



# South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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## **\$3.1 Million in Locally Grown Food Headed to South Carolina Schools**

**COLUMBIA** – South Carolina students will be eating more food grown by local farmers as part of a partnership involving the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and the South Carolina Department of Education.

Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture is working with South Carolina distributor Senn Brothers to purchase foods and beverages from local farmers and distribute them to school districts for use in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

The \$3.1 million grant targets small and historically underserved farmers in an effort to strengthen the local food supply chain.

“We’re building relationships between farmers and schools, and we’re showing young people the importance of agriculture,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “This program can have a lasting impact on the health of our state and the future of farming.”

State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman said, “This partnership is truly a win-win for our agricultural industry and for our schools. Not only will it help students have access to fresh, locally grown foods and increase their understanding of where their food comes from, it will support local farms and communities. We’re excited about the many benefits we will see for years to come.”

Senn Brothers currently works with school districts across the state to supply fresh local food to students. The grant will allow them to expand their sourcing from small local farms, and to help those farms equip themselves to serve larger scale customers.

“We love supporting local farms, and this will help us build a stronger relationship with these farms,” said Zach Senn, Local Program Coordinator for Senn Brothers. “Also, as schools see how readily available local produce is, we hope they will continue to incorporate local food into their menus.”

School districts had until Nov. 18 to affirm that they intend to use the funding this school year. The funding was offered to all school districts in the state. Unused funds will be reallocated to participating districts.

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