

NEWS RELEASE: For Immediate Distribution

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### **Boise School District “Harvest Day” Highlights Year-Long Farm to School Program**

BOISE – (Sept. 24, 2012) – To celebrate Idaho Preferred month and highlight efforts to serve local foods, the Boise School District will observe “Harvest Day” on Wednesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Although local foods will be served at all 45 elementary and secondary schools as part of an ongoing Farm to School program, a special celebration will be held at lunchtime at Cynthia Mann Elementary School. Along with a local food menu, farmers and special guests will be on hand to celebrate Harvest Day.

Farm to School is a broad term that is used to describe efforts to connect healthy local food and agriculture with schools and students. Its goal is to support healthy children, healthy schools, healthy farms and healthy communities. Boise School District was one of five school districts selected by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and Idaho State Department of Education in 2010 to pilot a Farm to School program and help create best practices for other schools that want to begin Farm to School efforts. In one year alone, the district spent over \$1 million on local foods to feed over 25,000 students. Boise School District continues to expand its effort to include more local foods on school menus throughout the year.

In the Boise district, the goal of the Farm to School program is to provide all students at least one local food item per day during the month of September and at least one local food item per week the rest of the year. Most weeks they exceed this goal. Every school in the Boise School District offers access to a variety of vegetables and fruits. Many of these products are local during the fall harvest season. Throughout the year, Boise schools will serve fresh local apples, pears, grapes, watermelon, cantaloupe, zucchini and potatoes. Students have several entrée options each day, including options made with local food items such as trout and pizza made with local whole-wheat flour crust. And, every student is served milk from Idaho dairies every day.

This Harvest Day luncheon is the culmination of a month-long focus on local foods. In addition to eating nutritious school lunch, the celebration will encourage exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. Elementary students will track their food consumption with the goal of eating according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s My Plate guidelines and noting which of those foods are local. Those who complete the assignment will receive a free ticket to the Farmstead Corn Maze from their teachers. At secondary schools, Farmstead tickets will be awarded as prizes in a local food trivia contest drawing.

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**About Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup>**

The Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> program is designed to identify and promote food and agriculture products from the Gem State. Under the direction of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> promotes the quality, diversity, and availability of the food and agriculture products we grow, raise and process in Idaho. For more information about the Farm to School program, visit [www.idahopreferred.com](http://www.idahopreferred.com), or contact Leah Clark at [Leah.clark@agri.idaho.gov](mailto:Leah.clark@agri.idaho.gov), or 208-332-8684 or Heidi Martin, R.D, L.D. at the Idaho State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs at [hcmartin@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:hcmartin@sde.idaho.gov) or 208-332-6827.

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