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- Please support full funding of the Farm to School & Early Childhood grant program at \$500,000 (Governor's budget level funds the program at \$171k) and please support the governor's recommendation to fund the Local Purchasing Incentive Program at \$500,000.
- Over 100 Vermont farms now provide food to feed our youth across the state through early childhood programs and school nutrition programs.
- Every Vermonter should have access to the nourishing food we produce in this state, regardless of their zipcode, so that while we address food insecurity we are also helping our VT farmers and agricultural economy. That is the win-win of farm to school.
- The Farm to School & Early Childhood grants help schools to create the structures and build the partnerships we need to be able to bring farm fresh food into our schools and offer it to our students on a daily basis.
- The grants program had a record number of applicants this year, but the funding has not kept pace with demand. In FY21, the Farm to School & Early Childhood Grants Program received 70 applications yet only 24% of the requested funds could be awarded with the \$171K available.
- We are asking you to please support the Farm to School & Early Childhood program by supporting a base appropriation of \$500,000 for Fiscal Year 2023.
- The Local Food Incentive program for schools that you passed last year had one time funding of \$500,000 and we are asking you to support the Governor's recommendation of \$500,000 for FY 23.

- School are spending \$15.5M purchasing food each year and we want more of those dollars to stay in VT with VT producers
- In the inaugural year of the Local Purchasing Program, 23 of 51 School Food Authorities (45% of all SFAs) applied for the funding, and will be receiving a total of about \$490,000 that will go toward their local purchasing.
- This is the year to build more resiliency in our local food systems, ensure our youth are well nourished, and expand opportunities for our farmers, especially as we recover from the pandemic.
- Thank You for listening!