hunger Task Force Executive Director. “They have been amazing partners when creating our ‘Kohl's Serving Up Supper for Kids’ program and when they heard of our need, they didn't hesitate in their decision to help fill our pantries. Thousands of families will now have the nutritious

meals we strive to provide.”



*Milwaukee children enjoy a meal provided by Kohl's Serving Up Supper for Kids program.*

*Photo credit: Michael Goelzer, HTF*



### **Partners Make the Difference!**

FNS nutrition assistance partners play a vital role in running our programs and ensuring their effectiveness. A recent USDA blog highlights partnerships in Chicago and Ohio that support the Summer Food Service Program:

[Feeding More Kids by Working Together in the Midwest](#)

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## Outreach Campaign Targets “Missing Meals” in Minnesota

*Goal: reach over 90,000 food insecure Minnesotans*

*by Jill Hiebert, Hunger Solutions Minnesota*

[Hunger-Free Minnesota](#) and [Hunger Solutions Minnesota](#) recently launched a statewide outreach and awareness campaign to reach seniors and the recently unemployed with information about their eligibility for SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The new campaign is aimed to close the missing meal gap in the state. One in 10 Minnesotans is not getting adequate nutrition. And for thousands, putting food on the table is a financial challenge.



**LUPÉ** AGE: 35  
CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED  
HER FAMILY  
USES SNAP,  
SO CAN YOURS.  
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CALL 1-888-711-1151  
TO SEE IF YOU  
QUALIFY OR VISIT  
[mnfoodhelpline.org](http://mnfoodhelpline.org)

Campaign materials and media advertisements emphasize the value of SNAP and show the face of those who now need some assistance in difficult economic times. Currently, over 500,000 Minnesotans are enrolled in SNAP, but only 65 percent of eligible Minnesotans and 41 percent of eligible seniors, age 60 and over, receive SNAP benefits.

### Simple message; colorful tools

Creatively designed with easy to understand messaging, campaign materials include posters, brochures, tear pads, flyers, mail inserts, postcards, door hangers and table tents.

Materials are available in English as well as Spanish, Somali, Hmong and Russian. Outreach kits were shipped to over 2,000 locations across the state. Outreach partners include Meals on Wheels programs, schools, food pantries, Head Start, WIC offices and more. The materials have been so well received that they are already printing additional quantities.

### Two audiences targeted: seniors and the situationally poor or recently unemployed.

Through research conducted by the Good Works team at General Mills, it was determined that members of these audiences were inclined to think they did not qualify for assistance or reluctant to accept help — or both. This campaign makes the program criteria very clear, hopefully helping to remove the stigma from a supplemental food solution that people need and can use.

The Governor’s Office and the Minnesota Department of Human Services are working closely with Hunger Solutions Minnesota on this important access campaign. The goal of the campaign is to reduce barriers to access including lack of information, confusion over eligibility or reluctance to ask for help with basic necessities such as food. Early results show an uptick in calls to the Minnesota Food HelpLine. The local media picked up on the campaign and the outreach partners across the state have been successfully getting the word out to their low-income clients.

For more information, contact Jill Hiebert: [jhiebert@hungersolutions.org](mailto:jhiebert@hungersolutions.org) or go to the Minnesota Food HelpLine: [www.Mnfoodhelpline.org](http://www.Mnfoodhelpline.org)

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The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) or SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) is the cornerstone of USDA's nutrition assistance programs. It provides food purchasing power to eligible low-income individuals and families during tough economic times. SNAP benefits help free up other family funds for necessities, such as housing and utilities, as the families and individuals work toward self-sufficiency. Many misconceptions about SNAP participants exist. A new USDA study presents a clear picture of SNAP clients that may surprise some people.

USDA's new report, [Characteristics of SNAP Households FY 2010](#), reveals the changing face of SNAP clients:

### **SNAP clients were as diverse as America.**

SNAP clients may report their race and ethnicity as part of the application process, though it is not required. In 2010, application data showed:

- 34% were whites;
- 22% were African-Americans;
- 16% were Hispanic;
- 3% were Asian; and
- 4% were Native American.

(Note: for 20%, race/ethnicity was not reported.)

### **Many SNAP participants had jobs.**

Nearly 30 percent of SNAP households had earnings and 41 percent of all SNAP participants lived in a household that had earnings. Jobs were the primary source of income for most of these households.

### **Most SNAP participants were children, elderly or disabled.**

- Nearly half (47 percent) were under age 18;
- 8 percent were age 60 or older.
- Nearly 20 percent of SNAP households contained a person with disabilities.

### **One of the most important transformations over the last 20 years is a fundamental shift in income from welfare to work.**

In 1990, 42 percent of all SNAP households received cash welfare benefits and only 19 percent had earnings. In 2010, only 8 percent received cash welfare, while 30 percent had earnings.

Here is a link to the complete study: [Characteristics of SNAP Households FY 2010](#)

### **SNAP - a Bridge to Success**

In December 2011, 46.5 million people participated in SNAP. In January 2012, 46.4 million people participated. During 2011, increases in SNAP participation were primarily due to high unemployment, as well as natural disasters such as hurricanes that made people eligible for SNAP disaster assistance.

SNAP "expands to meet the needs of families during tough economic times and contracts as circumstances improve," said Under Secretary Kevin Concannon. "As the economy continues to improve and add jobs, families who are now struggling to put food on the table will no longer need assistance." Read more in his March 6 blog: [SNAP – A Bridge to Success](#).



## FARM TO SCHOOL Thrives in the Midwest

by Vanessa Herald  
Great Lakes Region Farm to School Network

The *Farm to School* movement connects schools with local farms to serve healthy meals, improve student nutrition, provide educational opportunities and support local farmers. *Farm to School* programs are as diverse as the schools and communities they serve. They run the gamut from sourcing local apples for the cafeteria to school gardens to classroom visits by local chefs.

*Farm to School* is growing into a thriving national movement. The goal of the [National Farm to School Network](#) (NFSN) is to strengthen this movement while keeping intact the unique flavor and diversity of individual farm to school programs. The Great Lakes Region of the NFSN (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana) is bustling with activities in at least **341** school districts.



The Bear Lake School Summer Feeding Program in Manistee County, Michigan serves peak-of-the-season produce, including strawberries, blueberries and asparagus, from at least two local farms, providing delicious meals and a new market for abundant local summer produce. A [new video](#) on the [Michigan Farm to School](#) website highlights this program. Other new videos on the website are: *Vegetables from the Leges* and *Country Dairy*.

In Ohio, the South Euclid Lyndhurst School District successfully implemented year-round, local procurement for school meals, increasing participation by 7.5 percent while holding food costs even. Farm to school language is now included in the district's Wellness Policy. Program partners include AVI Fresh, Red Basket Farm and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. Details can be found in the program's [case study](#).

Great partnerships are creating success for [La Crosse County Farm to School](#) in Wisconsin. Working together, the La Crosse County Health Department and school districts are pooling local produce purchasing and light processing at the [Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen](#) to create economies of scale and reduce labor costs.

Fresh produce on the lunch line is complemented with a *Harvest of the Month* educational program.

[Farm to School: Growing Our Future](#) is a 30-minute documentary providing an in-depth look at how communities can work together to improve children's health and education through farm to school partnerships. This television production is developed by [University of](#)

[Minnesota Extension](#), [Minnesota Department of Health](#), and [Twin Cities Public Television](#), with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information, contact Vanessa Herald: [vherald@wisc.edu](mailto:vherald@wisc.edu)

More information about *Farm to School*, including local contact information, is available online at: [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org).

Please join us this August for the 6<sup>th</sup> National Farm to Cafeteria Conference in Burlington, Vermont: [www.farmtocafeteriaconference.org](http://www.farmtocafeteriaconference.org).

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## Farmers Market Incentive Programs

*boost purchasing power of SNAP clients*

Spring heralds a new farmers market season and the appeal of fresh-picked local farm produce. A thriving demand for healthy, locally-grown products is fueling the growth of SNAP-

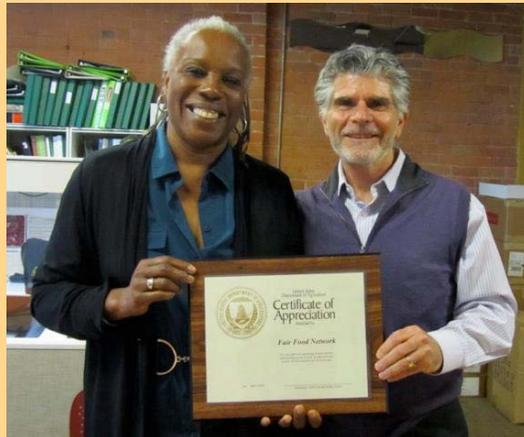


authorized farmers markets. Last fiscal year USDA authorized over 2,400 farmers' markets, farmstands and

individual farmers to accept SNAP EBT benefits - a record number. And, SNAP purchases at farmers markets and other authorized farmers reached a record high of \$11.7 million in FY 2011. Over 155,000 SNAP households made at least one purchase at a farmers market. Several factors have contributed to this growth. Funding from USDA and other sources has helped equip the markets to accept EBT. USDA and its state and local partners have also reached out to farmers and farmers markets to encourage them to become SNAP-authorized. Another major factor has been the growth of farmers market incentive programs. These programs, supported by a variety of public/private partnerships, are making healthy, locally-grown foods more accessible and affordable to SNAP recipients *and* boosting the local farm economy.

Farmers market incentive programs help SNAP customers stretch their food benefit dollars by providing a "match" of their initial EBT purchase. Though the dollar amount of the match is relatively small, the results show that a small incentive can have a major impact on customer shopping habits. One such program is the [Double Up Food Bucks](#) (DUFb) project operated by the [Fair Food Network](#) in Ann Arbor, Michigan. DUFb matches the first \$20 a SNAP participant spends with an extra \$20 in tokens

### Fair Food Network Recognized



On April 4, FNS Administrator Audrey Rowe visited the Fair Food Network (FFN) in Ann Arbor, Michigan and presented President and CEO Oran Hesterman, Ph.D. (pictured above) with a USDA Certificate of Appreciation. She recognized FFN's innovative efforts to increase SNAP clients' access to locally grown produce and sales opportunities for Michigan fruit and vegetable farmers.

During the 2011 season, Michigan SNAP recipients spent \$687,843 in SNAP benefits at 54 participating markets (up from 15 in 2010) and received \$620,115 in Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) matching tokens. Michigan's SNAP farmers markets redemptions are the highest of the Midwest Region states.

to spend at participating markets in Michigan and Toledo. DUFb grew out of the Double Value Coupon Program (DVCP) created by [Wholesome Wave](#).

[Wholesome Wave](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting small and mid-size farms

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# What's New in the FNS Nutrition Assistance Programs

## Preventing Fraud in SNAP

In December 2011, USDA Under Secretary Kevin Concannon announced new anti-fraud efforts to combat fraud and abuse in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These include stronger penalties for retailers who abuse the program and curbs on participants who use their benefits improperly. On March 8, 2012, he testified before the House Government Oversight Committee on SNAP fraud. He noted that USDA diligently enforces SNAP rules and the vast majority of retailers and participants play by the rules. USDA studies show that retailer fraud is at an all time low of less than one percent, although no amount of fraud is tolerated. He also noted that SNAP payment accuracy (measuring whether participants receive the correct amount of benefits) is at an historic high of 98 percent.



Also, in February 2012, he announced the results of [USDA's first quarter FY 2012](#) efforts to identify and eliminate fraudulent retailers. Read more in the [Under Secretary's blog on preventing SNAP fraud](#).

USDA has a new website on fighting SNAP fraud. Access the [SNAP Integrity Fact Sheet](#) and learn how FNS and its partners are fighting SNAP fraud at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/fraud.htm>.

## SNAP Data by Congressional District

[SNAP Community Characteristics](#) data is now available **by Congressional district** on the FNS website. You can also find information related to poverty status, race, income, and work status by Congressional district.

## FY 2012 SNAP Participation Grants

FNS has posted a Request for Applications (RFA) for FY 2012 SNAP Participation Grants. A total of \$5 million is available to state or local governments (including SNAP agencies), public health or educational entities, or private nonprofits such as food banks. The grants will focus on improving the quality and efficiency of SNAP operations and applicants' ability to access benefits. Applications must be received by June 20. Click on the link below for the full grant announcement:

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/government/grants/Grant\\_Announcement-2012.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/government/grants/Grant_Announcement-2012.pdf)

## Expanding Access to Summer Meals

Summer is almost here, and FNS and its state and local partners are working to make sure children who rely on free and reduced price school breakfasts and lunches can get nutritious meals when school is out.



Four new [radio PSA's](#) on the [Summer Food Service Program](#) are available for free on the USDA website. Two are for use in recruiting sponsors and volunteers and two are for conducting outreach to parents and caregivers. [Transcripts](#) are also available.



*A Catholic Charities Chicago summer food program participant enjoys a healthy lunch. (2011 SFSP photo contest winner)*

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# What's New in the FNS Nutrition Assistance Programs, cont'd



In 2009 USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack launched [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#), an initiative to support local,

sustainable agriculture and increase Americans' access to healthy, local farm products. In February 2012, Secretary Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan launched a new online resource -- the [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food \(KYF\) Compass](#).

The KYF Compass is a multi-media guide to local and regional food systems across the U.S. It features an [interactive U.S. map](#) of USDA-supported local and regional food projects. You'll also find inspiring stories, case studies, photos and videos about efforts to support local food production, conserve natural resources, help schools procure regionally produced food, start school and community gardens and more. Read USDA [Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan's blog](#) to learn more.

## USDA Celebrates 150 Years

On May 16, 2012, USDA will begin a year-long celebration of the 150th anniversary of its founding. In 1862 President Abraham Lincoln signed into law an act of Congress establishing the United States Department of Agriculture. In 1864, in his final message to Congress, President Lincoln called USDA "The People's Department." USDA still fulfills Lincoln's vision, says USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, "touching the lives of every American, every day." Learn interesting facts about American agriculture and the history of USDA on [USDA's 150th Anniversary](#) website.



## Follow FNS and USDA!

Connect to FNS and USDA news with:

**Twitter** - <https://twitter.com/#!/USDANutrition>

**E-updates!** (fast and friendly FNS news stories) <http://www.fns.usda.gov/outreach/eupdates/>

**Facebook** - <https://www.facebook.com/USDA>

**YouTube** - <http://www.youtube.com/USDAfoodandnutrition>

**Flickr** (USDA and FNS photos) - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov>

**USDA blog** - <http://blogs.usda.gov/>



## Making Healthier Food Choices

Visit USDA's [ChooseMyPlate](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/) website (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>) for great ideas and resources to achieve a healthier diet. USDA's MyPlate icon replaced the familiar MyPyramid graphic in 2011 with a simple, easy-to-remember image of a nutritionally balanced dinner plate. (MiPlato is the Spanish version.)



The new website helps consumers choose a healthy diet based on the [2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), which aim to improve Americans' health and reverse the epidemic of obesity and chronic diet-related illnesses. The ChooseMyPlate website features [SuperTracker](#), a web-based tool to help consumers create a personalized diet and exercise plan and a [Ten Tips Nutrition Education Series](#) for consumers in a convenient, printable format. Order free print materials in limited quantities by [clicking here](#).

## SNAP Farmers Market Programs, cont'd

### SNAP Farmers Market Incentive Programs, cont'd from page 9

and making locally-grown fruits and vegetables available and affordable to underserved communities. Its DVCP, operating in 25 states through community partners, is enjoying tremendous growth. The number of families participating in the DVCP jumped from 20,000 in 2010 to nearly 40,000 in 2011. And DVCP sales, on the average, account for 1/4 of total farmers market sales. In Illinois, Wholesome Wave partners with [Experimental Station](#) and the Illinois Farmers Market Association to offer an incentive program called [LINK Up Illinois](#). Working with 20 markets across the state, LINK Up Illinois generated over \$84,000 in SNAP sales and provided an extra \$43,000 in fresh, healthy food to low-income Illinoisans in 2011.

In Minnesota a new SNAP farmers market incentive program is making it easier for SNAP participants to buy locally grown produce. [Market Bucks](#) is a collaboration between Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, local government organizations (such as the City of Minneapolis and Saint Paul - Ramsey County), and the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association. Since its launch in 2010, Market Bucks has grown from three locations to 24 around the state this coming summer. It offers coupons that match the first \$5 in EBT card purchases with an additional \$5 each market day.

### USDA Supports Farmers Markets

On April 6, USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced that approximately \$10 million is available for [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) grants. At least 10 percent of the funds must be used to enable EBT at farmers markets. USDA is looking for projects that will expand healthy food choices for all Americans – especially in food deserts or low-income areas - while supporting farmers markets, community supported agriculture, roadside stands and other direct marketing operations. Applications are due by May 21, 2012.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) maintains a [national directory of farmers markets](#) with self-reported information from farmers markets, associations and others. It is searchable by location, products, and type of payments accepted (e.g., SNAP, WIC Farmers Market coupons, credit card).

To support SNAP usage at the markets, FNS has streamlined the certification process so farmers' markets and farmstands can accept EBT benefits. USDA's AMS and Rural Development are supporting installation of wireless terminals at the markets. Learn more in the [USDA guide](#) to equipping farmers markets.

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#### FNS Midwest Region

77 W. Jackson Blvd, 20th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604  
phone (312) 353-1044  
fax (312) 353-0171  
email: [publicaffairs@fns.usda.gov](mailto:publicaffairs@fns.usda.gov)

#### Office of Public Affairs

Alan Shannon, Director  
Kathleen FioRito  
Megan Bensette

#### US Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

*At the Table* is produced for our partners throughout the Midwest Region. If someone you know has an interest in our programs, we would be happy to add them to our distribution list.

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# STATE OF MICHIGAN



## CERTIFICATE OF PROCLAMATION

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF MICHIGAN

I, Rick Snyder, governor of Michigan, do hereby proclaim

May 2012 as

## MICHIGAN ASPARAGUS MONTH

WHEREAS, Michigan is home to 125 asparagus farms on approximately 11,000 acres, with each grower yielding about 2,100 pounds of asparagus per acre; and,

WHEREAS, Michigan ranks third in the nation for asparagus production and produces 25 million pounds of fresh asparagus each year; the total annual value of the Michigan asparagus crop is estimated at \$15 million; and,

WHEREAS, beginning in early May, fresh Michigan asparagus can be found at farmers markets, roadside stands and in grocery produce sections throughout Michigan; adding more vegetables like Michigan asparagus to the daily diet of children and adults in our state will lead to a healthier Michigan; and,

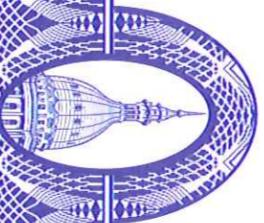
WHEREAS, during this month, we encourage all residents to support Michigan's bountiful agricultural industry by consuming locally grown asparagus and recognizing its many health benefits;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Snyder, governor of Michigan, do hereby proclaim May 2012 as Michigan Asparagus Month.



A blue ink signature of Rick Snyder.

Rick Snyder  
Governor



## Asparagus Guacamole

**2.5 lbs Asparagus**  
**.5 Cup Lime Juice**  
**1 Cup Salsa**  
**1 Cup Cilantro, Fresh (lightly packed)**  
**1 Cup Green Onions, Chopped**  
**12-16oz Cream Cheese – helps thicken and prevents it from being too watery**

**Step 1** – If not using leftovers. Wash and trim asparagus into 2 inch pieces. Toss in oil, salt and pepper. Roast in 350F oven for 6-8 minutes or until tender.

**Step 2** – Wash Cilantro and remove stems. Wash and rough chop green onions.

**Step 3** - Place all ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth. Cover and store in cooler until service.

**Makes 64 – 2T servings**

*Nutrition analysis per 2 Tbsp (64 servings per recipe): 23 calories, 2g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 42mg sodium, 1g carbohydrate, 0.5g fiber, 1g protein*

Recipe provided by Sarah Stone, Chartwells Director of Dining, Godfrey-Lee Public Schools



**Farm to School:  
Setting the Table  
for Wellness**

**Asparagus Pasta Salad**  
**Courtesy of Traverse City Area Public Schools**

Prep Time: 8 Hours

Cook Time: 1 Hour

Yield: 50 servings

**Ingredients:**

18.5 cups of Asparagus, cut into 2-3" pieces

12.5 cup of small Shell Pasta

9.5 cup of Italian dressing

6.5 cup of Carrots, sliced in thin circles

6.5 cup of Onions, diced

3.25 cup of Sweet Red Peppers, diced

4 Tbsp of Dried Oregano

**Preparation Instructions:**

1. Cook the small shell pasta as directed on its packaging.
2. Rinse, drain and allow to cool.
3. Add the other ingredients and mix together thoroughly.
4. Marinade for about 8 hours. 1 serving = ½ cup

*Recipe Provided By Kristen Misiak*



**Farm to School:  
Setting the Table  
for Wellness**

**Asparagus Soup  
Courtesy of Glen Lake Community Schools**

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1.5 hours

Yield: 1.5 gallons

**Ingredients**

5 pounds of Norconk Asparagus, chopped, reserve tips  
1 Large Onion, diced small  
2 Ribs of Celery, diced small  
1 pound Unsalted Butter  
1 pound Flour  
1 gallon Chicken Stock  
1 quart Heavy Cream  
2 tsp Dried Thyme  
TT Kosher salt and pepper

**Preparation Instructions:**

1. Over medium heat in a stock pot, melt the butter
2. Sauté the onions, celery & asparagus pieces in the butter-but reserve the tips.
3. In a different pot, bring water to a boil and blanch the asparagus tips for 2 minutes.
4. After the stock has simmered for 30 minutes, puree the stock mixture with an emersion blender. Strain the pureed stock to create a smooth stock. Add the thyme at this time.
5. Add the heavy cream and the tips and simmer for 20 minutes. Re-check the seasonings.
6. If the stock is not thick enough, add a cornstarch slurry (3 oz. of water & 3 oz. of corn starch) and simmer for 5 more minutes.
7. If the soup is 165 degrees it is ready for service.

*Recipe Provided by Chef Gene Peyerk*

## Michigan Asparagus Shippers, Processors, and Handlers

### Asparagus Shippers

Todd Greiner Farms Packing  
2542 N 128th Avenue  
Hart, MI 49420

Todd Greiner  
(231)873-2828  
(231)873-0357 (Fax)

Greiner's Green Acres Farms, Inc.  
1938 W. Jackson Road  
Hart, MI 49420

Jim Greiner  
231-873-5910 (Office)  
231-873-8141 (Fax)  
ggafinc@live.com

Miedema Produce, Inc.  
5005 40th Avenue  
Hudsonville, MI 49426

Todd Miedema  
616-669-9420

Mol Produce Co.  
PO Box 141154  
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Dan Mol  
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616-453-3605 (Fax)

North Bay Produce  
P.O. Box 988  
Traverse City, MI 49685-0988

Mark Girardin  
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231-946-1902 (Fax)

Superior Sales, Inc.  
PO Box 159  
Hudsonville, MI 49426

Randy VandeGuchte  
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616-896-6510 (Fax)

Spiech Farms  
PO Box 42  
Lawton, MI 49065

spiechfarms.com  
269-657-1980 – phone  
269-657-5023 - fax

### Asparagus Processors, Canned

Honee Bear Canning,  
Div. of Packers Canning Co.  
P.O. Box G,  
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Lawton, MI 49065

Steve Packer  
Ron Armstrong  
269-624-4681  
269-624-6009 (Fax)

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Cooperative, Inc.  
3958 W. Chauvez Rd.  
Ludington, MI 49431-9704

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### Asparagus Processors, Frozen

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Coloma Frozen Foods  
4145 Coloma Road  
Coloma, MI 49038

Bradley Wendzel  
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269-861-2274 (Fax)

Michigan Freeze Pack  
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John Ritchie  
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231-861-2274 (Fax)

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Brad Wendzel  
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Hart, MI 49420

Todd Greiner  
(231)873-2828  
(231)873-0357 (Fax)

Greiner's Green Acres Farms, Inc.  
1938 W. Jackson Road  
Hart, MI 49420

Jim Greiner  
231-873-5910 (Office)  
231-873-8141 (Fax)  
ggafinc@live.com

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Ronald Richter  
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Conklin, MI 49403

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616-675-5549 (Pack)  
616-899-2102 (Fax)

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1464 Wilson Ave.  
Conklin, MI 49403

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616-894-5476 (Fax)

Wheeler Farms  
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Hart, MI 49420

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231-873-7638 (Fax)

## **FARM MARKETS & DIRECT SALES**

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**(Farm Market)**  
Siler Asparagus Farm  
1300 Buchanan Road  
Remus, MI 49340

Dave Siler  
PH: 989-967-3417  
e-mail: [dianelesiler@yahoo](mailto:dianelesiler@yahoo)

**(Farm Market & Direct Sales)**  
Harvey's Farm  
2651 15 Mile Road  
Tekonsha, MI 49092

Ron Harvey  
PH: 517-767-3408  
e-mail: [harvey@harveysupick.com](mailto:harvey@harveysupick.com)

**(Farm Market)**  
Gregory's Asparagus Farm  
14875 110th Avenue  
Rodney, MI 49342

Bruce & Colleen Gregory  
PH: 231-867-3345  
e-mail: [gregorycjb@gmail.com](mailto:gregorycjb@gmail.com)

**(Farm Market)**  
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4180 W. M20  
New Era, MI 49446

Scott Lewis  
PH: 231-861-5730  
FAX: 231-861-5773  
e-mail: [info@lewisfarmmarket.com](mailto:info@lewisfarmmarket.com)

**(Roadside Stand & Direct Sales)**  
Norconk Farm  
10004 Aral Road  
Honor, MI 49640

Harry and Barbara Norconk  
PH: 231-326-3540  
FAX: 231-326-3540  
e-mail: [norconkfarm@att.net](mailto:norconkfarm@att.net)