Ashworth Middle School

FAYE DARBY, Principal

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April 20, 2000

Dear Director of Food Distribution:

As a School Nutrition Manager I am concerned about some of the USDA Proposals for Change in Food Distribution 2000.

If I understand Proposal #4 under Section II, vendors of USDA commodity foods would be allowed to use commercial labels on USDA products.

This would be a very confusing concept when applied within the school kitchen. I know from experience that employees would not take time to check code numbers to identify USDA foods from purchased foods, especially if they were in a hurry.

It would also create a problem when food items were checked in at delivery. The same employee may not check deliveries each time and all may not be familiar with matching codes.

I cannot imagine having to go back and track food products when one or both of the situations above occurred, especially at the end of the month, when my perpetual inventory and the inventory on hand did not match. The trail and employee memories would be cold.

After thinking through Proposal #6, I would like to say that parents want to feel comfortable knowing their children are being fed quality food products in the school cafeteria. Proposal #6 would give industries the freedom to use inferior products to process USDA foods instead of the products USDA has inspected and approved for our programs. In elementary school, this could be a potentially hazardous situation with the immune systems of the small children not being fully developed.

Proposal #8 is a School Nutrition Employees dream. Facilitating the processing of commodities with limited demand would help tremendously with the overabundance of raisins, fig and date pieces, prunes, etc. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Our school would have been proud to have been a participant in a pilot program. (Proposal #14) I am sure it is now too late, with the end of school less than six weeks away. We would not have time to formulate, test and get results before the time limit expired. Please keep us in mind for future pilot programs.

Thank you for allowing me to express my opinions on these proposals. I sincerely hope that you will give thought to my letter and its contents.

Sincerely,

Jolene Clements

School Nutrition Manager