

Our FY 24-25 Priorities:



Increase accessibility of the 30% program and reduce administrative burden on schools by including all NSLP meals in the 30% reimbursement incentive program.



Incentivize schools to purchase local foods by changing the 30% program language from “shall not exceed 25 cents” to “an additional 25 cents” reimbursement per school meal.



Provide crucial technical support to schools by maintaining funding for the Farm to School Grants and Coordinator Program at \$1.5 Million, split evenly between the education and agriculture budgets.

NY GROWN FOOD FOR NY KIDS

Advocating for Farm to School

www.finys.org/policy

Who We Are

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a member-supported national organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land. In New York State, our policy efforts center Farm to School, farmland protection, access, and transition, and climate-resilient agriculture. AFT leads the NY Grown Food for NY Kids coalition, which has advocated for the adoption and implementation of a \$10 million state-funded local food purchasing incentive since 2018. The coalition is made up of 80 members who support increasing access to fresh, healthy, local food in K-12 schools across the state. Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS) is a collaborative initiative led by AFT to empower NY institutions to purchase at least 25% of their food budget from NY farmers and producers.

Why Farm to School Matters

School meals are a key source of nutrition for students, who consume as much as half of their daily calories at School¹. Farm fresh food improves the quality of these meals, in turn improving kids’ diet and health outcomes while supporting local farm viability and local economies.

Farm to School incentive programs create a triple win for the state’s students, farmers, and communities.

Previous AFT research indicates that **overall farm to school spending in New York could generate half a billion dollars in total economic impact when three quarters of schools spend 30% of their breakfast and lunch budgets on New York grown food**, with much of this positive impact directed towards the dairy industry².

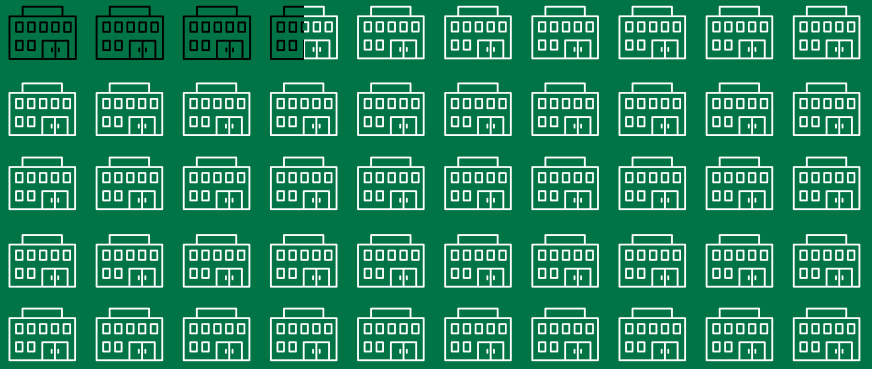
1. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/schoolnutrition.htm#:~:text=Most%20US%20children%20attend%20school,shape%20lifelong%20healthy%20eating%20behaviors.>

2. https://farmlandinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/12/AFT_NY_Growing-Resilience-Executive-Summary.pdf

Only
of NY
School



**Food Authorities (SFAs)
have qualified for the 30%
Program.**



Expanding the 30% Reimbursement Program

NY has the only local food purchasing incentive program in the country that is limited solely to lunch. Including all meals would increase accessibility of the program.



Over 70% of 2023 survey respondents indicated that they would purchase more local foods if the program included all NSLP meals.



55% of survey respondents have not tried to qualify for the program. Of those, 62% indicated that "separating breakfast and lunch is too difficult."

"I love this program...However, breakfast NEEDS to be included- It would make the paperwork SO much easier and attainable for more districts and I would be more likely to serve NYS products at breakfast instead of purposely limiting them." -Anonymous SFA

Changing Program Language

Because of bill language, schools who participate in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) meals will not receive the full reimbursement for 30% local procurement, discouraging participation in local food purchasing. Changing the bill language would address this challenge.



As of 2023, 2/3 of applicants to the 30% program are affected by the new CEP guidelines, reducing their reimbursement and impacting nearly 45,000 student meals.

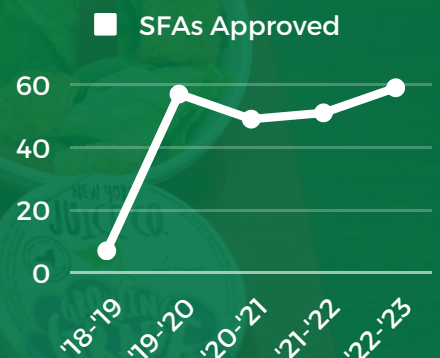
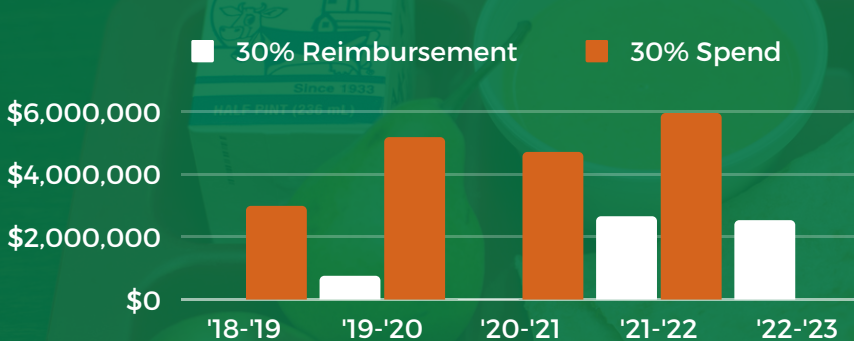


94% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that even if NYS adopted universal meals, a local food purchasing incentive would still be important to incentivize schools to purchase from local producers.

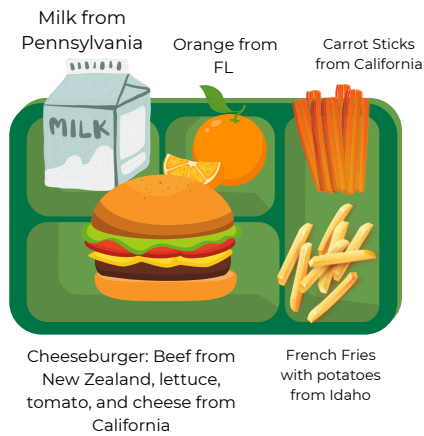
Increasing Funding for the FTS Coordinator Program

Nearly half (45%) of survey respondents indicated they work with a regional Farm to School Coordinator. Increasing the budget for these coordinators to \$750,000 would allow these staff to be funded full-time and provide more support to both schools and farmers.

30% PROGRAM 2018-2023



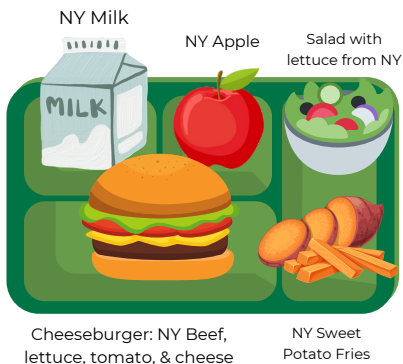
NY Funded School Meals Only



Paid School Lunch Cost:
\$0.00

Profit for NY Farmers:
\$0.00

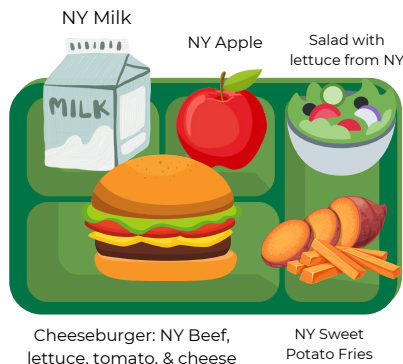
30% Incentive Program Only



Paid School Lunch Cost:
\$3.50 - \$0.19 = \$3.31

Profit for NY Farmers:
\$0.58*

NY Funded School Meals & 30% Incentive Program Together



Paid School Lunch Cost:
\$0.00

Profit for NY Farmers:
\$0.58*

Graphics & statements adapted from the Michigan Dept. of State Ed.
*SFAs that applied to the 30% Program spent an average of \$0.58 per lunch on local foods

Local Food Purchasing & Universal Meals

NY State provides food *access* by universally funding school meals for all students.

NY State ensures the *quality* of school meals is high and NY farmers have market access by incentivizing local food purchases in K-12 institutions.

Pairing these two programs together ensures that we use school food service dollars for the *greatest benefit* of NY children and farmers.

In 2023, 93% of surveyed school food authorities (SFAs) in NY State *agreed or strongly agreed* that local food purchasing incentives are important even if they had access to universally funded school meals.

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I will keep buying local food regardless because I believe it is the right thing to do, but I already have a hard time convincing other districts it's worth the effort. If their 30% incentive is much lower because of higher state reimbursement from universal meals, I'm sure a lot of districts will choose not to bother with it at all.

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