

CHAPTER 51

AN ACT establishing "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week" and amending P.L.2011, c.10 and P.L.2014, c.39.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.2011, c.10 (C.4:10-25.1) is amended to read as follows:

C.4:10-25.1 "Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week."

1. a. The Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Department of Education, shall coordinate with farmers in the State, the New Jersey Farm to School Network or its successor entity, public, private, and charter schools and their food services, and other interested and relevant organizations and groups, as determined by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education, to establish:

(1) an annual week of promotional events to be known as "Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week" to be celebrated each year throughout the State with the holding of relevant promotional events during the last week of September; and

(2) an annual week, during such week as may be designated by the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Department of Education, which shall be known as "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week," to encourage classroom activities to be celebrated each year throughout the State by providing sample educational resources, including, but not limited to, resources that highlight how agricultural products provide the necessary ingredients for meals.

b. "Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week" shall highlight and promote the value and importance of New Jersey agriculture and fresh foods produced in New Jersey, and the value and importance of fresh farm foods for children, their general health, and their success in school. The promotional events shall be provided to:

(1) children through school breakfast, lunch, and snack programs and in the classroom;

(2) community groups, churches, and service organizations;

(3) the public at large at farms and community farmers markets; and

(4) other organizations or groups or at other locations in the State determined by the Department of Agriculture to be beneficial for the success of promoting the value and importance of New Jersey agriculture and fresh foods produced in New Jersey.

c. "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week" shall highlight, at a minimum, the importance of agriculture and how the agricultural products in the State provide the necessary ingredients for meals. The Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Department of Education, shall make available sample educational resources for appropriate grade levels based on their connection to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

2. Section 2 of P.L.2011, c.10 (C.4:10-25.2) is amended to read as follows:

C.4:10-25.2 Rules, regulations; development of program.

2. a. The Department of Agriculture shall develop a "New Jersey Farm to School Program" and a "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program" and, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), adopt rules and regulations for its implementation, including, but not necessarily limited to, rules and regulations that:

(1) provide encouragement for schools that participate in school meal programs to expand or improve their kitchen facilities to allow for the daily production of meals that incorporate more fresh, locally grown or produced farm produce, fruit or other products;

(2) establish a bidding matrix that provides for school purchases of New Jersey-grown food and allows schools to adopt price preferences for local agricultural and farm products;

(3) in conjunction and cooperation with the Department of Education, provide for the incorporation and coordination of school curricula with information about:

(a) New Jersey agriculture;

(b) the importance and significance of farms and farmers to New Jersey's economy, culture, history, and quality of life; and

(c) the health value of eating fresh farm foods and locally grown produce and fruits; and

(4) encourage additional classroom activities during "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week", which may include, but need not be limited to, personal stories from volunteers which may include farmers.

b. The Department of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Department of Education, shall develop a training program with emphasis on the theme of "Farm to School" and shall offer this program to schools, teachers, and other event providers.

c. (1) The Department of Agriculture shall establish a "New Jersey Farm to School" website that shall be designed to:

(a) provide opportunities for the establishment of purchasing networks between and among farmers, distributors, and schools or school districts;

(b) facilitate the development and refinement of promotional events in association with "Jersey Fresh Farm to School Week" and "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Week"; and

(c) provide for the dissemination of information about, and the website-based promotion of, these and other related events.

The department shall include on the "New Jersey Farm to School" website a copy of any public contract or other written agreement for the purchase of fresh foods and the provision thereof to school children, which has been entered into and successfully implemented by any school or school district in the State.

(2) The department shall post, in a prominent location on the homepage of its Internet website, a hyperlink that provides visitors with direct access to the "New Jersey Farm to School" website established pursuant to this subsection.

3. Section 1 of P.L.2014, c.39 (C.4:10-25.2a) is amended to read as follows:

C.4:10-25.2a Contributions to "New Jersey Farm to School Program" permitted.

1. The Secretary of Agriculture may solicit and accept contributions from private and public sources for the purpose of providing support to help fund the "New Jersey Farm to School Program" and the "New Jersey Agricultural Literacy Program," established pursuant to section 2 of P.L.2011, c.10 (C.4:10-25.2).

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first school year beginning after the date of enactment.

Approved May 8, 2023.