



# STATE OF IDAHO



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## **IDAHO TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL MONTH IN OCTOBER**

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> Program will celebrate statewide Farm to School Month in October as part of the National Farm to School Month. The initiative seeks to feature the ways farm-to-school efforts can improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food.

The 2016 National Farm to School Month theme, One Small Step, highlights the simple things anyone can do to get informed, get involved and take action to advance the initiative in schools and communities.

To assist schools in making the most out of farm-to-school opportunities, Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> will provide such resources as suggested menu applications, classroom posters, teacher curriculum and fun physical activities that advance a food theme. These weekly themes also represent some of Idaho's major agricultural industries – including dairy, potatoes, apples and trout – and focus on easily accessible local foods.

The official start to Idaho's Farm to School Month will occur Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at Whittier Elementary School in Boise. During lunch, the school will be taking "One Small Step" by adding fresh Idaho apples and vegetables to their salad bar. The menu addition will be used at all cafeterias in the Boise School District on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and will include 40 cases or about 6,500 Idaho-grown apples. Throughout the year, Boise schools also will serve Idaho grapes, green peppers, garbanzo beans, trout, potatoes and a wide variety of dairy products.

"Students, parents, faculty and food service staff in our district are really supportive of preparing and eating locally grown and produced items," said Peggy Bodnar, RDN, LD, SNS, Food and Nutrition Services supervisor for the Boise School District. "We love supporting the local economy, and the foods Idaho produces taste fantastic!"

“Celebrating National Farm to School Month is just one more element of our very active Idaho Farm to School program” said Leah Clark, Idaho’s lead for the National Farm to School Network and manager of ISDA’s Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> program. “Our Idaho Farm to School program is a great collaboration between the Idaho’s departments of Agriculture and Education, Idaho Ag in the Classroom and, most importantly, our school nutrition professionals. And, it is paying off. The most recent USDA Farm to School Census shows that 45 percent of Idaho schools, or 55 districts with over 107,700 students, are serving local foods. In 2015, more than \$4.2 million was spent by Idaho schools on locally produced foods.”

**About Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup>**

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture’s Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> program promotes the quality, diversity and availability of local food and agricultural products grown, raised or processed in Idaho. Idaho Preferred<sup>®</sup> strives to increase consumer awareness of local farmers, ranchers and food processors; provide education and information about seasonal local product availability; reach out to local communities and schools; and provide a connection between producers and retailers.