

Minutes

In Attendance: FDPIR Program Directors - Ray Capoeman, Lorraine Davis, Charles "Red" Gates, Betty Jo Graveen, Roxanna Newsom, and Pat Roberts, FNS - Peggy Cantfil, Sheldon Gordon, and Cathie McCullough, and FSA - Sharon Hadder

On Call: FNS - Rosalind Cleveland, Lillie Ragan, Karen Kell, and Melanie Todd; AMS - Catherine Smith (for Dennis Pearson), CDC - Susan Anderson and Lorraine Whitehair, FSA - Bill March.

I) Butter

- a) Cathie McCullough, Director of FNS' Food Distribution Programs, thanked the work group for their continued support over the past year. She repeated the announcement Under Secretary Nancy Johner stated at the 21st NAFDPIR Conference about FNS possibly exploring a viable alternative to butter.
- b) However, Cathie pointed out that butter will not be reinstated into FDPIR. Butter is not available in any other commodity program, to ensure that FNS meets its goals of offering foods lower in fat, sodium, and sugar. She suggested that a flyer or hand-out be given to participants to help them understand why butter was removed from the package.
- c) There were concerns if a butter alternative is added to the package that something else would need to be taken out to keep the cost of the package neutral.
- d) Some alternatives that were discussed among the work group were: an all-fruit spread as well as products like I Can't Believe It's Not Butter, Promise, Land O'Lakes spread, and Smart Balance. Olive oil was considered previously; however, it is still not available domestically in the quantities needed to support USDA programs.

TASK 1: Assignment due to FNS by Friday, July 18, 2008

Task A: ITO Programs Directors/States will survey participants to see if they would prefer an all-fruit spread or butter alternative spread.

Task B: FSA will determine the availability and types of spreads available to USDA for purchase.

Task C: AMS will determine the availability and types of all-fruit spreads available to USDA for purchase.

Task D: FNS will prepare chart of nutrients of commercial spreads on the market compared to butter.

II) Peanuts

- a) There was discussion regarding the sodium content in the packaged peanuts. In the SWRO, salted peanuts were provided to the ITO's. Work group members stated in the past peanuts have been offered as unsalted. However, the peanuts did not move through the inventory. When salted peanuts were offered, participants jumped at the opportunity to take them. The sodium content should be reviewed for possibly a lightly salted peanut as an alternative to heavily salted peanut. Offering heavily salted peanuts could send a mixed message to participants.

TASK 2: Farm Service Agency (FSA) and FNS will be closely reviewing the specification for sodium content as well as the variety of peanuts offered.

III) Implementation of New Products: Monitor Participant Acceptance Through Fiscal Year 2009.

- a) Fresh Tomatoes had been going well until recent FDA notice of salmonella incident.
- b) Ultra High Temp (UHT) milk has been receiving rave reviews from participants.
- c) Beef Roast has been well accepted; however, participants have concerns about its appearance. The vacuum packaging alters the natural shape of the beef roast making it appear like a "mound of meat." FNS will check with AMS in regards to packaging criteria to see if this is preventable. Also, AMS has changed the specification to make future purchases a consistent 2-lb beef roast. This will eliminate ITO's from counting shipment for inventory control and distribution.
- d) Turkey Ham has not been as popular among participants as expected. Peggy Cantfil (FNS - Operations Branch) indicated that FNS warehouses have turkey ham supplies that are well above

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the demand. Please encourage participants to try the new product. FNS will send out helpful information to pass along to participants on how to use the turkey ham.

- e) Canned chicken seems to be going well. However, it was pointed out that in the SWRO some of their shipments have been inconsistent in quality. The chunks of meat were not always noticeable and a red vein-like material was present in the can. Cathy Smith (AMS-representative) will take closer look into this matter.

IV) Whole Grain Rotini Sampling

At the 21st NAFDPIR Annual Conference in Green Bay WI, FNS held a sampling of whole grain pastas and low-sodium tomato sauce for attendees to taste. The results from the survey indicated that the attendees were very much in favor of the whole grain rotini. Many work group members observed some attendees going back for seconds as well as some making a meal out of the pasta available.

The low-sodium tomato sauce also received great feedback from the attendees. Although low-sodium sauce is currently being offered, FNS decided to have attendees sample it in case they were not aware of the change in the product formulation. All in all, the sampling of products was a great success.

The work group was asked if they would like to order rotini through multi-shipment starting Oct-Dec and all replied yes. FNS will work with FSA to making this an available ordering option for the package. It will be categorized with the other pastas currently available.

V) Grain Packaging – Egg Noodles, Macaroni, and Spaghetti

- a) Members voiced concerns regarding the packaging for grain products such as macaroni and spaghetti. The cellophane bags have been bursting at the seams when ITO warehouse staff is loading/unloading commodities. Some ITO's have just taped the seams and passed them out to participants in order to offer these foods. FSA indicated that we are using commercially labeled products so the strength of the bags should be the same as it is in the stores.
- b) It was suggested that ITO's file formal complaint via email, fax, or the toll-free hotline. To file a complaint, ITO's must have the requisition number to determine which vendor produced the product. This will help FNS determine if there are trends and notify vendors if they need to change their manufacturing practices. Any additional information that could be supplied such as digital pictures would also be helpful when filing the complaint.

TASK 3: FNS will work with FSA to see what, if any, changes can be made to the current packaging requirements.

VI) Juice Containers

- a) FNS asked work group members to consider changing the juice container from the current 46 oz can to a 64 oz plastic bottle. AMS suggested this would create more availability of vendors to offer juice in the programs as well as help to increase competition and lower cost. Currently, there are few vendors that produce juice in aluminum cans whereas the plastic bottle is used more frequently by many vendors. Generally, the work group seemed receptive to using the 64 oz plastic bottle.
- b) Guide Rates - Currently, each participant may receive up to three cans per month totaling 138 fl oz. If the plastic bottles were offered, participants would receive two 64-oz plastic bottles, 128 fl oz per month. The work group agreed that this change would be acceptable for the package.

Task 4: FNS will work with AMS to further evaluate the possibility of offering juice in the plastic bottles in FDPIR and its other household programs.

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VII) Commercial labels –

The new USDA labels for canned fruits and vegetables will begin appearing on commodity products in the fall of 2008. It has significantly been revised to add: a more commercial-like appeal; actual photographs of the fruit/vegetable; label use a 4-color method; printed on glassy paper; and, has been branded as “America’s Finest.” Many work group members were impressed with the outcome and were happy to see the paragraph regarding “Distributed by USDA in cooperation...” deleted from USDA’s label.

VIII) Wrap-up

- a) **Hard Cooked Eggs** - AMS poultry division is requesting the work group to consider hard cooked eggs. There are some concerns regarding the shelf life and warehouse spacing. AMS will further investigate the product to address work group members concerns.
- b) **Fresh Produce** - FNS will obtain the fresh produce list from the Department of Defense and present to work group for consideration of other possible produce in FDPIR.
- c) **Cream of Mushroom Soup**- FNS will follow-up on the request for a low-fat, low-sodium cream of mushroom soup. AMS had indicated in the past a vendor was interested in producing this product, but they were years away from offering it. FNS will check with AMS on the status of the vendor as well as other options such as at least the availability of either a low-sodium cream of mushroom or low-fat cream of mushroom soup. FNS will provide a chart to compare nutrients to the work group for consideration.
- d) **Canned Hominy** - An initial investigation found that canned hominy was not available domestically. FNS will check with AMS to see if the availability status has changed.
- e) **CDC Comments** – Susan Anderson will submit an article for the next FDPIR newsletter. She also stated there was a recent Indian Health Service summit that included topics on policy laws on nutrition and activity.
- f) **Sweet Potatoes** – The work group had agreed at the last annual conference that we should offer canned sweet potatoes seasonally. This decision was made at the same time as the canned pumpkin; however, the sweet potato decision was not acted upon. The work group members were asked again if this is still suitable to which all agreed.
- g) **Low-Fat Bakery Mix** – At the last annual conference, the work group had agreed to discontinue the regular baking mix and offer only the low-fat bakery mix. The work group members were asked again if this is still suitable to which all agreed. The low-fat bakery mix has been widely accepted among participants. Regular bakery mix will be phased out of all USDA programs between July and September 2008.
- h) **Brown Rice** – The work group was asked to consider whether a parboiled brown rice should be offered in the food package. Parboiled brown rice cooks roughly about the same time as regular white rice. The work group would like to have more information - pack size and nutrient information.
- i) **Farm Bill** - The Farm Bill was discussed regarding the section that affects FDPIR which includes a Report to Congress within a 180 days after the bill was approved (November 2008). It also ask the Under Secretary to address the following:
 - i) Derived process for determining the food package;
 - ii) Extent to which food package
 - (1) Address nutritional needs
 - (2) Conforms (or fails to conform) to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines
 - (3) Addresses (or fails to address) the nutritional health challenges specific to N.A.
 - (4) Limitations by distribution costs or challenges in infrastructure
 - iii) Secretary’s Plan
 - (1) Revise and update food package if it does not conform to recent Dietary Guidelines; or
 - (2) Rationale why a revision to the food package is not necessary

Meeting adjourned at 11:45AM (CST)