

2 — Menu Records

SFAs must maintain records to document that foods used in reimbursable meals provide the food components and serving sizes required by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. Without appropriate documentation, foods cannot credit toward reimbursable meals.

Table 2-1 summarizes the records required to document the meal pattern compliance of commercial foods and foods made from scratch. SFAs must maintain these records on file for the CSDE’s Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

Table 2-1. Required documentation for meal pattern compliance	
Commercial foods	Foods made from scratch
Menus Production records Child Nutrition (CN) labels Product formulation statement (PFS) forms Compliance with Buy American provision Nutrition information (Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients)	Menus Production records Standardized recipes Nutrition information
¹ Many commercial products require nutrition information to determine crediting information.	

This section provides information on each requirement.



Menus

SFAs must maintain menu records that document the service of reimbursable meals to students in grades K-12. Menus should reflect all meal choices and types of milk. Cycle menus or menus developed in advance of the meal service must specify the month and day, and indicate any menu substitutions that occur. The SFA must maintain all menus on file with other required records in accordance with the NSLP and SBP regulations.



Using cycle menus

The CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to use cycle menus for school meals. A cycle menu is a series of menus planned for a specific period (such as four weeks) with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help SFAs comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time.

The CSDE recommends that cycle menus include at least four weeks. This increases the variety of offered meals and ensures that children are not served the same combination of foods too often. For additional guidance and resources on cycle menus, refer to chapter 3 in the USDA's guide, *Menu Planner for School Meals*, and the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*.

USDA certification of meal pattern compliance

The USDA's menu worksheets indicate whether menus for grades K-12 comply with the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, including the meal components and dietary specifications. These are the worksheets that SFAs must use to demonstrate meal pattern compliance and to certify schools as eligible to receive the additional performance-based reimbursement. These worksheets are available on the CSDE's [Certification of Meal Pattern Compliance](#) webpage.

CSDE lunch menu planning checklists

The CSDE's lunch menu planning checklists help SFAs determine if lunch menus comply with the meal pattern requirements. These checklists are available in the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For sample menus and more resources, refer to the CSDE's *Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs*. For guidance on menu planning and additional menu checklists, review chapter 3 in the USDA's guide, *Menu Planner for School Meals*.

Production Records

The USDA regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210.10\(a\)\(3\)](#)) and SBP ([7 CFR 220.8\(a\)\(3\)](#)) require that SFAs must maintain daily production records for all school meals. A production record is a working tool that outlines the type and quantity of foods that need to be purchased and available for the meal service.

Production records must show how the offered meals contribute to the required food components and food quantities for each meal served to each grade group every day. In addition to documenting reimbursable meals, production records provide valuable information to help with menu planning, forecasting products and amounts, purchasing foods, controlling waste, and identifying acceptable menu items.

Table 2-2 indicates the elements that production records should include and when food service personnel should complete the required information.

The USDA requires that school nutrition programs must complete daily menu production records that document the service of reimbursable meals. Production records must demonstrate how meals contribute to the required food components for each day of operation. SFAs must keep production records on file for three years plus the current school year.



Table 2-2. Required elements for production records

Complete <i>before</i> meal service	Complete <i>after</i> meal service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of site • Meal date • Meal type (breakfast or lunch) • All planned menu items including all meal choices, food components, types of milk, leftovers, substitutions, and all other food items such as condiments and other noncreditable foods • Recipe name and number or product name and code • Planned serving size and number of servings for reimbursable meals for each age/grade group, and if applicable, nonreimbursable meals (e.g., second meals and adult meals), and a la carte sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperatures (complete throughout meal service) ¹ • Total amount/quantity of food prepared for each food item or menu item, e.g., number of servings, pounds, cans, and pieces • Amount of leftover food for each food item or menu item • Total amount of food served • Number of reimbursable meals served for each age/grade group • Number of nonreimbursable meals served, e.g., second meals and adult meals
<p>¹ Food service staff should record temperatures throughout the meal service to ensure that hot foods are held at 140 °F or above and cold foods at held at 41 °F or below. For additional guidance, visit the CSDE’s Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage.</p>	

Sample production records

The CSDE’s sample breakfast and lunch production records include forms for different grade groups based on food items or food components. These forms help SFAs provide the information required to comply with the USDA’s regulations for production records. The CSDE’s production records are available on the CSDE’s [Production Records for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Guidance for completing production records

Production records must be completed correctly to provide accurate documentation of reimbursable meals. When using production records, SFAs should ensure that food service personnel:

- complete all information, i.e., ensure that information is not missing or incomplete;
- record the information so it is legible, i.e., ensure that handwriting can be read;
- use the proper weight or volume measure for each food item, e.g., use cups for fruits and vegetables instead of ounces (refer to “Volume versus weight” below);
- enter the number of servings, pounds, cans, or pieces (not the number of portions prepared) in the column for the total quantity of food used;
- separately list each type of milk served;
- list all condiments;
- list portion sizes accurately and ensure that listed portion sizes are the same as what is actually being served to students;
- list all items prepared for the meal including daily items and alternate meal choices;
- accurately record the “planned” servings for each age/grade group;
- separately list nonreimbursable adult meals and second student meals (do not include as part of reimbursable student meals);
- add any extra amounts of food needed during the meal service period;
- note if any substitutions are made or leftovers are used; and
- use a production record for each site, including satellite locations.

SFAs should maintain production records on file with other required documentation. The CSDE will review menu documentation during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs

Volume versus weight

The amounts listed in production records must reflect the servings required by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The meal patterns indicate the servings of the food components by weight (ounces) or volume (fluid ounces). For example, the servings for the vegetables component and fruits component are indicated by volume (cups). The servings of most foods in the meat/meat alternates component are indicated by weight (ounces), but volume is required for some foods such as peanut butter (tablespoons), cottage cheese (cups), and legumes (cups).

Volume and weight measurements are not the same. Volume is the amount of space an ingredient occupies in a measuring container. Volume measures include teaspoon, tablespoon, fluid ounce, cup, pint, quart, and gallon.

2 | Menu Records

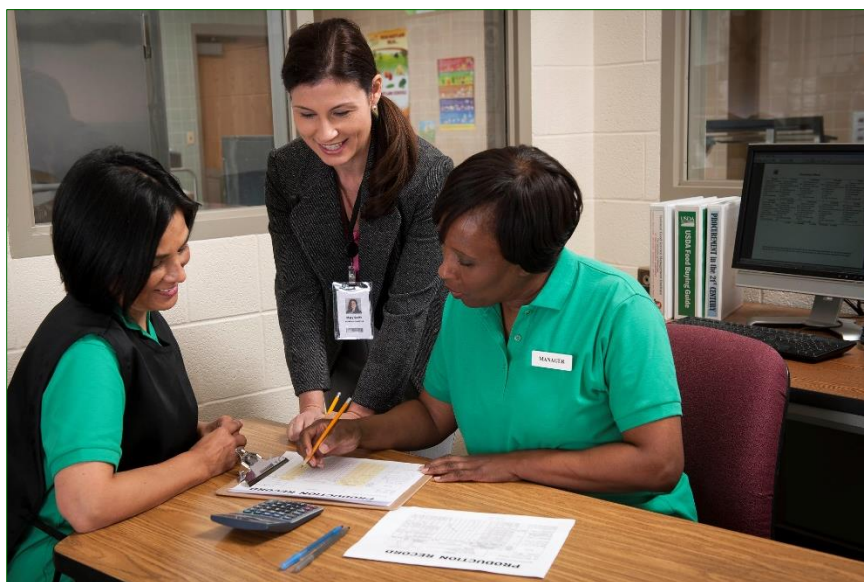
A common issue with production records is listing incorrect serving sizes, e.g., listing the serving for a fruit or vegetable as “4 ounces” instead of “½ cup.” This does not indicate that the serving meets the meal pattern requirements because these two measurements are not the same.



The weight of a specific volume of food varies depending on the density of the food. For example, ½ cup of lettuce weighs less than ½ cup of cooked butternut squash; and 1 cup of whole-grain flaked cereal weighs less than 1 cup of baked beans. For many foods, a specific measure of volume does not equal the same measure of weight. There are some exceptions, such as yogurt (a ½-cup serving of yogurt equals 4 ounces by weight) and certain types of canned fruits and vegetables (refer to the FBG).

Menu planners should use the FBG to determine the amount of a food that meets the required meal pattern serving, and must ensure that production records reflect this amount. For example, the servings of vegetables, fruits, peanut butter, and legumes must be listed by volume, not weight. For more information, refer to “[Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#)” in this section.

For information on weights and measures, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) handout, *Basics at a Glance*, and the “[Weights and Measures](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.



Administrative Review of production records

During the Administrative Review, the CSDE will evaluate production records to ensure that they meet the following requirements:

- include all information necessary to support the claiming of reimbursable meals, i.e., all menu items are listed and all required meal components are offered;
- are used for proper planning, such as determining meal consumption and leftovers;
- document that the prepared foods are creditable for the total number of reimbursable meals offered and served;
- document a la carte sales, adult meals, and other nonreimbursable meals (such as student purchases of second meals), including the number of portions for each of these food items;
- document that menus meet the requirements for fluid milk, the weekly vegetable subgroups, the weekly juice limits, and the weekly limit for grain-based desserts at lunch;
- document that menus meet the weekly quantity requirements for fluid milk, vegetables, fruits, grains, and meats/meat alternates; and
- align with standardized recipes, i.e., the ingredients in the SFA's standardized recipes correspond to the menu items listed on the production records.

Resources for production records

The websites and resources below provide guidance on developing and using production records.

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Menu Planner for School Meals: Chapter 4 Meal Preparation Documentation (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/USD-114%20-%20MenuPlanner_Ch4.pdf
- Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Production-Records-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>
- Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/Requirements_Production_Records_NSLP_SBP.pdf

- Weights and Measures (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage)
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#WeightsMeasures>

The CSDE’s document, *Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs*, summarizes the requirements and guidance for using production records in school nutrition programs.

Standardized Recipes

The USDA’s regulations [7 CFR 210.10\(b\)\(5\)](#) require that SFAs develop and follow standardized recipes for foods prepared on site. The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted, and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation; and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment, and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized quantity recipes produce 25 or more servings.

Standardized recipes are required for foods prepared from scratch, such as cornbread, coleslaw, potato salad, soup, lasagna, chicken stir-fry, and macaroni and cheese; and for foods that require some additional processing by adding other ingredients after purchasing. Examples include making rice or pasta with butter, sautéing vegetables in oil, adding dressing to salad, assembling a sandwich, adding eggs and oil to a muffin mix, and reconstituting canned soup with milk.

Standardized recipes are not required for commercial foods when the SFA does not add any ingredients after purchasing. Examples include fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned, and frozen); breads, rolls, and baked products; and other commercially prepared products such as entrees, soups, and side dishes.

Benefits of standardized recipes

Standardized recipes document the specific meal pattern contribution of one serving. For example, a standardized lasagna recipe might indicate that one serving credits as 2 ounce equivalents of the meat/meat alternates component, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component, and 2 ounce equivalents of the grains component. In addition to documenting the meal pattern contribution, standardized recipes provide many other benefits. Standardized recipes help school nutrition programs ensure:

- consistent food quality;
- predictable yield;

- accurate meal component contributions;
- consistent nutrient content;
- food safety through preparation steps that avoid cross-contamination and ensure appropriate time and temperature;
- customer satisfaction;
- food cost control;
- efficient purchasing procedures;
- inventory control;
- labor cost control;
- increased employee confidence;
- reduced recordkeeping; and
- successful completion of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.



Information to include on standardized recipes

SFAs may standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA's recipes. Standardized recipes should include the following:

- recipe name that describes the recipe;
- recipe number that is unique to each recipe;
- recipe category classification, e.g., main dish, grains, and vegetables;
- recipe yield (weight and/or volume and number of servings), i.e., the amount produced when production is complete;
- ingredients used;
- ingredient amounts per yield, i.e., the quantity (weight or volume) of all ingredients for each yield, such as 50 servings or 100 servings;
- preparation equipment and utensil, such as pans, steamers and mixers;
- food safety Critical Control Points (CCPs), i.e., time and temperature critical limits for each step of preparing, holding, serving, and storing (visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage);
- cooking time and temperature, as required (visit the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage);
- serving size (the weight and/or volume of the single portion size);
- serving utensils such as scoops, ladles, and spoodles; and
- meal pattern component contributions per serving, e.g., fruits component, vegetables component, grains component, and meats/meat alternates component.

Vendor-prepared foods

Vendors that prepare foods for SFAs must have a standardized recipe that documents the meal pattern contribution per serving. SFAs are responsible for reviewing the crediting information to ensure its accuracy.

Requirements for standardized recipes

SFAs may standardize their own local recipes or use existing standardized recipes such as the USDA's recipes. Standardized recipes must include the following:

- recipe name that describes the recipe;
- recipe number that is unique to each recipe;
- recipe category classification, e.g., main dish, grains, and vegetables;
- recipe yield (weight and/or volume and number of servings), i.e., the amount produced when production is complete;
- ingredients used;
- ingredient amounts per yield, i.e., the quantity (weight or volume) of all ingredients for each yield, such as 50 servings or 100 servings;
- preparation equipment and utensil, such as pans, steamers and mixers;
- food safety Critical Control Points (CCPs), i.e., time and temperature critical limits for each step of preparing, holding, serving, and storing;
- cooking time and temperature, as required;
- serving size (the weight and/or volume of the single portion size);
- serving utensils such as scoops, ladles, and spoodles; and
- meal pattern component contributions per serving, e.g., fruits component, vegetables component (including subgroups), grains component, and meats/meat alternates component.

The CSDE's *Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs* provides a template that SFAs may use to develop standardized recipes. For more information, refer to "[Determining Food Yields and Crediting](#)" and "[Resources for standardized recipes](#)" in this section.

SFAs must ensure that local menus comply with the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. When using non-USDA recipes and menus, menu planners should check these resources for compliance with the meal patterns and adapt as needed.

Resources for standardized recipes

The websites and resources below assist SFAs with developing and using standardized recipes.

- Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster (ICN):
<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/basics-at-a-glance/>
- Child Nutrition Recipe Box (ICN):
<https://theicn.org/cnr/>
- Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#PreparedonSite>
- Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) of the FBG (USDA):
<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/>
- Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning#Recipes>
- Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Menu_Planning.pdf
- Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Standardized_Recipe_Form_Schools.docx
- Standardized Recipes (Chapter 4: Meal Preparation Documentation of the USDA's Menu Planner for School Meals):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/USD-114%20-%20MenuPlanner_Ch4.pdf
- Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#StandardizedRecipes>
- Why Use Standardized Recipes? Fact Sheet (ICN):
<https://theicn.org/resources/527/food-service-management-skills/107291/why-use-standardized-recipes.pdf>

Crediting Documentation for Commercial Products

SFAs must be able to document the meal pattern contribution of commercial processed foods served in school meals. For example, to credit a breaded chicken patty product as 2 ounce equivalents of the meat/meat alternates component and 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, the manufacturer’s documentation must indicate that one serving of the product contains 2 ounces of cooked chicken and 0.8 ounce (22 grams) of WGR breading. To credit commercial products, SFAs must obtain either:

- the original CN label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.

The CSDE will review product documentation during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

Commercial processed products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in school meals.

Table 2-3 compares the criteria for CN labels and PFS forms. Only CN labels provide a guarantee of the product’s contribution to the USDA’s meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs. SFAs must check the crediting information on the PFS form for accuracy prior to using the product in reimbursable meals and snacks.

Criteria	CN label	PFS
Standard information required	✓	
Reviewed and monitored by the USDA	✓	
Includes USDA guarantee of meal component contribution for Child Nutrition Programs	✓	
Distinct six-digit product identification number	✓	
SFAs must check crediting information for accuracy prior to use		✓

For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and visit the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Child Nutrition (CN) Labels

The USDA’s CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs. 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. CN labeling provides a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements, as printed on the label.

Table 2-4. Sample CN label

CN Label

1 Chicken Stir-Fry Bowl

Ingredient Statement:

2 Chicken, brown rice, broccoli, red peppers, carrots, onions, water, olive oil, soy sauce, spices.

3 CN

XXXXXX

Each 4.5 oz Chicken Stir-Fry Bowl provides 1.5 oz eq meat, 1.0 oz eq grains, ¼ cup dark green vegetable, ¼ cup red/orange vegetable, and ⅓ cup other vegetable for Child Nutrition Meal Pattern Requirements. (Use of this logo and statement authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA 09/16).


CN

CN

Net Wt.: 18 pounds

4

Chicken Wok Company
1234 Kluck Street • Poultry, PA 1235



1 Product Name

2 Ingredient Statement

3 CN Logo

4 Inspection Legend

The CN Logo is the box with "CN" on each side, surrounding the meal pattern contribution statement. It is one of the four integral parts of a label (product name, ingredient statement, CN Logo, and inspection legend). All four parts must be on the product carton for the CN label to be valid.

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the USDA’s meal patterns for the Child Nutrition Programs, such as beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish

portions. However, 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.

Resources for CN labels

The resources below provide additional information on CN labels.

- Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CN_Labeling_Program.pdf
- Child Nutrition (CN) Labels (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#CNlabels>
- CN Labeling Program (USDA website):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>
- USDA Memo SP 11-2015 (v2), CACFP 10-2015 and 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 and 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>

The USDA's [Authorized Labels and Manufacturers](#) webpage lists approved CN-labeled products and manufacturers.



Product Formulation Statements

A PFS is a document developed by manufacturers that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's 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 a PFS can vary among manufacturers because the USDA does not monitor PFS forms.

To document meal pattern crediting information, the 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 FBG and USDA's policy on crediting foods (such as the USDA's [policy memos for the school 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.

All creditable ingredients in the PFS must match a description in the FBG. The USDA's [CN Labeling](#) website provides sample PFS templates for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. If the PFS does not meet these requirements, the SFA cannot accept it, and the product cannot credit in school meals and ASP snacks.

Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims for reimbursable meals and snacks. SFAs must check the crediting information on the PFS for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals and snacks, and if needed, request supporting documentation from the manufacturer. This documentation must be maintained on file for the CSDE's Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.



USDA's PFS forms for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns

The USDA's [Food Manufacturers/Industry](#) website provides sample PFS templates for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. The PFS forms that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns are listed below.

- **Grains:** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf
- **Grains (completed sample):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Example_Grains_Oz_Eq.pdf
- **Meat/Meat Alternates:** Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Meat_Meat_Alternate.pdf
- **Vegetables and Fruits:** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Veg_Subgroups_Fruits_Fillable_508.pdf
- **Vegetables and Fruits (completed sample for vegetables):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs: Completed Sample for Vegetables (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplevegetables.pdf>
- **Vegetables and Fruits (completed sample for fruits):** Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in School Meal Programs: Completed Sample for Fruits (USDA):
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFSsamplefruits.pdf>

Resources for PFS forms

The USDA's [Food Manufacturers/Industry](#) website provides sample PFS templates and guidance for the meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains components. The PFS forms that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 are listed below.

- Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Product_Formulation_Statements.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
- Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

Additional resources for accepting documentation are available in the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#)” section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Buy American Requirement

All foods sold in the USDA's school nutrition programs must comply with the Buy American provision under the federal regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210.21 \(d\)](#)) and SBP ([7 CFR 220.16 \(d\)](#)). This provision requires that schools and institutions purchase domestic commodities or products to the maximum extent practicable.

- A “domestic commodity or product” is an agricultural commodity that is produced in the United States, and a food product that is processed in the United States substantially using agricultural commodities that are produced in the United States.
- “Substantially” means that over 51 percent of the final processed product consists of agricultural commodities that were grown domestically.

There are **very limited exceptions** to the requirement that SFAs must purchase domestic foods. Nondomestic foods are permitted only:

- after first considering domestic alternatives; and
- when domestic foods are unavailable or prohibitively expensive.



SFAs must maintain documentation on file to indicate that any purchases of nondomestic foods meet these criteria. The CSDE’s *Buy American Justification Form* assists SFAs with meeting this requirement. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the SFA’s school nutrition programs.

SFAs must ensure that all foods purchased using funds from the nonprofit school food service account comply with the Buy American provision. This includes foods that are part of reimbursable meals and competitive foods sold a la carte, i.e., foods and beverages sold separately from reimbursable meals.

Resources for Buy American

The resources below provide guidance on the Buy American provision.

- Buy American Factsheet (USDA):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Procure/Fact_Sheet_Buy_American.pdf
- Buy American Justification Form (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Procure/Buy_American_Form.pdf
- Letter to Industry on the Buy American Provision (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/Buy_America_Industry_Letter.pdf
- USDA Memo SP 32-2019: Buy American and the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/buy-american-and-agriculture-improvement-act-2018>
- USDA Memo SP 38-2017: Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the NSLP:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/compliance-enforcement-buy-american>

For additional guidance, visit the “[Buy American Provision](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Procurement for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Nutrition Information

SFAs must obtain nutrition information for all commercially prepared foods used to prepare school meals. If a processed product does not have a Nutrition Facts panel, the SFA is responsible for obtaining the necessary information from the manufacturer. This information must be readily available for use by the CSDE in conducting the nutrient analysis of school menus, as part of the CSDE’s Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

In addition to CN labels and PFS forms, nutrition information helps menu planners to determine if certain commercial products credit toward the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. Nutrition information is also required to meet the USDA requirements to provide reasonable meal modifications for participants whose children restricts their diet.

Determining crediting information

For many commercial products, the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients are needed to determine crediting information. The examples below show when nutrition information is required to credit commercial products toward the meal patterns for school nutrition programs.

- Crediting deli meats and hotdogs:** Deli meats, hotdogs, and similar foods that contain binders and extenders (but are not CN labeled) require a PFS to determine crediting information. The ingredients statement indicates if a product contains added liquids, binders, and extenders. This alerts the menu planner that a PFS is required to determine the correct crediting information for the product. For more information, refer to “Liquids, binders, and extenders” in section 3.
- Crediting tempeh:** To credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, tempeh ingredients must be limited to soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and for some varieties, vinegar, seasonings, and herbs. If a tempeh product contains other ingredients, SFAs must obtain a CN label or PFS to document crediting information. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if tempeh products contain additional ingredients. For more information, refer to “Crediting Tempeh” in section 3.
- Crediting commercial tofu products:** To credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component, commercial tofu products and tofu and other soy products must contain at least 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume). Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine the amount of protein per serving. For more information, refer to “Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products” in section 3.

- Crediting commercial grain products:** To credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, a commercial grain product must meet the specific weight for the appropriate grain group in the USDA Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)). Menu planners must review the Nutrition Facts label to determine the manufacturer’s serving weight, which is required to determine the ounce equivalents contribution of the serving. For more information, refer to “Part C: Grain Ounce Equivalents” in section 3.
- Crediting WGR commercial grain products:** To credit as a WGR food, commercial grain products are WGR if they meet three criteria: 1) the first ingredient (excluding water) is a whole grain; 2) any other creditable grains are enriched; and 3) the combined weight of any noncreditable grains does not exceed the specified limit. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if a whole grain is the first ingredient and if the product contains any noncreditable grains. For more information, refer to “Part B: Whole Grain-rich Criteria” in section 3.
- Crediting commercial smoothies:** Commercial smoothies that contain dietary supplements (such as whey protein powder) or herbal supplements (such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, and echinacea) do not credit in the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. Menu planners must read the ingredients statement to determine if commercial smoothies contain these ingredients. For more information, refer to “Commercial smoothies” in section 3.



These examples are not all-inclusive. For guidance on how to read food labels, refer to “Using Food Labels for School Meals” in section 6.

Making meal modifications

SFAs will need to review nutrition information when planning meal modifications for children with special dietary concerns, such as food allergies, lactose intolerance, and celiac disease. In addition, the USDA considers providing nutrition information for foods served in school meals to be part of reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet. SFAs are responsible for making nutrition information for school meals available to children (when age appropriate), families, school nurses and other medical professionals, and appropriate school staff, as needed. For information on the requirements for meal modifications, refer to the CSDE’s guide, *Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE’s [Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Nutrition information for USDA Foods

The USDA’s [USDA Foods in Schools Product Information Sheets](#) webpage provides product information sheets for USDA Foods. These product information sheets include the product’s description, crediting and yield information, culinary tips and recipes, food safety information, and a general Nutrition Facts label. However, they do not include a product-specific Nutrition Facts label or ingredients statement.

For further processed USDA Foods, the nutrition information and ingredients for USDA direct delivery food items (brown box) may vary based on the vendor who received the bid. If a SFA requires product information for students with food allergies or other dietary needs, the SFA must obtain product-specific information from the manufacturer.

To find the nutrition information for USDA direct delivery food items, check the outside of the case or the inside packaging. If nutrition information is not available, check with the product’s manufacturer. The processor’s agreement with the Connecticut Food Distribution Program (FDP) requires that the processor must provide product nutrition information to SFAs upon request and make available on their website. For additional assistance, contact the [Connecticut FDP staff](#).



Trans fats

Labels or manufacturer specifications for all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals must indicate zero grams of trans fats per serving. Menu planners cannot use nutrient databases to determine values for trans fats because nutrient databases do not currently have complete data for trans fats.

SFAs must add the specification for zero trans fats to procurement contracts and request the required documentation (nutrition label or manufacturer specifications) from manufacturers. Menu planners must review all commercially prepared products for trans fats content before purchasing.

On January 23, 2020, the USDA issued the proposed rule, *Simplifying Meal Service and Monitoring Requirements in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* (85 FR 4094). This rule proposed to remove trans fat as a dietary specification, effective July 1, 2021. The USDA indicates that the trans fat dietary specification is no longer needed because the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is regulating trans fat out of U.S. food supply. As of the date of this publication, the proposed rule has not been finalized. Therefore, the current trans fat standard still applies.

Nutrient analysis

During the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs, the CSDE must assess whether meals offered to students in grades K-12 are consistent with the USDA's dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. The CSDE's Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs will include the SFA's:

- menus;
- production records;
- standardized recipes;
- product formulation statements and CN labels; and
- if applicable, nutrition information showing how the products contribute toward the meal pattern requirements.

If a nutrient analysis is required as part of the CSDE's Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs, it will include all foods (including condiments) and beverages offered as part of reimbursable meals during the one-week review period. SFAs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis of their own menus because SFAs are expected to follow the meal patterns to meet nutrient targets. However, SFAs may choose to conduct a nutrient analysis of menus to assist in their efforts to ensure they are meeting the dietary specifications.

Nutrition disclosure

The USDA’s regulations (210.10 (n)) require that SFAs must accurately represent foods on breakfast and lunch menus. Menus cannot claim that a food item is beef, pork, poultry (such as chicken or turkey) or seafood (such as fish or tuna) if the food item contains more than 30 percent alternate protein product (APP). The names used for these menu items must reflect that they are not 100 percent meat, poultry, or fish. For more information on APPs, refer to “Crediting Alternate Protein Products (APPs)” in section 3.

Determining Food Yields and Crediting

Yield refers to the amount (weight, volume, or number of servings) of a product at the completion of the preparation process. For example, 10 pounds of raw ground beef might yield 8 pounds after cooking; 5 pounds of fresh carrots might yield 3½ pounds after peeling and trimming; a vegetable soup recipe might yield 2 gallons after cooking, and a muffin recipe might yield 24 servings after baking. Yield affects how a product or recipe credits toward the school meal patterns.

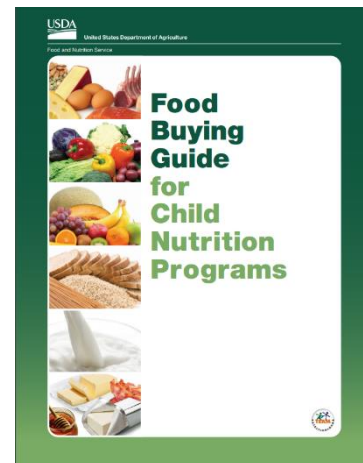
The yield of a product or recipe depends on the type of food and the preparation process. Processed fruits and vegetables yield less than the purchased amount due to peeling and trimming. Raw meats yield less than the purchased amount because moisture and fat are lost in the cooking process. Rice and pasta yield more than the purchased (dry) amount because water is absorbed during the cooking process.

The USDA’s FBG is the definitive resource for determining yields and crediting information for the Child Nutrition Programs. SFAs should ensure that menu planners use this resource to plan school meals and ASP snacks.

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

The USDA’s FBG provides yield information for common types and customary sizes of milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains, including commercially available foods and USDA Foods. The FBG helps menu planners determine:

- a food’s specific contribution toward the meal pattern requirements;
- how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide;
- what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe; and



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- how much food to buy.

The FBG helps menu planners determine how recipes and purchased foods contribute to the meal patterns for school nutrition programs. For example, menu planners can use the FBG to determine how much raw broccoli provides 50 servings of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked vegetable or how much uncooked brown rice provides 100 servings of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked rice. This information is essential for documenting compliance with the meal patterns.

In addition to the printable version, the FBG also includes several online tools for menu planners. These include the Exhibit A Grains Tool, the FBG Interactive Web-based Tool, and the Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW). These resources are available on the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The resources below provide guidance on using the FBG.

- Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-training-resources>
- Webinar: Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue! (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue>
- Webinar: Food Buying Guide Goes Digital! (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-goes-digital>
- Webinar: Navigating the Food Buying Guide FBG Calculator (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/navigating-food-buying-guide-fbg-calculator>



Determining in-house product yields

The yield information provided in the FBG represents average yields based on research conducted by the USDA. Many factors affect yield, including:

- the quality and condition of the food purchased;
- storage conditions and handling;
- the equipment used in preparation;
- cooking method and time;
- the form in which the food is served, e.g., whether potatoes are mashed, fried, or baked; and
- the serving utensils and portion control methods used.



If a food service operation consistently obtains a higher or lower yield for a product than the yield listed in the FBG, the SFA should conduct an in-house yield study to determine the actual number of portions of a specified size that the product provides. In-house yields are also required for products not listed in the FBG. The CSDE allows SFAs to use in-house yields if they are properly documented and follow the CSDE’s yield study procedures.

Yield study procedures

SFAs can use the procedures below to determine and document in-house yields for food products.

1. Select a day when the product is served on the menu. Use at least four separate samples of the product to determine yields. A “sample” is the product pack unit, such as number 10 cans or 5-pound bags. If the food service operation uses more samples, the yield data will be more accurate.
2. For the best yield estimate, at least two people should independently portion and count the samples. Each person completes half of the samples. For example, with a sample of four cans, each person works alone to measure and count the servings from two cans.
3. Select the appropriate measuring utensil for the portion size being served, such as a number 16 scoop/disher or ½-cup measuring spoon. For information on measuring utensils, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* and visit the “[Weights and Measures](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
4. Fill the measuring utensil level to the top of the measure.

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5. Carefully count and document the number of portions in each sample.
6. Add the total number of servings from each of the samples.
7. Divide the total number of servings by the number of samples to get the average number of servings per sample.
8. Complete the CSDE's *Yield Study Data Form* and maintain on file for review by the CSDE staff during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

For additional assistance with yield studies, contact the CSDE's [school nutrition programs staff](#).

