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The Farm to School Census is a critical service and tool for our country's food system. The National Farm to School Network shares that it is the only nationally representative dataset available on farm to school participation and activities in the United States. Additionally, 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. There is no other publicly available dataset like it, making it an indispensable resource for our country.

As a researcher and evaluator for the Chef Ann Foundation, a nationally renowned organization whose mission is to provide children with healthy school food, the census is an essential source of information that helps us better understand the full extent of farm to school participation. We know that farm to school programs enable school food authorities and their child nutrition programs to support American farmers, ranchers, and food producers while providing children with healthy and nutritious local foods. This census provides the data that we need to investigate the extent of those desired outcomes and apply what we have learned to improve policies, programs, and much more.