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McCollum's Legislation (H.R. 5456) Replicates Success of St. Paul Schools Linking Local Farmers to Healthier School Meals

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum will join local advocates to celebrate the start of Minnesota's inaugural Farm to School Week on September 20, launched by the Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP).

Earlier this year, Congresswoman McCollum introduced the National Farm to School Act of 2010 (H.R. 5456). The legislation has already received bipartisan support, and it will promote the consumption of fresh, local food in schools by helping to connect school lunch programs with local farmers.

Farm to School programs are growing in popularity across Minnesota and the country. The numbers of Minnesota districts participating in farm to school is estimated to have more than tripled, up from 30 school districts in 2008. St. Paul Public Schools alone purchased 110,000 pounds of locally grown produce in just the first six weeks of the 2009-2010 school year. Markets created by school districts can be a big boost to farmers whose products have typically been absent from school lunch trays and help keep more of our food dollars circulating within the local economy.

Congresswoman McCollum will visit the Community Design Center of Minnesota, a St. Paul non-profit established in 1969 that facilitates cooking and nutrition classes for youth and families, maintains seven organic youth gardens and performs rain garden installation and other conservation projects through the Center's teen internship and community education programs. Students from the Community Design Center were finalists in the recent national Cooking Up Change National Healthy Cooking Contest. Their winning recipes will be featured on St. Paul School District's menu this school year.

WHO: Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04 - DFL)

Jayne Anderson, Community Design Center

JoAnne Berkenkamp, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Finalists from Cooking up Change National Healthy Cooking Contest, Community Design Center

WHEN: 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

WHERE: Community Design Center of Minnesota, 731 East 7th Street, St. Paul, MN 55106

Media outlets interested in attending this event are asked to RSVP to Maria Reppas at maria.reppas@mail.house.gov or 202-225-6631.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.

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