

Minnesota Grown Farm to School District of the Year Contest 2023



Contest Overview

Minnesota Grown is excited to host the first annual *Farm to School District of the Year Contest* – a statewide contest to celebrate school districts who buy, serve, and promote foods from Minnesota Grown farmers and producers!

The Minnesota Grown Farm to School District of the Year Contest is an opportunity for school districts to share their Minnesota Grown pride during National Farm to School Month in October.

Contest Period

The 2023 contest period runs October 1-October 31, 2023, during National Farm to School Month. Throughout the month of October, Minnesota school districts are encouraged to serve and promote Minnesota Grown foods and celebrate connections with farmers. To enter the contest, school districts will submit information and photos documenting how they celebrated Farm to School Month and their support for Minnesota farmers and producers.

Entry Deadline

All entries must be received no later than **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 1, 2023**, through the online entry portal.

Eligibility

- K-12 school districts must be located in Minnesota. Eligible applicants include public and private school districts.
- Entries should represent the promotional efforts of a **school district**, not an individual school. Districts with several schools are encouraged to submit photos and information that capture the breadth of their schools' promotional efforts.

Contest Procedures

Entry Checklist:

To enter the contest, school districts will be required to submit the following:

1) Summary of menus and promotional activities during the contest period

- Brief description of local foods served and featured during Farm to School Month (10/1/23-10/31/23), including:
 - List of local, Minnesota grown or raised foods served
 - List of Minnesota farms where products were purchased
- Brief description of promotional and educational activities conducted during the Farm to School Month. (Examples of potential activities: morning announcements, special events, farmer visits, classroom lessons, promotions and displays in the cafeteria featuring the Minnesota Grown logo, social media, newsletters, use of Harvest of the Month materials, etc.)

2) Photos from the contest period

- Up to 7 photos can be included in an entry submission to highlight Farm to School meals and promotional efforts during Farm to School Month (10/1/23-10/31/23)
 - Examples of photos: Farm to School meals, salad bars or serving lines, cafeteria displays or marketing materials, samples of social media posts or newsletters, scene from a school/community events, students/staff in the cafeteria activities, etc. *Whatever best documents how your school district served, promoted, and celebrated local foods and farms during the contest period!*
- At least one photo must include the Minnesota Grown logo. For example, a cafeteria display with a Minnesota Grown sign included, or a lunch tray with a Minnesota Grown sticker next to a local food item. Additional use of the Minnesota Grown logo in marketing materials, promotions, and photos is *strongly encouraged*. School districts can [order free marketing materials](#) from Minnesota Grown, or [request the Minnesota Grown logo file](#) and it to self-designed promotional materials.
- **One single photo (no collages) will be used to enter into the *People's Choice Contest*. *This photo must include the Minnesota Grown logo.***

3) Summary of school district's Farm to School program activities *beyond the contest period*

- Brief description of district's overall commitment and approach to local food purchasing (beyond Farm to School month), including overall variety of local foods offered in school meal programs and demonstrated commitment to incorporating local food into menus.
- Brief description of district's overall commitment and approach to local food promotion and education, and how the district builds connections between the cafeteria, classroom and community throughout the school year.

Award Categories

1) **Minnesota Grown Farm to School: District of the Year**

One winner will be selected. Scoring will be based on school districts' promotion of Minnesota grown and raised foods during the contest period (10/1/23-10/31/23), as well as their overall commitment to buying local food and promoting Minnesota agriculture and producers.

2) **People's Choice Award Photo Contest**

One **single** photo (no collages) from each District of the Year entry will be entered into the Minnesota Grown People's Choice Award Photo Contest of the Year. One winner statewide will be chosen based on 50% weighted fan voting on the Minnesota Grown Facebook page and 50% judge-awarded points. Facebook voting will occur in early November 2023; Minnesota Grown staff will alert entrants of specific dates.

Award Announcement

Winners will be announced in mid-November, with an official award presentation to follow.

Prizes

The 1st place winner of the **Minnesota Grown Farm to School: District of the Year** will receive:

- Exclusive rights to a "Minnesota Grown District of the Year" logo for the award year
- Commemorative plaque
- **On-site, school-focused culinary training for a group of staff from a professional chef**

The winner of the **People's Choice Award Photo Contest** will receive exclusive rights to a "Minnesota Grown District of the Year" logo for the award year and a commemorative plaque.

Judging Criteria

Part 1 - Farm to School Month Showcase (up to 70 points)

Scores will be awarded based on local purchasing and promotional activities during the month of October (10/1/23-10/31-23), which is National Farm to School Month.

Part 1: Farm to School Month Showcase		Up to 70 points
Farm to School Meals - Use of local foods in cafeteria meals, including number of local foods served and Minnesota farms/businesses purchased from during the contest period.		Up to 25 points
Promotion & Education - Promotion of Minnesota Grown products/farmers in communications, marketing and promotion, and educational experiences.		Up to 25 points
Minnesota Grown Branding - Use and promotion of Minnesota Grown logo in promotional displays, activities, communication/marketing materials, and photo submissions.		Up to 20 points

Part 2 - Farm to School Commitment (Up to 30 points)

Scores will be based on overall commitment to Farm to School throughout the school year – including buying and serving, promoting, and teaching about local foods.

Part 2: Year-Round Commitment to Farm to School		Up to 30 points
Producer Relationships & Local Meals: Overall variety of local foods offered in school meal programs; use of innovative and creative strategies to incorporate local food into menus; and demonstrated commitment to supporting local producers.		Up to 15 points
Promotional & Educational Activities: Promotional and educational activities and experiences offered throughout the school year to promote and teach about local food, farmers, and agriculture.		Up to 15 points

How to Apply

Online Entry Form

School districts will submit their entry for Minnesota Grown Farm to School: District of the Year through an online form. To do this, follow these steps:

1. [Create account with Minnesota Department of Agriculture online platform](#)
2. **Review entry form** as you get started with your promotional efforts by
 - a. Selecting “2023 Minnesota Grown Farm to School: District of the Year” within the portal.
 - b. Reading the PDF version of the entry questions on the Farm to School: District of the Year webpage.
3. **Upload required information and photos** anytime during the contest period – you can return at any time to add more information, edit your responses, etc.
 - a. Information: Enter written responses about your Farm to School efforts
 - b. Photos: Please only submit photos in the provided upload slots on the application. Any outside links with photos or marketing materials will not be considered as part of the submission.
 - c. Make sure to review contest rules as you finalize your entry.
4. **Submit your entry by 4 p.m. on November 1, 2023.** Incomplete entries will not be considered.

Entries should be uploaded into the online application portal. If you cannot utilize the online portal or have questions, contact Kate Seybold at kate.seybold@state.mn.us

Resources for a Successful Entry

Entrants are encouraged to use the following resources for planning and executing their Farm to School: District of the Year promotions and activities.

- [Request the Minnesota Grown Logo](#) to use for self-designed promotional materials
- Find farmers using the [Minnesota Grown Wholesale Directory](#)
- [Order free Minnesota Grown marketing materials](#) such as posters, stickers, and label cards to use for your Farm to School promotions
- [Minnesota Harvest of the Month](#) also offers free marketing materials (stickers, posters, salad bar clings, etc.) as well as educational resources and recipes to support Farm to School efforts

Privacy Notice

All information and materials provided by entrants to the MDA as part of the Minnesota Grown Farm to School District of the Year contest are legally classified as public data under Minnesota law. This means that any member of the public has a right to view and/or request copies of contest submissions, and all associated information and materials, at any time and for any reason.

- 1. No Confidentiality:** Photographs submitted to Minnesota Grown and the MDA as part of this contest will not be treated as confidential, private, or otherwise not public. By submitting a photograph you affirm that you are not including or disclosing any trade secrets or other confidential information, including without limitation confidential information of any third party, in any photographs.
- 2. Non-Infringing Materials:** By submitting a photograph, you hereby represent and warrant that: (a) you are above the age of majority in the jurisdiction of your residence; (b) the photograph is original to you, you personally are the photographer of the photograph and that you are the owner of all right, title and interest in and to the photograph and have the right to grant the rights granted herein or, alternatively, you have obtained all necessary rights and permissions to use and submit the photograph in connection with Minnesota Grown and the MDA and to provide all the rights specified herein; and (c) the photograph and the use thereof as contemplated herein does not and will not violate or infringe any law or regulation or the rights of any third party, including, without limitation, any copyright, trademark, patent, or any rights of publicity or privacy, or any other intellectual property, personal, or proprietary rights.
- 3. Permissions:** Except where prohibited by law, by submitting a photograph you grant permission to Minnesota Grown and the MDA to use the photo without limitation, for promotional, advertising, marketing, awareness, outreach, or educational purposes without further permission or compensation.
- 4. General Release:** By submitting a photograph, you release Minnesota Grown and the MDA and all of their respective employees, officers, directors, contractors, and agents from any liability whatsoever, and waive any and all causes of action, related to any claims, costs, injuries, losses, or damages of any kind arising out of rights of publicity or privacy, defamation or portrayal in a false light, whether intentional or unintentional, whether under a theory of contract, tort (including negligence), warranty or other theory.
- 5. Intellectual Property Notice:** While photo submitters retain all rights to their images, the submitter grants permission for unrestricted use of the image, including people in the image, to Minnesota Grown and the MDA to utilize the image in future publications, exhibits, on its Internet site and social media accounts to promote the functions and values of Minnesota Grown and the MDA. Minnesota Grown or the MDA may alter the image for their use, including but not limited to adding text over the image.

Questions?

Contact Kate Seybold, Farm to Institution Coordinator, at 651-201-6165 or by email at Kate.Seybold@state.mn.us.