

SENATE RESOLUTION 43

(By Senators Rucker, Hart, Taylor, and Thorne)

[Introduced February 16, 2026]

1 Designating February 17, 2026, as Local Food and Farm Day at the Capitol.

2 Whereas, The State of West Virginia recognizes the vital role of agriculture in sustaining
3 the health and prosperity of its citizens and communities; and

4 Whereas, West Virginia boasts a higher number of small farms per capita than any other
5 state, showcasing the deep-rooted desire to feed our communities; and

6 Whereas, These West Virginia farmers contribute significantly to the state's economy and
7 the well-being of its residents through the production of diverse crops, including beef, pork, poultry,
8 fish, fruits, and vegetables; and

9 Whereas, West Virginia farmers have extended their agricultural endeavors beyond
10 traditional farming to support value-added food entrepreneurs. Along with marketing this has
11 created a wide array of products such as jams, jellies, maple syrup, sauces, wine, beer, cider, and
12 others, narrating West Virginia's rich story through innovative marketing, packaging, and
13 storytelling; and

14 Whereas, These dedicated farmers play a crucial role in stocking the shelves of rural
15 grocery stores across the state ensuring the availability of fresh and nutritious food in numerous
16 communities; and

17 Whereas, Food is Medicine recognizes the critical role that nutritious, locally produced
18 food plays in preventing and managing chronic disease and improving health outcomes, and
19 acknowledges that West Virginia farmers are essential partners in making these health benefits
20 possible for communities across the state; and

1 Whereas, The Grow This! campaign has demonstrated remarkable reach and impact
2 enrolling hundreds of thousands of participants, reflecting increased public interest in home
3 gardening for health, food access, and well-being; and

4 Whereas, SNAP Stretch, a commendable program initiated in late 2018, has been
5 instrumental in providing a dollar-for-dollar match for the purchase of fruits and vegetables from
6 West Virginia farmers to SNAP/EBT recipients, resulting in a remarkable return of \$3.9 million to
7 West Virginia farmers and rural grocers and creating an overall economic impact of \$6 million;
8 therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Senate:*

10 That the Senate hereby designates February 17, 2026, as Local Food and Farm Day at the
11 Capitol; and, be it

12 *Further Resolved,* That the Senate acknowledges the hard-working farmers and food
13 entrepreneurs of West Virginia and their significant contributions to the state's agricultural sector,
14 economy, community well-being, and the overall health of its residents; and, be it

15 *Further Resolved,* That the Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of this resolution to
16 the representative of the West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition.