

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Summer Food Service Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). For information on the SFSP meal patterns and the MMA component, review the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) resource, [Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns](#), and visit the “Meal Patterns for the SFSP” and “Meat/Meat Alternates Component for the SFSP” sections of the CSDE’s SFSP webpage.



Contents

Overview of Crediting Requirements2

Criteria for APPs.....2

Required Documentation for APPs.....3

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children4

Resources4



Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP

Overview of Crediting Requirements

Alternate protein products (APPs) credit as meat alternates toward the meat/meat alternates (MMA) component of the SFSP meal patterns. APPs are food ingredients that may be used alone or in combination with meat, poultry, or seafood. They are processed from soy or other vegetable protein sources and may be dehydrated granules, particles, or flakes. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs may be used in the dry (nonhydrated), partially hydrated, or fully hydrated form.

APPs are generally used as part of a formed meat patty or in a vegetarian patty resembling a meat product. Examples of foods that might contain added APPs include beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos, and tuna salad.



Processed food items such as vegetarian burgers may contain APP, but the food item itself is not an APP because it contains other ingredients such as seasonings or breading. APPs do not include tofu, surimi, seitan, or tempeh.

A 1-ounce serving of a creditable APP credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component for the SFSP meal patterns. The total MMA contribution cannot exceed the weight of product.

Criteria for APPs

APPs must meet the USDA's requirements specified in [appendix A](#) of the SFSP regulations (7 CFR 225). These regulations specify that APPs may credit for part or all the MMA requirement if they meet the three criteria below.

1. The APP must be processed so that some portion of the non-protein constituents of the food is removed. This refers to the manufacturing process for APP. APP must be safe and suitable edible products produced from plant or animal sources.
2. The biological quality of the protein in the APP must be at least 80 percent of casein (milk protein), determined by performing a Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS). The PDCAAS is a method of evaluating protein quality.
3. The APP contains at least 18 percent protein by weight when fully hydrated or formulated. "When hydrated or formulated" refers to a dry APP and the amount of water, fat, oil, colors, flavors, or any other substances that have been added.

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP

Menu planners cannot determine if an APP product meets these criteria by reading the product's label. The labeling laws of the USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) require manufacturers to list product ingredients, but percentage labeling is voluntary. For example, a product may list whey protein concentrate and hydrolyzed soy protein in the ingredients but will not indicate the percentage of these protein ingredients by weight. Therefore, manufacturers must provide the appropriate crediting documentation. For more information, refer to the USDA's [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

Required Documentation for APPs

The USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) does not contain yield information for APPs. SFSP sponsors must obtain documentation from the manufacturer that the product meets the APP criteria. Without appropriate documentation, APPs cannot credit in the SFSP meals and snacks. Acceptable documentation for APPs includes:

- the original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer with supporting documentation on company letterhead that the APP ingredient meets the USDA's requirements. Sample APP documentation is on page 6 of the USDA's [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

The manufacturer's documentation should include information on the percent protein contained in the dry alternate protein product and in the prepared product. For an APP product mix, manufacturers should provide information on the amount by weight of dry APP in the package, hydration instructions, and instructions on how to combine the mix with meat or other meat alternates.

If the PFS for a commercial product lists APP ingredients that are being credited as the MMA component, the manufacturer must provide supporting documentation to indicate that the APP ingredients meet the USDA's APP requirements. APP ingredients without this supporting documentation cannot credit in SFSP meals and snacks.

The USDA's [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products \(APP\)](#) provides additional guidance on documenting the APP requirements. For information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#) and [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#), and the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#).

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP

Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms and how to evaluate a PFS is available in Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation 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*.

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Some APP foods may be choking hazards, such as tube-shaped meats like hotdogs, sausage, and meat sticks. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of APP foods to offer in school menus. Modify menus as appropriate and use preparation techniques to reduce choking risk. For additional guidance, visit the "Choking Prevention" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Accepting_Processed_Product_Documentation_SFSP.pdf

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Commercial_MMA_SFSP.pdf

Crediting Commercial Processed Products ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents#CreditingCommercialProcessedProducts>

Crediting Deli Meats in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Credit_Deli_SFSP.pdf

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Meal Patterns for the SFSP ("How To" Section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/How-To#MealPatterns>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for the SFSP ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's SFSP webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Summer-Food-Service-Program/Documents#MMA>

Nutrition Guide: Summer Food Service Program (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA_SFSP_NutritionGuide.pdf

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP

Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf

Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app>

Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component of the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Component_MMA_SFSP.pdf

Resources for the Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/MealPattern/Resources_SFSP_Meal_Patterns.pdf

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

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

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

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

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program (CDSE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/CN_Labels_SFSP.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Product_Formulation_Statements_SFSP.pdf

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (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>

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the SFSP



For more information, visit the [Meal Patterns for the SFSP](#) and [Crediting Foods in the SFSP](#) sections of the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the CSDE's SFSP webpage, or contact the [Summer Meals 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/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/APP_Requirements_SFSP.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

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