



**United States  
Department**

DATE: February 27, 2013

**Agriculture**

MEMO CODE: SP\_

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

SUBJECT: USDA's Farm to School Census

3101 Park  
Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

TO: Regional Directors  
Special Nutrition Programs  
All Regions

State Directors  
Child Nutrition Programs  
All States

We need your help in conducting the USDA *Farm to School Census* of all public school district School Food Authorities (SFAs). The Census will provide an important national baseline of how many SFAs are purchasing locally produced food for school meal programs or conducting other farm to school activities such as bringing students to farms and farmers into classrooms, teaching students how to cook locally grown food, and edible school gardens.

The *Farm to School Census* is being conducted by USDA's Farm to School Program, in collaboration with Economic Research Service (ERS). This information collection is authorized under 7 U.S.C. 427 and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Control No. 0536-0069, expires 2/29/2016). Participation is voluntary for both you and the SFAs in your State. The time required for the State portion of this information collection is estimated to average 2 hours.

We need State Agencies to:

1. Distribute the questionnaire to all public school district SFAs in your State and encourage them to participate, and
2. Provide a list to ERS of all public school district SFAs in each state for tracking response and sampling non-respondents.

Your assistance is vital. Information from the questionnaire will be used to allocate grant funding and technical assistance for farm to school programs in your State and across the country. These programs are connecting schools and farms to support local and regional economies and inspire students' enthusiasm for healthier food.

Please see the instructions below for distributing the questionnaire and providing a list of public school district SFAs.

### **Questionnaire Distribution**

On March 11, we will send an invitation to participate in the Farm to School Census to be forwarded to all public school district SFAs by email. Please forward the invitation as quickly as possible and encourage SFAs to participate even if they are not currently involved in any farm to school related activities. Responses from all public SFAs are needed in order to develop accurate state-level estimates of farm to school activities and to produce web-based maps of SFA responses.

The questionnaire can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F2S> and will be open until May 3. It is estimated that the online questionnaire should take about 20 minutes if the SFA has a local foods procurement program and only 5 minutes if it does not have one. We will send you three reminder messages via the PartnerWeb and ask that you forward these reminders to the SFAs in your State.

### **List of public school district School Food Authorities**

Please send an electronic file (Excel, CVS, or TXT format accepted) of public school district SFAs to Katherine Ralston at [kralston@ers.usda.gov](mailto:kralston@ers.usda.gov) by March 13, including the following information if available:

1. Name of the SFA
2. State ID number
3. Food Service Director name
4. Email address
5. Mailing address
6. Phone number
7. Whether the SFA is managed by a private food service management company
8. Whether the SFA contains more than one school district
9. Names of other districts contained in the SFA

FNS will provide a webinar on March 6 at 3:00 PM Eastern Time to review this request and to answer questions. You may also contact your Regional Office if you have any questions about this memorandum. If you have questions about the questionnaire, please contact Katherine Ralston at [kralston@ers.usda.gov](mailto:kralston@ers.usda.gov) or 202-694-5463.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Long  
Director

Regional Directors  
State Directors  
Page 2

Child Nutrition Division