



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Butter Lettuce the cafeteria received last month to test out!

## IN THIS ISSUE

The Future of Urban Farming

What's for Lunch?: New Items to Try

Foreign Language Week/Month

Looking Ahead: Calling All Farmers

Chew on This

## THE FUTURE OF (URBAN) FARMING?

For as long as humans have existed, we have turned toward the dirt beneath our feet to feed ourselves in one way or another.

In the past decade, hydroponic farming or gardening has emerged as a contender for heavily populated areas. What is hydroponic farming?

This type of agriculture uses mineral and nutrient enriched water, instead of soil, to grow crops. Some advantages, found by Purdue University, to using aquaponics is:

- Plant growth is accelerated
- Uses up to 65% less water
- Minimal pesticides used

In addition to these, hydroponics can be used anywhere and can be stacked on each other. This means that in populated areas, these "garden towers" can be used in any part of the city.

There are some drawbacks to using this method as well:

- Higher start-up and maintenance costs
- Select species can be used
- More technical skills needed

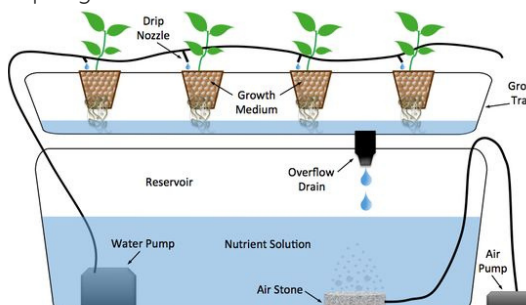
Another factor to consider is geography.

Here in Western New York, we have a shorter growing season than most other area of the country. With aquaponics, many crops can be extended throughout the entire year!

Eden Valley Growers and the WNY Food Hub have been growing crops via hydroponic farming for several years now. We here in Forestville received our first batch of hydroponically grown butter lettuce that we are now including in our fresh salads daily!

As the cafeteria continues to grow a relationship with Eden Valley and other farmers we hope to include more and more hydroponically grown foods! You can look forward to receiving other lettuces, tomatoes, herbs, peppers, and more in your school meals.

Forestville even received a grant for 3 growing towers that we hope to roll out this spring!



Check out this simple model for growing crops in an aquaponic system!



*Last year around this time when schools closed, cafeteria staff and aides pulled together to pack thousands of meals a week to send to students!*



Fresh pork chops in a NYS veggie marinade and served with cilantro lime rice

## WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?



### "Gaelic" Irish Pork Stew

February 9th & 25th

Similar to a traditional Irish Stew with beef chunks, this stew has been slow cooked with local NYS pork, from the Becker's farm. Then carrots, local potatoes, and onions are added to take the flavor to the max!

### "Locro" Argentinean Mountain Stew

February 9th & 25th

This stew, which is a hearty staple of Argentina uses many of the same ingredients as the Gaelic stew in Ireland. However, local ingredients such as corn, chiles, and zapallo (similar to sweet potatoes) are added to make this a unique South American dish!

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE MEALS!

For over 2 decades now, the Forestville Spanish teachers have held an annual Foreign Language Week. Each day of the week, Mrs. Becker and Mrs. Marvin teach different aspects of a specific country's culture. In the cafeteria, a different country is highlighted each day. With the hybrid schedule this year, 2 countries will be featured throughout the month on alternating days. While these two countries are across the world from each other, they share many of the same ingredients.

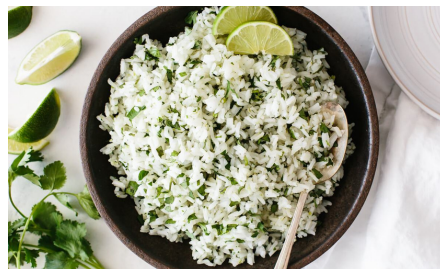
**Ireland** and **Argentina** will be featured this month! Both utilizing pork and potatoes in a hearty stew. The difference? Each region has a vastly different climate and therefore local plant and animal life.

What grows locally always influences how people cook. By the ocean? You'll probably have more seafood on the menu. Somewhere tropical? Many types of plants will probably be added to your menu. Up in the mountains? Animal products and root vegetables are probably your main source of calories. The month of March will be serving up new foods and an opportunity for learning about cultures across the world!

## LOOKING AHEAD

We know that farmers like to plan ahead so they know how much to grow or raise in the coming season. If you are, or know, a farmer who would like to work with the Forestville Cafeteria in the 2021-2022 school year please reach out to Nick Weith at [nweith@forestville.com](mailto:nweith@forestville.com).

## CHEW ON THIS



### Cilantro Lime Rice

Try this fresh and easy dish to brighten up your lunch or dinner!

#### Ingredients

- 1 c long grain rice, washed
- 1/2 juice of lime
- 2 c water
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 - 1/2 c fresh cilantro, chopped
- 2 tsp oil

#### Instructions:

1. Combine rice, water, 1 tsp oil, and salt in small soup pot.
2. On medium-high heat, bring to a boil. Then reduce heat to medium/medium low and cover.
3. Once rice is cooked through, add in cilantro, lime juice, and remaining oil.
4. Serve hot with tacos, pork chops, beans and more!

