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I am currently a Food Business Specialist with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources supporting small food businesses and small farmers navigate compliance through outreach, education, and personalized technical assistance; I was a Food Policy Project Manager where I advocated for food and nutrition sovereignty, uniting community members from diverse sectors—including industry, government, public agencies, and non-profits—to promote the social, economic, and environmental health and equity of Central California's local food systems; I was a Marketing Director for a magazine, where I leveraged my journalism expertise to deliver crucial resources on safety, compliance, and innovation within the agribusiness sector.

With these professional experiences, I must emphasize that on a local, regional, and national level, the Farm-to-School Census is key to supporting work within the food system--and ensuring food-insecure children have access to fresh, nutritious produce.

The Farm-to-School 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. It fuels better policies, stronger programs,