WHY FARM TO SCHOOL?

School lunches make up a critical component of daily nutrition for many children, particularly those receiving free school lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Many children do not eat the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables; school lunches often do not provide adequate options of these foods. With one-third of American children currently overweight, school lunches are a critical component to fighting the national obesity epidemic. Farm to School programs seek to connect schools with local farmers and thereby support the local community while simultaneously increasing both the amount of fruits and vegetables consumed in schools and awareness of where food comes from and what it means to eat locally.

WHY OHIO?

Nationwide, Ohio has one of the lowest participation rates in Farm to School lunch programs. While a few schools have school gardens, but do not have full lunch programs. The goal of this project was to identify those Ohio school districts that should be prioritized for implementing such programs based on the percentage of children relying on the National School Lunch Program and on the availability of local fruits and vegetables.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many, many thanks to Jeff Howarth for an amazing class and for helping me think through the conceptual sticking points, Bill Hegman for putting up with me in the final days of this project and for making the final solution possible, Zach Christman for his patience in helping me clean up my data tables, and Ben Meader for his advice throughout (particularly in the early stages of the planning process). None of this would have been possible without you—thank you so much!

SOURCES

Map of the US: http://nationalatlas.gov/ataftp.html
F2S participation numbers: http://www.farmtoschool.org/states.php
Number of schools/districts, NSLP information: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/bat/output.asp
Land use data (Seamless): http://seamless.usgs.gov/website/seamless/toolbar.htm?sec_select=1&button_sel=1