

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

School Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025)

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For information on the meal patterns, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



## Contents

Overview of Ounce Equivalents (Oz Eq) Chart.....	2
Creditable Grain Foods.....	3
Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement .....	3
Limit for Noncreditable Grains .....	4
Grain-based Desserts .....	4
Using the Grain Oz Eq Chart .....	5
When a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) is Required .....	6
Grain Oz Eq Chart .....	7
Resources .....	10

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## Overview of Ounce Equivalents (Oz Eq) Chart

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#), summarizes the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods. These quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The "[Grain Oz Eq Chart](#)" in this document lists the Exhibit A oz eq that apply to creditable grain foods in the meal patterns for grades K-12.

Groups A-G include baked goods such as crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, pancakes, and grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, cake, granola bars, and pastries. Group H includes cereal grains like pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, and other cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat. Group I includes ready-to eat (RTE) cold breakfast cereals.

The amount of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, a roll (group B) must weigh 28 grams or 1 ounce and a blueberry muffin (group D) must weigh 55 grams or 2 ounces. The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz eq.



# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## Creditable Grain Foods

To credit as the grains component, commercial grain products and foods made from scratch must be made with creditable grains. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran), and germ (such as wheat germ). Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

- Creditable foods include commercial grain products and foods made from scratch that are whole-grain rich (WGR) or enriched. For guidance on the grain crediting requirements and how to identify WGR and enriched grains, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include WGR, enriched, and fortified cereals. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Effective with school year 2024-25 (July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a sugar limit for breakfast cereals. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Additional resources on the grains component are available in the "[Grains](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

## Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR based on the total oz eq of offered grains. Grains that are not WGR must be enriched and cannot exceed 20 percent of the offered grains. WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains and foods that contain a blend of whole (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For guidance on identifying WGR foods, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## Limit for Noncreditable Grains

To credit in school meals, all commercial WGR and enriched grain products must comply with the limit for noncreditable grains. Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for group H. For guidance on meeting the limit for noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

## Grain-based Desserts

Grain-based desserts are in groups B-G and are indicated in blue or red. Only certain grain-based desserts are allowed at breakfast and lunch.

- **Breakfast and lunch:** Grain-based desserts in blue (footnote 1) are allowed at lunch and breakfast. Examples include sweet crackers (e.g., animal crackers and graham crackers), coffee cakes, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, and fruit turnovers.
- **Lunch only:** Grain-based desserts in red (footnote 2) are allowed only at lunch. Examples include cookies, cakes, cupcakes, plain brownies, and piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan).

The lunch meal pattern limits grain-based desserts (WGR and enriched) to no more than 2 oz eq. For example, the lunch menu may include a 2-oz eq grain-based dessert once per week or a 1-oz eq grain-based dessert twice per week. Graham crackers (or any other grain-based desserts) cannot be offered as the grains component of daily alternate lunch choices because this exceeds the 2 oz eq weekly limit.

The breakfast meal pattern does not require a weekly limit for grain-based desserts but restricts the types that are allowed. The CSDE recommends limiting grain-based desserts at breakfast. Menus that frequently include grain-based desserts might not meet the required weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for school meals. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Grain-based Desserts in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Dietary Specifications](#) webpage.

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## Using the Grain Oz Eq Chart

The oz eq chart on pages 7-9 indicates the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H and I) for each group of grain products to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. It also indicates the required quantities for  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz eq,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz eq, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz eq (the minimum creditable amount).

School food authorities (SFAs) must know the grain item's serving weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H and I) to use this chart. Oz eq are calculated by dividing the *grain item's serving weight/volume* by the *required weight/volume for 1 oz eq* of the applicable grain group.

- The serving weight/volume for commercial products is listed on the Nutrition Facts label or product formulation statement (PFS).
- The serving weight/volume for foods made from scratch is determined from the SFA's standardized recipe. If the standardized recipe does not provide this information, the menu planner must determine the average serving weight/volume by weighing or measuring several portions (refer to the CSDE's [Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs](#)) or use the creditable grains method for determining oz eq (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#)).

The steps for using the oz eq chart are indicated in the CSDE's resource, [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#). Training on oz eq is available in Module 13 Grain Ounce Equivalent, of the CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

For detailed guidance on both methods for determining the oz eq of commercial grain products and standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## When a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) is Required

The oz eq chart can only be used for creditable grain foods. A manufacturer's PFS is required when a commercial product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if it meets the crediting criteria. This documentation must be obtained and verified for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the grain product in reimbursable meals.

For guidance on when a PFS is required and what it must include, refer to the CSDE's resources, [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#). Additional guidance on PFS forms is available in the "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

SFAs must maintain all crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the school nutrition programs (refer to the CSDE's [Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs](#)). This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the [Administrative Review](#) of the school nutrition programs..

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## Grain Oz Eq Chart

The chart below includes the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods in the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*. Grain-based desserts in groups B-G are indicated in blue or red. Grain-based desserts in blue (footnote 1) are allowed at lunch and breakfast. Grain-based desserts in red (footnote 2) are allowed only at lunch and cannot exceed 2 oz eq per week.

Group A	Group A Servings
Bread-type coating Breadsticks, hard Chow Mein noodles Crackers, savory, e.g., saltines and snack crackers Croutons Pretzels, hard Stuffing, dry (weights apply to bread in stuffing)	<b>1 oz eq</b> = 22 grams or 0.8 ounce $\frac{3}{4}$ <b>oz eq</b> = 17 grams or 0.6 ounce $\frac{1}{2}$ <b>oz eq</b> = 11 grams or 0.4 ounce $\frac{1}{4}$ <b>oz eq</b> = 6 grams or 0.2 ounce
Group B	Group B Servings
Bagels Batter-type coating Biscuits Breads, e.g., white, wheat, whole wheat, French, Italian Buns, hamburger and hot dog Crackers, sweet, e.g., graham crackers and animal crackers, all shapes <sup>1</sup> Egg roll skins English muffins Pita bread Pizza crust Pretzels, soft Rolls Taco shells Tortilla chips Tortillas	<b>1 oz eq</b> = 28 grams or 1 ounce $\frac{3}{4}$ <b>oz eq</b> = 21 grams or 0.75 ounce $\frac{1}{2}$ <b>oz eq</b> = 14 grams or 0.5 ounce $\frac{1}{4}$ <b>oz eq</b> = 7 grams or 0.25 ounce

<sup>1</sup> Allowed at lunch in the NSLP and breakfast in the SBP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

## Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

Group C	Group C Servings
Cookies, plain, including vanilla wafers <sup>2</sup> Cornbread Corn muffins Croissants Pancakes Piecrust (dessert pies <sup>2</sup> , cobblers <sup>2</sup> , fruit turnovers <sup>1</sup> , and meat or meat alternate pies) Waffles	1 oz eq = 34 grams or 1.2 ounces $\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq = 26 grams or 0.9 ounce $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq = 17 grams or 0.6 ounce $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq = 9 grams or 0.3 ounce
Group D	Group D Servings
Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, plain <sup>1</sup> Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, unfrosted <sup>1</sup> Muffins, all except corn Sweet rolls, unfrosted <sup>1</sup> Toaster pastries, unfrosted <sup>1</sup>	1 oz eq = 55 grams or 2 ounces $\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq = 42 grams or 1.5 ounces $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq = 28 grams or 1.0 ounce $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq = 14 grams or 0.5 ounce
Group E	Group E Servings
Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, with nuts, dried fruit, and/or chocolate pieces <sup>1</sup> Cookies, with fillings or coverings, nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces, and/or fruit purees <sup>2</sup> Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, frosted or glazed <sup>1</sup> French toast Sweet rolls, frosted <sup>1</sup> Toaster pastries, frosted <sup>1</sup>	1 oz eq = 69 grams or 2.4 ounces $\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq = 52 grams or 1.8 ounces $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq = 35 grams or 1.2 ounces $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq = 18 grams or 0.6 ounce
Group E	Group E Servings
Cake, plain, unfrosted <sup>2</sup> Coffee cake <sup>1</sup>	1 oz eq = 82 grams or 2.9 ounce $\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq = 62 grams or 2.2 ounce $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq = 41 grams or 1.5 ounce $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq = 21 grams or 0.7 ounce
Group G	Group G Oz Eq
Brownies, plain <sup>2</sup> Cake, all varieties, frosted <sup>2</sup>	1 oz eq = 125 grams or 4.4 ounces $\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq = 94 grams or 3.3 ounces $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq = 63 grams or 2.2 ounces $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq = 32 grams or 1.1 ounces

<sup>1</sup> Allowed at lunch in the NSLP and breakfast in the SBP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

<sup>2</sup> Allowed only at lunch in the NSLP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.



## Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

Group H	Group H Servings
Barley Breakfast cereals, cooked <sup>3</sup> Bulgur or cracked wheat Cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat Macaroni, all shapes Noodles, all varieties Pasta, all shapes Ravioli, noodle only Rice, brown or enriched white	<b>1 oz eq</b> = ½ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) dry <b>½ oz eq</b> = ¼ cup cooked or ½ ounce (14 grams) dry
Group I	Group I Servings
Ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals (cold dry) <sup>3</sup>	<b>1 oz eq</b> = 1 cup or 1 ounce for flakes and rounds 1¼ cups or 1 ounce for puffed cereal ¼ cup or 1 ounce for granola  <b>½ oz eq</b> = ½ cup or ½ ounce for flakes and rounds ¾ cup or ½ ounce for puffed cereal ⅛ cup or ½ ounce for granola

<sup>3</sup> RTE breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified. Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a sugars limit for breakfast cereals (no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs...](#)

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

## Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting\\_processed\\_product\\_documentation\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_snp.pdf)

Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/calculate\\_wgr\\_percentage\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/calculate_wgr_percentage_snp.pdf)

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain\\_calculation\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_cereals\\_snp\\_preschool.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_cereals_snp_preschool.pdf)

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_enriched\\_grains\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_enriched_grains_snp.pdf)

Crediting Grain-based Desserts in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_grain\\_based\\_desserts\\_grades\\_k-12\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_grain_based_desserts_grades_k-12_snp.pdf)

Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit\\_whole\\_grains\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_snp.pdf)

Food Buying Guide Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-training-resources>

Grains Component (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/grains>

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wgr\\_requirement\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wgr_requirement_snp_grades_k-12.pdf)

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how\\_to\\_use\\_ounce\\_equivalents\\_chart.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_ounce_equivalents_chart.pdf)

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements>

Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/records\\_retention\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/records_retention_snp.pdf)

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

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

[https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming\\_Meal\\_Pattern\\_Changes](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming_Meal_Pattern_Changes)

USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation>

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product\\_formulation\\_statements.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf)

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation Part B – Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE Training Program):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when\\_commercial\\_grain\\_products\\_require\\_pfs\\_snp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf)

# Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain\\_oz\\_eq\\_snp\\_grades\\_k-12.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp_grades_k-12.pdf).

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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