

**Blue Cornmeal Request for Information/Sources Sought Notice SUMMARY**  
*September 26, 2012*

The United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency (USDA/FSA) issued a Request for Information and Sources Sought Notice (RFI/Notice) to assess the availability and specifications of Blue Cornmeal. USDA is interested in purchasing blue cornmeal in consumer-sized packages for Domestic Food Distribution Programs.

NOTE: All information provided with regard to the commercial practices for blue cornmeal should take in to account USDA's 100 percent domestic origin requirement.

USDA received one response to this RFI/Notice

**Respondents Interest:**

- To develop potential markets for our product.
- To provide traditional blue corn meal to native populations who need it the most, that is, those who have difficulty, due to finances or proximity, in obtaining organic, native-raised products for the nutritional health of their families.
- To reach a population that might have a nutritional need - blue corn meal is promoted in some cases to those suffering from diabetes because it has a lower glycemic index and contains 20 percent higher protein than other cornmeal. It is also higher in antioxidants and is recommended for those with heart disease, obesity, and cancer.
- As a native-owned business, we heartily support the purchase of traditional native foods for use in FNS's food distribution programs.
- **Capacity:** Native Natural cornmeal is processed and milled on a regular basis so there should be an ample supply. After further discussion, Native Natural provided the following capacity amounts: 4 trucks of blue cornmeal a month / 12 trucks per quarter / 48 trucks per year.
- **Pack size(s), and commercial prevalence of each pack size:** USDA is particularly interested in obtaining details on household or family-sized packages of 5 pounds or smaller. At present, the company is set up to produce packages of 453.6 grams or 1 pound. However, if a different size is required we can easily accommodate a 3-pound package upon request. The bags for the 1-pound packages are 100 percent virgin, high clarity polyethylene film of 2 mil thickness that meets FDA and USDA specifications for food content. Bags for the 3-pound packages are tab-locked bags of laminated polyethylene film liner that keeps contents fresh and also meets FDA and USDA specifications.

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- **Shipment configuration:**
  - Packages per case - 18 one pound bags per case
  - Cases per pallet - 36 or 45
  - Pallets per truckload - 10
  - Cases per truckload - 360 or 450
  - Net product weight per case - 18 lbs.
  - Gross case weight - 19 lbs.
  - Net product weight per truckload - 6480 lbs. with 360 cases, 8100 lbs. with 450 cases
  - Gross truckload weight - 6840 lbs. with 360 cases, 8550 lbs. with 450 cases
  
- **Servings per container:** Each container or 1-pound package has 4 cups of corn meal or approximately 16 servings depending on how the blue corn meal is used in cooking. A 3-pound package would contain approximately 48 servings. In addition, each package comes with 6 recipes for the household or family cook to use in preparing blue cornmeal in both modern and traditional dishes such as tortillas, corn bread, atole, porridge, and tamales.
  
- **Ingredients composition:** 100 percent organic blue corn meal with no additional ingredients. Certificate of Organic certification available upon request.
  
- **Nutritional information:** For each serving of ¼ cup:
  - Calories 190; Sodium 21 mg; Carbohydrates 42 g; Dietary Fiber 16 g; Protein 4 g;
  - % Daily Value: Fat 2%, Sodium 1%, Carbohydrates 14%, Vitamin A 6%, Iron 8%.
  - Not a significant source of saturated fat, cholesterol, vitamin C and calcium.
  
- **Cost/price:** \$2.75 per 1-pound package and \$5.25 per 3-pound package
  
- **Shelf life, including recommendations for optimal storage conditions:** Shelf life is 12 months in storage at cool temperatures averaging 60 degrees F.
  
- **Organic or non-organic product:** If both organic and non-organic blue cornmeal can be provided, please indicate pertinent variances; This company promotes only organic products grown in the U.S.
  
- **Grading methodology, please indicate what grading and size standards are utilized by your organization:** Blue corn is certified as 100 percent organic and also certified for cleaning and bagging prior to milling to a fine state.

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**Other relevant information, recommendations, comments, issues that would be beneficial:**

- The nutritional value of blue corn as a dietary aid in the treatment and prevention of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and cancer is well-documented by USDA researchers at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces as well as other sources, most recently:
- North Dakota State University: What Color is Your Food?; Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., L.R.D.; February 2009
- Reuters: Blue Corn Tortillas Pack Greater Nutritional Punch; Anne Harding; August 2007
- "Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture"; Chemical Composition and in Vitro Starch Digestibility of Pigmented Corn Tortilla; Juan Pablo Hernández-Uribe, et al.; October 2007
- Also see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue\\_corn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_corn)
- Nutritional Benefits: Blue corn, naturally grown, is distinctly rich in anthocyanins and antioxidants. Preserving the integrity of its dense nutritional value depends upon knowledge of healthy seeds and growing conditions that suit the blue corn plant, that is, appropriately healthy soil, as well as processing techniques that allow the highest possible nutrient content to emerge in the final product. Native Americans have many centuries of knowledge and experience producing nutrient-dense blue cornmeal.