

School Programs Commodity Update

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

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MESSAGE FROM THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION DIVISION DIRECTOR

It was great to see so many of you at the School Nutrition Association Annual National Conference in Baltimore in July! We like to hear what issues are important to schools at the local level. We held several workshops about commodities during the

conference, and we would appreciate your feedback. If you have any comments and/or ideas for future commodity sessions, please e-mail them directly to our Program Support Branch at: fdd-psb@fns.usda.gov.

Many people had questions about how the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program works. To address this, we are including an article on Page 2 which further discusses this program and how funds are allocated at the local school district level. For more information, go to: <http://www.commodityfoods.usda.gov> and click on the new DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program's home page.

Some of you also asked if and when our Electronic Commodity Ordering System (ECOS) might be available to you at the school district level. This past school year, North Carolina and Georgia joined Virginia and Connecticut in allowing their schools to have access to ECOS for food ordering. Many States are phasing ECOS in, starting with large school districts, co-ops, or state warehouses, for example. We are also making ECOS available to receiving organizations, i.e., distributors, warehouses, and processors. When they can access the system and track orders in real time, they will be better equipped to meet your needs. Many school districts and States are concerned about increases in distribution and

administrative fees. This is an area we plan to review. Our long range plans include an assessment of State Administrative Expense funding and the factors that affect distribution and administrative charges. Ideally, we would like to work with the American Commodity Distribution Association to identify best practices and share them among States, with the ultimate goal of maximizing ordering and distribution efficiencies and minimizing these fees.

We noted there is a growing interest in commodity co-ops. They can assist in controlling costs. Co-ops can serve multiple purposes beyond uniting for the procurement of commercial purchases. Co-ops can also procure processing services and help the States coordinate commodity orders. We encourage you to work with your State distributing agency and share your co-op's organization and administration plans, since co-ops can affect a State's distribution and food ordering systems.

According to the School Nutrition Association website, the September issue of School Foodservice & Nutrition Magazine will feature an article about commodities. So be sure to check it out! *Cathie McCullough* //

COMMODITY UPDATE

To assist the pork market this year, we are testing purchases of new cooked pork items. They are pork patties, both 2.7 and 1.2 ounce, pork links, and pork crumbles. A customer survey will be sent to those schools that are receiving these products. Please make sure you submit your comments. We will review the results and consider future purchases.

The complete listing of commodities offered to States can be found on our website at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/sy06-schfoods.pdf>. //

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM

Our April 2005 issue included an article about the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which is available to schools through a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). School food service directors have asked about the allocation of funds for this program at the local school district level.

DoD fresh "commodity" dollars are limited - Each State agency has a dollar figure called a commodity entitlement which equals the meals served times the per-meal-rate for that year. State agencies order USDA commodities up to the amount of that entitlement. Within the entitlement dollars, a limited amount, \$50 million, has been authorized by Congress for the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

USDA allocates and offers these dollars to States **that choose** to participate in the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. States or school districts may order fresh fruits and vegetables, up to their portion of the \$50 million that is designated for this program nationwide each year. USDA charges these orders against the State's total entitlement. Thus, the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program does not represent an **additional** funding source for commodities. As more States decide to join the Program, each State's share of the \$50 million is necessarily

reduced since the Program is capped at \$50 million annually. By the same token, if additional school districts within a State decide to participate in the Program, each school district's share of product within the State is necessarily reduced.

In school year 2005-2006, 47 State agencies are participating in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, but not all of their local school districts will participate, for a variety of reasons. Each State Distributing Agency decides how to allocate its DoD Fresh allotment among its local school districts. Some States allocate a small amount to all of their school districts, and some States limit participation to those school districts that helped with the original program pilot. Other States have districts that simply choose not to participate because they have access to a satisfactory produce supplier and may find it simply does not work for their district.

The DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program was intended to provide an alternative to USDA purchases of fresh products and designed to supplement and to complement school districts' commercial purchases of fresh produce. States should treat this as any other commodity ordering option.

However, as explained in our April 2005 article, **all** school districts also have the option to use their Section 4 & 11 meal reimbursement funds to purchase fresh produce through DoD. Many participating school districts exercise this option to purchase additional fresh produce through DoD once they exhaust their allotment from the State for the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Some school districts exclusively use Section 4 & 11 meal reimbursement funds for this purpose. Contact your State Distributing Agency for more details about how your district can access the services of DoD to procure fresh produce. You can also find additional information at this DoD website:

<http://www.dscp.dla.mil/subs/produce/school/index.htm> //

USDA ANNOUNCES VALUE OF DONATED FOODS AS 17.50 CENTS PER MEAL

For the 2006 school year, July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006, USDA announced the value of donated foods or cash-in-lieu of donated foods it gives schools and institutions as 17.50 cents. The per-meal rate applies to each lunch served by schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. This increase has been entered into the system and ECOS should reflect current balances.

For the 2006 school year, the commodity rate for commodity-only schools is 39.50 cents for each free, reduced price, and paid lunch served. USDA announced this rate increase in the July 18, 2005, *Federal Register*. //

BONUS COMMODITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR SY 2006

USDA is offering schools a number of bonus commodities. These bonus products are being delivered July 2005 through June 2006.

Currently available commodities are:

- Dehydrated Potatoes
- Cranberry products, frozen and canned
- Apple products:
 - Fresh
 - Frozen slices
 - Applesauce
 - Canned slices
- Peaches, canned
- Fruit Mix, canned //

FOOD SAFETY CORNER

NEW FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOLS

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Congress mandated two food safety provisions for schools that participate in the National School Lunch or National School Breakfast Programs. The two provisions include one requiring schools to increase their food safety inspections to two per year, and one requiring the implementation of a food safety program based on Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. Both provisions are effective July 1, 2005.

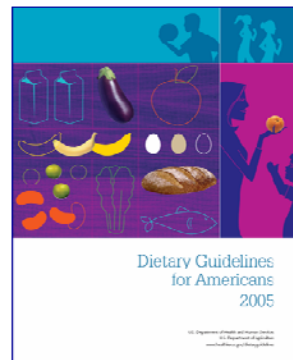
According to the new provisions, the two health inspections per year must be performed by a State or local agency responsible for food safety inspections. Schools also must now post a copy of the results of the latest health inspection in a publicly visible location and provide a copy of the results upon request. In addition, State agencies will be required to report to FNS the details of the number of schools meeting, exceeding, or falling short of the new inspection requirement.

In addition, schools participating in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program must implement a HACCP-based (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) school food safety program. FNS, with the cooperation of the Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration, recently developed and released guidance for school food authorities regarding this new requirement. The guidance provides the minimum elements which must be included in a school food safety program as well as basic steps in developing such a program. The guidance may be found on the FNS website at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/Downloadable/HACCPGuidance.pdf>

NEW GUIDING LIGHTS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATORS: THE 2005 DIETARY GUIDELINES & MYPYRAMID

USDA unveiled two new nutrition education tools earlier this year that will impact all of USDA's nutrition assistance programs, including the commodity food programs:

- The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which replaced the 2000 edition of the Dietary Guidelines, and
- MyPyramid, which replaced the 1992 Food Guide Pyramid.



The Dietary Guidelines for Americans

are the federal government's science-based advice to promote health and reduce risk of chronic diseases through nutrition and physical

activity. It also supports the nutrition and physical fitness pillars of President Bush's *HealthierUS* Initiative.

The new *Dietary Guidelines* highlight the principle that Americans should keep their weight within healthful limits and engage in ample physical activity. Taken together, the recommendations will help consumers make smart choices from every food group, get the most nutrition out of their calories consumed, and find a balance between eating and physical activity.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines contain 41 key recommendations - 23 for the general public and 18 for special populations - that are grouped into 9 general topics:

- Adequate Nutrients Within Calorie Needs
- Weight Management
- Physical Activity

- Food Groups to Encourage
- Fats
- Carbohydrates
- Sodium and Potassium
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Food Safety

For details about the 41 specific key recommendations for the general population, go to:

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/recommendations.htm>.

For the consumer publication, go to:

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/brochure.pdf>

MyPyramid is USDA's new food guidance system which was developed to replace the 1992 Food Guide Pyramid. A new approach was needed to motivate consumers to make healthier food choices and to ensure USDA's food guidance reflects the latest nutritional science.



The Pyramid is no longer a “one size fits all” concept. Now this new nutrition and health graphic symbol and slogan is also an online, interactive food guidance system. Its website allows for a personalized approach to navigate a healthier lifestyle that balances healthy eating and physical activity. Also, for the first time ever, physical activity becomes a prominent component of USDA's nutrition and health symbol.

How does the new pyramid differ from the old one? Take a look.

The MyPyramid.gov website has a number of helpful tools. Be sure to check it often, particularly the *For Professionals* page, which provides resources and information for use in developing education materials to assist in understanding Federal food guidance.

A couple of major adaptations of MyPyramid will soon be released this fall. These are the Spanish version of MyPyramid and a child-friendly version called MyPyramid for Kids. Starting mid-September, check the MyPyramid.gov website for news about their release. In addition to the online nutrition and health advice, tips, and other resources, the children's material will include an interactive game for the children and lesson plans for the teachers.

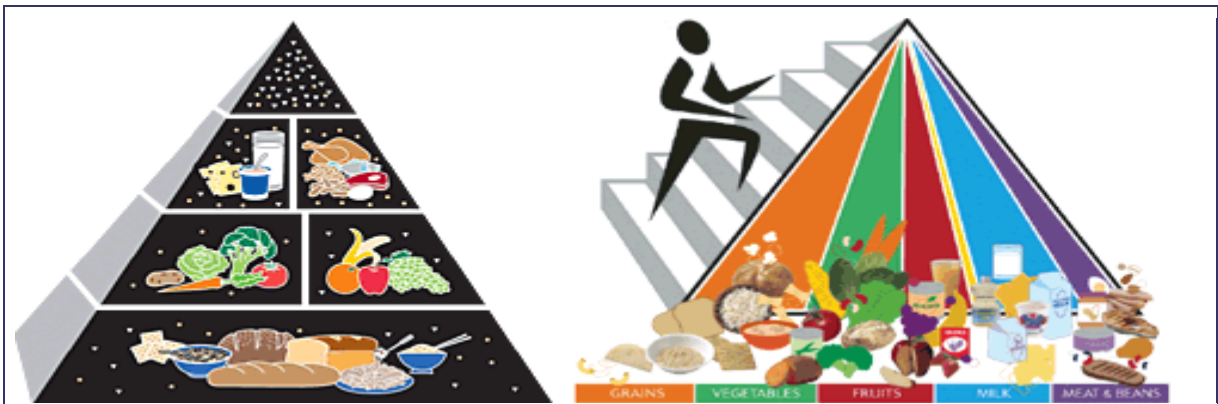
MyPyramid is built around 6 key concepts: personalization, gradual improvement, physical activity, variety, moderation, and proportionality -- to remind consumers to make healthy food choices and to be active on most days. //

Schools can receive an introductory MyPyramid packet containing:

- 1 full-size poster
- 1 tear-pad of MyPyramid mini-posters
- 1 Anatomy of MyPyramid handout

To receive an introductory MyPyramid packet, send your name, mailing address, and request to publication@cnpp.usda.gov.

Bulk copies can be purchased from the Government Printing Office (<http://bookstore.gpo.gov> or 1-866-512-1800) or Purdue University Press (media.order@purdue.edu or 1-888-398-4636).



Old: Food Guide Pyramid	New: MyPyramid
1 pyramid	12 pyramids
Two-dimensional graphic; one size fits all approach	Interactive tool; customized based on age, gender, and physical activity
Vague description of how much to eat ("servings sizes" could be confusing)	Specific description of how much to eat (for example, "2 cups of fruit per day")
<p>5 food groups (and suggested servings):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. bread, cereal, rice and pasta (6-11 servings) 2. vegetable (3-5 servings) 3. fruit (2-4 servings) 4. milk, yogurt and cheese (2-3 servings) 5. meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts (2-3 servings) <p>Plus the tip of the pyramid: fats, oils, and sweets (use sparingly)</p>	<p>5 food groups (and suggested amounts):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. grains (6 ounces) 2. vegetables (2½ cups) 3. fruits (2 cups) 4. milk (3 cups; 2 cups for kids aged 2 to 8) 5. meat and beans (5 ½ ounces) <p>Plus oils: oils (about 3-7 teaspoons, depending on age and gender)</p>
No mention of physical activity	Visual reminder of the importance of physical activity

Note: The MyPyramid recommendations above are for a 2,000-calorie per day diet. This is one of the 12 different calorie level plans that can be found on MyPyramid.gov. For the other calorie level plans and more information, log on to: www.MyPyramid.gov.

VISIT OUR ONE-STOP COMMODITY INFORMATION WEBSITE

For the latest and most updated information on the commodity programs, please visit our Commodity Food Network (CFN) Website. This website is a “One-stop, single point-of-contact website” that will give visitors instant access to a variety of commodity food information available on both Federal and non-Federal websites that support the USDA Commodity Programs. Check out this website at:

www.commodityfoods.usda.gov. //

COMMENTS

Please let us know if there are any commodity-related issues that you would like us to address in future editions of the School Programs Commodity Update. If you have any questions or comments on our products or services, including ways to improve our commodity fact sheets, please e-mail 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 520, Alexandria, VA 22302. //

ACRONYM LIST

DoD	Department of Defense
ECOS	The Electronic Commodity Ordering System
FDD	Food Distribution Division
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service
HACCP	Hazard analysis critical control point
SY	School Year
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

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