

LOCAL FOOD ECONOMICS FACT SHEET

FARM TO SCHOOL

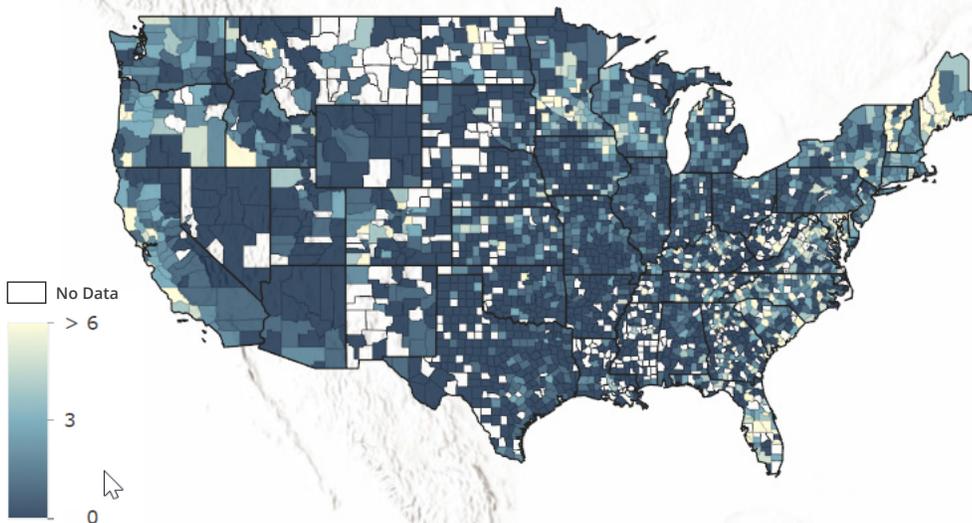


ENVIRONMENT

Several studies demonstrate that the Farm to School (FTS) environment – defined by the policy environment and programming intensity or number of activities – influences how farms, kids, and communities are impacted by FTS interventions (e.g., Bonanno et al., forthcoming; Ralston et al. 2017). The goal of this fact sheet is to lay out differences across the U.S. in the FTS environment.

We create a FTS programming intensity variable by taking the number of schools that implemented an activity divided by the total number of schools in the county. This calculation was done for each type of FTS activity and then summed. This gives us an index ranging from 0 to 12, where zero represents a county that reports no FTS programming and a 12 represents a county with the highest number of FTS programs.

Farm to School Programming Intensity



The majority of counties in the U.S. have a FTS programming intensity from 0-4, but there are counties in many different regions of the country where we see higher levels of FTS programming intensity. There are a few notable pockets of activity in California and the northwest, the great lakes region and along much of the east coast.

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Key Takeaways

- » The FTS environment matters!
- » Notable pockets of FTS activity occur in California, the northwest, the great lakes region, and along much of the east coast.
- » There is a wide range of state level FTS policy longevity.

¹ <http://www.farmtoschool.org/about/what-is-farm-to-school>



What is Farm to School?

FTS activities take place in the cafeteria (e.g., procurement and cafeteria promotions), the classroom (e.g., school gardens, integrating nutrition and/or agricultural education), or outside the classroom (e.g., farm visits).

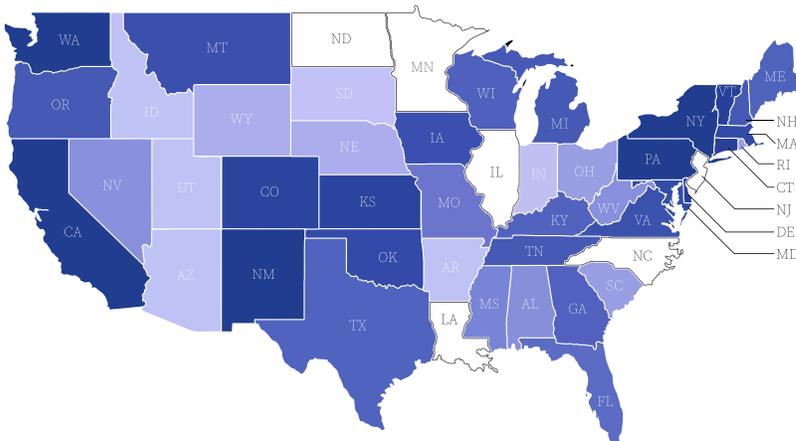
Farm to School Census

The USDA conducted the FTS Census in 2013 and 2015 to better understand the prevalence of FTS program implementation and to identify needs for technical assistance.

<https://farmtoschoolcensus.fns.usda.gov>

We create a second index that allows us to look at how long state level FTS policies have been in place. Here we use data that the National FTS Network collected between 2002 and 2016. This index tells us how many years each state has had a FTS policy in place, ranging from no policy (no data) to 14 years.

Farm to School State Level Policy Longevity



Number of years policy has been in place



California, New Mexico, New York and Washington have all had FTS policies in place for at least 14 years. There were only 5 states with no FTS policies in place as of 2016 and 7 states that first implemented a FTS policy in 2016.

How have these data been used?

- » Ralston et al. (2017) found that the number of schools serving local food daily was significantly different across regions, with the Northeast being the most prevalent and the Southwest the least.
- » Botkins and Roe (2018) found that the local food market environment (i.e., the proportion of farms with direct to consumer sales, farmers' markets and food hubs) are correlated with FTS participation.
- » Bonanno and Mendis (forthcoming) find diverse effects on FTS program continuation from state-level policies. They suggest that policies that target specific FTS activities (rather than general policies) are most effective.

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Data Sources:

Ralston, K., E.Beaulieu, J. Hyman, M. Benson, M. Smith. 2017. Daily Access to Local Foods for School Meals: Key Drivers, EIB-168, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, March 2017.

Botkins, E. and B. Roe. 2018. Understanding participation in farm to school programs: Results integrating school and supply-side factors. Food Policy 74:126-137.

Bonanno, A., S. Mendis. Forthcoming. Too Cool for Farm to School? Analyzing the Determinants of Farm to School Programming Continuation.

