



Programming Update

*By Laura Genello,
Farm to School Specialist*

This fall couldn't be more different from last year. In addition to hosting 27 field trips between mid-September and

Thanksgiving (over 1,000 students), the Farm to School team has been visiting schools to lead approximately 25 classroom experiences on the topics of cooking, planting, and animals.

The most popular of these programs has been, perhaps unsurprisingly, our "Animal Encounter" visit in which we bring the goats, chickens and turkeys to a school for the day. Typically, we set up portable fencing on the school grounds, and students come outside one class at a time to learn about and interact with our farm animals. The experience aligns well with the kindergarten curriculum in which they learn about farm animals and animal features. So far, over 700 students have had the opportunity to pet a turkey or feed the goats. While our animals will be taking a break from this program over the winter months, we look forward to resuming in the spring.

I always find it fun to hear the students' questions and comments about the animals. They see things with a fresh perspective that often makes me realize how much I do not know about the world. I find myself frequently turning to Google for the answers. Here are a few examples:

"What is that dangly red thing on the chicken's neck for?"

Answer: The chicken's wattle and their comb (the red bit on top of their head) both play a role in temperature regulation by helping the birds stay cool.

“What are the dangly things on the goat’s neck?”

Answer: Some goats also have wattles, small appendages on their necks. Unlike those of chickens, goat wattles do not have a function, and may be the remnants of an organ that has evolved out of usefulness (kind of like the human appendix).

“Is there a baby chick inside that egg?”

Answer: Not yet. While most of our eggs on the farm are fertilized (because we have a couple roosters), when the egg is laid, there is no chick inside. The fertilized embryo will only develop into a chick if the egg is exposed to conditions that allow that growth (such as the warm temperatures of an incubator or a hen’s body). This is one of the most common questions we receive, and it is asked equally by both students and adults.

“Why do some goats have horns, and others do not?”

Answer: The presence of horns in goats is determined by genetics, not by sex, as many students (and adults) assume. Most goats, both male and female, have horns, but some goats are born polled (without horns). The likelihood of a goat having horns depends on the genetic make-up of their parents. For more on this, [watch this video](#) we made for the 8th grade science unit on genetics.

*To sign up for a Farm to School Experience at your school,
follow this link: <http://Bit.ly/F2SatSchool>*



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Farmer's Notes

By James Koval, Farm Manager

One of my favorite things to grow is one of the most common and seemingly boring crops out there: corn. You can drive around the counties in Maryland and see acres upon acres of corn growing. Some form of corn is probably in your next meal or drink. And yes, the standard field corn may not be all that exciting. However, there are so many corn varieties out there to enjoy. One of my favorites is called Glass Gem.

As you can see, this corn is remarkably beautiful. While it is predominantly used for decoration, it can also be ground into flour. This fall, students on field trips have been harvesting ears straight from the stalks. As they peel back the husks, they are amazed by the rainbow of kernels. I love being able to show off the variety of colors nature has to offer. Whether it is corn, or eggs, I try to grow/raise items that will be unique and stand out to all of our visitors.



Giving Tuesday 2021

This year, #GivingTuesday falls on November 30th. I hope you'll consider a donation to Friends of Great Kids Farm and the farm-to-school programming we support for Baltimore City Public School students. Friends can't continue their work without your support!

To make a secure donation on #GivingTuesday (or anytime), please visit <https://bit.ly/FGKFGivingTuesday21>, and if you'd like to become a sustaining donor, consider becoming a recurring donor. The process is simple and impactful. Simply click the box next to **Show my support by making this a recurring donation** on the secure donation page.

Resource Corner for Parents & Teachers

PROGRAM & RESOURCES FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

All the Farm's offerings have been updated for the new school year! You can check them out [HERE](#).

For more information about educational resources, please reach out to our farm to school specialists at farms@bcps.k12.md.us or visit our [website](#) for the most up-to-date information. And be sure to follow us on social media!

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