

**Family Farms and Local Foods Education Day**  
**Texas State Capitol**  
**Monday, February 21, 2011**

The Family Farms and Local Foods Education Day is an opportunity for farmers and consumers from all over the state to come together to speak up for our local food producers. You will have the chance to learn about the legislative process, meet legislators and their staff, and learn how to be an activist in support of our food freedom.

Please make your plans today to join us on February 21. **And please invite others from your area to join you!** Wouldn't this be a great opportunity to invite some friends along for the ride to Austin? How about young family members who might benefit from the educational experience of seeing our state government in action? Are you a member of a CSA or milk group with others who might like to carpool or caravan to Austin? The more people we have, the more the legislators will hear our voices and see our commitment to local foods and family farms.

**Can't make it to Austin? No problem!** Plan to meet with your legislators' district office on the same day. We can provide you with materials and help you prepare.

**Make Plans**

- 1) Find out who your State Representative and State Senator are. You can look them up online at <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/> You can also find out by calling the Capitol Switchboard at 512-463-4630.
- 2) Send us your name, address, email, and phone number to [info@farmandranchfreedom.org](mailto:info@farmandranchfreedom.org) or by phone at (254) 697-2661. If others from your district have already scheduled a meeting, we can let you know.
- 3) Call your Representative and Senator's offices. Introduce yourself, including the fact that you're a constituent. Tell them you'd like to set up a meeting on Monday, February 21, to discuss agriculture and food issues. Ideally, ask for a meeting between 11 am and 2 pm.
- 4) If they can't schedule a meeting with your legislator for that day, be willing to accept a meeting with a staffer. Staffers often have a lot of input on the issues! *(Note: if the legislator is planning to be in their district that day, another option is to ask for a meeting in the district instead)*
- 5) Let us know who your legislators are and what time your meetings are scheduled for. That way, if others from your district contact us later, we can coordinate the meeting.

**The Day of the Event: February 21, 2011**

On the day of the event, we will start with a short presentation on how to make the most of your meetings and about the bills before the legislators. Then we will split into small groups for the meetings. After the meetings, we will gather again to compare notes and discuss the next steps in our citizen activism efforts. Please plan to be there from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Learn more at: <http://farmandranchfreedom.org/upcoming-meetings>

## **What's Happening With Local Foods & The Texas Legislature?**

Even though local foods travel a very short *physical* distance from farm to table, the farmers travel a long road littered with barriers in the form of government regulations. Big Agribusinesses has a lot of power in our system, and the laws and regulations have been made by and for Agribusiness. The Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) works to protect local farmers from unnecessary and overly burdensome government regulations, thereby improving consumer access to healthy local foods.

**The Texas Legislature will be in session January-May 2011.** FARFA is working hard to get new laws introduced to help farmers, while battling new laws that would further burden our local producers.

- **Improving access to raw milk:** Grade A licensed farmers can sell raw milk in Texas, but only “on farm,” i.e. consumers must drive out to the farm. HB 75 and SB 237 would allow licensed farmers to sell at farmers markets and make delivery arrangements. FARFA has worked closely with farmers and consumers to get this legislation introduced, and we will defend it against the Big Dairy lobby.
- **Promoting reasonable regulations for farmers markets:** Ambiguous state laws have led to problems at farmers markets with sampling of foods, preparing hot foods, and keeping cold foods chilled. Different local governments have applied the state laws differently, creating confusion. FARFA is working on a bill to clarify and simplify the state laws applying to farmers markets.
- **Promoting “cottage foods”:** The costs of a commercial kitchen can be prohibitive for start up businesses and small-scale producers. FARFA is working on a “cottage foods bill” to allow small-scale producers selling low-risk foods, such as jams, jellies, baked goods, and dried herbs, to sell their products directly to consumers without needing a commercial kitchen.
- **Preventing Agribusiness takeover of livestock standards:** Agribusiness groups around the country have tried to “advisory boards” to control how farmers manage livestock, and staff them with Agribusiness representatives. A bill has been filed to establish an advisory board here in Texas, and we will work to ensure that, if it does pass, it includes representatives of local and sustainable livestock producers.
- **And more!** From property taxes for urban community gardens to licensing of farmers raising fruits and vegetables to water law, Texas farmers – and the consumers who wish to buy food from them – face a multitude of issues in the upcoming Texas Legislative session.

**Please Help Us Protect Local Farms and Foods! Join Today!**

[www.FarmAndRanchFreedom.Org](http://www.FarmAndRanchFreedom.Org)