



School Programs USDA Foods Update

April 2011

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

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Spring Time!

We hope you had a wonderful winter and that your students are enjoying healthy school meals. As you begin to plan the remainder of this year's meals and next year's food orders, we want to make sure you receive the latest USDA Foods program updates. Our SY12 foods available list can be found here:

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



USDA Foods Help Schools Serve Healthy Meals

Sugar: USDA has reduced the added sugar in *all* canned fruits. As of July 2011, all canned fruits will be packed in extra light syrup or slightly sweetened fruit juice.



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The extra light pack reduces the sugar in USDA's canned fruit products between 35-55%. All applesauce remains unsweetened.

Sodium: Starting July 2011, USDA will reduce the sodium in its processed and blended cheeses. The new specification will reduce the sodium level from 450 mg or more to between 200-300 mg per ounce. In addition, no added salt canned corn and diced tomatoes will be made available for SY11/12 delivery. USDA is also reviewing the sodium level in processed meats currently offered through the USDA Foods program.

Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Program: Reminder

The DoD Fresh Program is a cooperative effort between USDA



For more information go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd>

and DoD, paid for with entitlement funds, to supply more than 60 types of fresh fruits and vegetables to schools.

DoD funding has increased as the program grew from a pilot serving a handful of States to a nationwide effort. From SY03 through SY08, the program was capped at \$50 million.

In SY09, the cap was removed, allowing each State to receive as much of its entitlement in DoD Fresh as the schools and States desired. Since then, spending has increased every year: \$54.3 million in SY09, \$65.6 million in SY10, and \$73.1 million in SY11. The program is projected to reach \$78.4 million in SY12.

For more on the DOD Fresh Program, please go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/dod/default.htm>

Ham Tips!

Wondering how to maintain quality and safety for your frozen ham? Thawing ham properly is the first step to preserving taste and appearance.

USDA's Ham Tips:

Thaw the ham slowly in the refrigerator. This will result in the best quality of meat and is the safest method for preventing food borne disease.



Thawing in the Refrigerator: To prevent dehydration, leave the ham wrapped in its original packaging. Place the meat on a platter or a tray to catch the drippings as the ham thaws. Drain these juices off as they accumulate. Place in the refrigerator on the lowest shelf away from other foods.

It may take 3 to 4 days to thaw, so be sure to plan ahead.

Cold Water: Thawing ham in cold water is a faster method of thawing than the refrigerator method, but

because of increased awareness of illness due to bacterial growth, it is generally not recommended. Do not refreeze meat that has been thawed using this method unless it has been cooked first.

Kitchen Counter: Ham should never be thawed out on the kitchen counter because the outside of the meat will reach a temperature of above 40°F while the inside is still frozen. The area that reaches a temperature above 40°F would be susceptible to bacterial growth.

Microwave: Thawing large items, such as ham, in the microwave does not work well and should be avoided.

Roasted Chicken: Feedback

USDA has received positive feedback about the new bone-in roasted chicken product now available to schools. We hope you are enjoying this new product and welcome your thoughts and comments!

In SY11, USDA filled orders from thirty states and purchased over 5.5 million pounds of this product. While there were some delays in purchases due to capacity issues and only one vendor bidding the product, we are hopeful the capacity and vendor participation will increase this coming school year.

Below are select comments schools sent to us:

"The Oven Roasted Chicken is one of the BEST USDA products we have ever received in the 32 years I have been the Food & Nutrition Director. Our students loved it and we would really love to continue to receive this item in greater quantity in the future."

"I have received very positive feedback. It is an item we will continue to order for the schools."

"The quality was great, good size, and tasted great."

"I created a recipe using the cut up roasted chicken we received in December and oh my goodness you should hear the rave reviews this chicken is getting. I've had kids coming into my office just to thank me for having the chicken. Principals and teachers are coming up very excited about the chicken. It is very very good."

"Easy to work with and a hit with the kids"

Planned Assistance Level: SY11 Update

For SY11, USDA purchased approximately 24 cents per meal worth of USDA Foods, totaling over \$1.2 billion dollars for the nation. This includes entitlement, bonus and DOD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program purchases. There will be shortfalls for some States this year for a few reasons, including early ordering in WBSCM, the inability to buy certain items due to timing and market, and the late infusion of additional funds that would increase States' entitlement to meet the "12%" provision. Unspent National School Lunch Program entitlement funds are carried over to the next school year and will be available for States to order in SY12.

Delays and Cancellations: Apples, Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, and White Potatoes

Due to unfavorable growing conditions in the fall of 2010 and USDA's food purchasing standards, four USDA products have been either cancelled or delayed.

Apples: Apple production was down significantly this year due to weather and stink bugs. There were not enough bulk fresh apples available for processing into canned applesauce and slices to meet current orders.

Apple products are not expected to become plentiful before October 2011 when the new crop is harvested. FNS will review orders that are in the system for July to September delivery and work with

States to move deliveries, cancel orders, and enter orders for other products if needed.

Carrots: Carrot producers have experienced a late freeze that has hindered production. Current growing conditions are still not producing carrots large enough to satisfy USDA specifications. This has delayed some canned carrot deliveries.

Sweet Potatoes: Due to a severe drought in the late summer in North Carolina, a large percentage of the sweet potato crop was damaged. This lowered the quality of the canned sweet potatoes to Grade B. USDA will only accept Grade A sweet potatoes for the National School Lunch Program. In addition, several producers have switched varieties that are not as hardy and under adverse conditions cannot meet USDA standards. As a result, USDA cannot purchase canned sweet potatoes for delivery until after the new harvest in October 2011.

White Potato Products: The white potato carryover inventory for 2010 crop is limited due to weather, decreased plantings, and the large bonus buy for the Emergency Food Assistance program. Because July through September orders for potato wedges, rounds, and oven products are packed from available inventory, there will be a limited supply during this time.

USDA Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM) Update



WBSCM Deployment: In June 2010, the first WBSCM release (1.0) was implemented. This phase included Household Programs multi-food ordering through the National Warehouse functionality. WBSCM 2.0 was released December 2010 for participating Indian Tribal Organizations, State Agencies (six pilot states),

and Recipient Agencies. Pilot states have successfully navigated the catalog and begun ordering activities. WBSCM release 2.1 was deployed for Suppliers in February 2011. WBSCM Release 2.2, the final release, will go-live April 2011 for procurement activities and remaining functionality. All ECOS user ID's and organizations have been converted to WBSCM.

WBSCM Refresher Training: WBSCM refresher training was conducted by Headquarters staff in Atlanta and Dallas Regional Offices for State Distributing Agencies in three sessions beginning December 2010. Refresher training webinars led by FNS staff are being held in March and April 2011 for interested WBSCM State Distributing Agency users. Topics include: User Registration, Catalog Maintenance, Requisition Creation, Order Consolidation, and Reporting.

For additional information on WBSCM visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/wbscm>.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT
USDA FOODS...**

- Help schools meet meal pattern requirements
- Help schools 'Go for the Gold' through the HealthierUS School Challenge
- Stretch tight food budgets
- Support American farmers

Check out USDA's whole grain fact sheet:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/facts/nutrition/WholeGrainsFactSheet.pdf>

**ANC in Nashville - Food Distribution
Division's Education Sessions**

The School Nutrition Association will hold its annual meeting July 11-14th, in Nashville, TN. USDA Foods

will be featured in multiple sessions and will include information about healthy eating, getting the best bang for your buck, and the popular USDA Foods Jeopardy game. Make sure to look for these sessions as your plan your agenda for SNA ANC 2011!

**Recipes for Healthy
Kids Competition**



**Vote for the Recipes for Healthy Kids
Competition Popular Choice Award!**

On March 9th, 2011, Secretary Vilsack announced the 15 semi-finalist recipes for the Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition. FNS received a total of 340 recipes. Launched last September, the Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition challenged teams to develop creative, nutritious, and kid-approved recipes that schools can easily incorporate into National School Lunch Program menus. Five recipes from each of the three categories - whole grains, dark green & orange vegetables, and dry beans and peas were chosen as semi-finalists. Recipes submitted by schools will be evaluated by a category judging team consisting of a USDA official, an American Culinary Federation chef, and a school nutrition professional to determine the finalists (one from each category). The finalists will participate in a national cook-off event in July 2011 at the American Culinary Federation convention.

The semifinalist recipes are posted on the Recipes for Healthy Kids website until May 15, 2011. Go to www.recipesforkidschallenge.com to vote for your favorite recipe and help determine a Popular Choice Award winner!

Food Safety Resources

FNS Office of Food Safety partnered with the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) to develop two fact sheets on recovering after a flood. The fact sheets are available here:

- **Salvaging Food After a Flood Fact Sheet:**
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20110128013510.pdf>
- **Reopening Your School After a Flood Fact Sheet:**
<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20110209091232.pdf>

Best Practices: Handling Fresh Produce in Schools

Developed by USDA and NFSMI, this fact sheet includes recommendations for handling fresh produce including tips for hand hygiene, training, and general food safety practices. Specific recommendations for handling melons, tomatoes, leafy greens, and sprouts are included. The fact sheet is available at:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/safety/pdf/best_practices.pdf

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.

Prepared by: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Food Distribution Division and the Food Safety Unit.

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