



Green Schools Challenge February 2018:



Local Foods

With Spring on the way, many of us are beginning to look forward to the tasty fruits and vegetables that will soon be available from our local farmstands. With a quick trip to the supermarket, or even our cafeteria, we can find nearly anything we want, but there are no banana trees, orange trees, or pineapples growing nearby. Have your students thought about where this food comes from? What crops do Nebraskans grow, and what effect does that have on our local food availability? What is an [agricultural hardiness zone](#), and how does that influence what we can grow?

Nebraska has more irrigated acres of farmland than any other state and produces much of the world's food. Many tasty and nutritious foods are grown within 100 miles of where we stand. This month, we've suggested a few activities for your students to begin thinking about where their food comes from.

Design Your Own Activity

Do you or your students know a farmer who markets some of his or her produce locally? Would he or she be willing to come speak with students? Consider creating a game where you bring in common food items, and students try to guess where they came from, or guess which foods travelled the fewest miles to market. The more ingredients in a food item, the harder the game. Some common items such as vanilla and cinnamon may surprise your class. Feel free to create an activity that works for your school, and earn credit for it.

Example Activities For Your Green Team

1. Take your class on a field trip to a local farm such as the [Haber Icelandic Sheep Farm](#) in Riverdale. Interview the farmers about what they grow and raise, why, and where their products end up.
2. Discuss with your students the connection between food and [culture](#). Download this PowerPoint that invites students to guess the country of origin of several foods. Discuss with your students what foods are culturally important to many Nebraskans, and where those foods are grown.
3. For older students, consider one or more of [these lessons plans](#) that discuss the food system in detail. Each unit is comprised of multiple lesson plans, complete with presentations, handouts, and guides. Maybe try lesson 7 on [our food's journey](#) to facilitate students' critical thinking of different scales of food production.
4. For younger students pick from one or more of [these lesson plans](#) on food and gardening. Perhaps try [making garden signs](#), or other hands-on activities that will encourage students to try gardening at home.

5. [Watch this short video](#) on the benefits of local food with a group of students. After watching, discuss the benefits as a group. What are food miles? Why is local food often more nutritious? Where does our food come from?

Submit Photos

Take photos of your Green Team engaging in your activities, and email them to gogreen@kearneycats.com. You may see your submissions on the Green Schools Challenge photo site, or in the sustainability newsletter!

Let Us Know What You Did!

Report your progress and earn recognition for your school. [Fill out the Activity Reporting Form](#) to let us know which activity you did for this month!

Questions?

We're here to answer any questions you may have, talk through ideas or provide further resources. Just email gogreen@kearneycats.com.

RECOGNITION LEVELS

All KPS schools have the opportunity to earn recognition for their participation in the Green Schools Initiative each year. The more activities you complete, the more recognition you receive! For 2018-2019, the following three levels of recognition are available:

- **Level 1 (Green Performance)** - Participation in 5 activities during the year. Schools receive a framed certificate of recognition, \$50 for Green Team Activities next year, and \$100 for the Principal's budget.
- **Level 2 (Green Achievement)** - Participation in 6 - 9 activities during the year. Schools receive \$150 for Green Team activities next year, an award banner, and \$200 for the Principal's budget
- **Level 3 (Green Excellence)** - Participation in 10 or more activities during the year. Schools receive \$300 for Green Team activities next year, a large award banner, and \$400 for the Principal's budget. In addition, all schools that achieve Level 3 participation are placed into a raffle; the selected school receives \$450 to spend on district-approved items. Approved items could entail smart power strips, vending machine energy misers, native landscaping/trees, rain barrels, native plants for classrooms, and indoor/outdoor recycling containers. All items must be approved by the district office prior to purchase.