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Dear Office of Management and Budget,

I am writing to express my strong support for the renewal of the USDA Farm to School Census. As someone deeply invested in the well-being of our communities and the vitality of our agricultural sector, particularly here in Montana, I have seen firsthand the positive impacts of farm to school initiatives.

The Farm to School Census provides invaluable, nationally representative data that is simply not available elsewhere. This information is crucial for several key reasons:

**Empowering Local Producers:** For our Montana farmers, ranchers, and fishermen, the Census offers vital insights into the local school market. Understanding the purchasing interests and needs of schools allows them to identify and access appropriately scaled market opportunities, strengthening their businesses and our local food systems.

**Informing Effective Policy:** State and federal policymakers rely on the data collected through the Census to understand the landscape of farm to school programs. This understanding is essential for developing targeted and effective policies that support the growth and sustainability of these beneficial initiatives.

**Maximizing the Impact of Child Nutrition Programs:** The Census helps us understand how schools participating in the National School Lunch Program are leveraging farm to school activities to enhance the health and well-being of our children and support American producers. This data is vital for ensuring that government funds are used effectively to achieve these critical goals.

While I understand the importance of minimizing the burden of data collection, it is important to note that the Farm to School Census gathers information from entities already participating in the National School Lunch Program. The insights gained from this data far outweigh the effort involved, providing a clear understanding of how these programs can best serve both our children and our agricultural communities.

Renewing the USDA Farm to School Census is an investment in the health of our students, the strength of our local economies, and the future of American agriculture. I urge you to recognize its significant benefits and approve its continuation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.