

It's Summer in WI!

Summer Solstice, June 21st, is the day of the year when the northern hemisphere inhabitants receive the greatest amount of energy from the sun. However, due to climactic factors and buffering by the earth's atmosphere, we don't feel the full effects of this energy for at least a month. Correspondingly, our Farm Link Program starts up in early June and receives the bulk of its produce between July and August!

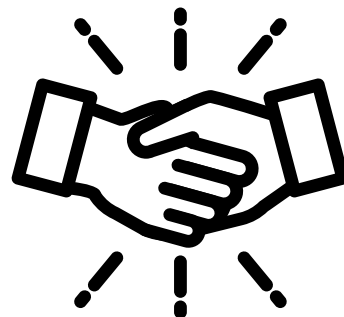
Farm Link is the Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin farm to food bank initiative that provides hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh, locally grown produce to our partners every year. We contract directly with farms to support our local agricultural community and to ensure the product is as fresh as it can be when we distribute it to our network pantries.

To kick-off another season of Farm Link, our team has been busy preparing for the season and sharing our knowledge with the community at several conferences across the country. Here, we will keep you up to date on where we've been to represent Farm Link, what we do to get the program season ready, and who our farmers are this year.

- Karaline Black, Fresh Category Procurement Coordinator

What's new with the Farm Link crew?

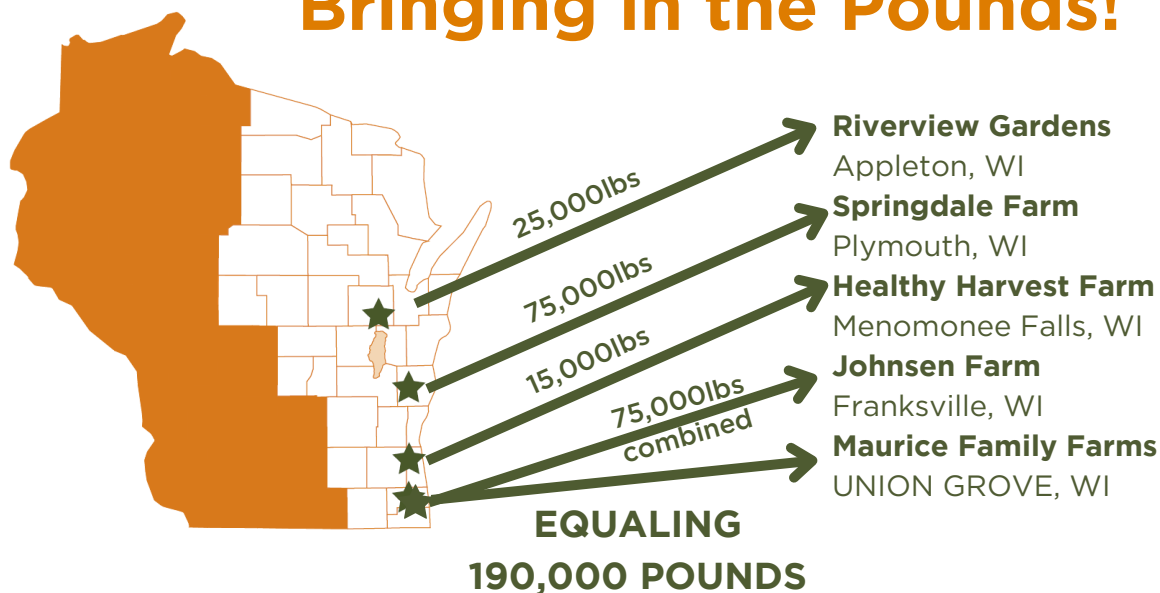
- In April, our team presented at Feeding Wisconsin's Annual Health and Hunger Summit in Wisconsin Dells. We presented on Farm Link's structure and also shared several initiatives that are occurring within the Farm Link Initiative.
- In May, we presented at the 2022 joint annual meeting of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society (AFHVS) and the Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS) in Athens, GA. Our presentation was a roundtable discussion where we had the opportunity to share lessons learned and best practices with others throughout the country doing similar work.



What goes into Farm Link preparation?

- Connecting network partners local to our farmers, and creating weekly pickup schedules to get produce distributed to pantries as fresh and quickly as possible;
- Making sure our farmers have everything they need, like packaging materials, hoop houses, scales, or cleaning equipment to properly distribute fresh produce; AND
- As produce starts to get distributed, our team is contacted to get paperwork ready, record the type and amount, and make sure product is properly stored and packed by volunteers.

Bringing in the Pounds!



At Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin, we support healthy hunger relief and local farmers; and have found a way to combine the two for a sustainable food banking model.



Kara Black, Fresh Category Procurement Coordinator

"As the Fresh Category Procurement Coordinator, I wear many hats surrounding the local fresh food world at Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin. One of my primary roles is the Farm Link Coordinator in which I am able to meet our local contract growers and help connect them with partners so we can get produce out as fresh and quickly as possible to the community! On a personal level, I believe that food sovereignty is a fundamental human right, and I'm grateful that I get to work towards increasing food sovereignty for the communities we serve each and every day.

I learned how to garden and prepare fresh vegetables in creative ways from my next-door neighbor growing up and then from an organic farmer in Bethel, Alaska where I served as a Natural Resources Technician for a year with the Orutsarmiut Native Council. I practiced increasing food sovereignty for tribal members learning how to farm and build fresh community farm boxes, connecting Elders with traditional foods like moose, salmon, pike, whitefish, hare, and ptarmigan through proxy hunts, and creating a seed potato and variety seed starter giveaway. In line with this work, I love dedicating time to meeting cultural needs of the communities we serve. In the summer, I spend my free time buying fresh and local from farmers markets, exploring new hiking and berry picking trails with my pup, and birding!"

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Featured Recipe

Strawberry Salsa

Adapted from Cookie and Kate

Ingredients

- 1 pint strawberries, chopped
- 1 jalapeno, stem & seeds removed, diced
- 1/2 small red onion, diced
- 1/2 cup freshly chopped cilantro
- juice of 1 lime
- pinch of salt
- minced garlic to taste

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and toss well
2. Store in the fridge for 20 minutes to marinate
3. Serve with tortilla chips

Tip: Add honey to bring in some extra sweetness!



<https://cookieandkate.com/strawberry-salsa-recipe/>



MKE Market Match (MMM)

On June 8, 2022, the Milwaukee Market Match (MMM) Program was allocated \$1.1 million in ARPA funding to assist families in purchasing more fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets throughout Milwaukee County. The MMM program matches SNAP/EBT (FoodShare) benefits dollar-for-dollar for up to \$20/day at Milwaukee County farmers markets. The program assists in making Wisconsin grown produce more accessible and affordable to families using FoodShare benefits while also increasing the income of small local family produce

farmers. Funding will allow the MMM to run throughout the growing season (May to November) for calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024 at participating Milwaukee area markets. For more information on participating markets, please visit: Milwaukee Farmers Market Coalition - Extension Milwaukee County (wisc.edu).

To learn more about the Farm Link initiative and how you can get involved, contact:
farmlink@feedingamericawi.org

