



## About Food System Economic Partnership

Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP), a non-profit collaboration representing Jackson, Lenawee, Monroe, Washtenaw and Wayne counties, exists to catalyze change in the food system of Southeast Michigan. We provide research, education and outreach, with urban and rural partnerships resulting in agricultural development opportunities, sustainable communities, and healthy local economies.

## About Farm to School

In 2007 FSEP began helping school districts in Southeast Michigan develop Farm to School Programs. Farm to School programs provide our children with access to fresh, delicious fruits and vegetables as part of their school meal programs and help them learn about where their food comes from. Farm to School programs also help local farms remain sustainable by providing them outlets closer to the farm to sell their products to.

Although it may seem natural for locally grown produce to be incorporated into the school lunch programs, there are often a number of obstacles both Food Service Directors and Farmers face in starting a Farm to School program. The FSEP Farm to School Program Director acts as a third-party facilitator and helps both Farmers and Food Service Directors work through the regulatory environment, distribution and marketing challenges that arise.

## The Politics of Farm to School

Given the many national, state and local rules that apply to school food purchasing, the regulatory environment related to farm-to-school programs is confusing at best. To help you navigate through all of this, I will briefly discuss the National School Lunch Program, recent legislation that has been passed in Michigan in support of Farm to School, legislation that other states have proposed, the Stimulus Package and the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act.

FSEP exists to catalyze change in the food system of Southeastern Michigan. We provide research, education and outreach with urban and rural partnerships, resulting in agricultural development opportunities, sustainable communities, and healthy local economies.

With participation of Michigan community and business leaders in:

Jackson County

Lenawee County

Monroe County

Washtenaw County

Wayne County

Research and Education Partners

### **For More Information Please Contact:**

Michaëlle Rehmann, Farm to School Program Director

705 North Zeeb Road • PO BOX 8645 • Ann Arbor, MI 48107

rehmannm@ewashtenaw.org • Phone: 734.222.3817 • Fax: 734.222.3990