CREDITING TO MEET THE MEAL PATTERN FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS – *At a Glance*

Schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs must be able to document that any foods used in school menus meet the USDA meal pattern requirements.

- Creditable Foods are those foods that may be counted toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for a reimbursable meal.
- Non-Creditable Foods are those foods that do not count toward meeting the meal pattern.

METHODS OF CREDITING

USDA Food Buying Guide – A resource published by the USDA to support management systems for menu planning, food purchasing, food production, and portioning in the Child Nutrition Programs. It will help determine the specific contribution each food makes toward the meal pattern requirements.

Recipe Analysis Worksheet (RAW) – This spreadsheet is designed to help SNP sponsors calculate standardized recipe ingredient contributions to the meal pattern.

Exhibit A for Whole Grain-Rich Items – Used to determine the portion size required to provide 1-ounce grain equivalent, Prepared grain food product listed in Exhibit A are grouped based on their average grain content. Grains must meet the whole grain-rich requirement and meet other grain product requirements before the sponsor can use Exhibit A to determine creditable amounts.

Child Nutrition Label (CN) - A voluntary federal labeling program for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the USDA meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product.

Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (PFS) -

When a product formulation statement is used to determine crediting information for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, it must:

- indicate how the product credits toward the USDA meal pattern requirements;
- document how the manufacturer obtained the crediting information; and
- be prepared on manufacturer's letterhead with an original signature of a company official and the date of issue.

USDA Food Fact Sheets - Provide nutritional and crediting information for all materials distributed through the Food Distribution Programs.

RESOURCES

Individual training and additional resources for each of the methods for crediting meals can be found on the ODE School Nutrition training webpage.

FRUIT - Creditable fruits include:

- Fresh
- Frozen
- Canned in light syrup, water or fruit juice
- Dried

Fruits credit based on volume except dried fruit credits as twice the volume served. To be counted toward the fruits component, a menu item must provide a **minimum of 1/8 cup** of fruit.

Methods to credit Fruit include: USDA Food Buying Guide, CN Label, PFS, Recipe Analysis Worksheet (RAW), and USDA Foods Fact Sheet.

VEGETABLES – 5 subgroups: Dark Green, Red/Orange, Legumes, Starchy, and Other.

Creditable vegetables include:

- Fresh
- Frozen
- Canned, drained
- Dried, dehydrated

Vegetables credit based on volume except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, and tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted. To be counted toward the vegetables component, a menu item must provide a **minimum of 1/8 cup** of vegetable.

Methods to credit Vegetables include: USDA Food Buying Guide, CN Label, PFS, Recipe Analysis Worksheet (RAW), and USDA Foods Fact Sheet.

MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES - Creditable meat/meat alternates include:

- cooked lean meat, poultry or fish
- cheese
- beans and peas (legumes)
- eggs
- nut and seeds, nut butters
- commercial tofu
- yogurt or soy yogurt
- alternate protein products (APP)

The serving size refers to the **edible portion** of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish as served. Legumes credit as either a meat/meat alternate or a vegetable, but not both in the same meal. To be counted toward the meat/meat alternates component, a menu item must provide a **minimum of ¼ ounce equivalent** of meat/meat alternate.

Methods to credit Meat/Meat Alternates include: USDA Food Buying Guide, Recipe Analysis Worksheet (RAW), CN Label, PFS, and USDA Foods Fact Sheet.

GRAINS - All grains must be **Whole Grain-Rich**. Whole grain-rich products contain at least 50 percent whole grains. The remaining grain ingredients must be enriched.

Non-creditable grains (oat fiber, corn fiber, bran, germ, modified food starch, corn starch, and wheat starch (including vegetable flours)) must be less than 2% or 0.25 oz eq. of the product. To be counted toward the component, a menu item must provide a **minimum of ¼ ounce equivalent** of grains.

Methods to credit Grains include: USDA Food Buying Guide, Exhibit A, for whole-grain rich items, Recipe Analysis Worksheet (RAW), CN Label, PFS, and USDA Foods Fact Sheet.

FLUID MILK - Milk must be pasteurized, meet all state and local requirements and contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Only **low-fat (1%) unflavored** milk and **nonfat unflavored or flavored** milk can be served. Schools must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of fat content and/or flavor of milk for both lunch and breakfast.