

“School to Farm Program” on FFP Chair, Rod Ofte’s, Farm



Photo: Rod Ofte



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Most people are familiar with the “Farm to School Program” that brings local, tasty nutritious food to school cafeteria’s across the country, but how many students from city schools get to actually visit a real working farm that food comes from? Each spring, inner-city kindergarteners from Summit Elementary in La Crosse, WI, have the opportunity to visit a real farm and learn hands-on about the animals that live there. From touching the aquatic insects and fish in the healthy stream to the chickens, hogs and beef, children immerse themselves for a day in what it’s like to live on a farm. Rod Ofte, Fishers & Farmers Chair, personally takes the kids on a hay ride to stations around the farm to plant in the garden, gather eggs from the chicken coop, pet the sheep, and much more. New this past year, was an aquatic invertebrate station where students literally got their feet wet learning how biologists sample streams for water quality. Because of good conservation practices like managed grazing on the Ofte farm, students learned that both streams and farms can be productive. Some of the kids had never dipped their toes in a stream before, so the learning opportunities in this event were as endless as the giggles heard on the farm that day.



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Grass-fed beef that live on the Ofte farm. Rod is a member of the Wallace Pasture Project.

Fishers & Farmers Coordinator, Heidi Keuler and Whitney Genetics Lab Biologist, Kyle Von Ruden show students how to sample and identify inverts.



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