



# School Programs

## *USDA Foods Update*

October 2012

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

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### October 15-19 is National School Lunch Week (NSLW)



Each year, the School Nutrition Association helps USDA promote NSLW. This year's theme, "School Lunch – What's Cooking?" celebrates the positive changes happening in school lunch programs across the country. Schools are cooking up new recipes and sharing resources to highlight healthy meals. During NSLW, schools can showcase their accomplishments to parents and students about the importance of a well-balanced school lunch. To find recipes and other resources, visit the SNA website at [www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw)

### USDA Foods Factsheets/Foods Available List Update

FNS has updated the USDA Foods factsheets for schools, including food safety guidance and expanded nutrient data that are essential to planning healthy school meals that support the meal pattern requirements, Dietary Guidelines and Myplate recommendations. For a complete list of new factsheets, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/schfacts/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/schfacts/)

In addition, we updated the USDA Foods Available list to include the new vegetable subgroup identifiers and reorganized the information to be more user-friendly. You can find the updated Foods Available List at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/SY13-schfoods.pdf>

### Frozen Fruits

FNS Policy Memo SP-20 2012 was revised in September 2012, to allow schools to continue to serve frozen fruit with added sugars through SY2013-2014. To review the revised memo, go to: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/SP20-2012sRSept12.pdf>

### Notice to the Trade

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is seeking information from the chicken industry regarding cutting options or substitution of parts to meet the NSLP meal pattern requirement for meat/meat alternates. This feedback will help USDA revise specifications for SY 2013-2014. USDA's current specification offers schools 8 piece cut-up

frozen bone-in chicken products from whole carcasses without giblets that weigh 2.5 to 3.75 pounds. Responses are due November 9th. To view the notice, visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5100826>

### Planned Assistance Level Update:

For SY 2012, USDA purchased approximately .2237 cents per meal in USDA Foods, totaling over \$1.2 billion dollars nationwide. Due to shortfalls for some States in SY 2012, unspent NSLP entitlement funds were carried over to SY 2013 and are available for States to order this year.

For SY 2013, States have approximately 24 cents per meal to spend on USDA Foods, which calculates to a total entitlement of \$1.3 billion. This includes \$95 million that school districts and States have allocated for DoD Fresh. To date, States have placed orders for 91% of entitlement dollars. USDA Foods catalogs will be opened through the month of October for State and districts to order USDA Foods for delivery January - June 2013. USDA has already purchased orders for delivery through November 30, 2012. After SY 12 entitlement is reconciled in early December, catalogs will be opened again for a few products for delivery March through June.

### Memo on Offering Value and Variety of USDA Foods in Schools

On October 11, FDD released policy memo [FD-125: Offering School Food Authorities the Required Value and Variety of USDA Foods, and Efficient and Cost-Effective Distribution.](#) The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to State distributing agencies to ensure that school food authorities (SFAs) receive their planned assistance level and maximize their use of USDA Foods to meet NSLP nutrition standards.

This memo details measures that State distributing agencies must take to ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements for school foods including:

- Offering the commodity offer value to SFAs;
- Using a request-driven ordering system that provides for SFA input and periodic submission of orders throughout the school year; and
- Ensuring that USDA Foods are provided to SFAs in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, utilizing direct shipments (including split shipments) to SFAs or processors.

To read the full memo visit:

[www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/policy/allfd\\_policies.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/policy/allfd_policies.htm)

### USDA Foods Looking Ahead...

FNS is researching new products to help schools meet the new meal pattern requirements. We are considering:

- Bulk Pinto Beans for processing
- 1 oz. Low-sodium Cheese Stick
- Bulk Romaine Lettuce for processing

We want your feedback and ideas about these products and any others you'd like us to consider. Email us at:

[USDAFoods@fns.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFoods@fns.usda.gov).

### USDA Foods Goes Mobile

Later this month, USDA will release a new mobile website to support school nutrition professionals. The goal of the website is to help school nutrition professionals find critical information about USDA Foods right from their mobile phones. The site will have talking points to help you engage in discussions with parents and administrators about USDA Foods, food safety, and an overview of how USDA Foods support the new National School Lunch Program meal patterns. The site will also include state agency contacts and the list of USDA Foods. We want your feedback and ideas about the site. Email us at:

[USDAFoods@fns.usda.gov](mailto:USDAFoods@fns.usda.gov).

## SNA ANC 2012 Denver Recap

Denver ANC was a successful event for the Food Distribution team! School Food Service staff from around the country visited our booth as well as education sessions, and provided helpful feedback. You can find presentation slides at SNA's website under [Past Meetings](#).

Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup>:

- Making the Most of USDA Foods for Healthier Meals
- USDA Foods 101
- Writing Excellent Food Bid Specs

Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>:

- USDA Foods = Lower Plate Costs!

We also had a good crowd at the Culinary Demonstration sponsored by NFSMI, which featured a Denver Public Schools' chef cooking with USDA Foods and fresh herbs. If you missed it, you can find the recipes on line in our USDA Foods Toolkit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/Toolkit.htm>

## Farm to School Month

On September 23, 2010, Congress passed a [resolution](#) designating October as National Farm to School Month. This October, school menus will feature an array of products from local and regional farmers, ranchers, fishermen, food processors, and manufacturers. Kids of all ages will dig up lessons in school gardens, visit farms, harvest pumpkins, and don hair nets for tours of processing facilities.

Soon, USDA will announce farm to school grant awards, and the next request for applications for farm to school grants will be issued early in calendar year 2013. Beyond farm to school grants, [several key USDA agencies](#), including the Forest Service, National Agricultural Library, and Natural Resources Conservation Service also support farm to school initiatives.

For more information, please visit the [USDA Farm to School Program website](#) and sign up for the USDA [Farm to School E-letter](#). (select "Farm to School" as a topic of interest from the many options once you've entered your email address.)

## Foster School-Wide Support for Healthier Choices at Middle School

**Healthier Middle Schools: Everyone Can Help** is a series of communication tools designed to help engage teachers, principals, parents, and students in school wellness efforts.

**Healthier Middle Schools** includes an audience-tested video and a print handout for each audience.



Schools can download materials or order printed handouts and a DVD from the Team Nutrition Web site under the "Resource Library" link: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

## Coming soon: Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbook



To recognize and share the culinary creativity nationwide, 30 delicious, kid-approved recipes from the *Recipes for Healthy Kids* competition are being standardized for cookbooks for home, child care centers, and schools. The cookbooks feature recipes with foods that children and adults alike should consume more of: dark green and orange vegetables, dry beans, and whole grains. The recipes contain no more than 15 ingredients and are low in total fat, sugar, and sodium. The USDA collaborated with the American Culinary Federation (ACF) and the School Nutrition Association on this nationwide competition.

Teams of students (grades 4 to 12), school nutrition professionals, chefs, parents, and other interested community members were challenged to partner and create tasty and healthy new recipes that schools can easily incorporate into National School Lunch Program menus.

The cookbooks and recipes should be available later this fall on the Team Nutrition Web site at <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>. The cookbooks should be published by the end of 2012.

## Best Practices Sharing Center

Looking for some great ideas to help you plan menus and the meet the new requirements? Check out the Team Nutrition Best Practices Sharing Center.



**Menus that Move**, developed by the Ohio Department of Education, is just one of the great resources in the Sharing Center that can help you maximize the use of USDA Foods in your menus.

You can find the Team Nutrition Best Practices Sharing Center at: <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/best-practices>.

## Team Nutrition Announces New MyPlate Lessons for Kids

**Serving Up MyPlate** is a collection of classroom materials that helps elementary school teachers integrate nutrition education into Math, Science, English Language Arts, and Health. This yummy curriculum introduces the importance of eating from all five food groups using the MyPlate icon and a variety of hands-on activities. Cafeteria connections in the lessons provide valuable opportunities for students to apply what they are learning in the

classroom to what they are choosing for lunch and breakfast.

### **Serving Up MyPlate**

includes:

- Teacher's guides (Grades 1-2, 3-4, 5-6)
- Three original songs
- *Eat Smart To Play Hard*
- *MyPlate at Home* parent handout in English and Spanish



Visit the Team Nutrition Web site to learn more: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

### **Thank You for Your Feedback!**

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 [usdafoods@fns.usda.gov](mailto:usdafoods@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



## HEALTHY FOODS

More options for you.  
More choices for them.

[www.fns.usda.gov/USDAFoods](http://www.fns.usda.gov/USDAFoods)