



HARVEST OF THE MONTH

Wisconsin Harvest of the Month is a statewide campaign that encourages kids and families to eat more fruits and vegetables. Each month schools showcase one seasonal, Wisconsin-grown fruit or vegetable.

This month we are featuring:

Spinach!



F2S IN THE CLASSROOM

Some of our K-3 students will be learning about **healthy habits** this month. Our lesson will emphasize the importance of choosing nutritious snacks and physical activity each day!

What is your families go-to healthy snack?



2023 WI CHILI LUNCH!

The chili lunch was postponed 1 week but was a great success!

Check out photos and information about the event later in the newsletter!



LOCAL THURSDAYS

Join us!

Plan on School Lunch!

Our amazing school nutrition staff is hard at work to provide delicious and nutritious foods for our students every day.

Check out our **school meal menus** to see what exciting items we have this month!



Spinach was the first frozen vegetable sold in North America.

Spinach Facts

- ✓ Raw spinach is 91% water.
- ✓ Spinach farmers of the 1930s credited the fame of Popeye the Sailor man for a 33% boost in spinach consumption which was much needed during The Great Depression.
- ✓ In the medieval days, artists used to extract green pigment from spinach to use as ink or paint.
- ✓ There is more potassium in spinach than there is in bananas. Potassium helps with digestion and muscular functions.
- ✓ The average American eats 1.5 lbs. of spinach a year.



Select – Look for greens that are a deep green color and have crisp leaves.

Store – Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3-5 days.

Prepare – Rinse, then tear or chop the leaves.

Greens are the Harvest of the Month!

Add greens to your favorite family meals:

- Add fresh spinach to your smoothie.
- Use fresh or frozen spinach in lasagna, casseroles, or soups.
- Saute Swiss chard with garlic and add to eggs or top a pizza.

Make meals and memories together. It's a lesson kids will use for life.

Did you know?

"Super green" refers to dark green vegetables that contain extra amounts of key nutrients like vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fiber. These dark green vegetables are important to eat often to grow and stay healthy. Try a variety of "super green" vegetables including spinach, Swiss chard, kale, collard greens, romaine lettuce, watercress, bok choy, and mustard greens.



Nutritious, Delicious, Wisconsin!
#WIharvestoftheMonth



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension is an EEO/AA institution committed to diversity among its employees and in its programs.

Before and after cooking spinach..



tiny meme:

Fresh spinach is typically available May-July in WI.
Special growing techniques such as use of hoop houses/green houses can extend this season.



Other Dark Green Veggies:

- bok choy
- broccoli
- collard greens
- dark green leafy lettuce
- kale
- mustard greens
- turnip greens
- watercress

January Nutrition Lesson

Spinach is part of the **Dark Green Vegetable** subgroup.

The amount of **veggies** we need is a bit different for everyone, but in general we should eat 1.5-2 cups of **Dark Green Veggies** a week.

1 cup of Veggies =

1 cup of fresh or cooked Broccoli
2 cups fresh Kale
1 cup cooked Turnip Greens
2 cups fresh Romaine Lettuce

Health Benefits of Dark Green Vegetables

- ✓ Great source of Vitamin A which helps our vision/eye health, immune system, and skin.
- ✓ Source of Vitamin C which helps our immune system, and is important for body tissue growth/repair.
- ✓ Potassium helps your nerves to function and muscles to contract. It helps your heartbeat stay regular helps move nutrients into cells.
- ✓ These vegetables contain fiber. Fiber is important in helping move food through our digestive system, regulating blood glucose, and helping us feel full.



Dark green veggies are also a great source of calcium! This is especially important if you are unable to eat dairy.



Do you have a
family chili recipe?



2023 WI CHILI LUNCH

On Thursday March 2nd, our amazing school nutrition staff prepared and served a delicious homemade chili loaded with Local WI ingredients.

The goal of the **WI Chili Lunch** is to create strong connections between Wisconsin farmers and eaters and demonstrates how cafeterias can serve Wisconsin grown food - even in the winter. This statewide chili lunch event inspires nutritious school meals, supports farm to institution initiatives throughout the state, and encourages year-round purchases of local foods. Serving locally and regionally grown ingredients in your cafeteria makes quality meals, supports local economies, and connects people to the people and places that grow their food.

Check out photos from the event on the next page!



Chili Lunch Ingredients Came from:

Weyauwega Cheese -
Sun Prairie, WI
Shredded Cheddar

Chippewa Valley Produce -
Elk Mound, WI
Sweet Potatoes, Sweet Onions,
Ground Beef, Dry Beans

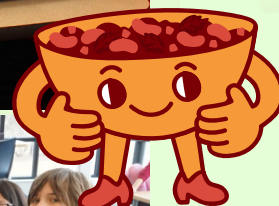
Klondike Dairy -
Monroe, WI
Sour Cream



How spicy do you like
your chili?



2023 WI CHILI LUNCH



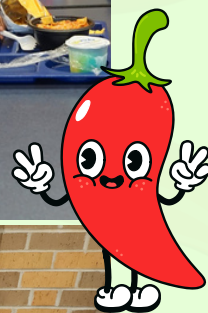
Feedback on the Chili was mainly positive! Some students said it was the best they have had.



What do you top
your chili with?



2023 WI CHILI LUNCH



Some students prefer chili without beans, or would rather have it without meat.



April Harvest of the Month Ideas: Spinach for students!

Spinach is very nutrient dense and delicious. However, It can be a food that is hard to introduce to our kids. Here are a few easy ways to incorporate spinach at home!



Chopped Spinach

Mince spinach finely, or use a food processor to break it down. This is a great way to add some greens into pasta and rice dishes. This can also work well with precooked frozen spinach.

If your family loves cooking from scratch this can even be incorporated into fresh made pasta dough, ravioli filling, or a pesto sauce!

Salads

If your eater enjoys lettuce salads, start to introduce different greens along with some of their favorite toppings, dressings and add-ins. Spinach can pair well with many other raw veggies!



Spinach Soups

Whole or chopped spinach can make a great addition/veggie addition to many types of your favorite soups like:

Chicken Noodle
Italian-style Tomato
Wild Rice
Creamy Chicken/Mushroom

Are there any ingredients that are challenging to incorporate into meals for your family?

Spinach

Harvest of the Month Resources

Check out a couple resources from **UW Extension** and **Food Wise** about our Harvest of the Month!



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GREENS: QUICK & EASY

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Send a Recipe!

and Local Produce

Send a Recipe

Mr. Wes and other Farm to School members in Dane County are collaborating on a **cookbook** this spring! It will contain recipes that feature seasonal local items from schools and community members.

If you have a recipe that you would like to share that can feature local products email Wes!



Local Produce

Our March local food came from:

Chippewa Valley Produce -
Elk Mound, WI

Weyauwega Cheese -
Sun Prairie, WI

Klondike Dairy -
Monroe, WI

Olden Organics-
Ripon, WI

A note from Wes!

Thanks for checking out the F2S newsletter. Your support is what will sustain our program.

As part of my AmeriCorps service, I write about my experiences each quarter of the year. My second quarter service story is attached on the next page.



Follow the Monona Grove SD [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for more updates, pictures, and events. Reach out to **Wes** with questions and suggestions!

Contact: **Wes** MG F2S Specialist - weston.broske@mgschools.net



TALKING ABOUT FOOD

WES BROSKE'S AMERICORPS SERVICE STORY
AT MONONA GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Q2 - WINTER 22-23

F2S WINTER 22-23

The second Quarter of my AmeriCorps service with the Monona Grove School district has included some of my favorite moments, and has allowed me to reflect on the first year of our Farm to School program. I want to share a few of these moments and connect them to the theme of how important it is that we **talk about food with our students!**

A quick shout out to all of the **amazing parents/caregivers** who have already started talking about food in a constructive and meaningful way at home. **I have worked with so many open minded, curious, and knowledgeable kids in our district that give me so much hope for the future**, and the sustainability of this movement.

I hope these conversations about food continue or start outside of the classroom. There are many ideas or topics that I feel are important and have inspired lots of conversation with students this year. Some of them include:

- the idea of buying locally and supporting our community
- seasonality and WI specific foods
- understanding the importance of eating nutritious meals
- recognizing how culture impacts how and what we eat
- knowing where your food comes from
- understanding how you can produce your own food

Kids have a lot to say about food, so I hope to continue letting them inspire these topics and activities.





HIGHLIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS FROM THIS QUARTER:

WI Chili Lunch- On March 2nd, our amazing school nutrition staff prepared and served a delicious homemade chili with ingredients from 3 different WI producers. The Chili was a hit with staff and students alike, and was an amazing way to showcase many local ingredients in a hearty winter dish. My favorite part of this event was talking to the students about the chili and getting all types of feedback(mainly good!). When asked or **while engaging in a discussion kids are more than happy to be honest about which ingredients they prefer, or what they would change about a dish if they had it again.** I was happy to hear that if a student “didn’t like it” that we could pinpoint that they just do not prefer something like beans. I was also happy to hear “I love it. Can we have it again tomorrow?”!



MG21 Snackdown- Students at MG21 took part in a chopped-style competition to create a healthy snack using a bag of mystery ingredients. This event was organized by the incredible staff at MG21, and I was able to add a short nutrition lesson to kick things off and help judge the dishes. I was struck by many students' creativity and how much fun they had creating food. A big takeaway from this event is that students were able to immediately put their knowledge into practice after the brief lesson. This became part of the discussion while creating their snacks as well as **creating a fun and exciting environment around nutritious foods.**



Harvest of the Month and Local Menu Items- In addition to events like the chili lunch, we have been featuring seasonal ingredients each month and serving local produce almost every Thursday. When I am able I like to stop into cafeterias when these new items are served. We still have a lot of work to do to get our students on board with trying all of our new items, but **exposure and discussion are key!** When I am able to ask students for feedback, or why they did/did not take an item I am usually met with a thoughtful response. My takeaway is that our(adults/caregivers/teachers) **excitement and openness about food can be contagious for our students.**

Carrot Taste Test- Some of the 5th Graders at our Winnequah School were able to taste test local carrots(and daikon) in 3 forms. The carrots were raw, in a Turkish yogurt dip, and in a Vietnamese pickled form with daikon. We are able to talk about how carrots can be grown in the winter in WI with special techniques and how this popular veggie is prepared around the world. Students were open minded and like the chili lunch the feedback was mainly positive. When there was negative feedback, students were able to pinpoint which elements they did not prefer, like the taste of garlic. For others this was a favorite element. **Most of us know kids like eating, but they were just as excited to talk about the experience and where the food came from.**

April Taste Test - I have also spent some time this quarter planning upcoming events including a school-wide taste test of fruits and vegetables at our Taylor Prairie school. We will be trying 3 fruits and 3 veggies. Some will be familiar and some a little different. My hope is that students will talk about their food experience, discuss what they know about each, and **have a fun time trying new things!** The original idea did not necessarily include finding all local versions of the foods (due to seasonal availability), but these items will be coming from WI producers to make that connection as well!

EXCITEMENT AND OPENNESS ABOUT FOOD CAN BE CONTAGIOUS FOR OUR STUDENTS.





F2S

SPRING AND SUMMER 23

I hope to share more of my experiences later in the year, and I am confident this movement will continue to grow. It is all about our students and community, connected to something we can all talk about, FOOD!

Wes Broske
AmeriCorps Farm to School Specialist
Monona Grove School District

Contact me:
weston.broske@mgschools.net