

House Bill 367

By: Representatives Pruett of the 144<sup>th</sup>, England of the 108<sup>th</sup>, McCall of the 30<sup>th</sup>, Benfield of the 85<sup>th</sup>, Ashe of the 56<sup>th</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To promote the production, purchase, and consumption of Georgia-grown farm products; to  
2 amend Chapter 2 of Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the  
3 Department of Agriculture, so as to provide for food procurement procedures and materials  
4 that encourage and facilitate the purchase of Georgia-grown food by state agencies and  
5 institutions; to amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
6 relating to elementary and secondary education, so as to provide for the operation of school  
7 gardens and farms; to provide for a farm to school program to promote the sale of  
8 Georgia-grown farm products to county and independent school districts in this state; to  
9 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 Chapter 2 of Title 2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the Department  
13 of Agriculture, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

14 "2-2-8.2.

15 The department shall develop food procurement procedures and materials that encourage,  
16 facilitate, and maximize the purchase of Georgia-grown food by state agencies and  
17 institutions in accordance with Code Section 50-5-60."

18 **SECTION 2.**

19 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and  
20 secondary education, is amended in Article 3, relating to local boards of education, by adding  
21 a new Code section to read as follows:

22 "20-2-66.1.

23 (a) Local school districts may operate school gardens or farms, as appropriate, for the  
24 purpose of growing fruits and vegetables to be used for educational purposes and, where  
25 appropriate, to be offered to students through the district nutrition services meal and snack

26 programs. All such foods used in the district's meal and snack programs shall meet  
 27 appropriate safety standards.

28 (b) If a school district operates a school garden or farm, students representing various  
 29 student organizations, such as but not limited to vocational programs such as Future  
 30 Farmers of America and 4-H, shall be given the opportunity to be involved in the operation  
 31 of such school garden or farm. When school gardens or farms are used to educate students  
 32 about agricultural practices, students shall be afforded the opportunity to learn about both  
 33 organic and conventional growing methods."

34 **SECTION 3.**

35 Said chapter is further amended in Article 10, relating to contracts and purchases by public  
 36 schools, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

37 "20-2-500.1.

38 There is established within the Department of Education a farm to school program. Such  
 39 program shall facilitate and promote the sale of Georgia-grown farm products to county  
 40 and independent school districts in this state. Through the farm to school program, the  
 41 department shall:

42 (1) Encourage and solicit Georgia farmers to sell their products to such local school  
 43 districts and other educational institutions;

44 (2) Develop and regularly update a data base of farmers interested in selling their  
 45 products to Georgia schools, including the types and amounts of products the farmers  
 46 want to sell and the time periods during which the farmers want to sell;

47 (3) In coordination with the Department of Agriculture, facilitate purchases from local  
 48 farmers by such interested school districts;

49 (4) Provide outreach and guidance to farmers concerning the value of and procedure for  
 50 selling their products to such interested school districts;

51 (5) Identify and promote critical components of individual farm to school programs and  
 52 advise local school districts on needed actions and strategies to implement the farm to  
 53 school program;

54 (6) Facilitate communication between farmers and such school districts;

55 (7) Provide leadership at the state level to encourage such school districts to develop and  
 56 improve school nutrition plans using Georgia-grown farm fresh products;

57 (8) Conduct workshops and training sessions and provide technical assistance to school  
 58 food services directors and personnel, farmers, and produce distributors and processors  
 59 regarding the demand for and the availability of Georgia farm products;

60 (9) Seek opportunities to standardize the small purchase threshold for child nutrition  
61 programs to facilitate the purchase by local school districts of farm products from local  
62 farmers;  
63 (10) Consult with the Department of Agriculture, Department of Community Health, and  
64 community groups as to the implementation of the farm to school program; and  
65 (11) Seek grants from private donors and other funding sources for the farm to school  
66 program."

67 **SECTION 4.**

68 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.