

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
729 Haywood Rd., #3, Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 236-1282
www.asapconnections.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACTS: Emily Jackson at (828) 236-1282 or emily@asapconnections.org
Brook Thompson at (828) 236-1282 or brook@asapconnections.org
Rose McLarney at (828) 236-1282 or rose@asapconnections.org.

**Farm to School Funding Goes Before Congress:
ASAP Urges Public Support**

ASHEVILLE, NC (August 10, 2009) – The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act—important legislation regarding Farm to School programs that make local food, school gardens, and farm field trips available to children—is coming before Congress. Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), the Southeast Regional Lead Agency for Farm to School, is urging the public to advocate for mandatory funding for a Farm to School grant program. “Contact your Congress people about Child Nutrition Reauthorization and attend the upcoming August 17 town hall meeting with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to voice your support,” says Emily Jackson, Director of ASAP’s Growing Minds Farm to School Program.

Farm to School programs are good for kids and their health. The programs are also good for schools, creating educational opportunities and increasing the number of children who buy school lunches. Furthermore, Farm to School benefits farmers and the community as a whole, providing farmers with new markets, and keeping dollars in the local economy. Find talking points, more reasons to support Farm to School, and links for contacting your legislators on ASAP’s blog, <http://www.getlocalasap.blogspot.com/>

On September 30, the current legislation regarding Farm to School will expire. Farm to School has been authorized for, but never received, national funding. ASAP supports the allocation of \$50 million over 5 years in mandatory funding for a Farm to School grant program (Section 122), administered by the USDA.

Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack will visit Hamlet, NC as part of a national tour with the theme of rural education. “Secretary Vilsack’s visit is a great time to tell him how important it is to provide locally grown food in our school cafeterias – for the health of our children and our agricultural communities,” says Jackson.

The exact location and time of the meeting will not be released until a few days before the visit. Check www.growing-minds.org for updates, or contact Brook Thompson in the ASAP office at brook@asapconnections.org or 828-236-1282.

ABOUT THE APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT

ASAP is helping to rebuild the local economy, preserve rural land and heritage, encourage sustainable agricultural practices, and increase access to fresher, healthier foods. We work to keep farmers farming and to reconnect people with their food. We involve businesses, shoppers, chefs, children, seniors, healthcare providers, teachers, and all community members in the local food movement.

###