

Questions and Answers on Juice Packaging for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

1. Is there a smaller pack size available than the proposed 64 oz plastic bottle?

State agencies have inquired about smaller pack size options. FNS has looked into the availability and cost effectiveness of offering juice in a smaller pack size than the proposed 64 oz plastic bottle. However, the price for the 32 oz plastic bottle is estimated to be significantly higher than the 64 oz plastic bottle. The cost for current juice offering in 46 oz tin cans is approximately \$0.43 per pound. Similarly, the juice in a 64 oz plastic bottle is estimated to cost about \$0.42 per pound. The juice in 32 oz plastic bottles is estimated to cost approximately \$0.58 per pound. Of course, prices are subject to change. All other things being equal, smaller container sizes will typically have a higher cost.

It must be emphasized that the juice industry is moving away from offering juice in tin cans. As more and more vendors move in this direction, FNS must adapt to the industry standard to assure the availability of juices while keeping costs in check.

2. Is the plastic used in the juice bottles safe?

Yes.

3. Would any harmful chemicals leach into the product from the plastic?

No. The chemical at issue is Bisphenol A (BPA) which may be found in certain types of plastic bottles containing polycarbonate plastics. FNS is requiring vendors to use BPA-free plastic bottles for juices offered in its domestic nutrition assistance programs. The more media and pressure from consumers, the more companies are making bottles from alternative forms of plastics (not polycarbonate).

4. How high can pallets be stacked?

The maximum height for the 64 oz plastic bottle will be two pallets high to prevent crushing of the bottles.

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5. How will the juice be packed - cardboard boxes or tray packs?

FNS is requiring vendors to pack the 64 oz plastic bottles in cardboard boxes. See chart below regarding pack size and case information for the juice in 46 oz tin cans and 64 oz plastic bottles.

	46 oz tin cans	64 oz plastic bottles
Units per Case	12	8
Weight	43.6 lbs	38.5 lbs
Height	7.8 inches	11 inches
Depth	17.7 inches	19 inches
Width	12.7 inches	8 inches

6. What is the shelf life of the juices?

The shelf life is about 6 months. Keep in mind, recommended CSFP inventory levels are 2 to 2 1/2 months by food category and recommended FDPIR inventory levels are 3 months by food category.

7. To help with pouring the 64 oz plastic bottle of juice, will there be a handle on it?

No. Current industry practice does not have handles on the 64 oz plastic bottles.

8. Is the juice bottle easy to open?

Yes, the juice industry has been moving in the direction of making the plastic bottles for juices more ergonomic. The new ergonomic bottle is smaller at the middle (waist) to make it easier for participants to grasp when transporting and pouring. The juice in plastic bottles, unlike juice in tin cans, may be stored in its original container once opened in the refrigerator.

9. Is there a seal under the plastic cap?

No. There is no foil seal under the cap; however, there is a plastic band around the bottom of the cap that prevents tampering. FNS is following the same industry standard that is used on plastic bottles found in the commercial marketplace. The plastic band used to secure the plastic bottle may be easily broken by participants by simply turning the cap. The plastic band is the same as those found on water and juice bottles. For seniors or those persons with a weak grip, a rubber jar grip may be used to help loosen the cap.

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10. Are the plastic bottles recyclable?

Yes. The 64 oz plastic bottle containers are recyclable.

11. For CSFP and FDPIR, are the distribution rates for plastic bottles the same as for tin cans?

No. Since plastic bottles contain 64 oz of juice, while tin cans contain 46 oz of juice, the distribution rates for plastic bottles differs from the rates for tin cans. See your program's most recently issued distribution guidelines to determine the amount of juice that should be distributed to participants.