FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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75 Georgia School Districts Win Golden Radish Awards for Farm to School Accomplishments

Atlanta, Ga. (October 30, 2017) - Georgia’s Departments of Agriculture, Education and Public Health, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension and Georgia Organics came together at the historic Georgia Railroad Freight Depot to celebrate over 40 percent of Georgia school districts with outstanding farm to school programs. Seventy-five school districts, serving more than one million students in Georgia, are now participating in farm to school. These districts served more than 97 million school meals with local food items during the 2016-17 school year.

The Golden Radish Award publicly recognizes school districts for all aspects of farm to school, from local food procurement to hosting taste tests and gardening with students. This year, the Golden Radish partners awarded 26 new school districts and welcomed a new partner-UGA Extension. “UGA Extension is so excited to promote healthy eating habits and incorporate Georgia’s great agricultural food products into our school lunchrooms,” said Associate Dean for UGA Extension at the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Laura Perry Johnson. “This is a natural partnership that benefits us as well as the school kids who get to enjoy these tasty and nutritious products.”

Districts of all sizes are utilizing farm to school programs to teach academic standards in school gardens, support the local economy through local food purchases for school meals, and fight childhood obesity and other preventable food-related diseases. “Access to fresh, locally grown food is not just important for students’ physical health – it’s part of their academic development as well,” said State Superintendent Richard Woods. “When children eat fresh, healthy meals, they have the fuel they need for a successful day of learning.”

Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture Gary W. Black notes that while farm to school efforts support academic achievement, they also help build a strong agricultural economy. “Feed My School For a Week, Georgia Grown Test Kitchen and the Golden Radish Awards are all great ways for school nutrition to support Georgia producers, and we are excited as to what current and future award winners will accomplish as we work toward our 2020 Vision for School Nutrition in Georgia.”

Department of Public Health Commissioner J. Patrick O’Neal, M.D. champions healthy food access for children and supports farm to school efforts. “The vitamins, minerals and health
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benefits from local fresh fruit and vegetables, not only allow our children to be physically healthy, but research has shown that healthy eating is also key to brain development,” said Commissioner O’Neal. “Here in Georgia, we are leading the nation in identifying ways to increase early brain development, and healthy nutrition is an enormous part of that.”

Georgia Organics founded the state’s first farm to school program in 2007. Since then, communities across the state have embraced the benefits of bringing students and fresh, local food closer together. “It’s astounding that over 40 percent of our school districts are actively involved in The Golden Radish Awards after only four years of establishing the program,” stated Georgia Organics Executive Director Alice Rolls. “This is an exciting trajectory given farm to school’s impact on child nutrition, farmer prosperity, rural development, local economies and public health.”

During the 2016-2017 school year, Golden Radish school districts collectively:

- Served over 97 million meals that featured locally grown and raised foods
- Conducted 8,204 taste tests
- Taught 7,263 standards based lessons
- Tended 885 school gardens
- Engaged students in 3,794 hands on cooking activities
- Involved parents and community members in 1,339 farm to school activities

The 2016-17 school year was a record breaking year of farm to school growth in Georgia, and all participants were thrilled to celebrate at the Golden Radish Awards.

The 75 school systems being recognized are:

**Platinum Level**
Barrow County School System
Carrollton City Schools
Cherokee County School District
Clarke County School District
Fulton County Schools
Jackson County Schools
Laurens County Schools
Sumter County Schools
Tift County Schools

**Gold Level**
Atlanta Public Schools
Baldwin County School District
Bartow County School System
Bleckley County Schools
Burke County Public Schools
City Schools of Decatur
Cobb County School District
Columbia County School Nutrition
Dougherty County School System
Effingham County School System
Elbert County School District
Fannin County School System
Fayette County Public Schools
Gwinnett County Public Schools
Habersham County Schools
Hart County Schools
Treutlen County Schools
Henry County Schools
Newton County Schools
Warren County Public Schools

**Silver Level**
- Crawford County Schools
- DeKalb County School District
- Floyd County Schools
- Forsyth County Schools
- Gainesville City School System
- Madison County School District
- Paulding County School District
- Savannah-Chatham County Public School System
- Toombs County Schools

**Bronze Level**
- Buford City Schools
- Carroll County Schools
- Coffee County School System
- Dade County Schools
- Dalton Public Schools
- Douglas County School System
- Lee County School System
- Marietta City Schools
- Mitchell County Schools
- Morgan County Charter School System
- Murray County Schools
- Muscogee County School District
- Richmond County
- Valdosta City Nutrition Program
- Wayne County
- White County
- Worth County School District

**Honorary**
- Banks County School System
- Butts County School System
- Calhoun City School System
- Clayton County Public Schools
- Dawson County School System
- Emanuel County School System
- Franklin County Schools
- Glascock County School System
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Haralson County Schools
Hall County Schools
Johnson County
Lincoln County School District
Lowndes County Honorary
Lumpkin County School System
Miller County Board of Education
McIntosh County Schools
Rockdale County Public Schools
Stephens County
Whitfield County Schools
Wilkinson County Board of Education

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