



School Programs USDA Foods Update

January 2012

What's New in USDA's Food Distribution Program for Schools?

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New Meal Patterns for Schools

On January 25, 2012, USDA published a final rule establishing new meal pattern requirements for schools, effective July 1, 2012 (School Year 2012-2013). This final rule makes significant improvements to school meals, while modifying several key areas to address public comments regarding cost, implementation, food waste, and administrative burden. USDA Foods are more nutritious than ever, and help schools serve meals that meet the new requirements, while stretching your food dollars. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy sources of protein are available to help schools create meals that are consistent

with the new meal requirements. For example, schools can choose from a variety of lower sodium USDA Foods options, including canned beans, canned and frozen vegetables, reduced-fat processed cheeses, chicken fajita strips, and beef products to help reduce sodium in school meals.

For more information on the new standards visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>

In the next few weeks, look for a special edition newsletter to highlight the new meal pattern requirements and share creative menu ideas using nutritious USDA Foods.

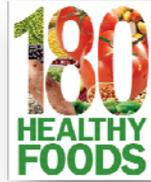
School Year 2012 Wrap-Up

We hope your students are enjoying healthy and delicious school meals. As you begin to plan menus for the remainder of this school year, and consider next year's food orders, we want to make sure you receive the latest USDA Foods program updates. Look for the School Year 2012 foods available list here:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/SY12-schfoods.pdf>

USDA Foods Toolkit

At SNA's annual conference in Nashville last summer, we premiered our newest video about USDA Foods. You can find it in our USDA Foods Toolkit at:



<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/Toolkit.htm>.

The toolkit also features power point presentations and other resources to help you promote your program to school administrators and your PTA community.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is developing materials to help promote the healthy foods in your programs at conferences. Look for the new USDA Foods Banner Kit early in 2012.



USDA Expands Fresh Options

For School Year 2012, USDA is offering fresh baby carrots and sliced apples to all State Distributing Agencies that administer NSLP. For two years, FNS piloted this program to select States to test the ordering and procurement of individual-serving fresh products. In conjunction with the Agricultural Marketing Service, FNS restructured the program to allow orders for less than full truckload quantities for States using a commercial distributor.

With the additional capability that USDA's new Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) ordering system provides, this marks the first time States will be able to order less than full truckload quantities. Although only four states have ordered these products, FNS hopes these changes will help districts use these perishable products more efficiently, and promote wider participation in the program. Also new this year, States can order bulk fresh apples in full truckload quantities for processing into pre-portioned packages.

DOD Fresh Update

Through the Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, USDA offers schools a wider variety of fresh produce than is currently available through USDA purchases. DOD's prime vendors provide greater buying power, consistent deliveries, and expanded choices of American grown, high quality, pre-cut, and/or locally grown produce.

If you have remaining dollars to spend, please contact your State Agency to consider allocating more for DOD Fresh. For more information, please visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/dod/default.htm>

Salvaging Food After a Flood

Floodwater can damage many foods in a school nutrition operation, but some foods can be salvaged. Using proper salvaging methods will save money while maintaining the safety of the food served. Food service managers should inspect all food that was exposed to floodwater and discard food that may have been damaged. Here are some tips:

- Discard any food that is not in a waterproof container that may have had contact with floodwater.
- Discard cardboard juice and milk boxes because they cannot be effectively cleaned and sanitized.
- Discard any cans or retort packages that show signs of damage such as swelling, leakage, fractures, and extensive deep rusting.
- Discard cans with signs of crushing or denting severe enough to prevent normal stacking.

How to Salvage Cans and Retort Pouches

If cans or pouches are not damaged:

1. Remove labels because they can harbor dirt and bacteria. Brush or wipe away dirt or silt.
2. Wash the cans or retort pouches thoroughly with soap and water, using hot water if it is available.
3. Label cans with the product name and expiration date using a permanent marker.
4. Rinse the cans or retort pouches with potable water.
5. Sanitize the cans or pouches by immersing for 15 minutes in a freshly made solution consisting of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of potable water.

6. Air-dry cans or retort pouches for a minimum of 1 hour before opening or storing.
7. Use the food in the reconditioned cans or retort pouches as soon as possible.

USDA Foods Fact Sheets

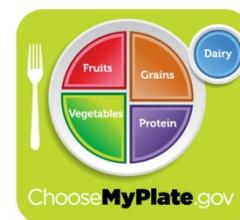
FNS is updating all USDA foods fact sheets to provide information on packaging, storage, nutrient content, and cooking tips. The fact sheets are getting a fresh look with the USDA Foods and MyPlate logos, too. The nutrient values represented in the Nutrition Facts panels are from the USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, or are average values from vendors who provide USDA Foods.

You can find USDA's Food Distribution Fact sheets here:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/schfacts/singfacts_tables_bytitle.htm

To gather more information on the new MyPlate icon, visit

www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.



Model Specifications and Nutrition Information

Section 242 of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296) directs USDA to analyze the quantity and quality of nutrition information available to schools, and distribute model product specifications and practices to schools about food service products and USDA Foods. To achieve this goal, FNS is gathering information in several ways:

- FNS published a Request for Information that solicited comments on nutrition information and ingredient lists that schools receive and would like to receive.
- FNS is collecting nutrition information data as part of the Special Nutrition Operations Study.
- FNS is partnering with State agencies, schools, nutrition organizations, and the food industry to identify model specifications and tools that make it easier to order foods that contribute to healthful school meals.

FNS will provide a report to Congress summarizing findings in June 2012.

American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA) Meeting May 4-8, 2012

There is still time to register for ACDA’s annual conference! Early Bird registration is due April 1. This conference provides a wealth of information about USDA Foods in school nutrition programs, as well as other FNS nutrition assistance programs. This year, FNS is hosting two pre-conference sessions: Food Distribution101 for State Agencies, and a Procurement 101 session open to Schools and Industry. You can find conference and information on ACDA’s website at www.commodityfoods.org.

Thank You for Your Feedback!

Please let us know if you have any USDA Foods related issues that you would like addressed in future editions of the School Programs USDA Foods Update. If you have any questions or comments about our products or services, please email them directly to our Program Support Branch at fdd-psb@fns.usda.gov.

Or, write to the Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 508, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.

Prepared by: *USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Food Distribution Division and the Food Safety Unit.* Look for postings on Facebook about USDA Foods by “liking” School Nutrition Association’s and U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Facebook Pages.



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