

School Programs USDA Foods Update July 2012

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

ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

Meal Pattern Requirements	1
USDA at SNA	1
New USDA Foods	2
Weather Impacts on Crops	2
Whole Grains In Schools	2
FFAVORS WEB MIGRATION	3
USDA Foods Image Project	3
USDA Food Connect	4
Idaho Pilot Program	4
Parent Food Show	5
Food Safety Tips	5
Quick Links	6

New Meal Pattern Requirements

Through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act championed by the First Lady and signed by President Obama, USDA is making the first major changes in school meals in 15 years, which will help us raise a healthier generation of children. The new standards align school meals with the latest nutrition science and real world circumstances of America's schools. These responsible reforms do what's right for children's health in a way that's achievable in schools across the nation. For more



information on the new meal patterns and how USDA Foods support the requirements, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/USDAFoods.pdf>

USDA at SNA ANC July 14-18, 2012 Denver, Colorado

USDA is pleased to sponsor 16 education sessions at the SNA Conference this summer. Topics include:



Pre-Conference Education Sessions:

- Understanding USDA Foods Program *(Space is still available!)*
- Food Defense: How to Assess and Minimize Risks in School Nutrition Operations

Conference Education Sessions

- USDA Foods 101
- Writing Excellent Food Bid Specifications
- USDA Foods=Lower Plate Costs!
- Earning and Keeping Your 6 Cents
- Making Summer Meal Service Easier Than Ever!
- The New Meal Patterns
- Professional Standards for Schools
- Proposed Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools

- Farm to School Grants
- Procurement/Geographical Preference
- Are You Getting the Right Produce at the Right Price?
- Food Safety Risk, Response and Resources: A School Foodservice Action Guide
- Avoiding a Showdown: Successfully Working With Your Inspector
- Get the Word Out: Communicating During Food Recalls

Make “**USDA Lane**”, in aisle 800, a “must stop” on your journey through the exhibit hall in Denver. You will find a wealth of resources about what USDA is doing for you and have some fun doing it!

Make sure to also attend the Culinary Demonstration by NFSMI on Monday, July 16, 11:15 a.m. to noon. Denver Public Schools and USDA Foods will be featured, and scratch cooking methods and use of fresh herbs in commercial production will be highlighted. For conference registration information, visit SNA’s Web site at <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/>.

New USDA Foods

Frozen Broccoli Florets: Due to participant feedback and in an effort to offer a dark green vegetable to support the new meal pattern, USDA expects to purchase frozen broccoli florets for the first time in school year 2013. The product will come in 6/5lb bags per case, with 1,320 cases per truck. This item is now listed in the WBSCM catalog and available to order for delivery January 2013 through May 2013. Orders are due August 7, 2012. A new factsheet is also available online.



Weather Impacts This Year’s Apple and Cherry Harvest

Apples: Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania lost an unprecedented amount of apple crop this year due to late frost and hail. Fortunately, the crop in Washington State was minimally affected. However, prices are significantly higher, and we do not expect to meet all our demand. USDA received no bids for canned apple slices.

Cherries: Also due to weather, cherry production will only be 20% of its normal output. The majority of the cherry orders were not purchased due to this unfortunate crop loss.

Whole Grains in Schools

Recently the Grains for Health Foundation released its Whole Grains White Paper. It examines the relationships of a sampling of stakeholders of the grain-based foods supply chain as they work together to ensure the smooth and seamless delivery of whole grain foods into schools. To read the full report visit: <http://grainsforhealth.org/resources/child-nutrition/the-future-of-grains-in-schools-task-force-white-paper/>



FFAVORS Web Migration

FNS has been working with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) to migrate the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Order and Receipt System (FFAVORS) to USDA/FNS for system support. FFAVORS, a web based application, provides the ability to order and receive shipments of fresh produce. In conjunction with DLA – Troop Support staff, the project has progressed well over the past 7 months and is targeted to be under FNS management by August 14th.

What does this mean to the users of FFAVORS? The users of the current system will see very little change to their interaction with the system. DLA – Troop Support will still be the ‘go to’ folks for assistance of the day-to-day operations with FFAVORS. All the screens and processes that have been in place will remain. The changes that you will notice are; first, there will be a new web site address and second we will be using USDA’s eAuthentication logon services, so different IDs and passwords will allow access to FFAVORS.

In early July, FFAVORS users will receive an email announcement with instructions on the next activities. Users can keep informed of progress at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/ffavors.htm. This will also be the web address users will book mark to log into FFAVORS once the migration is completed.

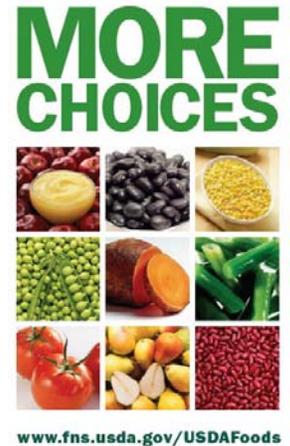
USDA Foods Image Project

Over the last few years, USDA has made many healthy changes to USDA Foods, including lowering the sodium, sugar, and fat in many of our foods. Despite these and other positive changes, many are still not aware of how USDA Foods help schools to serve healthier meals to their children or how the changes we make to our foods’ nutrient profiles help align each food more closely with recommendations provided under the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate.

Some of the ways we are spreading the word include:

- ***[USDA Foods Banner Kits](#) Now Available in the [USDA Foods Toolkit!](#)***

We’ve done all the work for you to make it easy for you to order bright colorful USDA Foods pop-up banners for your cafeterias, local meetings or health fairs. Promoting USDA Foods in your school cafeteria will help promote the healthy meals you’re serving!



- ***An op-ed in the National Association of School Nurses’ newsletter*** on how USDA Foods help to support better nutrition and school performance through healthier school meals is scheduled for print this summer,
- ***Two new cafeteria posters*** that showcase eating healthy in school, to be available online later this fall.
- ***A new collection of photos*** depicting the variety of healthy foods available through USDA Foods, including photos of children enjoying USDA Foods as part of a healthy school meal. The new photos will start showing up on our materials later this year.
- ***A series of targeted advertising*** in prominent magazines and online aimed at informing parents and school nutrition professionals about USDA Foods.

USDA Food Connect: Nutrition Web Site for Schools

USDA Food Connect is a very useful website for school nutrition programs. The site is administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and provides information, including nutrition information, for some USDA Foods and commercial food products. USDA Food Connect provides detailed product information for both commercial and USDA Foods to SFAs, other procurement groups, and vendors, manufacturers, and processors. Registration for USDA Food Connect is free and the site has useful functions for school nutrition program operators. USDA Food Connect includes a robust searchable database to source commercial products by many attributes, including nutrients, allergens and ingredients. In addition, it also includes manufacturer contacts to purchase the foods. To use the USDA Food Connect website go to www.foodconnect.usda.gov.

In addition, USDA Food Connect launched a web portal for the California Department of Education (CDE) in April 2012. AMS developed the portal in cooperation with CDE to help local school procurement specialists find foods and beverages that comply with State Senate Bills 12, 965, and 490. California schools also can access the full complement of product resources available nationwide, which can be found on the USDA Food Connect website.

In August, USDA staff will provide webinars for California school foodservice officials on the USDA Food Connect website, including how to search for foods that meet California competitive foods and beverages regulations. Stay tuned for more information about USDA Food Connect developments.

Idaho Pilot Program

The Idaho State Department of Education has implemented a pilot program, known as Chef Tuesday, which enlists chefs to prepare and serve healthy meals to students who offer feedback and suggestions. The recipes used contain three to five USDA Foods. When Chef Tuesday has run its 12-week course, the State Department of Education will select the 10 menus that went over best with students and offer them to schools statewide to help meet the USDA's new school lunch nutrition standards. Since many school districts rotate lunch menus monthly, the chosen 10 would provide chef-developed meals approximately every other day.



The recipes will be modified based on student comments, then compiled in a cookbook distributed to all Idaho schools. It's all part of the USDA Team Nutrition grants that also fund other child-nutrition efforts.

Parent Food Show Partners with DoD

Hartford Schools in Hartford, Connecticut recently had a parent food show. There were many food vendors there who displayed the many varieties of food that are given to the children each day. Siravo, a DoD Fresh produce vendor, was there to have them taste and sample fruits and vegetables that the DOD Program provides. Parents were impressed with how much the vendors were involved in getting the best nutrition to the schools.



These activities are helping USDA to showcase the new, improved, and tastier USDA Foods that are available to schools across the country.

Handling Leaking and Swollen Cans of USDA Foods

Canning is a safe and reliable food preservation method. Occasional problems with the canning process can allow microorganisms to enter or grow inside of canned foods. As microorganisms grow, they produce gases that may cause cans to leak or swell. If you discover leaking or swelling cans, set aside the entire case so that none of it is served or distributed. All similar cases from the same lot also should be isolated. These precautions are important because some cans may be contaminated without showing signs of leaking or swelling.

Follow these tips to ensure that damaged cans are handled safely and properly reported:

- At delivery: Reject **cases** with damaged, leaking, or swelling cans and

send a notice to USDA through WBSCM via the Goods Receipt.

When State Distributing Agencies (SDAs), School Food Authorities (SFAs), or schools find leaking or swollen cans of USDA Foods already in inventory, they should do the following:

- Isolate **all cases** containing leaking or swollen cans. **Do not separate or distribute cans that look normal.** The product may be spoiled or may contain harmful microorganisms, even if the outside of the cans appear undamaged.
- **Do not discard the cans.** Continue to isolate the cans until USDA guidance is provided.
- Submit a complaint report. School Food Authorities (SFAs) and State Distributing Agencies (SDAs) should follow the complaint procedures on the USDA [Foods Complaints webpage](#).
 - SFAs submit complaint reports to their SDA.
 - SDAs submit qualified complaint reports through WBSCM.

Tip for SFAs and Schools: Leaking and swollen cans always should be reported. Notify your supplier if the leaking or swollen cans were purchased commercially.

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 on our products or services, please email them directly to our Program Support Branch at fdd-psb@fns.usda.gov. You can also write to the Food Distribution Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 508, Alexandria, Virginia 22302.

Quick Links:

Web and/or contact links in this issue:

- **USDA Food Connect**
www.foodconnect.usda.gov.
- **FFAVORS Web Migration**
www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/ffavors.htm
- **Whole Grains White Paper**
<http://grainsforhealth.org/resources/child-nutrition/the-future-of-grains-in-schools-task-force-white-paper/>
- **USDA Foods Banner Kit**
http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/USDA_Foods_Banner_Kit_Instructions.pdf
- **USDA Foods Toolkit**
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/Toolkit.htm>
- **School Nutrition Association**
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/>.
- **USDA Foods Complaints**
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/complaints/default.htm>

Prepared by: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Food Distribution Division and the Office of Food Safety

