

Crediting Deli Meats 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, refer to 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.



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Overview of Crediting Requirements

Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna) credit as the meat/meat alternates (MMA) component. The amount that provides 1 ounce of the MMA component depends on the product's ingredients and varies greatly between different brands and types.

- **100 percent meat:** Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, 1 ounce of deli meat that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component.
- **Added liquids, binders, and extenders:** Products that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component. The crediting depends on the amount of meat per serving, excluding added ingredients. For example, to credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component might require 1.6 ounces of one brand of deli meat and 2.3 ounces of another brand of deli meat.

SFSP sponsors must ensure that the serving of deli meat provides the required amount of the MMA component for SFSP meals and snacks.

Required Crediting Documentation

SFSP sponsors must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all deli meats that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation for deli meats 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) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.

SFSP sponsors must obtain a PFS for all commercial processed products that are not CN labeled. Crediting documentation must be maintained on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the SFSP.

Deli meats without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in the SFSP meal patterns.

For more information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Summer Food Service Program](#). For guidance on how to review a PFS, refer to the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating a](#)

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Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement and *Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates*. For additional guidance, visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products” section of the CSDE’s SFSP webpage.

Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms 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*.

Liquids, Binders, and Extenders

Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS that states the amount of the MMA component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if commercial products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. The ingredients statements below show some examples (in *italics*) of turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders.

- Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water*, *modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.
- Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.

Table 1 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders.



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Table 1. Examples of binders and extenders ¹

Agar-agar	Dry or dried whey	Soy flour (APP) ²
Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)	Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate	Soy protein concentrate (APP) ²
Bread	Gums, vegetable	Starchy vegetable flour
Calcium-reduced dried skim milk	Isolated soy protein (APP) ²	Tapioca dextrin
Carrageenan	Locust bean gum	Vegetable starch
Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)	Methyl cellulose	Wheat gluten
Cereal	Modified food starch	Whey
Dried milk	Reduced lactose whey	Whey protein concentrate (APP) ²
	Reduced minerals	Xanthan gum
	Sodium caseinate	

¹ Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA’s regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7).

² Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s requirements for alternate protein products (APPs). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

Developing Recipes for Deli Meats

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, SFSP sponsors should develop recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees. These recipes should indicate the deli meat’s contribution to the MMA component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. For ease of portioning, the weight of the deli meat in the recipe should be rounded up to the nearest measure. For example, the recipe should list 1.2 ounces as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces as 1.75 ounces.

If the SFSP sponsor makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the recipe should include the required weight of each brand. For example, if a summer meals site makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, the recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand and the required weight of XYZ brand. Alternatively, the SFSP sponsor could develop a separate turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat.

For more information on developing standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE’s [Standardized Recipe Form for the Summer Food Service Program](#) and visit the “[Standardized Recipes](#)” section of the CSDE’s SFSP webpage.

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Comparing Cost

Determining the cost per ounce of MMA helps SFSP sponsors decide if the required meal pattern serving for a specific brand of deli meat is reasonable and cost effective. The deli product with the lowest cost per pound might not be the least expensive. Considering the cost per ounce of the MMA component instead of the cost per ounce of meat provides a more accurate reflection of the product's cost in SFSP meals and snacks. Table 2 shows a sample cost comparison of two deli meat products.

Food item	Price per pound	Price per ounce	Amount to provide 1 ounce of MMA ¹	Cost of 1 ounce of MMA
Sample product A: Deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders	\$4.99	\$.31	1.7 ounces ²	\$.53
Sample product B: Deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders	\$6.99	\$.44	1 ounce	\$.44

¹ Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of the MMA component per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Summer Food Service Program](#) and [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Summer Food Service Program](#).

² This information would be obtained from the product's PFS.

Sample product A (deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders) costs \$2 less per pound than sample product B (deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders). However, when the menu planner compares the cost based on 1 ounce of the MMA component, a serving of sample product A costs 53 cents and a serving of sample product B costs 44 cents. Sample product A requires almost twice the weight of sample product B to provide 1 ounce of the MMA component, due to the added liquids, binders, and extenders.



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Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Large chunks or cubes of deli meats are choking hazards. Consider children’s age and developmental readiness when deciding how to offer deli meats in SFSP menus and modify foods and menus as appropriate. 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

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CN_Labeling_Program.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 Foods in the SFSP (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s SFSP webpage):

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

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>

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component of the SFSP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

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

Standardized Recipe Form for the Summer Food Service Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SFSP/CreditingSFSP/Standardized_Recipe_Form_SFSP.docx

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Standardized Recipes (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s SFSP webpage):

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

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>

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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 [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/Credit_Deli_SFSP.pdf.

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3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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