

# Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

This guidance applies to meals and snacks in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's CACFP.



The USDA's CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for Child Nutrition Programs. It provides food manufacturers the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels. The USDA approves labels prior to use, and manufacturers must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet USDA's requirements. Manufacturers participating in the CN Labeling Program must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet USDA's requirements.

The USDA does not require that manufacturers make CN-labeled products or that CACFP facilities purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the local CACFP facility. If the CACFP facility requires a CN labeled product, this must be clearly stated in the facility's purchasing specifications.

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the USDA's meal patterns. Examples include beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions.

CN labels will usually indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For example, CN-labeled pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains, and vegetables components; and CN-labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates and grains components.

## Contents of CN Labels

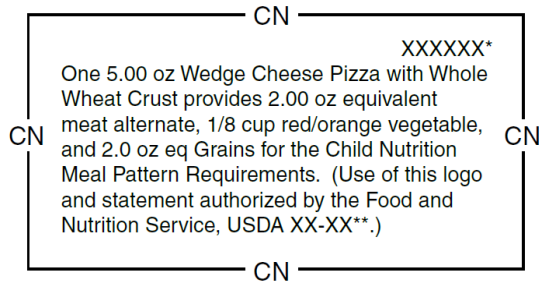
A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Manufacturers state this contribution on their labels. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements as printed on the label.

The CN label will be found on the actual product packaging and will always contain the following:

- the CN logo, which is a distinct border;
- the meal pattern contribution statement;
- a six-digit product identification number;
- the USDA's authorization; and
- the month and year of approval.

## Using CN Labels in the CACFP

This sample CN label for cheese pizza with whole-grain crust indicates that the product provides 2 ounce equivalents of the meat/meat alternates component, 1/8 cup of the vegetables component (red/orange subgroup), and 2 ounce equivalents of the grains component.



**Note:** CN-labeled products list the grains component in ounce equivalents, which are not required in the CACFP meal patterns until October 1, 2019. However, CACFP facilities may use the ounce equivalents information on a CN-labeled product to document compliance with the CACFP whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement, because an ounce equivalent of the grains component is slightly more than the current CACFP serving sizes. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP](#).

The USDA does not allow manufacturers to place the CN label on a fact sheet or any other product information. Acceptable and valid documentation for the CN label includes:

- the original CN label from the product carton; or
- a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton. CN labels that are photocopied or photographed must be visible and legible.

For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) handout, [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#), USDA Memo [SP 11-2015 \(v2\) CACFP 10-2015 SFSP 13-2015: CN Labels Copied with a Watermark Acceptable Documentation](#), and USDA Memo [SP 27-2015 CACFP 09-2015 SFSP 12-2015: Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition \(CN\) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#).

# Using CN Labels in the CACFP

## Resources

*Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP* (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>

Authorized Manufacturers and Labels (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/usdausdc-authorized-labels-and-manufacturers>

CN Labeling (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/child-nutrition-cn-labeling-program>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

*Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Adult-Centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

USDA Memo SP 11v2-2015 CACFP 10-2015 SFSP 13-2015: *CN Labels Copied with a Watermark*

*Acceptable Documentation:* <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn-labels-copied-watermark-acceptable-documentation>

USDA Memo SP 27-2015 CACFP 09-2015 SFSP 12-2015: *Administrative Review Process Regarding the Child Nutrition (CN) Label, Watermarked CN Label and Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement:*

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/administrative-review-process-regarding-child-nutrition-cn-label-watermarked-cn-label-and>

# Using CN Labels in the CACFP



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

*This handout is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNlabelCACFP.pdf>.*

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of age, ancestry, color, criminal record (in state employment and licensing), gender identity or expression, genetic information, intellectual disability, learning disability, marital status, mental disability (past or present), national origin, physical disability (including blindness), race, religious creed, retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, sex (pregnancy or sexual harassment), sexual orientation, veteran status or workplace hazards to reproductive systems, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes.

Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Levy Gillespie, Equal Employment Opportunity Director/Americans with Disabilities Coordinator (ADA), Connecticut State Department of Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 607, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-807-2071, [levy.gillespie@ct.gov](mailto:levy.gillespie@ct.gov).