

APPENDIX B.2
CENSUS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2027 Farm to School Census

FAQs

What is the purpose of the Farm to School Census?

The 2027 Farm to School Census will collect data on local food purchasing, edible school gardens, and other farm to school activities among over 18,000 SFAs across the country. Results for SFAs, States and the nation will be made available on a public website. A report using the findings will examine farm to school efforts in SY 2026-27 and over time.

Who was selected to participate?

All public (including charter schools) and private SFAs that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are being asked to complete the Census. SFA names, the names of SFA directors, and contact information were provided by State Child Nutrition offices. Your contact information (e.g., name and email address) will not be linked to your Census responses, but the responses for your SFA will be made publicly available, as they were in the past.

I am an SFA Director. What do you need me to do for this study?

We need you to complete the Census. SFA directors will be emailed a unique link for your SFA's Census survey. As noted below, you may need to share the survey with others in order to provide all of the requested information.

The schools in my district don't do any farm to school activities—do I still need to fill out the Census?

Yes! All public and private SFAs that participate in the NSLP in all 50 States as well as Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and Washington, D.C. should complete the 2027 Census. This effort will help us understand which SFAs do farm to school activities and will help the USDA provide support for farm to school activities in the future.

What types of questions will the Census ask?

The Census asks mostly multiple choice questions to collect basic information about your SFA, the types of farm to school activities your SFA and schools have participated in, perspectives on your SFA's experience with farm to school, and details about your purchases of local foods. You may find a copy of the Census questions here [\[insert link\]](#), if you would like to review them before completing the Census. **You can and should still complete the Census even if you cannot provide all of the requested information.**

What if I don't know the answers to the Census questions?

To help you gather the necessary information for the Census, we prepared an optional worksheet [\[insert link\]](#) that is available on the Census webpage. It will walk you through information that will be helpful to collect ahead of completing the Census.

You may need to consult with your farm to school partners, such as vendors, school garden coordinators, foodservice staff, or teachers. You can directly share the Census survey with others using the unique survey link emailed to the SFA director. Anyone can access the survey using this link, although only one person can be in the survey at a time. When someone exits the survey, their responses will automatically be saved.

The Census asks for detailed information about your food purchases—this information is crucial to helping us understand the details about how much local food schools are purchasing. **Please answer these questions to the best of your ability.** We understand that often vendors don't provide information about local purchases, and you may not have all the answers to some questions initially or at all. You can always continue and return to those questions. We ask that you please try to answer as many questions as possible, but it's OK if you aren't able to answer them all or need to provide your best estimates for some.



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I don't think I am the correct person to complete the Census.

If you don't know about farm to school in your SFA and don't know who else in your SFA should complete the survey, or if you are no longer associated with the SFA, please let the study team know by phone at [study team phone number] or by email at [study team email].

Do I need to complete all the Census questions at one time?

No, you do not need to complete the Census all at once. Your responses will be saved automatically upon closing out of the Census, and you can return to complete it later.

How long will it take me to complete the Census?

We anticipate that the Census will take at minimum 5 minutes and on average 30 minutes, including time to gather the requested information. The total time will depend on your level of participation in farm to school activities.

Why should I complete the Census?

Participation by all SFAs will ensure accurate representation of farm to school activities, including which farm to school activities SFAs do, what has changed since the 2019 Census, and how SFAs and the community benefit from farm to school. The Census also helps indicate the challenges of participating in farm to school and what USDA FNS and partners can do to support SFAs who want to source local foods, provide food and agriculture education, and engage in other farm to school activities.

When will the Census be conducted?

The 2027 Farm to School Census will be distributed in April 2027 and available through June 2027.

Can I complete the Census on my mobile device or over the phone?

Yes, you can use the link sent to you by email to complete the Census on a computer or a mobile device (including a cell phone or tablet). You can also get in touch with a member of the study team by phone at [study team phone number] or by email at [study team email] to schedule a time to complete the survey over the phone.

Where can I find the final Census Report and data?

When posted, the report and data will be available at: <https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov>, and this will include the response for your SFA. Findings and the final report for 2023 are currently available at the link above.

Who can I contact for more information?

[Project Director Name]
Project Director, Farm to School
Census [Contractor name]

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This information is being collected to assist the Food and Nutrition Service in understanding and tracking farm to school engagement. This is a mandatory collection and FNS will use the information to set priorities for USDA outreach and technical support. This collection does not request any personally identifiable information under the Privacy Act of 1974. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0584-0646. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 0.25 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, 1320 Braddock Place, 5th Floor, Alexandria, VA 22306 ATTN: PRA (0584-0646). Do not return the completed form to this address.