



What's Growing On... Rhode Island Farm to School



February 2011

What's Sprouting in Rhode Island?

Winter Stores

As RI farmland sleeps peacefully under a blanket of snow, last season's stores eagerly await the opportunity to get out and see the world again. Locked up now for over three months, they long to be set free. Release them from their cold, dark storage prisons by serving them in your schools!

Carrots

from Schartner Farms
in all kinds of shapes and sizes!

Frozen Strawberries

from Schartner Farms

Potatoes

from Schartner Farms

Honey

from Aquidneck Honey
in straws or by the pound



Jeff Mello

of Aquidneck Honey
in Portsmouth.

Jeff's honey is being served to lucky students in Newport and Pawtucket to enhance breakfast and lunch offerings

"Planting" Ahead

Believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about the next harvest. Right now RI farmers are planning what, when and how much to grow. It is the ideal time to sit down with them and discuss how much of their crop you should reserve for use in your school meals program. Lettuce, asparagus (available in May!) cherry tomatoes, green beans, suntan and sweet red peppers, maybe even sweet potatoes...think of the bounty we could see on RI school lunch trays! Kids First is happy to assist in brainstorming, sourcing and facilitating discussions. Pre-planning could influence the planting of an early or late harvest crop. Call or email Kimberly Clark to discuss the possibilities. Hurry!!

Rhode Island Farm to School 2010 Highlights

Kids First is proud to report that we've reached over 28,000 students and school community members with Rhode Island Farm to School programs in 2010.

Classroom visits and cafeteria events enabled students to meet the farmers who grow their food, taste new things, understand nutrition and learn about the importance of farms to our economy, environment and communities. Farm tours followed many of these visits, allowing 1829 students to experience farming life firsthand.

Over 300 community members participated in "Eating Healthy on a Budget" workshops featuring healthy cooking demonstrations highlighting seasonal Rhode Island Grown produce.

We were able to support a myriad of initiatives by school food service providers, after school programs and community partners. Activities included series of garden related nutrition education programs, "All Local Lunch Day" celebrations with entire meals of RI produced foods, Harvest Festivals, RI Grown Carrot Festivals, RI Grown Strawberry Festivals, "Fresh to You Market" healthy cooking demonstrations, a statewide Family and Consumer Science Teacher workshop and even a SCLT Gardening with Youth program.

We helped to celebrate RI Grown foods in 30 school districts and have documented purchases by 36 districts so far

in from the 2010 harvest.

This year our goal is to help increase the amount and variety of RI Grown foods in schools. More consistent purchases of RI Grown would be best facilitated by a contract between school food service providers and a local produce distributor. Kids First can assist in an RFP process with any one of the school food service providers to identify a distributor and processor to work with farmers before the next growing season begins. The advance planning involved in that process will economize all aspects of serving RI Grown in RI schools and create a sustainable supply chain, benefiting all involved - especially RI school kids!

Berries and Cream Oatmeal

So simple and delicious!

Ingredients:

Topping

Schartner Farm Strawberries (frozen)
Sugar (about 2 tsp. per cup of berries)

Oatmeal

Use instructions on box for "grain to liquid" ratio, substituting milk for the water

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1/4 teaspoon vanilla per cup of oats

Preparation

1. Simmer berries & sugar over medium heat until they start to release their juices and thicken- about 15 min.
2. In a separate pan bring milk to a simmer. Add oatmeal. Cook to desired thickness. Add Vanilla Extract and a dash of salt if desired before serving.
3. Divide oatmeal into bowls and top with berries. Enjoy!

For Farm to School programs and technical assistance, contact
Farm to School Specialist Kimberly Clark at Kids First 401 475-9696

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