



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive
Alexandria, VA
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DATE: November 3, 2014

SUBJECT: Information and Guidance on USDA Foods Availability
for SY14-15

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Distributing Agencies
All States

I am writing to provide information and guidance to State agencies and school food authorities (SFAs) on the current status of USDA Foods orders for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). I am acutely aware of the challenges we have experienced in fulfilling orders from States for a variety of protein products ordered for NSLP.

As we noted in the September 22, 2014 memo entitled "Information and Guidance on the Domestic Beef Market," wholesale prices for ground beef have increased more than 30% since last year and supplies of domestic beef are tight nationwide. While USDA has had difficulty obtaining bulk beef for further processing, beef products that USDA delivers directly to States (i.e., USDA fine grind, patties and cooked meat items) have been steadier in supply and have experienced fewer related delays. We have also experienced challenges in fulfilling orders for some chicken products. Market conditions, increased demand and vendor capacity for these products has limited some, but not all, of the chicken products we have been able to purchase and deliver this fall. Lastly, USDA has experienced difficulty obtaining USDA Foods turkey products due to vendors' limited supply of birds.

We recognize the strain that food order delays and cancellations place on your SFA's and schools and are working diligently to offer as many options as possible for ordering in the second half of the school year. On October 27, State Distributing Agencies received an email message with an update on a variety of protein and other products which we believe will be available for purchase for the second half of the school year. As in the past, we will keep you posted on the status of these procurements as updates become available to try and provide sufficient lead time for planning purposes. As updates are provided, I encourage you to read this information carefully and adjust orders as needed to ensure your districts receive the full benefit of their USDA Foods entitlement.

While we will continue to keep State agencies apprised of new developments regarding market conditions and related procurements, we expect State agencies to immediately distribute all relevant information to their SFAs and work with SFAs to adjust USDA Food orders as needed in order to assist with school meal planning.

Regional Directors
State Directors
State Distributing Agencies
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I know these challenges are significant and want to assure you that FNS will continue to work with you, USDA purchasing agencies and industry to resolve USDA Foods availability issues. Thank you for your patience and partnership.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Diane M. Kriviski", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Diane M. Kriviski
Deputy Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs