



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND 23218-2120

SNP Memo No. 2014-2015-08

TO: Directors, Supervisors, and Contact Persons
School Nutrition Programs

FROM: Catherine Digilio Grimes, MS, RDN, LDN, SNS
Director, Office of School Nutrition Programs

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Digilio Grimes".

DATE: April 2, 2015

SUBJECT: 2015 USDA Farm to School Census

The U.S. Department of Agriculture requests all school divisions complete the second biennial Farm to School Census.

The first census, in 2013, revealed that nation-wide more than 40,000 schools, serving 23.5 million students, were “bringing the farm to school.” In Virginia of the ninety-five percent of the school division that responded to the 2013 census, 80 school divisions, representing 1,344 schools, serving more than 965,000 students were purchasing locally produced foods and participating in farm to school activities. Many changes have occurred since the first census. The 2015 Farm to School Census will provide updated information about how many school division are purchasing locally produced food for school nutrition programs or conducting other types of farm to school activities (such as school gardens, agriculture education, farm visits, etc.).

Please click or cut-and-paste the following link to open the 2015 Farm to School Census questionnaire <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015F2SCensus>. Complete the questionnaire by **May 29, 2015** even if you are not currently purchasing any locally produced food or participating in farm to school.

A paper copy of the Farm to School Census is attached. If you prefer to complete the survey on paper rather than on-line, a hard copy is attached for this purpose. Please print the attached questionnaire, complete it and submit it via fax to the Farm to school Census evaluators at (609) 936-1462. If you need assistance completing the online or paper copy, please call the 2015 Farm to School Census help line at 1- (844) 218-5330.

The questionnaire does not include any personal information. However, your responses are not confidential and are not covered by the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002. USDA will treat all information gathered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

Thank you for completing the 2015 Farm to School Census.

Attachment



2015 FARM TO SCHOOL CENSUS FAX-BACK QUESTIONNAIRE

If you would rather complete the 2015 Farm to School Census by hand and fax back, please use this form and fax the form back to (609) 936-1462. If you need assistance completing the questionnaire, please call a toll free help line 1-844-218-5330 or email farmtoschool@mathematica-mpr.com.

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 0584-0593 (expires February 29, 2016). The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 9 minutes 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. This information collection is conducted under the authority of 7 U.S.C. 427.

Welcome to the 2015 Farm to School Census!

We know this is a busy time of the school year, and we deeply appreciate your time. This Census will provide updated information about 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 cultivating edible school gardens.

Before you start, a few important reminders:

- Please complete the questionnaire even if you do not buy any locally produced food. We need your response to estimate what percentage of school districts ARE buying locally produced food.
- Please complete a separate Farm to School Census questionnaire for each school district SFA you manage.
- The questionnaire has been kept as short as possible and should take about 20 minutes if you are involved with farm to school and only 5 minutes if you are not.
- A few questions ask for the total value of food purchases during school year 2013-2014, and how much (in dollars) of those purchases were locally produced. Estimates are perfectly acceptable, so please don't spend excessive amounts of time doing the calculations. That said, if you already have that information, it will help to have it handy before you start.

The questionnaire does not include any personal information. However, we must inform you that your responses are not confidential and are not covered by the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002. USDA will treat all information gathered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

Again, many thanks!

Deborah Kane
National Director, USDA Farm to School Program



* Questions 1 and 2 are required questions.

1. School district identification *

Email address of respondent:

School district name (Please print complete district name without abbreviation.):

State or territory:

5 digit zip code for school district mailing address:

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ID number assigned to your school district by your State Agency (If known.):

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2. Farm to school activities generally center around procurement of local or regional foods and food, agriculture or nutrition-based educational activities such as but not limited to:

- Serving local food products in school (meals and snacks)
- Serving local food products in classrooms (snacks, taste tests, educational tools)
- Conducting educational activities related to local foods such as farmers in the classroom and culinary education focused on local foods, field trips to farms, farmers' markets or food processing facilities, and educational sessions for parents and community members
- Creating and tending school gardens (growing edible fruits and vegetables)

Based on the definition above, did your district or any schools in your district participate in farm to school activities during the 2013-2014 school year? (Please check one.) *

- Yes
- No, but started activities in 2014-2015 school year
- No, but plan to start activities in the future
- No activities currently and no plans for the future

SKIP TO QUESTION 10 ON PAGE 8
SKIP TO QUESTION 3 ON PAGE 3
SKIP TO QUESTION 6 ON PAGE 5
SKIP TO QUESTION 9 ON PAGE 7



If the answer to Question 2 is “No, but started activities in 2014-2015 school year”, please proceed to these questions:

3. Which of the following benefits have you enjoyed as result of participating in farm to school activities?
(Please check all that apply.)

- Reduced food waste
- Lower school meal program costs
- Greater acceptance of the new meal pattern
- Increased participation in school meals
- Greater community support for school meals
- Other: (please specify)

4. How does your district define "local" as it relates to your food procurement? (Please check one.)

- Same city/county
- Produced within a 50 mile radius
- Produced within a 100 mile radius
- Produced within a 200 mile radius
- Produced within a day's drive
- Produced within the State
- Produced within the region
- Geographic along with other restrictions
- Other: (please specify)

5. What activities are you starting this school year (2014-2015)? (Please check all that apply.)

- Serving locally produced foods in the cafeteria
- Serving locally produced foods as a Smart Snack (a la carte, as fundraisers, etc.)
- Serving locally produced foods or providing farm to school activities as part of afterschool programs
- Serving products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria
- Holding taste tests/cooking demonstrations of locally produced foods in the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Holding taste tests/demos of products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Using Smarter Lunchroom strategies to encourage student selection and consumption of locally produced foods (e.g., product placement, food prompts, creative signage, etc.)



- Using cafeteria food coaches to promote the consumption of local foods (e.g. adults or students in the cafeteria encouraging kids to eat healthy/local foods)
- Using USDA Team Nutrition materials (such as *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* or *Dig In!*) as part of taste testing or educational activities
- Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of a school curriculum
- Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of an after school program
- Conducting student field trips to farms or orchards
- Having farmer(s) visit the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Promoting local efforts through themed or branded promotions (e.g. Harvest of the Month, Local Day, Taste of Washington, etc.)
- Promoting locally produced foods at school in general (e.g. via cafeteria signs, posters, newsletters, etc.)
- Generating media coverage of local foods being used in schools (e.g. press interviews or other activities that resulted in local coverage)
- Hosting farm to school related community events (e.g. invited parents to lunch, corn shucking contests, etc.)
- Celebrating Farm to School Month (October 2014)
- Integrating farm to school concepts, including school gardening activities, into educational curriculum (math, science, language arts, etc.)
- Providing training to school food service staff on farm to school or school gardens
- Working with local food producers to develop a specific food product using local foods
- Implementing farm to school activities as part of overall school efforts to reduce food waste
- Evaluating changes in student acceptance and food waste as a result of implementing farm to school activities
- Other: (please specify)

Thank you for completing the 2015 Farm to School Census! For more information on starting or expanding farm to school activities, please see the new USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/census/#/toolkit>.

Questions or comments? Please contact Matthew Benson with the USDA Farm to School Program at matthew.benson@fns.usda.gov.



If the answer to Question 2 is “No, but plan to start activities in the future”, please skip to these questions:

6. Which of the following benefits do you perceive as result of participating in farm to school activities? (Please check all that apply.)

- Reduced food waste
- Lower school meal program costs
- Greater acceptance of the new meal pattern
- Increased participation in school meals
- Greater community support for school meals
- Other: (please specify)

7. What activities are you planning to start in the future? (Please check all that apply.)

- Serving locally produced foods in the cafeteria
- Serving locally produced foods as a Smart Snack (a la carte, as fundraisers, etc.)
- Serving locally produced foods or providing farm to school activities as part of afterschool programs
- Serving products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria
- Holding taste tests/cooking demonstrations of locally produced foods in the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Holding taste tests/demos of products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Using Smarter Lunchroom strategies to encourage student selection and consumption of locally produced foods (e.g., product placement, food prompts, creative signage, etc.)
- Using cafeteria food coaches to promote the consumption of local foods (e.g. adults or students in the cafeteria encouraging kids to eat healthy/local foods)
- Using USDA Team Nutrition materials (such as *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* or *Dig In!*) as part of taste testing or educational activities
- Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of a school curriculum
- Conducting edible school gardening or orchard activities as part of an after school program
- Conducting student field trips to farms or orchards
- Having farmer(s) visit the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
- Promoting local efforts through themed or branded promotions (e.g. Harvest of the Month, Local Day, Taste of Washington, etc.)
- Promoting locally produced foods at school in general (e.g. via cafeteria signs, posters, newsletters, etc.)
- Generating media coverage of local foods being used in schools (e.g. press interviews or other activities that resulted in local coverage)
- Hosting farm to school related community events (e.g. invited parents to lunch, corn shucking contests, etc.)
- Celebrating Farm to School Month
- Integrating farm to school concepts, including school gardening activities, into educational curriculum (math, science, language arts, etc.)



- Providing training to school food service staff on farm to school or school gardens
- Working with local food producers to develop a specific food product using local foods
- Implementing farm to school activities as part of overall school efforts to reduce food waste
- Evaluating changes in student acceptance and food waste as a result of implementing farm to school activities
- Other: (please specify)

8. When do you plan to start participating in farm to school?

Thank you for completing the 2015 Farm to School Census! For more information on starting or expanding farm to school activities, please see the new USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census/#/toolkit>.

Questions or comments? Please contact Matthew Benson with the USDA Farm to School Program at matthew.benson@fns.usda.gov.



If the answer to Question 2 is “No activities currently and no plans for the future”, please skip to these questions:

9. Are any of the following considered to be problems in procuring local products or reasons why your district does not purchase local products? (Please check all that apply.)

- Local producers aren't bidding
- Hard to find year-round availability of key items
- Hard to coordinate procurement of local with regular procurement
- Local items not available from primary vendors
- Vendors for local items don't offer a broad range of products
- Higher prices
- Unstable product prices
- Lack of reliability in delivering ordered items
- Lack of kitchen equipment to process/prepare local foods
- GAP or other food safety requirements
- Lack of compliance with your institution's purchasing regulations and policies
- Lack of availability of processed/precut products
- Hard to find new suppliers/growers or distributors
- Hard to get information about product availability
- Hard to place orders with vendors
- Getting on-time deliveries
- Getting product delivered that meets your quality requirements & other specs (i.e., size)
- Having quantity delivered equal to quantity ordered
- Resolving problem deliveries
- Inability to pay farmers according to farmers' needs due to school district payment procedures
- Other: (please specify)

Thank you for completing the 2015 Farm to School Census! For more information on starting or expanding farm to school activities, please see the new USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/census/#/toolkit>.

Questions or comments? Please contact Matthew Benson with the USDA Farm to School Program at matthew.benson@fns.usda.gov.



If the answer to Question 2 is “Yes”, please skip to these questions:

10. Which of the following benefits have you enjoyed as result of participating in farm to school activities?
(Please check all that apply.)

- Reduced food waste
- Lower school meal program costs
- Greater acceptance of the new meal pattern
- Increased participation in school meals
- Greater community support for school meals
- Other: (please specify)

11. During the 2013-2014 school year, what age groups participated in farm to school activities? (Please check all that apply.)

- Pre-K
- K through 5th grade
- 6th grade through 8th grade
- 9th grade through 12th grade
- Other: (please specify)

12. Are you participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)? (Please check one.)

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

13. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many schools within the district participated in any farm to school activities during the 2013-2014 school year?



14. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many schools had edible school gardens during the 2013-2014 school year?

15. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many schools had salad bars during the 2013-2014 school year?

16. How does your district define "local" as it relates to your food procurement? (Please check one.)

- Same city/county
- Produced within a 50 mile radius
- Produced within a 100 mile radius
- Produced within a 200 mile radius
- Produced within a day's drive
- Produced within the State
- Produced within the region
- Geographic along with other restrictions
- Other: (please specify)

17. Please indicate whether your district or any schools in your district used local products IN ANY FORM (fresh, minimally processed, or processed) for any of the following federal nutrition programs during the 2013-2014 school year. (Please check all that apply.)

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Supper
- Snacks
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- CACFP (i.e., in a pre-k setting such as Head Start, etc.)
- CACFP At-risk Afterschool
- Summer meals (i.e., meals in the Summer Food Service Program, in Seamless Summer, or in the NLSP under accredited summer school programs)



18. For the 2013-2014 school year, please indicate whether your district obtained local foods DIRECTLY from the following sources. (Please check all that apply.)

- Direct from individual food producers (i.e. farmers, fishers, ranchers)
- Direct from farmer, rancher or fisher cooperatives
- Direct from farmers markets
- Via a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model
- Direct from food processors and manufacturers

19. For the 2013-2014 school year, please indicate whether your district obtained local foods from any of the following INTERMEDIARY sources. (Please check all that apply.)

- Distributors
- Food buying cooperative
- Food hub
- Food service management companies
- DoD Fresh Program vendors
- USDA Foods
- State Farm to School Program office
- Other: (please specify)



20. Please indicate if your district or any schools in your district purchased any of the following foods – IN ANY FORM -- from local growers/producers/processors/manufacturers during the 2013-2014 school year or would like to in the future.

	Yes	No	Not now, but would like to in the future	I don't know
Fruit				
Vegetables				
Fluid Milk				
Other Dairy				
Meat/poultry				
Eggs				
Seafood				
Plant-based protein items such as beans, seeds, nuts				
Grains and flour				
Bakery products				
Herbs				
Other product type: (please specify)				

21. Please list the top 5 SPECIFIC food items (e.g. apples, chicken drumsticks) your school district purchased locally in 2013-2014, based on VALUE.

	Name of item
Food item #1:	
Food item #2:	
Food item #3:	
Food item #4:	
Food item #5:	



22. On average, about how frequently do your district's meals or snacks include at least one locally sourced food item from the categories below?

	Daily	A few times per week	Weekly	A few times per month	Monthly	Occasionally	Never
Fruit							
Vegetables							
Fluid milk							
Other Dairy							
Meat/poultry							
Eggs							
Seafood							
Plant-based protein items such as beans, seeds, nuts							
Grains and flour							
Bakery products							
Herbs							
Other product type: (please specify)							

The following questions ask how much money you spent on food and local food during the 2013-2014 school year. Please give your best approximation and do not include USDA Foods or DOD Fresh.

23. For the 2013-2014 school year, what were your approximate total food costs (in dollars)?

TOTAL food costs (Please round to the nearest dollar. Do not count USDA Foods/DOD Fresh.):	\$
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24. For the 2013-2014 school year, about how much of your total food purchases (in dollars) were spent on local foods INCLUDING fluid milk? (If you're not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.)

LOCAL food costs (Please round to the nearest dollar. Do not count USDA Foods/DOD Fresh.):	\$
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25. For the 2013-2014 school year, about how much of your total food purchases (in dollars) were spent on local foods NOT INCLUDING fluid milk? (If you're not sure, a rough estimate is perfectly acceptable.)

LOCAL food costs (Please round to the nearest dollar. Do not count USDA Foods/DOD Fresh.):	\$
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26. Looking forward, do you anticipate your local purchases will (Please check one.):

- Increase
- Decrease
- Stay the same
- I don't know
- Other: (please specify)

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27. To the best of your knowledge, please check the activities that any of your district's schools engaged in during school year 2013-2014. (Please check all that apply.)

- Serving locally produced foods in the cafeteria
- Serving locally produced foods as a Smart Snack (a la carte, as fundraisers, etc.)
- Serving locally produced foods or providing farm to school activities as part of afterschool programs
- Serving products from school-based gardens or school-based farms in the cafeteria
- Holding taste tests/cooking demonstrations of locally produced foods in the cafeteria, classroom or other school-related setting
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- Hosting farm to school related community events (e.g. invited parents to lunch, corn shucking contests, etc.)



- Celebrating Farm to School Month (October 2013)
- Integrating farm to school concepts, including school gardening activities, into educational curriculum (math, science, language arts, etc.)
- Providing training to school food service staff on farm to school or school gardens
- Working with local food producers to develop a specific food product using local foods
- Implementing farm to school activities as part of overall school efforts to reduce food waste
- Evaluating changes in student acceptance and food waste as a result of implementing farm to school activities
- Other: (please specify)

28. Are any of the following considered to be problems in procuring local products or reasons why your district does not purchase even more local products? (Please check all that apply.)

- Local producers aren't bidding
- Hard to find year-round availability of key items
- Hard to coordinate procurement of local with regular procurement
- Local items not available from primary vendors
- Vendors for local items don't offer a broad range of products
- Higher prices
- Unstable product prices
- Lack of reliability in delivering ordered items
- Lack of kitchen equipment to process/prepare local foods
- GAP or other food safety requirements
- Lack of compliance with your institution's purchasing regulations and policies
- Lack of availability of processed/precut products
- Hard to find new suppliers/growers or distributors
- Hard to get information about product availability
- Hard to place orders with vendors
- Getting on-time deliveries
- Getting product delivered that meets your quality requirements & other specs (i.e., size)
- Having quantity delivered equal to quantity ordered
- Resolving problem deliveries
- Inability to pay farmers according to farmers' needs due to school district payment procedures
- Other: (please specify)



29. Is there other information that was not asked for that you think we need to know?

30. Please share a local food procurement success story. (Optional)

Thank you for completing the 2015 Farm to School Census! For more information on starting or expanding farm to school activities, please see the new USDA Farm to School Planning Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/census/#/toolkit>.

Questions or comments? Please contact Matthew Benson with the USDA Farm to School Program at matthew.benson@fns.usda.gov.