

**FDPIR Food Package Review  
January 18, 2007 Conference Call Notes**

		<b>Present</b>	<b>Not Present</b>
1.	Betty Jo Graveen, Lac du Flambeau FDP		X
2.	Dennis Pearson, AMS (Alternate - Cathie Smith)	X	X
3.	Karen Kell, FNS-SERO	X	
4.	Lorraine Davis, Navajo Nation	X	
5.	Lorraine Whitehair, CDC	X	
6.	Melanie Todd, Chickasaw Health System		X
7.	Nancy Gaston, FNS-HQ	X	
8.	Nancy Theodore, FNS-HQ	X	
9.	Pat Roberts, Menominee FDP		X
10.	Ray Capoeman, Quinault FDP		X
11.	Ron Ulibarri, AMS-HQ		X
12.	Rosalind Cleveland, FNS-HQ		X
13.	Roxana Newsom, Chickasaw FDP		X
14.	Sarah Kellogg-Eby, FNS-WRO	X	
15.	Scott Krueger, Menominee Tribal Clinic	X	
16.	Sharon Hadder, FSA-HQ		X
17.	Sheldon Gordon, FNS-HQ	X	
18.	Susan Anderson, CDC	X	
19.	Red Gates, Standing Rock Sioux (Mary Greene-Trottier)		X
20.	Steve Freeman, FSA-HQ		X
21.	Tony Nertoli, Sault Ste. Marie		X

The food package review work group assembled on the conference call at 1:00PM (EST) on Thursday, January 18, 2007. Sheldon Gordon took roll call at 1:05 PM.

Nancy Gaston opened the discussion about an up coming listserv to share ideas, material, solutions, and research information on nutrition and food topics regarding Native Americans participating in FDPIR at the local or tribal levels. This listserv will be a communication tool that is open to nutrition educators, warehouse/distribution personnel, or others that work closely with FDPIR.

**Goals for FY 2007-2008**

**I. Goal 1 - Healthier Food Options: Meeting the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.**

**A. Reduced or low-sodium canned vegetables**

Discussion 1 - FNS reported after reviewing previous notes from AMS that the work group will need to determine if we want to move forward on offering the low sodium corn and green beans. In order for us to procure this item at a reasonable cost, we will have to order about the same quantity we offer in the regular version. Since vendors pack vegetables so far in advance and are limited on the availability of low sodium versions, it will be challenging to procure these products without requesting a sufficient quantity for it to be worthwhile for the vendor. A question from the work group came about if we knew if recipients wanted the low sodium (<140 mg per reference amount) or the reduced sodium (25% less than original) version. When ITO Program Directors polled the recipients, it was determined that the low sodium version was desired. Currently our commodities meet the FDA's health claim for "Healthy." Healthy is defined as  $\leq$  480 mg per reference amount customarily consumed (RACC)). Another question came about regarding the popularity of these two vegetables being sought in a low sodium version and whether recipients would really be interested. On the November 16<sup>th</sup> call these two items were selected because of its familiarity to recipients. It was also thought, they would be more willing to try these than other vegetables they are not taking as much of in their monthly food package.

**Task 1a: ITO's Program Directors** are being asked to respond to the question below to Sheldon by **COB, Friday, February 23.**

**Yes**  **No** Offer only the low sodium version of corn and green beans as a healthy alternative to regular versions.

In regards the canned pumpkin and sweet potatoes, a total of four responses were received indicating that we should only offer them on seasonal basis (winter) due to low take rates, concerns with storage, and cost. Both canned commodities seem to peak only during the winter holiday season, and then are in low demand throughout the remaining fiscal year. Offering, these commodities seasonally may help to offset prices for other foods and eliminate warehouses from stockpiling these items.

**Task 1b: ITO Program Directors** if for any reason you did comment previously and would like to express concerns regarding the change, please send your comments to Sheldon by **COB, Friday, February 9**. (If you do not respond by the deadline, it will be assumed that you agree with the decision made on the November 16<sup>th</sup> call to offer these items seasonally.)

B. Reduce total fat in food package.

Discussion 2 – Reduced-fat bakery mix was discussed among the call participants. FNS reported that four ITO Programs Directors responded in regards to moving towards offering the reduced-fat bakery mix as our only offering. There were some concerns about the commodity that were raised such as the overall taste as well as its cooking ability. Some participants reported that they didn't notice any differences between the two products while other participants felt that the product had a funny aftertaste, did not cook the same, or liked having the option of both versions. Currently, there are some ITO's that only offer the reduced-fat bakery mix while some others shy away it because it is "low" fat product. Lack of familiarity with low fat products tends to make some participants avoid products like this thinking it will not taste good. Since there were more participants in favor of the reduced-fat bakery mix, it was moved that we offer this as the sole bakery mix in the monthly food package. Thus, by offering the reduced-fat bakery product this helps to keep our on task with our goal of reducing the total fat in the monthly food package.

It was suggested that some type of nutrition education material (pamphlet, fact sheet, brochure, etc.) shall be used to help in promoting this product. The education material could possibly show that there is not a drastic change between the two products. FNS agreed that nutrition education is key in making it a success and that they would like into providing a fact sheet to aid in promoting it.

**Task 2a: FNS** will contact FSA to move forward on offering the reduced-fat bakery mix as our sole bakery mix. **FNS will share information regarding the change to the food package committee by COB Friday, February 23, 2006.**

**Task 2b: FNS** will draft a fact sheet on the reduced-fat bakery to be available before the next conference call. **Fact Sheet draft shall be ready no later than March 8, 2007.**

Discussion 3 – Removal of shortening in basic food package. FNS reported that USDA has been considering for some time to remove shortening from all of its programs. On the last call, FNS was tasked with determining the take rate for this item. FNS was able to determine from the orders that for the past two fiscal years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 that there has been a decline in the number of shortening ordered. There has been approximately 33% decline in orders for shortening in all FNS programs. For FDPIR, that decline was 31%, just one third less between FY04-05 and FY 05-06. It was stated that because sometimes orders are not filled on time or decreased caseloads, that the order numbers may not truly reflect take rates for the shortening. Also, there were concerns about removing it from the package all together. However, it was also restated that the shortening is something that USDA is considering removing from all their commodity distribution programs. This product is not a non-nutrient dense food item and is considered to be an added fat. By offering shortening in the program it goes against one of the key recommendations from the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* which is to limit fats in the diet that are high saturated fats and/or *trans* fatty acids.

A committee member mentioned that such a change will be challenging for some participants. However, with the help of nutrition education material we could again help to promote a healthy eating lifestyle. Also, there was a discussion of the new no *trans* fats shortenings available on the commercial market. However, FNS reported that these new shortenings although contain no *trans* fats may be higher in calories and saturated fats. Also, FNS reported that the appearance of this new shortening (yellowish in color) is quite different than the regular white color they are accustomed to receiving. This difference in color may be taken by most people as being rancid or believing that the product is not safe to consume.

A suggestion from the group was to again focus on offering only cooking oils as a way to offer healthier fats since cooking oils do not contain *trans* fat. According to KCCO, our oils do not contain *trans* fat. The only oil we purchase containing *trans* fat is a liquid shortening. Some participants reported back to ITO Program Directors that the oils (blended) currently offered do not work as well as for frying/cooking purposes. It was stated that since the oils are blended the smoke points in them are different producing a fishy smell and taste. CDC had provided some time ago a chart with various oils such as canola, corn, safflower, etc. that could be considered for the program. By using a single type ingredient cooking oil versus a blended type of cooking oil the fishy odor/taste should be resolved since the smoke point would be unique to the one oil. More information (nutrition education) would have to be used to help explain how oils could be used effectively. A study (NIH) not too long ago indicated that fat intake among the Navajo Nation was considerably higher than the national average. A tremendous amount of effort is being made to teach Native Americans to focus on heart health including eating habits that can be found in programs such as *Honoring the Gift of Heart Health* program.

**Task 3a: FNS** will review the FNS 152 to determine the actual take rate for shortening and report to committee **due by Thursday, February 15, 2007.**

**Task 3b: FSA** to research oils such as canola, safflower, corn, etc. (no blended oils) for the program. **Due to FNS by Thursday, February 22, 2007.**

C. **Increase Whole Grains**

Discussion 4 – On the 50/50 bakery mix FSA reported that any flour that states it is wheat flour is already a blend of wheat and white flour. The only way it is not a blend is if it states "100 % whole wheat." Therefore, a mix would be available; however, we have not received the quotes from KCCO. The concern that was discussed on behalf of FNS is that we are looking at a 50/50 blend of "whole" wheat flour and white flour since our goal is to increase whole grain consumption. By offering a regular blend of wheat/white flour we are meeting our goal of offering more whole grains as recommended in the *2005 Dietary Guidelines*.

**Task 4: FSA** will re-survey vendors to see if a 50/50 mix consisting of whole wheat and white flour available on the commercial market. If so, obtain product information. **Due to FNS by COB Thursday, February 22, 2007.**

II. **Goal 2 - Guide rates: Modify to accommodate the 1-person households' monthly distribution package and select smaller pack sizes for certain commodities.**

A. Choose smaller pack sizes from current chart to narrow down to top 3-4 items.

Discussion 5 – Availability of some items from the chart were discussed among the group.

- i. Saltine Crackers – FSA was able to determine that the requested 8 oz pack size is available on the commercial market. The cost/lb would increase from \$0.7125 to \$0.8250. By offering the 8 oz packaging in the monthly distribution this adds about 6 cents per month to the basic package cost.
- ii. Farina/Cream of Wheat - It was determined that the 14oz pack size currently offered in the food package is the smallest available on the commercial market. By offering this product every month for the 1 person-household it would add an additional cost of 16 cents per person per month.

As far as the nutrients are concerned, overall there would not be a significant increase to the basic food package. Some nutrients that would increase included: calories – up 25; carbohydrates - 5g; sodium – 1mg, and Ca – 1mg. All other nutrients such as fat, sat fat, vitamin A & C, iron, and protein remained the same. Again you can see this does not significantly change the nutritional value of the package, but does allow for 1 person household to conveniently receive it every month. A suggestion from one of the work group members was to see if the 1-person household could receive a package of the Farina every month but forgo one of the other non-whole grain breakfast cereals.

- iii. Oats – FSA was able to determine that a smaller pack size is available for the quick oats in an 18 oz tube (canister). The estimated cost for the product in the smaller pack size is about twice the amount we are currently purchasing it at \$0.3518/lb for the 42 oz compared to \$0.7781/lb for the 18 oz. By offering the new pack size in the program, we are adding an additional 41 cents per person for the basic food package.

Overall, the cost of changing these three commodities would increase the cost of the food package by 65 cents (1 dollar to be safe) per person per month.

**Task 5a: ITO Program Directors** in order to determine our next steps please decide if the above changes for the whole grains Discussion 5 (i, ii, and iii) are acceptable for your programs. **Respond by COB February 15, 2007.**

     Yes      No (If no, please share your concerns.)

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Macaroni and Cheese – By April 1, Kansas City Commodity Operations (KCCO) stated that all Group B commodities will be commercial. This means that the macaroni and cheese we have been seeking would be available to offer to our recipients. It will be the same type commonly found on the shelves in your local grocery stores. By doing this, this will eliminate the problem we have been having with the thick walled macaroni. However, I am not sure how this will influence the cost as FSA did not provide cost information in time for the call.

**Task 5b: FSA** provide cost associated with change in macaroni and cheese package as well as confirm pack size that will be available. **Respond by COB February 22, 2007.**

Cheese – At the time of call, FSA had not heard back from KCCO on the availability on the 2 1/2 lb. loaf of cheese. On January 17, 2007, FNS also tried to reach to KCCO to obtain this information for the call. From our brief discussion with them it is our understanding that this may not be an option but we are still hopeful that a vendor may decide to partake in this package size.

As of January 22, 2007 FSA has received new information regarding the reduced-fat cheese. The reduced-fat cheese is now available in a 5-pound sliced loaf for approximately \$1.45/lb. This will help to settle the issue of trying to find vendors who could provide a 2 ½ pound loaf, or offering the current 2-pound loaf and then trying to make-up for the missing pound.

**Task 5c: ITO Program Directors** to survey recipients to see offering the cheese in a sliced 5 pound loaf would be favorable. **Respond by COB February 15, 2007.**

     Yes      No (If no, please share your concerns.)

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### III. Goals 3 - Explore possibility of offering UHT milk in the program.

- A. Discussion 6 – FSA's responded by email stating it was understood in October 2006 that we had decided that UHT milk at \$3.71 a gallon was too high for the program. The buying power per year for UHT milk would be 1,821,241 gallons, while the buying power of Nonfat dry milk would be 7,843,138 gallons with the same dollar amount.

However, I believe FNS suggested that although we know the price for the 32 oz carton was more expensive we were trying to determine the availability of the larger 64 oz carton. As we mentioned, we are looking to see if we could off-set the cost by reducing the orders of evaporated milk or eliminating it in the program since take rates have declined. According to the orders, comparing FY04-05 to FY05-06 there was an 8% decline in orders for evaporated milk for FDPIR.

**Task 6a: FSA** to research the availability and cost of a 64 oz carton UHT milk. **Due to FNS by COB February 22, 2007.**

**Task 6b: FNS** to review take rates on evaporated milk and NDM by next call. **Due to committee by COB February 22, 2007.**

### IV. Old business -

- A. Corn Syrup – A member of the group raised the concern about corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) currently offered in the program. Although this is something we are still very much interested in partaking as a goal, as a group we decided to focus our efforts on the above items for the current review cycle. FNS responded similarly, like that of the shortening, USDA is looking at possibly removing this from all of its commodity programs due the recommendations found in the *2005 Dietary Guidelines* that suggest choosing or preparing foods with little added sugars. We have recently been bombarded with emails and calls from our states distributing agencies concerned about the HFCS in our products. States like California and New York have decided to not offer any products made with HFCS.

A committee member expressed concerns that the corn syrup currently offered did not contain HFCS. However, after checking the specification on the corn syrup offered, the corn syrup offered in the program in fact is made with HFCS. So while it may be on the backburner for FDPIR it is on the forefront for all USDA commodity programs.

- B. Current changes to the guide rates for canned and frozen meat products included increasing the amount of frozen ground beef and frozen cut-up chicken that may be substituted for canned meat products. Over the next few months, FNS will monitor if any changes have occurred in take rates between the canned meats and frozen meats by recipients. (On track)
- C. Revisit canned meat/frozen meats list – With more and more tribal organizations procuring coolers for the warehouses the demand for canned meats items may decrease. It has been mentioned many times by group members that many of the recipients do not favor the canned meat commodities and would prefer more frozen meats. To help determine our next steps regarding offering alternatives to the canned meats in the program, we will use the information above in IV B as our guide. (On track).
- D. Juice Concentrate – AMS was not available on the call to provide any updates. However, it has been noted that AMS will be attending industry meetings in April 2007 which will serve as vehicle to informing the industry about the changes - moving away from juice in the 46 oz can (full strength) to 11.5 oz can juice (concentrate).
- E. Cream of Mushroom Soup & Hominy – AMS re-approached JWOD concerning their ability to produce these product. From their meeting, it was determined that JWOD was interested. If any production occurs, it may take up to a year or two. **AMS** will keep the group posted if any updates are available on the next call.

**Task 7a AMS** to provide any updates regarding the juice concentrate, cream of mushroom soup and canned hominy. **Due to FNS by COB Thursday, March 1, 2007.**

- F. Commercial Labels – As mentioned above, KCCO has stated that all Group B commodities will be in commercial labels effective April 1.

**Task 7b ITO Program Directors** to inform warehouses to be on the look out for this as well as report any Group B products not commercially labeled.

**Next Conference Call -**

The next work group session will be at 1:00 PM Eastern time (10:00 AM Pacific Time) on either **Thursday, March 15 or 22, 2007**. An email to the group will be sent out for a group consensus of the date. Sheldon will provide the agenda and call-in information when it is available.

Meeting adjourned at 2:26 PM EST.  
Minutes submitted by,  
Sheldon Gordon