

September 21, 2022

Memorandum to: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Executive Director of Provincial and Demonstration Schools

From: Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Lisa Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs

Subject: **Enrolment open for *Fresh from the Farm: Healthy Fundraising for Ontario Schools 2022***

Fresh from the Farm returns this year, providing students, teachers, staff and parents an opportunity to connect classrooms with home kitchens and local growers by selling Ontario vegetables and apples to raise funds for their school community.

Today, we are inviting over 4,900 schools from the 72 publicly funded school boards, school authorities, provincial and demonstration schools and First Nation Schools across the province to enrol in this popular fundraising program by visiting: www.freshfromfarm.ca.

Fresh from the Farm offers two bundles of Ontario produce for sale:

- 14 lb/6.35 kg Vegetable Bundle (3 lbs/1.36 kg carrots, 3 lbs/1.36 kg yellow onions, 5 lbs/2.27 kg potatoes, 3 lbs/1.36 kg sweet potatoes)
- 8 lb/3.63 kg Apple Bundle

For their fundraising efforts, each school keeps 40 per cent of total sales, while 50 per cent is returned to Ontario's farmers, and 10 per cent is retained by *Fresh from the Farm* to support program operational costs.

Fresh from the Farm is a partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA). This innovative program provides schools and students with a healthy fundraising alternative while supporting local farmers and the economy. The return of this program also aligns with the return to a normal back to school experience for students and families across Ontario, with the full restoration of activities such as sports, extra curriculars, and field trips.

Since *Fresh from the Farm's* launch in 2013, almost 2,400 schools have participated in the program from across Ontario selling more than 4.5 million pounds of produce. Historically, participating schools have each raised, on average, \$900 a year to help pay for travel and entry fees for sports competitions or school band trips, student retreats, upgrades to sporting facilities, school yard improvement projects, scholarships or bursaries, and charitable purposes.

Students build their understanding of food literacy through mandatory learning across various subjects and grades. For example, in the recently revised Science and Technology curriculum, students develop an understanding of where food comes from, including the importance of locally sourced food, and how it is grown and prepared, as well as students investigate the importance of biodiversity in agriculture. This program is another way in which we can support student learning and understanding of food literacy.

Based on surveys of past *Fresh from the Farm* participants, Ontario schools are pleased with the program with over 90 per cent reporting a high satisfaction level regarding the quality of the Ontario produce.

We encourage you to promote participation from both elementary and secondary schools within your board. In addition, please share the program link www.freshfromfarm.ca with your Parent Involvement Committee.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to promoting student well-being.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Lisa Thompson
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs