

Minutes

Work Group members in attendance: FDPIR Program Staff: Jenelle Gimlin (WR VP), Lorraine Davis (WR), Sarah Kellogg-Eby (FNS WRO); Mary Greene-Trottier (MPR VP), Charles “Red” Gates (MPR), Lucy Atteberry (MPR), Kathy Sweitzer (FNS MPRO), Bob Gorman (FNS MPRO); Betty Jo Graveen (MWR), Samia Hamdan (FNS MWRO); Lou Hankins, (FNS SWRO); Sara Hernandez (AMS), Lena Milton (FSA), Laura Walter, Patti Schock, Stephanie Cooks, (FNS).

Work Group members not at the meeting: Roxanna Newsom (NAFDPIR President), Tod Robertson (SWR VP), Connie Martinez (SWR), Sharon Wheeler (SWR), Jaime Prouty-Nolan (NAFDPIR Treasurer), Gregory Nothstine (NAFDPIR Parliamentarian); Susie Roy (MWR VP), Melissa Baker (FNS WRO); Desiree Bergeron (WR);

Visitors: Laura Castro (FDD Director), Janice Fitzgerald (Chief, FDD Household Operations), Matthew Martin (FDD).

I. USDA Foods Updates

- a. **Frozen pork chops**– The draft specification is out for industry comment, with a deadline of April 4, 2013. The product specification includes a one lb. pack of ready-to-cook pork chops. The un-marinated, boneless, chops will be individually frozen for easier removal and storage. FNS is considering a pilot purchase of the product this fiscal year (FY 2013) to see the volume of product that can be supported for the FY 2014 budget.
- b. **Alaskan Pollock filets** – Pollock filets were rated very low on the NAFDPIR product survey that went out, possibly because ITOs are not familiar with this type of fish across some Regions. FNS plans to introduce pork chops in the food package before the Pollock filets. In FY 2014, FNS will revisit available funding before considering whether to add frozen Pollock to the food package.
- c. **Low sodium blended vegetable juice (similar to V8)** – AMS is requesting samples and information from interested suppliers to determine industry’s ability to supply it and the details to include in the USDA specification.
- d. **Slow moving items** – FNS continually analyzes take rates among products in FDPIR. Products that are ordered less frequently (i.e., “slow movers”) cost FDPIR resources that could be used to buy more desirable foods. Slow movers include: (1) turkey roasts, (2) fruit & nut mix, (3) canned, condensed tomato and vegetable soups, and (4) whole grain rotini. In Western Region, participants have expressed concern about the white “powder” on the trail mix. This is rice flour, an anti-caking ingredient that prevents the dried fruit from clumping together. In the Mountain Plains Region, dried dates and figs are not popular in the fruit & nut mix. Participants would prefer dried cranberries and raisins instead. Some ITOs would like the canned soups to be in larger containers like the beef stew. Whole grain spaghetti was suggested as a possible replacement for the whole grain rotini. Black beans (MPR) and canned salmon (MWR) were identified as two Regional slow movers. Butter has been moving slowly compared to buttery spread however; programs need a longer distribution period to determine how popular butter will be with participants over time. **ACTION ITEMS:** (1) Patti and Matthew will compile a list of slow moving products by Region to send to workgroup members.

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(2) FNS will add a statement to the fruit & nut mix fact sheet explaining the use of rice flour to prevent clumping. (3) FNS will further research availability of canned soups in larger pack sizes.

- e. **Canned salmon complaints** – FNS received two complaints from ITOs that the canned salmon contained a disproportionate amount of dark skin and bones. AMS researched the packing variations for the salmon product and found the product identified in the complaints was within specification. FNS/AMS will continue to monitor complaints and suggest potential options to the workgroup if participants do not like the canned salmon.
- f. **Shelf-stable chicken**–Protein products in pouches (chicken, etc.) are becoming more popular in the commercial market. One pouch supplier has expressed interest in providing pouched chicken to Food Distribution programs however, the vendor was unable to offer product at a competitive price. **ACTION ITEM:** FNS will determine the shelf-life of pouched chicken and report back to the workgroup.
- g. **DoD eggs** – DoD asked its produce and other vendors about their capacity to provide shell eggs to FDPIR along with produce. The Request for Information (RFI) circulated by DoD closed on March 15, 2013 and responses are being analyzed. Delivery of shell eggs by this method would likely require a pilot period with a limited number of ITOs before expanding to a wider distribution. If FNS is ultimately able to provide shell eggs for the ITOs, egg mix would be discontinued.

II. Other Business

- a. **Tuna** – There remains no domestic supplier of tuna for the foreseeable future.
- b. **Canned pineapple and pineapple juice** – There is no domestic supplier of canned pineapple and pineapple juice.
- c. **Corn meal packaging** – Western Region expressed concerns about generic packaging (black and white) for corn meal. **ACTION ITEM:** Lena Milton has forwarded the information to FSA – Kansas City for further research and response.
- d. **Low sodium canned vegetables** – Some work group members reported that they are experiencing low availability of canned corn and diced tomatoes, which are popular items. A drought last year resulted in a limited supply of tomatoes. Canned items are processed once a year and if crops are limited, canned products are typically in short supply for the rest of the year. **ACTION ITEM:** FNS Operations staff will research specific concerns raised regarding canned vegetables and report back.
- e. **BIUB dates for roast beef** – One workgroup member reported roast beef has been coming into the North Dakota warehouse with BIUB dates close to expiration. **ACTION ITEM:** FNS will follow-up with North Dakota to resolve this issue.
- f. **Bison/buffalo** – some vendors have begun the application process to become USDA vendors but have not completed the technical review. Workgroup members are asked to reach out to bison vendors and encourage them to move forward with the process. **ACTION ITEM:** FNS will provide a summary of interested bison vendors and their geographic locations to facilitate workgroup outreach.
- g. **Regional vendor pilot** - the regional vendor pilot was re-awarded at the end of March 2013 to MDV Nash Finch out of Norfolk, Virginia. The pilot will operate

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out of Oklahoma the first year with the following ITOs: Chickasaw Nation, Pawnee Tribe, Ponca Tribe, and Sac & Fox Nation. One workgroup member expressed concern that the vendor chose the service Region for the vendor pilot, versus FNS deciding on the service Region. FNS staff noted that vendors were asked to develop a plan to serve as many pilot sites as possible and the vendor may be able to expand the pilot in future years depending on the pilot's effectiveness and funding. **ACTION ITEM:** FNS will provide a vendor pilot update at the June workgroup meeting.

- h. White hominy** – product is due for warehouse delivery in mid to late April 2013. Programs should begin to see the product by early May 2013. The AIS code and WBSCM material code for hominy will remain the same.
 - i. Mini crackers** – once product analysis is completed for the original wish list items, mini crackers will be considered for further review.
 - j. Frozen fruits and vegetables and freezer space** – FNS requested that NAFDPIR continue its survey to determine availability of warehouse freezer space across programs so that further inquiry of frozen fruits and vegetable options can proceed.
 - k. AMS procurement process** – Red Gates will provide specific questions by email about how USDA procures product for FDPIR. **ACTION ITEM:** Once received, FNS will forward questions to the appropriate office for response.
- III. Next workgroup meeting** - The next workgroup meeting will be help face-to-face at the NAFDPIR conference in Denver, Colorado in June 2013.

IV. Meeting Adjourned