

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to reimbursable meals and snacks served 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 (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For information on the CACFP meal patterns and crediting foods for children, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages. For information on the CACFP meal patterns and crediting foods for adult participants, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages.



CACFP facilities must be able to document that commercial processed foods (such as burritos, pizza, and chicken nuggets) provide the amount of the food components credited toward the CACFP meal patterns. For example, to credit a beef and cheese burrito as 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component, CACFP facilities must obtain documentation from the manufacturer indicating that one serving of the product contains 2 ounces of cooked lean meat and cheese.

Menu planners cannot determine the amount of the meal pattern components in a product by reading the Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement. If a commercial processed product does not have a Child Nutrition (CN) label, CACFP facilities must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer that demonstrates the product's meal pattern contribution.

A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. It generally includes a detailed explanation of what the product contains and indicates the amount of each ingredient in the product by weight. The information on PFS forms can vary among manufacturers because these forms are not monitored by the USDA.



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PFS Forms versus Child Nutrition (CN) Labels

PFS forms are not the same as CN labels. CN labels are the definitive documentation for verifying a product's crediting information for the Child Nutrition Programs. Table 1 compares the criteria for CN labels and PFS forms. Table 1 compares the criteria for CN labels and PFS forms.

Table 1. Comparison of CN labels and PFS forms		
Criteria	CN labels ¹	PFS forms
Standard information required	✓	
Reviewed and monitored by the USDA	✓	
Includes USDA's guarantee of meal component contribution for Child Nutrition Programs	✓	
Distinct six-digit product identification number	✓	
CACFP facilities must check crediting information for accuracy		✓
¹ For information on CN labels, review the CSDE's resource, Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP , and visit the USDA's CN Labeling Food Manufacturers/Industry webpage.		

Unlike CN labels, PFS forms are not monitored by the USDA and do not guarantee compliance with the USDA meal patterns. Therefore, CACFP facilities must check the manufacturer's crediting information for accuracy (and request supporting documentation if needed) **prior** to including the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. All creditable ingredients in the PFS must match a description in the FBG.

Manufacturers are responsible for ensuring that the product is processed to meet the meal pattern contribution stated on the PFS. CACFP facilities are responsible for verifying the crediting information on the PFS, and maintaining this documentation on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the CACFP

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Required Information for PFS Forms

To document a product's crediting information, the manufacturer's PFS must:

- list the product name, product code, serving size, and creditable ingredients;
- indicate how the product credits toward the USDA's meal pattern requirements;
- document how the manufacturer obtained the crediting information by citing specific Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations, such as the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) and USDA policy on crediting foods (e.g., [USDA policy memos for Child Nutrition Programs](#) and [Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\) instructions for Child Nutrition Programs](#)); and
- be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. The signature can be handwritten, stamped, or electronic.

PFS forms that do not meet these requirements cannot be accepted as crediting documentation. CACFP facilities must request a revised PFS (and supporting documentation if needed) from the manufacturer.

Manufacturers may modify the USDA's PFS forms for various types of commercial products. For example, cheese pizza could have crediting information for the vegetables component in addition to the meat/meat alternates and grains components. Manufacturers may choose to use one PFS to document the crediting information for each meal component, but must clearly identify how each component contributes to the meal pattern requirements. The PFS must include the information needed for sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs to determine how the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements.



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Reviewing PFS Forms

An appropriate PFS form will provide specific information about the product and show how the manufacturer obtained the meal pattern crediting information by citing [Child Nutrition Program regulations](#) or USDA resources such as [USDA policy memos](#), [FNS instructions](#), and other USDA policy guidance. Sponsors must review this information for accuracy using the guidance below.

1. **Review the PFS prior to purchasing processed products.** The USDA's [Food Manufacturers/Industry](#) webpage contains resources to assist sponsors with this process, including sample PFS forms for the meat/meat alternates, grains, fruits, and vegetables components; and other resources for reviewing crediting documentation for commercial products. These resources are listed below.

- **Meat/Meat Alternates**

Product Formulation Statement for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Meat_Meat_Alternate.pdf

Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/APPindustryfaqs.pdf>

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products:

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

- **Vegetables and Fruits**

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Total_Veg_Fruits.pdf

- **Grains**

PFS for Servings (through September 30, 2021): Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf

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PFS for Servings (through September 30, 2021) Completed Sample: Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains/Breads Servings in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA)

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Samples_Grains_Breads_Servings.pdf

PFS for Ounce Equivalents (effective October 1, 2021): Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Grains_oz_eq.pdf

PFS for Ounce Equivalents (effective October 1, 2021) Completed Sample: Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Sample_oz_eq.pdf

2. **Verify the accuracy of the PFS.** Sponsors must review the information below.

- Determine that the creditable ingredients listed in the PFS match a description in the FBG. If a PFS for a specific product claims to provide a higher meal component credit than the amount listed in the FBG, the PFS must clarify all credited ingredients and demonstrate how the product provides that credit according to the USDA's regulations, guidance, or policy.
- Verify that the product's stated credit toward the USDA's meal pattern requirements is not greater than the serving size of the product. For example, a 2.2-ounce beef patty cannot credit for more than 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component.
- Assure that the creditable components are visible in the finished product. To claim a contribution toward the meat/meat alternates component, the product must have a visible meat or meat alternate (such as a sausage link, beans, cheese, or peanut butter), and the PFS must specify the method for crediting these items.



The USDA encourages careful review of product literature. Sponsors are accountable for ensuring that reimbursable meals and snacks meet the meal pattern requirements.

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For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, review the CSDE’s resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP*, the USDA’s handout, *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement*, and visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Child Care Programs” or “Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers” sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

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

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE Webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-and-Adult-Care-Food-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 and Nutrition Service (FNS) instructions (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Food Manufacturers/Industry (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/food-manufacturersindustry>

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

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

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

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

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

Presentation: CN Labels and Product Formulation Statements (USDA):

<https://theicn.org/resources/930/march-2016/109876/manufacturers-product-formulation-statement-pfs03-31-16.pdf>

Reviewer’s Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

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Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/cnl_tipsheet-processedproduct.pdf

USDA Policy Memos for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) (USDA's FNS Documents & Forms webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources>

USDA Product Formulation Statements (USDA's Food Manufacturers/Industry webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/food-manufacturersindustry>

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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 document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFSCACFP.pdf>.

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- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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