

## **HISTORY OF FNS**

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), formerly known as the Food and Consumer Service, administers the nutrition assistance programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of FNS is to provide children and needy families better access to food and a more healthful diet through its food assistance programs and comprehensive nutrition education efforts.

FNS has elevated nutrition and nutrition education to a top priority in all its programs. In addition to providing access to nutritious food, FNS also works to empower program participants with knowledge of the link between diet and health.

The agency was established Aug. 8, 1969, but many of the food programs originated long before FNS existed as a separate agency. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program), now the cornerstone of USDA's nutrition assistance, began in its modern form in 1961, but it had its origins in the Food Stamp Plan to help the needy in the 1930's. The National School Lunch Program also has its roots in Depression-era efforts to help low-income children. The Needy Family Program, which has evolved into the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, was the primary means of food assistance during the Great Depression.

FNS works in partnership with the States in all its programs. States determine most administrative details regarding distribution of food benefits and eligibility of participants, and FNS provides funding to cover most of the States' administrative costs.

Congress appropriated \$82.7 billion for FNS programs in Fiscal Year 2010. By comparison, FNS programs cost \$1.6 billion in 1970, the first full year of the agency's operation.