OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CHILD NUTRITION (CN) LABELING PROGRAM - *At A Glance*

What is the CN Labeling Program?

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CN Labeling Program is voluntary. There is no federal requirement that manufacturers make CN labeled products or that schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs purchase foods with CN labels
- CN labeling provides food manufacturers the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels.
- CN labels assure institutions participating in Child Nutrition Programs that the item, when served as directed, credits toward the required meal pattern.
- Prior to use, 1. The USDA must approve CN labels, 2. Manufacturers must have quality control procedures approved by the either Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), 3. inspection oversight that meets USDA requirements must be in place.

Resources

Individual training and additional resources for the CN Labeling Program can be found on the ODE School Nutrition training webpage.

How Does the CN Labeling Program Work?

Manufacturer submits product to USDA

↓

USDA evaluates submitted manufacturer product and verifies that the claim of meal pattern contribution on the label is accurate.

↓

AMS, or NMFS also approves labels as appropriate

↓

FNS approves final label

USDA provides CNP operators a warranty against audit claims if the product is used according to the manufacturer's directions as printed on the approved CN label.

An Authentic CN Label Contains

- ✓ **Product Name**
- ✓ **Ingredient Statement**
- ✓ **CN contribution statement**
- ✓ **Inspection Legend**

All four parts must be present on a product carton in order for the CN label to be valid.

Documentation Required for Review

(Sponsors are required to have one of the following on file for each CN labeled menu item)

- Original CN Label from the product carton.
- Photograph of the CN label.
  - ✓ Label must be attached to the product carton.
- Photocopy of the CN label.

  Use Photocopy when:
  - ✓ Label is laser printed on product carton.
  - ✓ Label cannot be easily removed.
- CN labels that are photographed or photo copied must be visible and legible.
- New guidance from USDA allows the watermarked CN labels as acceptable documentation when:
  - ✓ Watermarks are used when the CN contribution statement is on product information other than the actual product carton.
  - ✓ Manufacturers provide sponsors with watermarked CN labels during the bidding process.
  - ✓ Watermarked CN labels can be hardcopy or electronic copy and must contain the product name and CN number.
  - ✓ Watermarked CN labels <u>must</u> be accompanied by purchase invoice when used for product documentation.

Advantages of CN Labels

- Provides a warranty against audit claims if the product is used according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Clearly identifies the contribution of a product toward the meal pattern requirements.
- Protects the purchaser from exaggerated claims about the product.
- Simplifies cost comparison of similar products.
- Relieves sponsor of the requirement to obtain a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement to document the product's contribution to the Meal Pattern.

Products That Are Eligible for CN Labels

- Main dish products that contribute to M/MA component.
- The CN label may also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of the main dish product:
  - Vegetable contributions (sub-groups) will be shown
    - NSLP: Utilize the sub-group contributions as listed.
    - CACFP/SFSP: Total the crediting information for all vegetable subgroups listed.
  - Whole Grain-Rich ingredients will be identified
    - 'oz. eq. grains' indicates the product meets the grain requirement for NSLP (and therefore, the bread requirement for CACFP/SFSP).
    - "bread" or "bread alternate" indicates the product meets the enriched grain criteria for CACFP/SFSP.