

The School Lunch Tray: January 3, 2024

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

The School Lunch Tray contains the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) weekly email notifications for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. This week's topics are listed below.

Happy New Year!

Action Items

- None

Need to Know

- CSDE Welcomes New Staff Member to the Child Nutrition Programs Bureau
- Updated CSDE Staff Contact Information
- No Table Talk for Thursday, January 11, 2023
- USDA Foods Update: Foods Available List for School Year 2024-25
- SNACT's Winter Warm Up Conference January 9, 2024
- Reminder: Water Availability During Meal Service
- Resource Roundup: Buy American Justification Form

Good to Know

- New England Dairy Free 30-minute webinar: Chill Out with Cold Milk, Thursday, February 1, 2024

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. For previous versions of the School Lunch Tray, visit the CSDE's [School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](#) webpage.



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Need to Know

CSDE Welcomes New Staff Member to the Child Nutrition Programs Bureau

The CSDE is pleased to welcome Jen Bove, the newest member of the Child Nutrition Programs Bureau. Jen is a registered dietitian with a B.S. in Business Management and an M.S. in Health Promotion. She has eight years of experience with child nutrition, and most recently was the nutrition services director for East Hampton Public Schools. Jen will be working with the school nutrition programs team.

Updated CSDE Staff Contact Information

The CSDE staff contact information documents below are updated as of December 2023.

- [Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities](#): This document includes a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Program staff and their areas of responsibility.
- [County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs](#): Each Connecticut county has an assigned CSDE school nutrition team member to provide technical assistance for the USDA school nutrition programs. This document indicates the Connecticut counties assigned to each CSDE school nutrition team member.

No Table Talk for Thursday, January 11, 2023

Table Talk will not be held on Thursday, January 11, 2024. Schools may still submit questions for future Table Talks at <https://forms.office.com/g/GWS7DCbbgo>.

USDA Foods Update: Foods Available List for School Year 2024-25

Please review the [USDA's Foods Available List](#) for the upcoming 2024-25 school year. A summary of the changes is below. Contact the [Food Distribution Team](#) by Tuesday, January 9, 2024, with any requests to add or remove any items from the catalog for next year's orders. As a reminder, the material codes that were available for Connecticut last year can be reviewed on the [USDA Foods Ordering Worksheets for School Year 2023-24](#). **Note: The worksheets will be revised shortly for the upcoming 2024-25 ordering period.**

Items Removed

Items temporarily removed due to lack of product availability.

- 100227 - Orange Juice, Unsweetened, Cartons, Frozen – 70/4 oz carton
- 110651 - Orange Juice, Unsweetened, Cups, Frozen - 96/4 oz cup

Item removed due to changes in processor needs and product availability.

- 100443 – Oil, Vegetable – Bulk Pounds

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Item Changes

- 110921 – Chicken, Grilled Fillet-Style, 2.0 MMA, Cooked, Frozen – 6/5 lb. or 3/10 lb. bag
The product description, specification, and Product Information Sheet have been updated to clarify that the product is not a whole muscle breast, but instead made from whole muscle breast pieces that are formed into a fillet-style shape. The product remains the same as what has previously been supplied.
- 110931 – Eggs, Patties, Cooked, 1.0 MMA, Round, Frozen – 25 lb. case à 111751 – Eggs, Patties, Cooked, 1.0 MMA, Round, Frozen – 25 lb. case
Updated material code reflects a change in truckload weight from 39,600 lbs. (1,584 cases) to 36,750 lbs. (1,470 cases). No other changes were made to the specification.
- 110398 – Yogurt, High-Protein, Vanilla, Chilled (K) – 6/32 oz tub à 111750 – Yogurt, High-Protein, Vanilla, Chilled (K) – 6/32 oz tub
Updated material code reflects a change in truckload weight from 34,320 lbs. (2,860 cases) to 35,280 lbs. (2,940 cases) and pallet configuration from 60 cases per pallet to 130 cases per pallet. No other changes were made to the specification.
- 110396 – Cheese, Mozzarella, Low Moisture Part Skim, String, Chilled – 360/1 oz package
The product will be available to order in less than truckload quantities in addition to full truckload quantities. The minimum order quantity is half a truckload (840 cases), which can be split between up to 3 delivery locations with a minimum order of 210 cases per delivery location.

USDA Foods Processing Reminder

The USDA Foods Available List (FAL) highlights products that are supplied in bulk for further processing in yellow. However, other USDA Foods found on the FAL not highlighted in yellow can also be used for the processing program. Contact the Food Distribution Program staff about utilizing other USDA Foods for further processing.

SNACT's Winter Warm Up Conference January 9, 2024

Join SNACT at the USDA Foods and Industry Food Show and Winter Conference on January 9, 2024, at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, CT. The conference will include a special new director's round table session, CSDE updates, and training from Patrick Garmong, Associate Director of Culinary Education and Training at the Institute of Child Nutrition.

- Registration: <https://snact.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1708713>
 - Agenda: https://cdn.ymaws.com/snact.org/resource/resmgr/documents/usda/2024/2024winter_war_m_up_agenda.pdf
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Reminder: Water Availability During Meal Service

The USDA regulations require that schools must make potable water available to students during the meal service. This requirement applies to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP) and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. When offering water to students, school food authorities (SFAs) must meet the three requirements below.

1. Water must be available to students without any restrictions, i.e., children can freely access the water in the location where the meals are served. For example, if the SFA meets the water requirement with a water fountain in the cafeteria or immediately adjacent, children must be allowed to leave their tables to access the water fountain during the meal service. Make sure that the fountains in or near the cafeteria are operating and that lunchroom aides are aware of this requirement if a student requests access to water during lunch service.
2. Water must be offered at no charge. SFAs cannot charge students for water or for cups to access water.
3. The water must be unflavored. For example, SFAs cannot add sliced fruits or vegetables to water for flavor, such as orange and lemon slices or sliced cucumbers.

For detailed guidance, visit the [Water Availability During Meal Service](#) section of the CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs webpage. A 15-minute training module (Module 14: Water Availability during Meal Service) is available in the CSDE's training programs, [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

Resource Roundup: Buy American Justification Form

As a reminder, SFAs must use the [Buy American Justification Form](#) when, on those rare occasions, SFAs find it necessary to purchase non-domestic products. Make sure to review all products to determine if a Buy American Justification form is required. The Buy American requirements for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are summarized in [USDA Memo SP 38-2017: Compliance with and Enforcement of the Buy American Provision in the NSLP](#). For additional resources, visit the "[Buy American Provision](#)" section of the CSDE's Procurement for School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Good to Know

New England Dairy Free 30-minute webinar: Chill Out with Cold Milk, Thursday, February 1, 2024

Join Lonnie Burt, MS, RD, CD-N, Retired Senior Food & Child Nutrition Director of Hartford Public Schools, and New England Dairy for the ***Chill Out with Cold Milk*** webinar on **Thursday, February 1, 2024, from 2:00 to 2:30 p.m.** Milk tastes best when it's icy cold. Poor flavor is the most common reason students decline to select milk with school meals and miss out on the important nutrients milk provides. This webinar will discuss current youth milk consumption behaviors, and best practices for serving great tasting milk. All attendees who work in school nutrition programs in CT, MA, NH, RI, or VT will receive a free cold milk kit. Additionally, participants who complete the evaluation will receive a Holstein inflatable cow for their cafeterias.

- Details and registration information: <https://www.newenglanddairy.com/class/cold-milk-webinar/>
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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray and Table Talk](#) 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/SLT/2024/SLT_01_03_2024.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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