

FSNE Farm to School

Invite a Farmer to the Classroom

Inviting a farmer to visit your classroom provides children with a unique learning experience. They will learn about where their food comes from, how foods are grown and get to their table, and what it is like to be a farmer!

Planning is the key to a successful farmer visit to your classroom. Here are some simple steps to follow when inviting a farmer to be a special guest in the classroom.

Plan Ahead:

1. Find a farmer in your county by visiting [Maryland's Best](#), visit a local farmers' market to meet and invite a farmer, or contact your local University of Maryland Extension office for suggestions. Visit [UMD Extension](#) for the extension office in your county.
2. Follow the school protocol and approval process to bring a guest into the classroom.
3. Ask the farmer if they are willing to talk with multiple classes during the day, and coordinate with other teachers if the farmer is willing to talk to several classes or grades.
4. Determine how long the farmer will be able to spend at the school.
5. Discuss your learning goals for the visit with the farmer, such as:
 - a. Links to nutrition education
 - b. Where and how food grows
 - c. Health and physical education
 - d. Science and technology
 - e. Special events, such as Homegrown School Lunch Week, National Farm to School Month (October), or National Gardening Month (April)
6. Discuss if any added learning resources will be provided for the farmer to utilize, such as read aloud books, posters, or videos.
7. Ask the farmer if they will be able to provide any food items for the children to touch, feel, smell, or taste. If they are planning to provide food items for the children to taste, discuss how and where produce will be washed and prepared before serving.
8. Determine if the farmer will have any special needs for the room, such as extra tables, a projector, or internet access.
9. Ask the farmer for a brief bio and history of their farm, and if they will have photos to share with the class.



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In the Classroom:

1. Share the farmer's bio and background on the farm, and prepare your students for the farmer's visit.
2. Review [Maryland Agriculture](#) map to begin a discussion on products grown in the state.
3. Ask students to write down one question they would like to ask the farmer, and collect them to give to the farmer.
4. Choose a read-aloud book, such as [“Before We Eat: From Farm to Table” by Pat Brisson](#), or [“Up, Down, and Around” by Katherine Ayres](#) to prepare the class to learn about how food grows and how it travels from the farm to our table.
5. Select a lesson from the Farm to School [Toolkit](#) to introduce the farm to table concept to students.

The Day of the Farmer Visit:

1. Remind students of your behavioral expectations.
2. Introduce the farmer to the class.
3. Remind students that you have shared their pre-written questions with the farmer and he or she will attempt to answer as many as possible during the visit.
4. Enjoy your farmer visit!

After the Farmer Visit:

1. Have students write thank you notes to the farmer for the visit. Alternatively, students could create a video or collage and share it with the farmer.
2. Lead an open discussion with students to find out what they learned from the visit, what they will share with someone at home, and what they think it means to be a farmer.
3. Have students draw a picture and write a paragraph summarizing their visit with the farmer.
4. Send resources home that complement the farmer's visit:
 - a. [FSNE Gardening for Nutrition Newsletter](#) (select the appropriate season)
 - b. FSNE Farm to School Newsletter ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
 - c. FSNE Grow Your Own Fruits and Veggies Newsletter ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
 - d. A recipe from the [FSNE Eat Smart recipe bank](#) for an item grown by the farmer
 - e. Promote a local Farmers' Market with parents using this flier ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
5. Encourage students to ask their family to visit a local farmers' market or look for locally grown produce at the grocery store to enjoy at home!

