



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 18, 2024
To: Local Education Agency Leads
Route To: Principals, and Health & Physical Education Supervisors
From: Jorden Schiff, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

Celebrating New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week: September 23-27, 2024

Pursuant to P.L. [2023](#), c.51, New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week was established for the purpose of highlighting the importance of New Jersey agriculture, how the state's agricultural products provide the necessary ingredients for meals, and the health value of eating fresh farm foods and locally grown produce and fruits for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Agriculture Literacy Week will be celebrated concurrently with Jersey Fresh Farm to School Spirit Week during the last week of September annually.

To prepare for Agriculture Literacy Week, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJAG) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) have collaboratively selected materials to support educators in implementing New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week. The selected materials support the development of agriculturally literate students that understand local, national, and global food systems. Many of these resources use agriculture as a vehicle to teach or reinforce a core academic concept for contextual and engaging learning experiences. New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week is designed to introduce teachers and students to the excitement of integrating agriculture in their classrooms. NJDOE encourages local educational agencies to review the attached resources (Appendix A, below) for consideration in celebrating New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week.

Contact information

Questions regarding New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week should be directed to standards@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

Appendix A: Example Instructional Materials

[American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture](#): A collection of free games, lesson plans, activities, and videos about agriculture. The resources are well researched, written by education specialists, and reviewed by subject matter experts. In addition, they offer educational opportunities through trainings, farm tours, grants and scholarships to attend the National Ag in the Classroom Conference.

[Basic Gardening](#): What should children know when they are working in a school garden? A school garden is a perfect hands-on way to introduce children to agriculture and show them how food is grown. These basic lessons from New Jersey Agriculture in the Classroom teach children all they need to know about the garden.

[USDA Food and Agriculture Soil Health Educators Guide](#): From soil conditions to crop productivity, lessons from soil infiltration to videos and supporting documents data help inform farmers, scientists, and decision-makers in the U.S. and around the world.

[Linus Pauling Institute Healthy Youth Program](#): K-12 educational materials that are built on the latest scientific research on vitamins, minerals and other compounds found in food that help people live a full and productive life, free of disease.

[NASA Greening Up Globally](#): Forests & Farms: Earth Observatory Kids is seeing green! Can people really change the color of our planet? Find out how Earth is greening up from forests and farms and how NASA can see our greener Earth from space (grades 5-8 and 9-12).

[National Agriculture in the Classroom](#): A network that seeks to improve agricultural literacy — awareness, knowledge, and appreciation — among PreK-12 teachers and their students. The National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix provides K-12 educators with relevant standards-based instructional resources. The lesson plans and companion resources use agriculture as a context for science, social studies, and nutrition education.

[New Jersey Agriculture in the Classroom](#): New Jersey specific agricultural resources and lesson plans designed to increase awareness and understanding of agriculture among New Jersey's educators and students.

[New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Program](#): The Farm to School Program offers grants to support school garden activities, which help teach students where food comes from by growing it themselves. Students benefit by learning the science behind farming and the nutritional values of fresh products and gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the environment. Educators can use school garden programs to teach any subject – math, science, language arts, health and nutrition, art or social studies.

[New Jersey Healthy Kids Initiative](#): The initiative is a partnership between the New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health and the Child Health Institute of New Jersey to focus on improving the health of NJ children by offering broad-based programs that promote nutrition and culinary education, as well as physical fitness.

[The New Jersey Agricultural Society](#): Learning Through Gardening program gives New Jersey preschools and elementary schools materials to build and maintain fruit and/or vegetable gardens and to provide teachers with the support needed to use the garden as an outdoor classroom. A school garden gives children the opportunity to learn where their food comes from, how it grows, and that a healthy meal begins with fruits and vegetables.

[The Shape of Farming: Water for Crops](#): Earth Observatory Kids looks at what water has to do with different types of farming practices, and how these practices look from space.

[U.S. Department of Agriculture My Plate](#): K-12 and community educational materials to develop healthy eating habits, lesson plans, and printable resources. Provides a framework for communicating messaging in schools and the community. All materials are available in Spanish.

[USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service](#): A collection of New Jersey focused statistics and publications that may be used by educators and students to support their exploration of agriculture in New Jersey.