

REGION 10 EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Child Nutrition Connection **2015 Issue 2** **October 1, 2014**

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Child Nutrition Contacts:

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Websites:

www.squaremeals.org
www.texasagriculture.gov
www.region10.org

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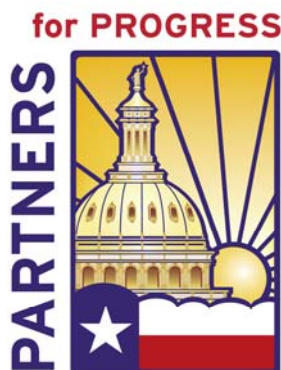
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A copy of this newsletter can be found at the following website:

<http://www.region10.org/child-nutrition/links-resources/connection-newsbriefs/>

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This information is to keep you informed of any changes in policies and procedures and of new communication originating from the state office this month.

Operations

2014-2015 School Grants for Healthy Kids Opportunities Released

An Action for Healthy Kids partnership will award approximately 1,000 schools with grants ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 to support school breakfast and physical activity programs. Funded schools will also receive expertise and people power to help implement a successful project that leads to sustainable change. Benefits can include

- Increased attendance and test scores
- Healthy breakfasts for students who typically do not eat breakfast
- Action for Healthy Kids resources and supplies
- Wellness event kits

For more information, CEs can contact [Action for Healthy Kids](#) today or [apply now](#). The application deadline is October 15.

USDA, FRAC Coffee Chat Scheduled for October 2

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service and the Food Research and Action Center are introducing a monthly Coffee Chat series to discuss important topics related to child nutrition. **This month's Coffee Chat is scheduled for 2 p.m. Central Time October 2** and the invited speaker is Tanna Nicely, a principal at South Knoxville Elementary School. Join them as they discuss strategies and methods designed to feed nutritious meals to kids and take questions from the field. Click [here](#) to register.

Save the Date for the Next USDA Foods Webinar

The webinar "Creating Healthy Menus with USDA Foods" is scheduled for 1-2 p.m. Central Time Thursday, October 16. Celebrate National School Lunch Week by learning about remarkable recipe resources! This webinar will feature the speakers from this popular panel at the SNA Annual National Conference in Boston this summer. The webinar will be available via Microsoft Office LiveMeeting and is free for all participants. You will need access to a phone line and a computer with internet access. A recording of the webinar will later be available on the [USDA Food and Nutrition Service](#) YouTube channel. TDA will send out registration information soon, but go ahead and mark your calendars!

New Edition of USDA FNS Direct Certification Newsletter "Match to Meal"

"Match to Meal Issue 4 Fall 2014" is attached. It features promising practices and lessons learned as States have carried out efforts to improve access to free school meals through direct certification. It will soon be available in the What's New section at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/child-nutrition-programs>.

Stickers Available for Nutrition Events

USDA is currently offering nutrition stickers to schools participating in the NSLP and/or School Breakfast Program, at no cost. The colorful 2-inch stickers may be used as part of a school breakfast promotion and taste-testing event. You may order stickers by visiting <http://tn.ntis.gov>.

Policy

New and Updated from USDA

USDA issued the attached policy memo and guidance related to rising prices and tight supplies for domestic beef:

- SP66-2014s - Information and Guidance on the Domestic Beef Market
- SP66-2014s - Just the Facts-Serve More Dry Beans and Peas_August 2012_FNS 449-E
- SP66-2014s - Just the Facts-Use Low-fat Milk, Cheese, and Yogurt_August 2012_FNS 449-B
- SP66-2014s - SY15_USDA-Foods_Available_List_5_14_14

USDA issued this attached memo to clarify Smart Snacks standards for exempt foods that are paired together as a single snack.

- SP63-2014s - Smart Snacks Standards for Exempt Foods when Paired Together
- USDA revised its policy for Certification of Compliance with New Meal Patterns and released updated lunch and breakfast worksheets to reflect the new regulations for School Year (SY) 2014-15 for CEs that are applying to operate NSLB or SBP for the first time. CEs that are currently operating NSLP or SBP do not need to complete these forms. New CEs will find a link to the forms they need on the SquareMeals.org page [NSLP Administration & Forms](#) under Certification of Compliance with the Meal Pattern.
- USDA has updated its policy memo regarding Flexibility for Whole Grain-Rich Pasta to include a question and answer section. This updated memo is attached:
 - SP47-2014v2s - Flexibility for Whole Grain-Rich Pasta in School Years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 Questions and Answers attached - REVISED

Potable Water Rules at Breakfast

The potable water regulations that apply to lunch also apply to breakfast with one exception. If breakfast is not served in the cafeteria, potable water is recommended, not required. Until an updated version of the breakfast section of the *Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM)* is released, CEs should use the guidance in the Lunch section.

The *ARM, Section 9, Lunch* (pages 9.76 to 9.78) has detailed guidance on the water requirement, including allowable costs. The following questions will help to determine if a cost for providing water is allowable:

- Would a prudent person find the cost to be reasonable?
- Is this cost at a fair rate or do alternatives exist that are more cost effective?
- Is the cost a significant deviation from an established practice of the CE?
- Would a change in practice cause increase costs to be borne by the nonprofit food service account?
- Could the CE defend this purchase to TDA?

Potable Water and Milk

CEs need to ensure that the method they use to offer potable water also aligns to the regulations for milk. This includes, but is not limited to, the following requirements:

- ⇒ Offering additional beverages must not discourage students from taking milk.
- ⇒ Milk must not be traded for another beverage at the point of service (POS).
- ⇒ Another beverage must not be offered as an alternative choice to milk.
- ⇒ Additional beverages (including water) must be offered after the POS.

USDA Foods

Pilot Program Distributing Unseasoned Chicken Strips

The USDA has approved Texas to participate in a pilot program to test unseasoned frozen chicken strips in 30 lb. cartons. This new product is being evaluated as a potential USDA Food item, so quantity is limited.

If a CE has remaining entitlement, they can modify an existing order or create a new one in TX-UNPS to request delivery. TDA will seek feedback from CEs in mid-October to help USDA analyze and determine the acceptability of this product.

HUSSC

Two Awards — Less Paperwork

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's [Healthy Schools Program \(HSP\)](#) and the USDA's [HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms \(HUSSC: SL\)](#) are working together to help schools earn two awards with a streamlined approach that eliminates some of the paperwork. To learn more about the new way to earn HUSSC:SL and HSP recognition and how these two awards work together, click on the links below.

[HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms](#)

[Healthy Schools Program](#)

New HUSSC Application Available

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service has announced the availability of the [HealthierUS School Challenge: Smarter Lunchrooms Application](#). The application is updated to reflect the criteria implemented on August 31, 2014. It also provides helpful tips to make the application process simpler as schools strive to be recognized for excellence in smarter lunchrooms, nutrition and physical activity.

Questions about the 2014 criteria or application can be sent to TeamNutrition@fns.usda.gov.

National School Lunch Week October 13-17

Help Schools “Score Big with a Healthy Texas Lunch”

This year's National School Lunch Week (NSLW) theme, “Score Big with a Healthy Texas Lunch,” shows students that winning in all aspects of life starts with a nutritious midday meal that includes Texas products. Visit the [NSLW Web page](#) on SquareMeals.org for more information. Don't forget to continue tracking NSLW events in your region.

TDA has developed an online [NSLW Toolkit](#) that includes:

- Suggested Menu with Recipes
- Suggested Morning Announcements
- Menu Calendar template

Also visit the **Boost Meal Appeal** website for additional tips on how to execute a successful National School Lunch Week. New entries on the Web page will help you capture the essence of your school's delicious meals. You also can get [food photography tips](#). There are also ideas on how to [gather student feedback](#) and score big with healthy Texas lunches!

Please contact [Christy Denman](#), Outreach Specialist, at (512) 463-0754 or [Alyssa Herold](#), Farm to School Program Specialist, at (512) 463-1209, with any questions related to NSLW or the Local Products Challenge.

Farm to School Updates

TDA's Statewide Farm to School Initiative Survey Deadline Extended

TDA is collecting information from CEs participating in NSLP regarding current farm to school activities and interest. Information gathered in this survey will be used to guide program staff in developing the resources most helpful to Texas CEs interested in incorporating farm to school activities into their districts' school meal plan. Materials will be made available to all NSLP participants.

Access the survey at <https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=RwoNE8WK5VVCYQbStJUJrA>

Participate in the NSLW Local Products Challenge

This year's challenge is focused on increasing the amount of Texas products included in meals served during NSLW. All participating schools will receive special recognition from TDA, and schools that incorporate an average of three or more local items per day will receive additional recognition — the *Cream of the Crop Award*.

Learn more about the challenge, access resources and pledge your participation [here](#).

October is National Farm to School Month

Celebrate the connections that are happening across country between students and local food! National Farm to School Month was designated by Congress in 2010 to demonstrate the growing importance of farm to school programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies and educate children about the origins of food. Join this year's celebration — go [here](#) for more information, a communications toolkit and learn about how you can win \$1,000 to spend on a farm to school project in your community.

Upcoming Webinars

Farm to School 101

October 14, noon Central Time

In celebration of National Farm to School Month, this webinar will offer an introductory look at farm to school and ways you can get started. Three speakers will discuss the three core elements of farm to school: procurement, education and school gardens. Speakers include Bertrand Weber/ Andrea Northup from Minneapolis Public Schools Culinary and Nutrition Services; Brittany Wager from ASAP; and Jeff Bryant from Urban Roots.

Fruit Trees in the School Garden

October 21, 4 p.m. Eastern Time

Hosted by edWeb.net

What in the garden could possibly be more exciting to students than a tree-ripened nectarine? Fruit trees and orchard-culture bring stability and productivity to the garden, all in a high yielding and low maintenance package. In our community's next webinar, Leo Buc, Director of Common Vision, will discuss best practices for growing fresh fruit in school gardens. We'll focus on every step of the process for new plantings as well as rehabbing existing trees.

Please contact [Alyssa Herold](#), Farm to School Program Specialist, with any questions regarding farm to school activities, including procurement of local food items, nutrition or agricultural educational opportunities for students or school gardening.