



Celebrate National Farm to School Month and locally produced foods by crunching South Dakota-grown or raised food throughout October! The South Dakota Crunch Off is a statewide event for students, teachers, farmers, community members, and local food enthusiasts to collectively bite into any locally grown or raised food. South Dakota is participating in the Mountain Plains Crunch Off along with Colorado, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming!

Why crunch? This collective crunch encourages healthy eating while supporting “Farm to School” and “buy local” initiatives throughout the state. Crunch Off is a great way to introduce kids to fresh, local produce and foods in an engaging way!

Crunch Suggestions

- Apples
- Carrots
- Broccoli
- Peppers
- Popcorn
- Tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Squash
- Sweet Corn
- Popcorn
- Green Beans
- Pears
- Grapes
- Watermelon
- Cantaloupe
- Beef Jerky

Steps to Get Started

- 1. Register!** If you would like to host a Crunch Off event, register your event at doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/CrunchOff.aspx. (You must register to be counted.)
- 2. Create a Crunch Team!** Find a group of individuals who are excited about local food and Farm to School. Consider including students, teachers, school nutrition staff, administrators, PTA members, and community members to help you plan and promote your event.
- 3. Find your Crunch!** Decide what you will crunch and where you will get it from! Refer to the list of crunch suggestions or visit the South Dakota Farm to School webpage. State-specific resources can help you source local foods provided upon registration.
- 4. Create your Crunch plan!** You may choose to have a school-wide or organization-wide crunch in a large assembly, individual classrooms, during breakfast or lunch, or with individuals in different locations simultaneously or at the same time.
- 5. Promote your Crunch event!** Share your event on social media, print media, school announcements, newsletters, etc. A template press release is available on page 11 for your use. Be sure to use #SDCrunchOff when posting on social media.

Find your Local Food

One of the first steps in coordinating your South Dakota Crunch Off event is to explore options for obtaining locally grown or raised foods. No matter where you're crunching, check with your local producers, and shop at local grocery stores or farmers' markets to purchase local foods.





Tips for Success:

Connect with the food service director or head cook at your school to see if they are interested in being involved and can help order local foods for the big crunch!

If your school qualifies, use your Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) money to purchase fresh produce for the South Dakota Crunch Off event. If crunching during the school day, consider crunching during mealtime so your Crunch qualifies as a reimbursable component for the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program.

Crunch Off at School

Increase Involvement

The more involvement in Crunch Off, the better! Recruiting volunteers can increase participation while simplifying the Crunch Off countdown. Families and other helpers can pick up food items at a central location in the school, deliver to classrooms, and assist with classroom activities. The school nutrition staff can also be a valuable resource for ordering, receiving, storing, washing, and passing out crunchable foods.

Organizing an Assembly

Rally support and increase excitement for Crunch Off by holding an all-school assembly. How loud can your collective crunch get?!

Crunch in the Cafeteria

Incorporating the crunch food into a school meal or snack and crunching in the cafeteria during the designated mealtime is an easy way to reach students and cover the cost. Make it more than a component of the meal by decorating the cafeteria, having prizes for crunching, taking photos, etc. Be sure to find ways to allow students who bring meals from home to be included in the fun. Consider cutting crunch items into halves or slices so everyone can try the food without it going to waste.

Crunch Off Leaders

Appoint South Dakota Crunch Off champions. An elected student from each classroom can pick up Crunch food from the school office or cafeteria for their classroom and help lead Crunch Off activities. A student club or sports team can take the lead in promoting the event and coordinating the distribution of food. Older students can act as Crunch Off mentor or buddy and deliver crunch items and help lead activities with younger students.

Take Photos and Videos

Don't forget to appoint a parent, teacher, or student to act as a photographer and capture all the action of Crunch Off! Share on social media using #SDCrunchOff.

Connect to the Classroom

Grades K-3

For younger elementary students, crunchy produce can be incorporated into writing, reading, math, science, and art activities. Consider the lesson ideas at doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/culinarykits.aspx and doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/HOM.aspx.

Grades 4-6

For older elementary students, challenge students to observe, problem-solve, and experiment. Students can perform basic science experiments and practice making connections to the fruits, vegetables, and foods grown locally and regionally around them. Check out the lesson ideas at doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/culinarykits.aspx and doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/HOM.aspx.





Tips for Success:

Use the South Dakota Crunch Off Poster Template and update it with your Crunch Off information.

Post the flyer around your community or email it to potential participants.

Post your Crunch on social media calendars and other calendar of events.

Invite local media to your crunch off.

Littlest Crunchers

Early Childhood Care and Education Activities

For young children, try using activities that help students identify new fruits and vegetables. Students associate vegetables and fruits with visual imagery, touch, smell, and taste. Connecting fruits and vegetables to fun activities is a great way to engage students and support development.

Taste Testers

Gather and cut up samples of two or three different local foods, such as apples, popcorn, carrots, and cucumbers, and let the children, adults, and volunteers share experiences between the foods. Try blindfolding to challenge their senses or have them close their eyes.

Activities

Activities for preschool students are available at doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/HOM.aspx.

Connect With Community

South Dakota Crunch Off is an opportunity to reach beyond the school walls and connect with the entire community.

Schedule a visit to a local farm so students can see what it takes to produce food. If transportation is a challenge, invite a producer into the classroom to share their experiences, eat lunch with students, or help hand out the crunch foods.

Ask a local dietitian or doctor to share the benefits and importance of eating fruits, vegetables, and local food products. Nutrition or health professionals can share why and how produce fits into a healthy, balanced diet. Local college students involved in nutrition or agriculture programs can also be guest speakers or lead activities.

Invite community leaders to celebrate South Dakota Crunch Off. Contact your local chamber of commerce to connect with local business owners or invite members of the school board to your Crunch Off event. Let local newspaper and television reporters know about your event by publishing a press release and inviting them to come join in on the fun. Who will be your “crunch celebrity?”

Community Celebrations

South Dakota Crunch Off isn't just for students and schools, everyone can participate! Across South Dakota, individuals, healthcare facilities, colleges, workplaces, businesses, community groups, and more will be celebrating healthy, local food with a synchronized crunch.





2026 Crunch Off Planning

AUG. 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Register your Crunch Off Event.

Registration link available at
doe.sd.gov/farmtoschool/crunchoff.aspx

Create your Crunch Off Planning Team.

Ask administrators, teachers, food service personnel, parents and students to help plan the event.

SEPT. 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

**SD Crunch Off
Begins Sept. 14**

Source your CRUNCH-y fruit or vegetables. Research your area for local producers, talk over your Crunch off plan, and settle logistics.

Promote your Crunch Off event.

Send home flyers, share on social media, and build excitement in your community.

OCT. 26

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**SD Crunch Off
Ends Oct. 31**

CRUNCH! Join in celebrating Farm to School Month by biting into local, crunchy fruits or vegetables.

Share your Crunch.

Communicate with your community and share your event through photos, social media, and newsletters.

