

What is the Child Nutrition Labeling Program?

APPENDIX M

What Is the Child Nutrition Labeling Program

The Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program is a voluntary Federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs.

Who runs the program?

The CN Labeling Program is run by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in cooperation with the following agencies:

- Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Agricultural Marketing Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service

The program is operated by FNS directly with commercial food processing firms.

How does the program work?

The program requires an evaluation of a product's formulation by FNS to determine its contribution toward meal pattern requirements. It allows manufacturers to state this contribution on their labels. The program provides a warranty against audit claims for purchasers of CN-labeled products.

What products are eligible for CN labels?

- Main dish products which contribute to the Meat/Meat Alternate component of the meal pattern requirements. Examples of these products include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions.
- Juice and juice drink products which contain at least 50 percent full-strength juice by volume. This includes such products as grape drink, fruit punch, and juice drink bars.

To carry CN labels, eligible products must:

- Be produced under *Federal Inspection by USDA or U.S. Display Consortium*.
- Have the contribution of Meat/Meat Alternate products determined using yields in the *USDA Food Buying Guide*.

Are manufacturers required to CN label products?

There is no Federal requirement that anyone make or purchase CN-labeled products. Purchasing decisions are left to the local level. If a CN-labeled product is desired, this must be clearly stated in purchasing specifications.

What are the advantages of using CN labels?

- A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a product toward the meal pattern requirements. It protects you from exaggerated claims about a product.
- A CN label provides a warranty against audit claims, if used according to the manufacturer's directions.

Do CN-labeled products cost more?

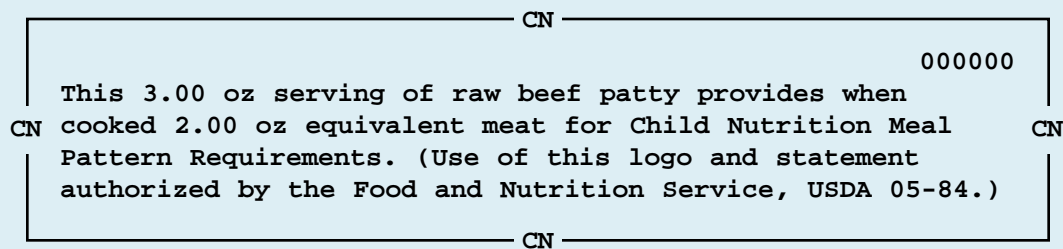
They should not. Cost comparison between two meat products should be based on the cost per ounce or pound that *contributes* to the meal pattern requirements, not on the *product* cost per ounce or pound.

How do I identify a CN label?

A CN label will always contain the following:

- The CN logo, which is a distinct border;
- A 6-digit product identification number;
- USDA/FNS authorization; and
- The month and year of approval.

A CN Label Example:



For more information:

For additional information about the CN Labeling Program, contact:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
Child Nutrition Division
3101 Park Center Drive—Room 1004
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500
Telephone: (703) 305-2621
Fax: (703) 305-2549

