



Agricultural Marketing Service

USDA Foods Product Information: More than Just the (Nutrition)Facts!

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Topics

- New product development
- Product information
- Looking ahead



New Product Development

- USDA receives requests from industry, States, recipients
- USDAFoods@fns.usda.gov
- FNS reviews info. If product warrants further research, AMS contacts industry representatives for additional information
- If sufficient industry support, schedule product review.



New Products: Important Considerations

- For NSLP, how does the product support the meal pattern?
- For household programs, does the product reflect Dietary Guidelines and food package/recipient needs?
- Market conditions- availability, sufficient lead time for research and development



Updating specifications

- Meat/Poultry/Fish–(NSLP) phasing in sodium upper limits; CN labels, product formulation statements
- Fruits and Vegetables –increase variety, bulk for further processing
- Clarify/remove some added ingredients
- Explore packaging options



Updating specifications

- Research current industry practices
- Draft specification language
- Notice to Trade: Opportunity for industry comment
- Incorporate suggestions/comments and finalize



Product Information

- Key impact:
 - ordering decisions, confidence in products, serving safe meals
 - updating specifications and national nutrient database
 - Includes nutrition facts panel, ingredients lists, allergens, and Kosher certification (if applicable)



Product Information

- Helps CP/LPS/FV team review specifications to make sure they reflect current manufacturing practices.
- States and Schools often use USDA Foods product information to create other bid specifications.



Product Information

Options:

- Provide nutrition/allergen/ingredient information to create a library
 - January 15 deadline for submitting info for SY 15-16
 - Information will be available as schools make entitlement decisions
 - Provides an opportunity for CP, LPS and FV teams to work more closely with companies as they reformulate products
 - Pros/Cons –challenges or timing issues with existing R&D plans?



Product Information

Options:

- Provide nutrition/allergen/ingredient information via password protected portal
 - Still in research/development
 - Will utilize format similar to GS-1
 - Submit info as soon as portal is available
 - Allows frequent updating throughout year



Product Information

Other Options:

- Modify Master Solicitation or product specification?
 - Will become evaluation factor for contracting
- Require as part of vendor pre-qualification process?



Looking Ahead

- Products under consideration:
 - Frozen sweet potatoes (oven ready forms)
 - Frozen vegetable blends
 - Fresh produce for TEFAP –apples/pears/potatoes
 - Lower sodium turkey products



Questions for Day 2

- What further sodium reductions are vendors anticipating for the upcoming School Year?
- Which products are not aligned with current commercial packaging options?
- How can we streamline the foods available lists and still meet dual mission?



Resources

www.ams.usda.gov/commoditypurchasing

- New vendor qualification instructions
- Historical purchases
- Notices to the Trade
- Specifications/Requirements



