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Date: October 5, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bergan Catholic Schools Celebrates Farm to School Month with Local Beef Partnership

Community collaboration will bring locally raised beef to Bergan Catholic's school lunch program

Fremont, NE – October 1, 2026 – Bergan Catholic Schools is celebrating National Farm to School Month through a new local partnership bringing Nebraska-raised beef to students' lunch trays while supporting area youth, agriculture and businesses.

The partnership began with Bergan Board of Directors President Todd Thomason, who also serves as Director of Child Care Services for the Masonic Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont. Thomason helped facilitate the purchase of a cow raised by a local 4-H youth through the Masonic Home's program. The beef will be incorporated into meals served through Bergan's school lunch program throughout the remainder of the fall semester. Mendlik Orthodontics, First Community Bank and Steffensmeier Insurance Agency provided financial support for the purchase, with Wahoo Locker coordinating processing.

"When we purchase locally raised 4-H beef, we aren't just buying food - we're investing in a young person, supporting agriculture and keeping dollars in our community," said Kelly Eklund, Bergan's Nutrition Services Coordinator. "We're also giving our students an opportunity to eat food with a story behind it. I want our students to understand that food doesn't begin in a box, a freezer or a grocery store. It begins with farmers, ranchers, families and a whole lot of hard work."

October has been recognized as National Farm to School Month since 2010, recognizing the important connections among schools, children, local food producers and their communities. At Bergan Catholic, the addition of locally sourced beef complements other farm to school efforts, including the school garden program. Together, these activities provide students meaningful opportunities to learn about the people and processes behind their food. Students will see the locally raised beef incorporated into a variety of school meals throughout the semester, creating a tangible connection between local agriculture and the food served in Bergan's cafeteria.

As Farm to School programs continue to connect students with locally grown and raised food across the country, Bergan Catholic hopes this partnership will be the beginning of continued collaboration.

"We would love to build on this effort and continue bringing locally sourced food into our schools," said Bode Hill, Bergan's Director of Community Partnerships & Alumni Relations. "Community collaboration from donors like this supports our students while strengthening the relationships that make the Fremont area unique."



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Bergan Catholic Schools extends its appreciation to Todd Thomason, Mendlik Orthodontics, First Community Bank, Steffensmeier Insurance Agency, Wahoo Locker, the Masonic Home and the participating 4-H youth for making the project possible.

Area farmers, ranchers, businesses or community members interested in supporting a future Farm to School partnership may contact Bode Hill at bode.hill@berganknights.org or the Advancement Office at 402.721.9683 (option 4).

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About Bergan Catholic Schools

Educating the whole child through faith, knowledge and service, Bergan Catholic Schools is proud to be an integral part of the Fremont community. Bergan Catholic serves students from Fremont and surrounding communities and welcomes students of all faiths. To learn more, visit berganknights.org.



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