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The Census provides the only nationally representative data available on farm to school participation and activities in the United States. It provides detailed information on how states and school food authorities (SFA) engage with farm to school efforts from local food purchasing, to gardening to food education. The Census illustrates the scale and reach of the farm to school movement, showing how child nutrition programs are effectively supporting American farmers, ranchers, and food producers. It equips:

Policymakers and advocates with real evidence needed to shape and sustain policy.

Federal, state, and local governments with data to identify trends, allocate resources, and tailor local programs to local needs.

Farmers and food producers with insight into schools that are interested in local purchasing, and what they may want to buy.

Researchers and evaluators with data to assess outcomes of related policies and programs (examples: Connolly and Wen, 2022; Kashyap et al., 2024)

The Census allows the farm to school and ECE movement to grow strategically, quickly, and efficiently. Census data is used to ensure financial investments are effective and reach all kids across the nation.