

# new york minute

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## Back to School with Farm to School in NYS

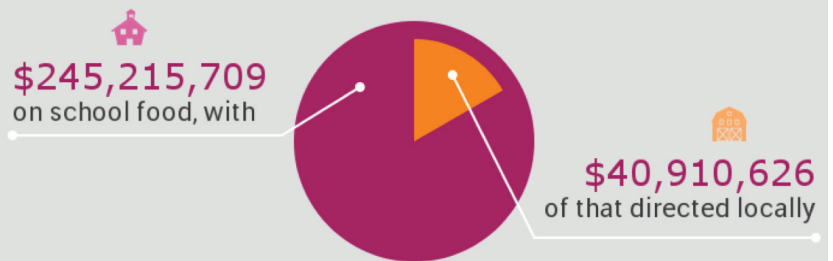
By Robin Blakely-Armitage and Jan Vink, Cornell University

Farm to School programs strive to bring food from local farms to local schools. Participation varies by state, community and school district. Not only does the program promote children's healthy eating by serving local food in school meals, growing edible school gardens, and learning about local food and agriculture, but farm to school efforts can also help promote strong and vibrant local economies and communities. The first national Farm to School Census surveyed public school food service directors across the country in March 2013 inquiring about districts' farm to school activities during the 2011-2012 school year.

Of the almost 640 public school districts in New York State (NYS), 505 responded to the Farm to School Census, and 311 (62%) indicated participating in farm to school activities. Districts reported spending almost \$41 million dollars on local food, out of a total food budget of over \$245 million. This highlights the very real local economic development impact this program can have. The positive benefits for children's health and community development may be even greater, with 59% of current participants indicating they will buy more local foods in the future, and 11% of non-participating districts planning to start.

Source for both charts and data reported: 2013 USDA Farm to School Census – NYS results

NYS school districts that bought local products in the 2011-2012 school year spent an estimated



59% of these districts say they will buy more local foods in the future.

ARE YOU PARTICIPATING IN FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES?



62% said yes

they are engaged in farm to school activities

Farm to school programs exist throughout New York in school districts of all sizes - large and small, rural and urban alike.

### Additional Resources:

Farm to School Census, USDA  
Cornell Cooperative Extension Farm to School Outreach  
National Farm to School New York Resources  
New York School Nutrition Association  
New York State Agriculture in the Classroom Program

New York State Department of Education: Child Nutrition  
Seeking Common Ground: Finger Lakes Farm to Cafeteria Initiative  
United States Department of Agriculture Farm to School New York State Contact  
New York State Farm to School Coordinating Committee



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