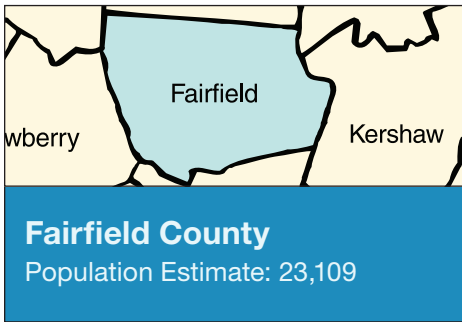


South Carolina Obesity Initiative

SC Farm to School Program



Building Capacity

In 2012, the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) began concentrating obesity prevention efforts in areas of the state with high rates of chronic disease. Fairfield County was identified as one of the initial five counties for the obesity initiative. Obesity prevention efforts included building capacity at the local level to implement strategies and programs, including the SC Farm to School Program.

The program is a collaborative effort between DHEC, the SC Department of Agriculture, the SC Department of Education, and Clemson University. The program connects schools (K-12) and local farms with the objectives of providing children access to high quality local foods, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers.

The four components of Farm to School are:

1. Source at least two SC grown fruits and vegetables per month to be served as a part of the school meal.
2. Promote SC grown fruits and vegetables in the school cafeteria.
3. Integrate nutrition and agriculture education into classroom activities.
4. Establish a school vegetable garden.

Capacity building efforts began by providing various trainings to prepare Fairfield County schools for implementation of the four components during the 2013-2014 school year. Along with participation by Fairfield County School District personnel, the following chart shows the schools that participated in the trainings.

Fairfield County Schools' Participation in SC Farm to School Program Trainings	
Training Offered	Participating Schools
SC Farm to School Program Action Institute Program overview and resources for implementation	Fairfield Elementary Kelly Miller Elementary Fairfield Central High
School Garden Workshop Hands-on activities and resources for creating a school garden	Fairfield Elementary Fairfield Central High McCrorey-Liston School of Technology
Culinary Trainings Hands-on training for foodservice staff on preparing and serving healthy recipes using SC grown produce	Fairfield Elementary Geiger Elementary Kelly Miller Elementary Fairfield Middle Fairfield Central High Fairfield Magnet School for Math and Science McCrorey-Liston School of Technology

Fairfield County's Implementation of the SC Farm to School Program

The SC Farm to School Program accomplished the objective of implementation of the program in seven Fairfield County schools, reaching about 3,000 students. On average, participating schools exceeded expectations of sourcing and serving at least two SC grown fruits and vegetables per month.

Successful implementation of the program in Fairfield County can be attributed to:

- Establishing partnerships with school administrators and obtaining leadership support.
- Trainings provided by the state level partners.
- Ongoing technical assistance provided by the SC Farm to School Program staff and local level partners.

Recommendations for Sustaining the SC Farm to School Program in Fairfield County

Implementation of the program in Fairfield County has been successful over the past year. However, sustainability of the program should be a key element of comprehensive obesity prevention efforts in the county.

Recommendations for sustaining Farm to School in the Fairfield County community include:

- Identifying community advocates to serve on school wellness committees and support incorporation of Farm to School core components into school wellness policies.
- Engaging community volunteers to assist with school garden projects.
- Connecting and building relationships with local farmers.
- Promoting Farm to School as an expanded market opportunity for local farmers.
- Contacting Farm to School staff to provide additional technical assistance as needed.
- Documenting the continued success of the program through media and communication outlets.
- Engaging key stakeholders, such as the Eat Smart, Move More Fairfield County coalition. The coalition coordinates obesity prevention efforts within the county. The sustainability of the coalition directly affects the success and support of the SC Farm to School Program and other related initiatives within the county.