
APPENDIX B.1
CENSUS SURVEY INSTRUMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2027 Farm to School Census!

The Farm to School Census is the main source for national information about school and school food authority (SFA) participation in farm to school activities such as purchasing locally produced food for school meal programs, teaching students about food and agriculture, and cultivating edible school gardens. Your responses help ensure we get meaningful results that accurately reflect the state of farm to school across the United States. We can't do this without you!

The 2027 Farm to School Census is being conducted for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) by [INSERT CONTRACTOR NAME], a private research company.

The Census is estimated to take 30 minutes or less to complete. Before you begin, a few important reminders:

- **Please complete the Census even if you think your SFA and schools do not participate in farm to school.** Broadly, “farm to school” refers to purchasing local or regional foods to serve in schools or providing educational activities involving food, agriculture, or nutrition, including edible school gardens. Many different types of activities can be considered farm to school, and there is no set definition for “local” or “regional.” We are interested in your opinions **even if you do not participate in any activities that would be considered farm to school.** SFA participation in this survey is required under Section 28c of the National School Lunch Act [https://www.fns.usda.gov/nsla-amended-pl-116-94]
- Please review the pre-survey worksheet [INSERT LINK TO DOWNLOAD WORKSHEET] before you begin.
- Some questions may require that you coordinate with other school staff or partners, and/or food service operators.
 - Multiple individuals can open and respond to the survey using your unique survey link (sent to you by email from [INSERT STUDY EMAIL ADDRESS]), although only one person can be in the survey at a time.
 - Feel free to share the link and ask others to answer relevant questions. As noted below, the survey will save anyone's changes when they close the page.
- For all Census survey questions, if you don't know an exact value, **please give us your best estimate.**
- Some questions ask for your SFA's spending on food during school year **(SY) 2026-27** and how much (in dollars) of those purchases were for local foods. For this reason, we recommend you review the pre-survey worksheet and obtain your purchase or procurement records before starting the Census survey. If you cannot obtain or do not have the relevant records, please give us your best estimate.
- If you are responsible for more than one SFA, please complete a separate Census survey for each SFA. You do not need to complete a separate Census survey for each school, just for each SFA. If you have multiple schools in your SFA, you only need to complete ONE Census survey for the entire SFA.

- Your place in the Census survey will be saved if you close the page. When you are ready to return, please use the same unique link you received by email. When you click the link to start again, you will be able to continue where you left off.
- Words that appear in **green** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Like this!) are defined. To access the definition, simply hover your mouse over the word or click the link on your phone.

The Census does not ask for any personal information. FNS complies with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC §552a). All information gathered is for research purposes only. Just as prior Farm to School Census results are available for each SFA [<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov/>], USDA intends to make the results of the current Census available in support and recognition of farm to school activities nationwide. Responses for each SFA will be shared on a public website, but no information about individuals (i.e., SFA respondent name or contact information) will be made public.

Participation in this study will not affect any reimbursements, credits, participation in or foods received through USDA programs. However, cooperation by states, local education agencies, and schools in research and evaluation is required under the National School Lunch Act.

Thank you for your time and attention in filling out this survey!

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 0.5 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 22706 ATTN: PRA (0584-0646). Do not return the completed form to this address.

B. SFA INFORMATION

Please review the information below to ensure it is correct and complete.

SFA name (Please use complete name without abbreviations.):

School food authority (SFA) (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The school food authority (SFA) is the entity legally responsible for the operations and administration of the local school nutrition programs (e.g., the school district food and nutrition department that operates the National School Lunch Program). An SFA will be associated with one or more local education agency (LEA), which is the entity with authority to control and direct educational services in a jurisdiction (e.g., a school district).)

Contact email address:

State or territory (abbreviation):

5 digit zip code for SFA mailing address:

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ID number assigned to your SFA by your State Agency (if known):

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Q1. Is all of this information complete and correct?

- Yes, all information is complete and correct. (*GO TO Q1g*)
- No, corrections or completions are needed.

Q1a. What information needs to be updated? (Please choose all that apply.)

- SFA email address
- SFA Name
- SFA state or territory
- SFA zip code
- State Agency ID number
- Nothing (*MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, GO TO Q2*)

(PROGRAMMER: ASK Q1B if Q1A = 1 “Email address”)

Q1b. What is the correct email address?

(PROGRAMMER: ASK Q1C if Q1A = 2 “SFA Name”)

Q1c. What is the correct SFA name? Please include complete name without abbreviations

(PROGRAMMER: ASK Q1D if Q1A = 3 “State or territory”)

Q1d. What is the correct state or territory? (DROP DOWN BOX WITH STATES LISTED BY ABBREVIATION)

(PROGRAMMER: ASK Q1E if Q1A = 4 “SFA Zip code”)

Q1e. What is the correct zip code for your SFA’s mailing address? Please enter the 5 digit zip code.

(PROGRAMMER: ASK Q1F if Q1A = 5 "State agency ID number" AND ALLOW SPACE FOR RESPONDENTS TO ENTER UP TO ELEVEN CHARACTERS BOTH LETTERS AND NUMBERS)

Q1f. What is the correct State agency ID number (SFAID) number?

Q1g. Please list the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) District ID Number for the district that your SFA provides meals for. Click here to look up an NCES ID number [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/].

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- My SFA provides meals for more than one district (PROGRAMMER: IF SELECTED PLEASE DISPLAY 4 ADDITIONAL ROWS OF BOXS TO NCES ID NUMBER)

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- My SFA does not have an NCES ID number. [EXCLUSIVE]

Q2. In addition to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which USDA Child Nutrition programs did your SFA participate in during school year (SY) 2026-27? (Please choose all that apply.)

- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Summer meals (i.e., meals in the Summer Food Service Program (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) reimburses providers who serve free healthy meals to children and teens in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session. Sponsors can include SFAs, local government agencies, private non-profit organizations, universities or colleges, or faith-based organizations.), the Seamless Summer Option (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) allows SFAs participating in the NSLP or SBP to feed students year-round under the NSLP and/or SBP rules.), or the Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Through Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service, SFAs in certain rural areas can distribute meals to kids outside of the group settings typically required by the Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option.)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federally assisted program providing free fresh fruits and vegetables to children at eligible elementary schools during the school day.)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for childcare centers or pre-kindergarten (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers and day care homes.) (e.g., in a pre-kindergarten setting)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Child and Adult Care (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool provides reimbursements for meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs.) (snacks and/or supper)

- [NSLP Afterschool Snack Service \(HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The NSLP Afterschool Snack Service offers cash reimbursement to participating SFAs for each reimbursable snack they serve.\)](#)
- None of these [EXCLUSIVE]

Q3. According to our records, there were [insert number of schools from contact list] schools in your SFA during SY 2026-27. Is this correct? (IF SAMPLE HAS NUMBER OF SCHOOLS =1, ASK “According to our records, there was [insert number of schools from contact list] school in your SFA during SY 2026-27. Is this correct?)

- Yes (GO TO Q3b)
- No (GO TO Q3a)

Q3a. How many schools were there in your SFA during SY 2026-27?

_____ (RANGE 1-9997)

- Don’t know

Q3b. How many schools of each type were there in your SFA during SY 2026-27?

	Number of schools
Public non-charter schools	
Public charter schools	
Private schools	
Residential childcare institutions	

Error check: Make sure number of schools for each option sums to total number of schools from contact list or response to Q3a

Q4. In SY 2026-27, how did your SFA handle food service for the NSLP? (Please choose all that apply.)

- Self-operated
- Food service management company (FSMC)
- Vended meals
- Other (please specify) _____

Q5. In SY 2026-27, how did your SFA handle food preparation for the NSLP? (Please choose all that apply.)

- Central kitchen (i.e., for entire SFA or multiple schools in the SFA)
- Regional kitchens (i.e., meals are prepared at one school and distributed to other schools)
- School-based kitchens (i.e., for a single school)
- Receiving (satellite) kitchen (i.e., on site preparation limited to activities such as reheating)
- No kitchen facilities [EXCLUSIVE]
- Other (please specify) _____

Q6. How does your SFA define "local" for its school food procurement? (Please choose all that apply.)

- Within 50 miles or less
- Within 51 to 400 miles
- Within the State
- Within our region or a State that touches our State
- Other definition not listed here
- We do not have a definition of local
- I don't know

C. FARM TO SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

This section asks about activities that take place in your SFA and schools. We are interested in **any** of these activities that occur in your SFA, including at the SFA-level, at one school, or at many schools.

Q7a. In SY 2026-27, did your SFA use **local** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The USDA Child Nutrition Programs do not define *local*. Please use your SFA's understanding or definition of the term (i.e., how you answered the previous question: within a 50-mile radius, within the State, etc). For the Census, we are interested in foods that are *produced* locally, for example, farmed, raised, fished, or manufactured in the area considered to be "local" by your SFA. This does not include foods that are produced elsewhere but procured through a local distributor) foods of any type (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: For example, fruits, vegetables, milk, cheese, other dairy, meat, fish, chicken, baked goods, or grains) and in any form (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: For example, fresh, pre-processed, frozen, dried, pre-cooked, or manufactured items) in the any of the following programs or other ways? (Please choose all that apply.). (PROGRAMMER: Please only show programs below if selected in Q2)

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), or Non-Congregate Summer Meal Service
- CACFP meals for child care centers or in a pre-kindergarten setting)
- CACFP At-Risk Afterschool
- NSLP After School Snack Service
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Served **local** foods in a school salad bar.
- Served **local food** in any other way (e.g., in the classroom, sold a la carte, as fundraisers)
- None of the above

Q7b. In SY 2026-27, did your SFA or schools in your SFA participate in any of the procurement/menu planning activities below? We are counting it as participation even if only one school in your SFA does or has done an activity. (Please choose all that apply.).

- Source **local** foods from USDA DoD Fresh (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program allows schools to use entitlement dollars to buy fresh produce. SFAs access this program through FFAVORS.)

- Work with [local producers/ processors](#) (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Local producers/processors refers to individuals or businesses, including farmers, processors and manufacturers, who meet the SFA’s criteria for buying local) to source specific food products using local foods
- Use a [seasonality chart, list or guide](#) (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A seasonality chart, list, or guide indicates local product availability at certain times of the year) when planning menus
- Indicate a [geographic preference](#) (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: In their procurement process, SFAs can use local as a product specification (i.e., the written description of a product or service that a vendor must meet to be considered responsive to a solicitation) or a defined scoring advantage (e.g., additional credit or points given to local unprocessed products during the evaluation of responses to a solicitation) for unprocessed agricultural products.) in procurement documents (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Procurement documents are written materials used to procure food for Child Nutrition programs, such as procurement policies, Invitations for Bids, or other solicitations.)
- Forecast budgetary needs for [local](#) purchases
- None of the above

Q7c. In SY 2026-27, did your SFA or schools in your SFA participate in any of the promotion activities below? We are counting it as participation even if only one school in your SFA does or has done an activity. (Please choose all that apply.).

- Implement strategies to encourage student selection and consumption of [local](#) foods (e.g., product placement, food prompts, creative signage)
- Use cafeteria food coaches to promote the consumption of [local](#) foods (i.e., adults or students in the cafeteria encouraging kids to eat local foods)
- Promote [local](#) foods through themed or branded promotions (e.g., Harvest of the Month, Local Day, Taste Washington Day, Apple Crunch)
- Promote [local](#) foods at school (e.g., via cafeteria signs, posters, newsletters)
- Host farm to school related family and community events (e.g., invite parents to lunch, corn shucking contests, farmers markets at schools)
- Generate media coverage of [local](#) foods being used in schools (e.g., in newspaper, blogs, radio, TV, social media)
- Celebrate National Farm to School Month (October)
- Host special [local](#) foods events in child care centers or pre-kindergarten settings
(PROGRAMMER: ASK if selected “Child and Adult Food Program (CACFP) for child care centers or pre-kindergarten” in Q2)
- Host special local food events in summer meals (i.e., [SFSP or SSO, when operated in the summer](#)) (PROGRAMMER: ASK if selected “Summer meals” in Q2)
- None of the above

Q7d. In SY 2026-27, did your SFA or schools in your SFA participate in any of the education activities below? We are counting it as participation even if only one school in your SFA does or has done an activity. (Please choose all that apply.).

- Have any type of [edible school garden or farm](#) (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: An edible school garden or farm can be any indoor or outdoor space where students or other school or community

members tend to edible plants. This can include raised beds, hydroponic systems, and tower or container gardens.)

- Hold taste tests/cooking demonstrations of local or edible school garden/farm-grown foods in the cafeteria, classroom, or other school-related setting
- Use USDA Team Nutrition materials (such as *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* or *Dig In!*) as part of taste testing or educational activities
- Use non-USDA materials as part of taste testing or educational activities
- Conduct student field trips to farms, farmers' markets, producers, and/or processors
- Have farmer(s) visit the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Integrate farm to school activities (such as gardening and local foods education) into curriculum
- Expose students to agriculture-related careers (e.g., through a class/curriculum or clubs like 4-H or Future Farmers of America)
- None of the above

Q7e. In SY 2026-27, did your SFA or schools in your SFA participate in any of the activities below? We are counting it as participation even if only one school in your SFA does or has done an activity. (Please choose all that apply.).

- Collect food waste for composting
- Provide training to school food service staff related to farm to school activities (e.g., on holding taste tests, purchasing or preparing local foods)
- Provide training to non-school food service staff (e.g., teachers) related to farm to school activities (e.g., on holding taste tests, purchasing or preparing local foods)
- Evaluate the impact of farm to school activities (e.g., measuring changes in food waste, student acceptance of local items, changes in participation rates)
- None of the above

(PROGRAMMER: SET FARM TO SCHOOL STATUS BASED ON Q7A-E ANSWERS. IF ANY OPTION IS SELECTED FOR Q7a-E (EXCEPT “NONE OF THE ABOVE”) SET F2S = 1 (PARTICIPATING IN FARM TO SCHOOL) AND GO TO SECTION F)

Q8a. Does your SFA or any schools in your SFA have plans to participate in any of the activities listed below in the future?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

[Repeat list from Q7a-e without check boxes]

(PROGRAMMER: IF Q8A IS “YES” SET F2S = 2 (PLAN TO PARTICIPATE) AND GO TO SECTION E)

Q8b. Has your SFA or any schools in your SFA ever participated in any of the activities listed below?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

[Repeat list from Q7a-e without check boxes]

(PROGRAMMER:

IF Q8B IS “YES,” SET F2S =3 (PAST PARTICIPANT) AND GO TO SECTION D

IF Q8B IS “NO” OR “I DON’T KNOW,” SET F2S = 4 (NOT PARTICIPATING AND NO PLANS FOR FUTURE) AND GO TO CONCLUSION)

D. NO LONGER PARTICIPATING IN FARM TO SCHOOL

Q9. Why is your SFA no longer participating in farm to school activities? (Please choose all that apply.)

- Lack funds to conduct farm to school activities
- No staff available to lead or conduct farm to school activities
- Don’t have buy-in from district management
- Not enough interest in farm to school activities from school-level teachers and administrators
- Not enough interest in farm to school activities from students
- Don’t see the benefits of farm to school activities
- Unable to find vendors that provide local foods
- Farmers/producers near me unable to provide what we need
- The cost of purchasing local foods is too high
- No longer prepare our own meals (e.g., purchase vended meals from a company or another SFA)
- I don’t know *[EXCLUSIVE]*

Q10. Which, if any, of the following would make it more likely for your SFA/schools to participate in farm to school activities? (Please select all that apply)

- More funding for SFA in general
- Targeted funding for farm to school educational activities
- Targeted funding for local food procurement
- Targeted funding to improve kitchen capacity (e.g., equipment, space) to prepare local foods
- More support and/or engagement from teachers and administrators
- More support and/or engagement from State agency
- Changes to policies/regulations related to procurement and/or local procurement
- Training/technical assistance related to finding local foods
- Training/technical assistance related to procurement and delivery processes for local foods
- Training/technical assistance related to paying for local foods and/or farm to school activities
- Training/technical assistance related to preparing local foods (e.g., training staff)
- Other – Specify: _____
- None of the above

GO TO CONCLUSION SECTION.

E. PLAN TO START FARM TO SCHOOL IN THE FUTURE

Q11. What would help your SFA/schools to start participating in farm to school activities? (Please select all that apply)

- More funding for SFA in general
- Targeted funding for farm to school educational activities
- Targeted funding for local food procurement
- Targeted funding to improve kitchen capacity (e.g., equipment, space) to prepare local foods

- More support and/or engagement from teachers and administrators
- More support and/or engagement from State agency
- Changes to policies/regulations related to procurement and/or local procurement
- Training/technical assistance related to finding local foods
- Training/technical assistance related to procurement and delivery processes for local foods
- Training/technical assistance related to paying for local foods and/or farm to school activities
- Training/technical assistance related to preparing local foods (e.g., training staff)
- Other – Specify: _____
- None of the above

GO TO CONCLUSION SECTION

F. F2S SFAS – OVERVIEW

This section asks for details about SFA and school participation in farm to school activities. Please remember that your best estimate is fine. You can also send this survey to others for their input using the unique survey link sent to you by *[INSERT STUDY TEAM EMAIL]*.

Q12. How long has your SFA been conducting farm to school activities?

- Less than 3 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- More than 15 years
- I don't know

Q13. To the best of your knowledge, which grade levels within the SFA participated in these farm to school activities during SY 2026-27? (Please select all school levels that apply for each activity.)

Activity	Pre-Kindergarten and younger	Elementary schools (K-5th grades)	Middle schools/junior high (6th-8th grades)	High schools (9th-12th grades)
Use of local foods in school meals (including lunch, breakfast, summer, after school)				
Promotion of local foods (e.g., celebrating Farm to School Month, advertising local foods in the cafeteria – click here for a list of promotion				

activities you said your SFA or schools participated in this year (PROGRAMMER : HYPERLINK LIST OF RESPONSES CHOSEN FROM Q7c))				
Food and agriculture education (e.g., having a school garden, doing taste tests of local foods – click here for a list of promotion activities you said your SFA or schools participated in this year (PROGRAMMER : HYPERLINK LIST OF RESPONSES CHOSEN FROM Q7d))				

Q14. . To the best of your knowledge, in SY 2026-27, how many staff in your SFA, schools, and district (e.g., food service staff, garden educators, AmeriCorps members, teachers) spent time on farm to school activities? Please only include **paid** staff, including any contracted and grant-funded staff.

Q14a. Number of full-time (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Full time is defined as working at least 40 hours in one week) staff whose job is dedicated to farm to school activities.	RANGE 0-10000
Q14b. Number of staff (including full-time AND part-time (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Part-time is defined as working fewer than 40 hours in a week) staff) who use some portion of their time for farm to school activities but whose job is not fully dedicated to farm to school activities.	RANGE 0-10000

Q15. To the best of your knowledge, in SY 2026-27, how did your SFA pay for local foods and fund participation in farm to school activities? Please choose all that apply. (See the list below of farm to school activities you indicated that your SF or /schools participated in this year.)

[PROGRAMMER: DISPLAY LIST OF ACTIVITIES SELECTED IN Q7A-e.]

Type of funding	Used this to pay for local food in SY 2026-27 (i.e., cost of food and delivery)	Used this to pay for any other farm to school activities (e.g., paying staff working on local procurement or other farm to school, field trips,taste tests, maintaining a school garden) in SY 2026-27
USDA Farm to School Grant		
Other federal funding source(s) (including Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA), Regional Food Systems Partnerships (RFSP))		
State government funding source(s)		
Local government funding source(s)		
Local or state program that offers monetary incentives for serving local foods (e.g., 30% New York State Initiative, Utah's Enhanced Local Reimbursement Program)		
Private foundation grant(s), corporate donation(s) or grant(s); or non-profit organization(s) or institute(s) (e.g., FoodCorps, No Kid Hungry)		
Food service management company		
School or district funding (e.g., district general fund, teachers doing farm to school activities as part of their teaching)		
School or district fundraising (e.g., PTA/PTO or		

school/district foundation) or individual donation(s)		
In-kind contribution(s) (e.g., a hardware store provides gardening supplies or the donation of apples from a local farm for an activity or meal)		

- There is no supplemental funding to pay for local foods (e.g., we pay for local foods out of the regular SFA budget, including cash reimbursements and entitlement funding (i.e., USDA DoD Fresh)))
- There is no supplemental funding for other farm to school activities (e.g., cafeteria staff incorporate farm to school into their regular activities)
- I don't know

Q16. To the best of your knowledge, which, if any, of the following were in place in your SFA in SY 2026-27? (Please choose all that apply.)

- **Wellness policies** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A local school wellness policy is a written document that guides a school district's efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn) that support farm to school
- Procurement policies that support purchasing local foods
- Policies that support fundraising for farm to school activities
- Budget allocations dedicated to farm to school activities
- Participation in a farm to school network, task force or advisory board that promotes or assists with farm to school activities
- None of the above were in place to support farm to school activities (CAN ONLY BE SELECTED IF ANOTHER RESPONSE IS NOT GIVEN)
- I don't know [EXCLUSIVE]

Q17a. Which of the following **student** outcomes have resulted from your SFA's participation in farm to school activities? (Please choose all that apply.)

Click here for a list of activities you said your SFA participated in this year. [PROGRAMMER: HYPERLINK LIST OF ACTIVITIES SELECTED IN Q7a-e.]

- Increased consumption of fruits and/or vegetables in school meals
- Increased consumption of items other than fruits and vegetables in school meals
- Reduced food waste
- Increased positive perception of school food program among students
- Increased participation in school meals
- Increased student knowledge about local and/or healthful foods
- Increased student knowledge about how to grow food
- Increased student **experiential learning opportunities** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Experiential learning opportunities gives students the chance to learn by doing. These may

include but are not limited to classes in the garden, visits to a farm, cooking classes, and taste tests.)

- Increased professional skill building, job training, or career exploration for students
- None of the above *[EXCLUSIVE]*
- I don't know *[EXCLUSIVE]*

Q17b. Which of the following **food service** outcomes have resulted from your SFA's participation in farm to school activities? (Please choose all that apply.)

Click here for a list of activities you said your SFA participated in this year. *[PROGRAMMER: HYPERLINK LIST OF ACTIVITIES SELECTED IN Q7a-e.]*

- Lower school meal program costs
- Access to better quality foods
- Less disruption to supply chains
- Greater ability to procure desired products
- Increased cooking food from "scratch"
- Increased kitchen staff satisfaction
- None of the above *[EXCLUSIVE]*
- I don't know *[EXCLUSIVE]*

Q17c. Which of the following **community** outcomes have resulted from your SFA's participation in farm to school activities? (Please choose all that apply.)

Click here for a list of activities you said your SFA participated in this year. *[PROGRAMMER: HYPERLINK LIST OF ACTIVITIES SELECTED IN Q7a-e.]*

- Increased support for local businesses
- Increased positive perception of school food program among teachers and/or administrators
- Increased positive perception of school food program among parents
- None of the above *[EXCLUSIVE]*
- I don't know *[EXCLUSIVE]*

Q18. Did your SFA experience any of the following *challenges* related to procuring and using local products in SY 2026-27? Select all that apply.

- ☐ The local products we want are not produced or grown when we need them (e.g., cucumbers are only grown when school is out of session)
- ☐ Local products are not available in precut or processed forms
- ☐ It is difficult to get local products that meet quantity, quality, and/or other specifications (**HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Specifications provide details on the products or services requested such as size or variety**) (e.g., size)
- ☐ Local products are not available from primary vendors (e.g., broadline or produce distributors, food service management company)
- ☐ Local products are not identified or marked as local by distributor/vendor
- ☐ It is difficult to find local producers, suppliers, and distributors
- ☐ Local producers are unable to meet food safety requirements (e.g., Good Agricultural Practices)

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- ☐ We don't get enough responses to invitations for bids (IFBs) or requests for proposals (RFPs) for local products
 - ☐ It is difficult to apply the geographic preference (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: In their procurement process, SFAs can use local as a product specification (i.e., the written description of a product or service that a vendor must meet to be considered responsive to a solicitation) or a defined scoring advantage (e.g., additional credit or points given to local unprocessed products during the evaluation of responses to a solicitation) option
 - ☐ It is difficult to follow the regulations for micro-purchasing for local products
 - ☐ It is difficult to follow the regulations for small purchases for local products
 - ☐ It is difficult to follow the regulations for formal purchasing for local products
 - ☐ Staff do not have enough time to find and coordinate purchase of local foods
 - ☐ We lack kitchen equipment and/or space to process/prepare local products
 - ☐ Our staff do not have the training to process/prepare local products
 - ☐ The cost of labor to process/prepare local foods is too high
 - ☐ Local foods are more expensive than conventional products
 - ☐ My SFA did not experience any of these challenges (exclusive)

Q19. What would make it easier for your SFA/schools to participate in farm to school activities? (Please select all that apply)

- More funding for SFA in general
- Targeted funding for farm to school educational activities
- Targeted funding for local food procurement
- Targeted funding to improve kitchen capacity (e.g., equipment, space) to prepare local foods
- Targeted funding for farm to school staff
- More support and/or engagement from teachers and administrators
- More support and/or engagement from State agency
- Changes to policies/regulations related to procurement and/or local procurement
- Training/technical assistance related to finding local foods
- Training/technical assistance related to procurement and delivery processes for local foods
- Training/technical assistance related to paying for local foods and/or farm to school activities
- Training/technical assistance related to preparing local foods (e.g., training staff)
- None of the above

G. F2S SFAS – GARDENS

[IF "HAVE ANY TYPE OF EDIBLE SCHOOL GARDEN OR FARM" IS SELECTED, GO TO Q20, ELSE GO TO SECTION H]

Q20. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many schools in your SFA had edible school gardens or farms during SY 2026-27? Remember, if you're unsure of an answer and someone else might know it, you can share this survey using your unique survey link from *[INSERT STUDY TEAM EMAIL]*.

_____ *[ONLY ALLOW WHOLE NUMBERS; Range 1:32000]*

- I don't know

[PROGRAMMER: ANSWER AT Q20 MUST NOT BE GREATER THAN Q3/Q3a. IF SO, DISPLAY: The number of schools with edible school gardens cannot be greater than the total number of schools in your SFA. Let's review that question again. GO TO Q20]

Q21. How did schools use the **edible school garden(s) or farm(s)** in SY 2026-27? (Please choose all that apply.) Remember that you can share this survey using your unique survey link from *[INSERT STUDY TEAM EMAIL]*.

- Used an **edible school garden or farm** as part of a school, summer, or afterschool curriculum
- Served some or all of the harvest in the cafeteria as part of a taste test and/or cooking demonstration
- Donated or sold some or all of the harvest to the cafeteria for inclusion in school meals programs, including summer meals (i.e., **SFSP** and **SSO**) and **CACFP**
- Donated or sold some or all of the harvest to outside entities, like at a farmers' market or to a food pantry/food bank Sent some or all of the harvest home with the students
- Served some or all of the harvest in the classrooms or gardens as part of classroom or garden-based educational activities
- I don't know

H. F2S SFAS - PROCUREMENT

This section asks questions about your procurement practices and spending in SY 2026-27. We recommend you review the pre-survey worksheet *[HYPERLINK WORKSHEET]* and obtain your purchase or procurement records before you begin. If you cannot obtain or do not have the relevant records, please give us your best estimate. If you would like to request help from someone else, you can share the survey using the unique survey ID link from *[INSERT STUDY TEAM EMAIL]*.

Q22. For SY 2026-27, please indicate if your SFA procured **local foods** from any of the following sources. (Please choose all that apply.)

- Directly from an individual food producer (i.e., farmer, rancher, fisher), including but not limited to a farmers' market or **CSA** model, or **cooperative** of producers
-
- Directly from a **food hub** (**HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A food hub is a centrally located facility that aggregates, stores, processes, distributes, and/or markets locally/regionally produced food products.**) Directly from a **local food processor or manufacturer** (**HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A local food processor or manufacturer refers to a business or organization that manufactures a food item or otherwise changes the physical characteristics of a food (e.g., by drying, cutting, freezing) and meets the SFA's definition for local**)
- Grocery store or large discount store (e.g., Costco, Sam's Club)
- School or community garden/farm
- **Produce distributor** (**HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A produce distributor is a foodservice company specializing in sales of wholesale fruits and vegetables to schools and other foodservice operators**)
- **Broadline distributor** (**HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A broadline distributor is a foodservice company that sells a wide range of types of items for use in foodservice operations**)
- **USDA DoD Fresh vendor**
- I don't know
- We did not procure any local foods in SY 2026-27 *[ONLY ALLOW IF NO OTHER OPTIONS ARE SELECTED; IF SELECTED, SKIP TO CONCLUSION]*

Q23. [SHOW IF 2 OR MORE LOCAL PURCHASING OPTIONS ARE SELECTED IN Q27]: In SY 2026-27, what percent of your local purchasing (based on the dollars spent) came from each of the sources you selected? Your best estimate is fine.

Local Food Source	Percentage of local purchasing
[DISPLAY FIRST LOCAL FOOD SOURCE INDICATED IN Q27]	
[DISPLAY SECOND LOCAL FOOD SOURCE INDICATED IN Q27]	
[ETC. FOR ALL LOCAL FOOD SOURCES INDICATED IN Q27]	

[PROGRAMMER: ADD CHECK TO MAKE SURE ROWS SUM TO 100% AND INCLUDE NOTE "Please make sure your responses total to 100%"]

Q24. Which of the following approaches did your SFA use to procure local foods during SY 2026-27? (Please choose all that apply)

- **Formal procurement** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Formal procurement is required when the amount of the purchase will be higher than a level designated by the Federal or State government) including Invitations for Bids and Requests for Proposal
- **Small purchase** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A small purchase is a type of informal procurement process that can be used if the amount of the purchase is below a level set by the Federal (\$250,000) or State government. Generally, price or rate quotations must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources, then the purchaser may exercise judgment in determining what number is adequate)
- **Micropurchase** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A micropurchase is a type of informal procurement process that can be used if the amount of the purchase is below the level set by the Federal (\$10,000) or State government. A micropurchase can be awarded without obtaining competitive price quotations if the purchaser considers the price reasonable based on research, experience, purchase history, or other information.)
- **Forward contracting** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: A forward contract is established in advance of when a product is delivered. This often refers to contracts with farmers in advance of the growing season.)
- **Use of geographic preference** (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: In their procurement process, SFAs can use local as a product specification (i.e., the written description of a product or service that a vendor must meet to be considered responsive to a solicitation) or a defined scoring advantage (e.g., additional credit or points given to local unprocessed products during the evaluation of responses to a solicitation) as part of solicitations (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK: Solicitations are requests to companies to provide goods or services, such as Invitations for Bids and Requests for Proposals)
- I don't know

Q25. Please indicate if your SFA or any schools in your SFA purchased **local** foods with any of the following characteristics during SY 2026-27 or would like to in the future. (Please choose one answer per row.)

	Yes, purchased in SY 2026-27	No or don't know, and have no plans to purchase	No or don't know, but would like to purchase in the future
h. From a small business			
a. From a woman-owned business (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK : A business that is third party certified as woman-owned, or self-identifies as such)	1	2	3
b. From a minority- or Indigenous-owned business (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK : A business that is third party certified as racial minority or Indigenous owned, or self-identifies as such)	1	2	3
c. From a veteran-owned business			
c. With the farm identity preserved (i.e., the identity of the producer/farm is known and explicitly communicated with the final product)	1	2	3
d. Certified USDA Organic (HOVER OVER/HYPERLINK : Foods can be certified as "organic" by the USDA if they are grown and processed according to federal guidelines)	1	2	3

addressing, among many factors, including soil quality, animal raising practices, pest and weed control, and use of additives.)			
e. With other environmental certifications or indications (e.g., low-spray, integrated pest management, organic transition)	1	2	3
f. With labor-related certifications or indications (e.g., fair trade)	1	2	3
g. With animal welfare certifications or indications (e.g., Certified Humane, Animal Welfare Approved)	1	2	3

Q26. Please indicate if your SFA or any schools in your SFA purchased **local** foods **in any form** from any of the following food groups during SY 2026-27 or would like to in the future. (Please choose one answer per row.)

	Yes, purchased locally in SY 2026-27	No, and have no plans to purchase locally	No, but would like to purchase locally in the future
a. Fruit	1	2	3
b. Vegetables	1	2	3
c. Fluid milk	1	2	3
d. Other dairy	1	2	3
e. Meat/meat alternate	1	2	3
f. Grains, including baked goods	1	2	3
g. Other product type (please specify) _____	1	2	3

[PROGRAMMER: IF 1 OR 3 IS CHOSEN FOR OTHER, SHOW THE SPECIFY BOX]

Q27. In general, in SY 2026-27, about how frequently did your SFA's meals or snacks include **at least one local** food **in any form** from the categories below?

[PROGRAMMER: Restrict categories to those where Q30 = 1]	Daily	A few times per week	Weekl y	A few times per month	Monthl y	Seasonally / occasional ly	Never
a. Fruit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Vegetables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Fluid milk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Other dairy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Meat/meat alternate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Grains, including baked goods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q28. In SY 2026-27, which of the following did your SFA ask vendors or distributors to provide regarding the items it considered ordering and/or did order? (Please choose all that apply.)

- Local order/availability guide
- Origin of items procured (e.g., farm location)
- List of local foods procured for your SFA (e.g., as part of a velocity report)
- Amount spent on local foods procured for your SFA
- Information about the environmental practices of **local producers/processors**
- Information about whether **local producers/processors** are woman-owned, minority- or Indigenous-owned, veteran-owned or small businesses
- Information on food safety certification/verification (e.g., GAP)
- I have not asked for any of these. [GO TO Q36]
- I don't know. [GO TO Q36]

Q28a. How frequently are the vendors or distributors able to provide the requested information?

- Always or almost always
- Sometimes
- Rarely or never
- I don't know

The following questions ask how much money your SFA spent on food and local food during SY 2026-27. Please include ALL food spending (including use of entitlement funds, i.e., **USDA Foods** and **DoD Fresh**). Please give your best approximation.

Enter numbers only; do not use commas or dollar signs. Please round to the nearest dollar.

	Amount Spent
Q29a. Total food spending (including but not limited to purchases using entitlement funds)	\$
Q29b. Spending on local food, including fluid milk (including but not limited to purchases using entitlement funds):	\$
Q29c. Spending on local fluid milk:	\$

PROGRAMMER RUN CHECK

[PROGRAMMER: IF Q29b>Q29a, DISPLAY: “Your local food purchases cannot be greater than your total food purchases. Let’s review these questions again.” GO TO Q29a)]

[PROGRAMMER: IF Q29b is 20% or more of Q29a, DISPLAY: “Your local food purchases are a large percent -- [DISPLAY PERCENT ROUNDED TO WHOLE PERCENT % IN PARENTHESES] -- of your total food purchases. Are your local food purchases [Q29b FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT] and your total food purchases [Q29a FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]?

- Yes, both are okay
- No, one or both are wrong (GO TO Q29a)]

[PROGRAMMER: IF Q29c>Q29b, DISPLAY: “Your spending on local fluid milk cannot be greater than your total local food purchases. Let’s review these questions again.” GO TO Q29b]

[PROGRAMMER: IF THE SFA INDICATED THEY PURCHASE LOCAL THROUGH DOD FRESH IN Q22, GO TO Q30; OTHERWISE, GO TO REVIEW SPENDING]

The following questions ask how much money your SFA spent on food and local food using **USDA DoD Fresh** during SY 2026-27. Please give your best approximation.

Enter numbers only; do not use commas or dollar signs. Please round to the nearest dollar.

	Amount Spent
Q30a. Total spending on USDA DoD Fresh	\$
Q30b. Spending on local foods through USDA DoD Fresh	\$

[PROGRAMMER: IF Q30b>Q30a, DISPLAY: “Your local food purchases cannot be greater than your total food purchases. Let’s review these questions again.” GO TO Q30a)]

[PROGRAMMER: IF Q30b is 20% or more of Q30a, display: “Your local food purchases are a large percent -- [DISPLAY PERCENT ROUNDED TO WHOLE PERCENT % IN PARENTHESES] -- of your total food purchases. Are your local food purchases through USDA DoD Fresh [Q30b FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT] and your total food purchases through USDA DoD Fresh [Q30a FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]?

- Yes, both are okay
- No, one or both are wrong (GO TO Q30a)]

[PROGRAMMER: IF Q30a > ([NUMBER OF STUDENTS] x 180 x 0.75 x 0.33), DISPLAY QUESTION BELOW.

Your USDA DoD Fresh spending is larger than expected: [Q30a FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]. Is this amount correct?

- Yes
- No (GO TO Q30a)]

Does this information look correct?

[PROGRAMMER: PLEASE INCLUDE COMMAS IN DOLLAR AMOUNTS]	Yes/no	If not, enter correct amount
Total food spending (including but not limited to purchases using entitlement funds): [Q29a FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]		
Spending on local food, including fluid milk (including but not limited to purchases using entitlement funds): [Q29b FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]		
Spending on local fluid milk: [Q29c FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]		
Total spending on USDA DoD Fresh: [Q30a FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]		
Spending on local foods through USDA DoD Fresh: [Q30b FORMATTED AS A DOLLAR AMOUNT]		

The next set of questions is about the top five local items you spent the most on in SY 2026-27.

Q31a. In SY 2026-2027, what local item, of any type and in any form, did your SFA spend the **most** on? Please include spending through entitlement funds (that is, through USDA Foods

and/or DoD Fresh). Click the food group to see a list of items (you may need to scroll down the page).

(PROGRAMMER: ONLY DISPLAY THE FOOD GROUP CATEGORY; FULL LIST OF ITEMS SHOWN ON CLICK)

Fruit

- Apples
- Bananas
- Grapes
- Oranges or other citrus
- Peaches
- Pears
- Strawberries
- Watermelon
- Other (specify)

Vegetable

- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Corn
- Cucumber
- Lettuce
- Potatoes (not sweet potatoes)
- Salad Mix
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini/Summer squash
- Other (specify)

Dairy

- Fluid milk
- Cheese, including cottage cheese
- Sour cream
- Yogurt/Greek yogurt
- Other (specify)

Meat/meat alternate

- Beef
- Dried beans
- Eggs
- Fish and seafood
- Nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters
- Pork
- Poultry
- Tofu
- Wild game
- Other (specify)

Grains and baked goods

- Flour
- Grits
- Pasta
- Rice
- Baked goods (e.g., bread, cookies, tortillas)
- Other (specify)

Other

- Sweeteners (e.g., honey, maple syrup)
- Other (specify)
- I don't know

Q31b. In SY 2026-27, from what source(s) did your SFA purchase your local [INSERT RESPONSE TO Q42]? Please select all that apply.

- Directly from an individual food producer (i.e., farmer, rancher, fisher), including but not limited to a farmers' market or **CSA** model
- Directly from a **cooperative** of producers (i.e., farmers, ranchers or fishers) or **food hub**
- Directly from a **local food processor or manufacturer**
- Grocery store
- School or community garden/farm
- Produce distributor
- Broadline distributor
- **USDA DoD Fresh Program**
- I don't know

Q32a. In SY 2026-2027, what **local** item, **of any type** and **in any form**, did your SFA spend the **second** most on? Please include spending through entitlement funds (that is, through and/or DoD Fresh). Click the food group to see a list of items.

[USE CATEGORIES/ITEMS LISTED ABOVE WITH ADDITIONAL OPTION BELOW:]

- My SFA did not purchase any other local items in SY 2026-27. *[SKIP OUT OF SECTION]*

[REPEAT Q31b]

Q33a. In SY 2026-2027, what **local** item, **of any type** and **in any form**, did your SFA spend the **third** most on? Please include spending through entitlement funds (that is, through and/or DoD Fresh). Click the food group to see a list of items.

[USE CATEGORIES/ITEMS LISTED ABOVE WITH ADDITIONAL OPTION BELOW:]

My SFA did not purchase any other local items in SY22-27. *[SKIP OUT OF SECTION]*

[REPEAT Q31b]

Q34a. In SY 2026-2027, what **local** item, **of any type** and **in any form**, did your SFA spend the **fourth** most on? Please include spending through entitlement funds (that is, through and/or DoD Fresh). Click the food group to see a list of items.

[USE CATEGORIES/ITEMS LISTED ABOVE WITH ADDITIONAL OPTION BELOW:]

My SFA did not purchase any other local items in SY22-27. *[SKIP OUT OF SECTION]*

[REPEAT Q31b]

Q35a. In SY 2026-2027, what **local** item, **of any type** and **in any form**, did your SFA spend the **fifth** most on? Please include spending through entitlement funds (that is, through USDA Foods and/or DoD Fresh). Click the food group to see a list of items.

[USE CATEGORIES/ITEMS LISTED ABOVE WITH ADDITIONAL OPTION BELOW:]

My SFA did not purchase any other local items in SY22-27. *[SKIP OUT OF SECTION]*

Q36. What local item that you **do not currently purchase** would you most like to be able to purchase in the future?

[REPEAT Q31b]

I. CONCLUSION

Q37. Who filled this survey out? (Please select all that apply.)

- SFA/food service director
- SFA procurement specialist
- Other SFA-level staff member (e.g., business manager, superintendent)
- Farm to school or garden coordinator
- Cafeteria manager or cafeteria staff member
- Teacher or principal
- Other school-level staff member
- Partner organization
- Other

[PROGRAMMER: INSERT SUBMIT BUTTON.]

[NEW PAGE]

Thank you for completing the 2027 Farm to School Census! We very much appreciate your time to help us better understand farm to school in the U.S.

To download a signature badge showing that you completed the 2027 Farm to School Census, please visit: [insert link]

For more information on starting or expanding farm to school activities, please visit the USDA Farm to School Program website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school>.

Please contact *[INSERT STUDY TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION]* if you have any questions or would like to update us with any additional information.

[PROGRAMMER: CLOSE BROWSER.]