



RESULTS FROM THE 2011 - 2012 FARM TO SCHOOL SNAPSHOT SURVEY

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NOURISHING KIDS AND COMMUNITIES

The National Farm to School Network sprouted from the desire to support community-based food systems, strengthen family farms, and improve student health. Funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Network coordinates, promotes and expands the Farm to School movement at the state, regional and national levels. The Network is a project of the Tides Center.

Introduction

Farm to School is broadly defined as a program that connects schools (Pre-K—12) and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing agriculture, health and nutrition education opportunities, and supporting local and regional farmers. Farm to School activities include local food products in school meals and snacks, local products in classrooms, educational activities related to local foods, and school gardens.

State and national surveys of school food service programs have included questions to indicate whether the school food service operation purchases locally. However, such surveys have tended to focus on facilitators and barriers to purchasing locally and rarely included questions about the nature of the overall scope of Farm to School activities. Available national surveys of school food service programs conducted for other purposes have not been large enough to yield a sufficient sample of programs implementing Farm to School activities for statistical analyses.

The 2011-2012 Farm to School Snapshot Survey was necessary to identify where there are gaps in information and to understand the current scope of Farm to School activity across the country to the extent possible.

The following numbers reflect the estimated Farm to School activity that took place across the country during the 2011-2012 school year.

Districts involved: **2,338**

Schools involved: **12,429**

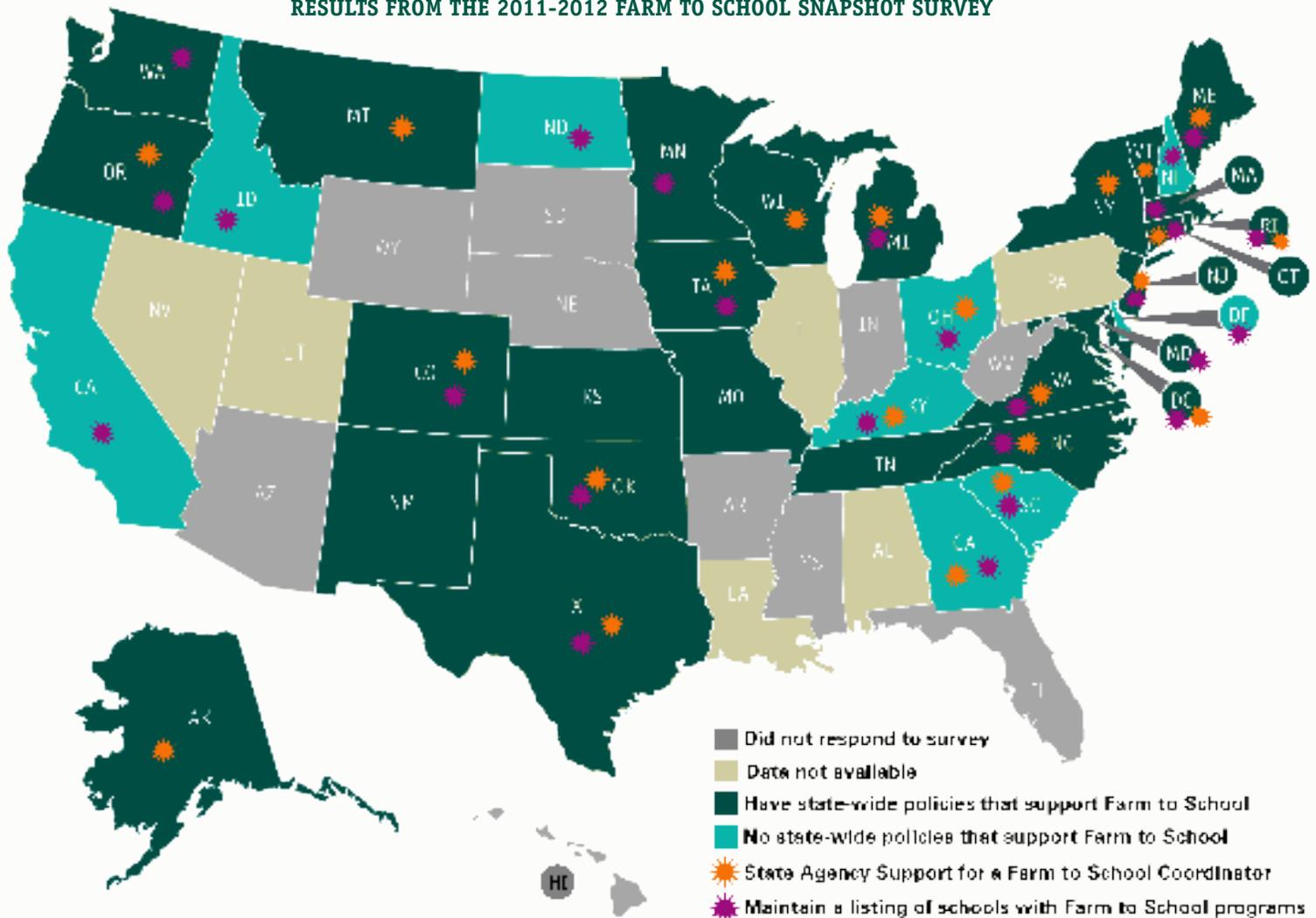
Students participating: **5,746,401**

Local food purchased: **\$12,972,964**

Methods

In April 2012, the National Farm to School Network (NFSN) developed and administered a web-based, nine-question survey to NFSN State Leads in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The goal was to obtain basic information about Farm to School activities in each state. State Leads were instructed to estimate in cases where exact information was not available. The survey was administered using Survey Monkey. Final analysis included 41 surveys representing 41 states.

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Farm to School programs reached more than **5,700,000** students in **12,500** schools and generated nearly **\$13,000,000** in local food purchases during the 2011-2012 school year.

Farm to School Activities: Most states that reported conducting Farm to School activities during the 2011-2012 school year cover the broad categories of local food procurement, school gardens, educational activities, and Farm to School promotions and events.



92% of schools procured local food



100% had school gardens



100% organized education activities



84% held Farm to School promotions and special events



53% of participating states said that 20 or more local farmers supplied food to their schools

The top five food purchases were apples, tomatoes, melons, lettuce/greens and potatoes.

States reported that their schools spent between \$2,000 and \$3,000,000 on locally purchased food.

The National Farm to School Network has compiled abundant resources on this topic and others and contact information for people in your state and region who are working on Farm to School programs. Find more information and join our network: www.farmtoschool.org