



Food and Nutrition Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DATE: July 31, 2025

SUBJECT: USDA Foods Support American Farmers and Healthy School Meals

To: State Directors, State Distributing Agencies, All States

USDA Foods support American farmers and improve our nation's health by providing unprocessed or minimally processed, healthy, 100% American-grown foods to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) child nutrition programs. Your commitment to the USDA Foods programs and the school feeding programs that serve our 100% domestically grown and produced foods, directly aligns with the Administration's goal of creating new opportunities to connect America's Farmers to nutrition assistance programs.

USDA Foods in Schools exemplifies Secretary Rollins' priority of strengthening strategies to encourage healthy choices, healthy outcomes, and healthy families and support you in meeting your child nutrition meal pattern requirements including the Buy American Requirement. The USDA is committed to working to clarify regulatory requirements and minimize instances of fraud, waste, and program abuse as highlighted by President Trump and supported and executed throughout its programs. With these goals in mind, we are pleased to announce the release of this clarifying information to schools to support maximum use of USDA foods in your programs. USDA Foods support local economies and agricultural markets and are a valuable resource for offering a variety of nutritious options to children across the country in support of their health, wellness, and development.

Accessing USDA Foods

Child nutrition program operators have the flexibility to use USDA Foods entitlement funding to meet their specific child nutrition program needs. There are three ways to access safe, nutritious, American-grown foods through USDA Foods in Schools, including:

Food and Nutrition Service, Braddock Metro Center, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

1. **Direct Delivery:** Choose from over [150 direct delivered foods](#) including:
 - Fresh, canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables
 - Canned and dried beans
 - Frozen and canned meat, poultry, and fish
 - Enriched and whole grain pasta, rice, flour, and tortillas
 - Various yogurt and cheese products
 - Other proteins such as nuts, peanut butter, and eggs
2. **USDA Foods Processing Program:** Send USDA Foods to an approved commercial processor to convert into more convenient, ready-to-use end products. For example, whole apples may be delivered to a processor to process into apple slices.
3. **USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (USDA DoD Fresh):** Order a variety of fresh and often local produce through a partnership with the DoD Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). This option supports local food markets, farm-to-school activities, and engagement with local produce growers and vendors. Additionally, this option often allows schools and state agencies to request additional products that meet their unique needs and preferences.

Resources to Support Local Food Purchasing

- [Using Federal Funds to Purchase Local Foods](#) provides an overview of the various ways local foods can be purchased to serve in child nutrition programs.
- The [USDA Foods State of Origin Reports](#) show which USDA Foods products were purchased from each state.
- [Using USDA DoD Fresh for Local Produce Purchases](#) provides an overview of how to use the USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to offer local produce.

Resources to Support American Farmers

- The [USDA Foods in Schools Foods Available List \(FAL\)](#) contains all USDA Foods available for child nutrition programs.

- USDA welcomes new vendors that can provide high quality, American-grown foods for child nutrition programs. The [Become a USDA Foods Vendor](#) webpage provides a list of tools and resources to assist potential vendors with this process.
- The [How to Get Your Product Considered for USDA Foods](#) webpage outlines the criteria and process for adding new USDA Foods to the FAL.
- The [USDA Foods in Schools Further Processing Fact Sheet](#) provides an overview of how interested suppliers can participate in the USDA Foods Processing Program.

For more information about USDA Foods, please send inquiries to USDAFoods@usda.gov.

Melissa Abelev, PhD

Associate Administrator

Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs