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**NOVEMBER 17, 2020 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **FRESH PRODUCE ON THE MENU FOR VALLEY STUDENTS**

*Donation from East Wisconsin Savings Bank supplies Flex Farms for regional schools*

(GREEN BAY, WIS.) Nov. 17, 2020 -- Lunch hours for Fox Valley students will feature fresh produce grown right in their schools thanks to a donation from East Wisconsin Savings Bank. The bank donated 16 Flex Farms to four school districts to help increase access to fresh greens in a contribution that totals \$63,920.

Flex Farms are the flagship product of Fork Farms, a firm founded and based in Northeast Wisconsin. The Flex Farm is an indoor vertical hydroponic system that is energy and cost efficient and is capable of producing fresh, leafy greens and other vegetables.

East Wisconsin Savings Bank made the donation as part of its mission to give back to the communities in which it does business. "Our mission is to create strong communities and this was a unique way to directly support our schools and our students," said Charlie Schmalz, president of East Wisconsin Savings Bank.

The donations were made to the following school districts and all will be growing produce to use in school lunches:

- The Kaukauna School District will use four Flex Farms located in the Kaukauna High School cafeteria.
- The Little Chute School District will use four Flex Farms located in the Little Chute Elementary cafeteria.
- The Freedom School District will use four Flex Farms located in the Freedom High School cafeteria and in classrooms for instruction.
- The Appleton School District will use four Flex Farms Flex Farms located in Appleton East High School cafeteria and in classrooms for instruction.

Ryan Marx is the environmental science teacher at Appleton East and says the system makes growing and maintaining produce easy.

"We feel so strongly that students should have access to fresh produce, but the fact that they are able to help plant, watch it grow and assist with the maintenance takes the experience to a whole new level." Marx said. "We are forever thankful to East Wisconsin Savings Bank and Fork Farms for making it possible for us to help our students and community in this unique, practical way. Our hearts and our bellies are full!"

Marx adds that surplus lettuce has been donated to St. Joseph Food Program in the Fox Valley.

According to Alex Tyink, founder and president of Fork Farms, the donation is central to their mission. "Good nutrition and achievement go hand in hand," Tyink said. "Children are our most important resource yet we feed them with outdated produce that has almost no nutritional value by the time it reaches our tables." The portable Flex Farm system can hold 288 plants, only requires a standard electrical outlet and less than 10 square feet of space to produce 20 pounds of produce every 28 days. Flex Farms contain all the nutrients, growing medium, lights and other supplies necessary to start growing food.

In making the donation, East Wisconsin Savings Bank received a collaborative grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago.

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**ABOUT FORK FARMS:**

Founded in 2010 by social entrepreneur Alex Tyink, Fork Farms is an agriculture technology company that allows people and communities to participate in the fresh, local food movement. Fork Farms created the Flex Farm technology and has implemented indoor hydroponic gardens for schools, institutional food service, and food pantries nationwide. For more information, visit [www.forkfarms.com](http://www.forkfarms.com).

**ABOUT EAST WISCONSIN SAVINGS BANK:**

Since 1887, East Wisconsin Savings Bank has been committed to the needs and lifestyles of the communities served. The business is a local, member owned savings bank, determined to remain responsive to local needs. Leaders recognize the importance of maintaining a strong, stable economy in the many fine communities which comprise the Fox Valley. The bank has six convenient [locations](#) that provide the most up-to-date banking products and services near your home or place of employment by offering the account flexibility, assured earnings and complete safety for your hard-earned dollars. EWSB also offers quick, easy, and contact free online account opening. Visit [eastwis.com](http://eastwis.com) to find out more.