



Food and
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DATE: July 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Justification for change in data collection instrument approved under OMB Control No: 0584-0646; Expiration Date 5/31/2028 "2027 Farm to School Census"

The Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) is requesting non-substantive changes to the 2027 Farm to School Census, approved under OMB Control No. 0584-0646; expiration date of May 31, 2028. Through this memorandum, we are requesting approval for the following non-substantive changes to the survey instrument:

1. Remove 15 survey questions
2. Combine and/or remove response options for several questions
3. Adjust question formatting and response options for two topics
4. Remove most "Other – specify" response options
5. Make minor language changes to some questions and response options
6. Add response options to four questions
7. Add one question

Change #1: Remove 15 survey questions. These questions cover the following topics:

- Scratch cooking (QO6¹)
- Challenges for past farm to school participants (QO9-Q9d)
- Plans for starting farm to school (QO14)
- Non-farm to school participation (QO16-17)
- "Other" grade level participation in farm to school activities (QO13)
- Number of schools participating in farm to school activities (QO20a-c)
- Number of school gardens for single school SFAs (QO24)

¹ "QO" refers to the version of the survey instrument originally approved by OMB.

These questions are no longer considered necessary for data collection. Removing these questions from the instrument allows for the emphasis of the other survey questions.

Change #2: Combine and/or remove response options for several questions. These response options relate to questions regarding:

- The definition of local (QN6²) – revised from 12 response options to 7
- Grade level participation in farm to school activities – revised from including any activity the SFA indicated participating to 3 broad categories (QN13)
- Funding sources for farm to school (QN15) – revised from 13 response options to 10
- Sources of farm to school products (Q22) – removed one response option
- Local food items procured (QN31a-e) – limited each product category to 10 or fewer response options

Making these adjustments prioritizes provision of key information.

Change #3: Adjust question formatting and response options. Changes were made to:

- Revise format of question on farm to school participation (QO7 to QN7a-e, 8a-b) – divided 1 question with 138 response options into 7 questions with between 2 and 9 options each
- Condense and streamline question on farm to school challenges – combined four questions with 5 to 8 options each (QO12-12d) into one question with 17 options (QN18)

These changes make these questions easier to read and understand. They also remove collection of information no longer considered necessary.

Change #4: Remove most “Other – specify” response options. We removed this option from 13 questions (QN9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17a-c, 18, 19, 21, 27, 28). This change removes collection of non-essential information.

Change #5: Make minor language changes used in questions and response items. Changes were made to:

- Refer to school farms in addition to gardens (throughout)
- Use more precise terminology for the “meat/meat alternate” food category (throughout)
- Provide the full name of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (QN2)
- Use more appropriate language for funding sources (QN15)
- Clarify response options related to farm to school challenges (QN18)
- Clarify response options related to school garden produce donation (QN21)
- Clarify response options related to local food procurement sources (QN22)
- Clarify response options related to vendor/distributor-provided information and ensure alignment with related question QN25 (QN28)
- Clarify response options related to survey respondent title (QN37)

Making these minor adjustments clarifies terminology and offers more complete explanations, which should ease respondent understanding of questions.

² “QN” refers to the revised version of the survey instrument.

Change #6: Add response options to four questions. We added response options related to:

- Length of participation in farm to school activities (QN12) – added one response option
- Support for farm to school activities (QN19) – added one response option
- Local foods characteristics (Q25) – added one response option
- Local foods items (QN31a, 32a, 33a, 3a, 35a) – added two response options

Adding these options helps clarify the question and better cover the range of potential responses to facilitate respondent understanding.

Change #7: Add one question. This simple question asks for a one-word answer from respondents about the top item they want to purchase locally (QN36). This question offers a simple way to collect information that many users of the data have asked for.

There is no change in burden for this collection.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Jamia Franklin, FNS Information Collection Clearance Officer for the Food and Nutrition Administration, Planning & Regulatory Affairs Office at (703) 305-2403.

Attachments:

- Appendix B.1 Census Survey Instrument (revised)