

The School Lunch Tray: March 5, 2025

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.

Action Items

- Final Reminder: USDA Foods for School Year 2025-26: Orders due March 7, 2025
- New USDA Foods Office Hours Session on March 5, 2025
- Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Training Survey: Due March 14, 2025

Need to Know

- Product-based Limits for Added Sugars in Breakfast Cereals and Yogurt, Effective July 1, 2025
- Product-based Limits for Added Sugars in Flavored Milk, Effective July 1, 2025
- Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated March 4, 2025
- Connecticut School Recycling and Composting Laws: Effective July 1, 2026
- Recording Now Available for Rudd Center's Webinar, Introduction to the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT)
- Resource Roundup: Reminder About Rudd Center's 2022 LSWP Triennial Assessment Report

Good to Know

- Connecticut DEEP Webinar: Complying with School Recycling and Composting Laws in Connecticut



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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Action Items

Final Reminder: USDA Foods for School Year 2025-26: Orders due March 7, 2025

The Connecticut Food Distribution Program's (FDP) catalog for USDA Foods for school year (SY) 2025-26 opened on **Friday, February 14, 2025**, in Web Based Supply Chain Management (WBSCM). The deadline to place orders in WBSCM is **Friday, March 7, 2025**. Recipient Agencies (RAs) that miss the ordering deadline will not receive USDA Foods.

Please carefully review and follow the CSDE's [Instructions for Ordering USDA Foods for School Year 2025-26](#). This document and the [USDA Foods Ordering Worksheets for School Year 2025-26](#) are available in the "[WBSCM](#)" section of the CSDE's FDP webpage. For questions, please contact the [FDP staff](#).

New USDA Foods Office Hours Session on March 5, 2025

The FDP will conduct an additional [USDA Foods office hours session](#) on **Wednesday, March 5, 2025**, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please come prepared with questions about your USDA Foods order.

Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Training Survey: Due March 14, 2025

Please complete the [Introduction to School Nutrition Leadership Training survey](#) by **March 14, 2025**. This survey will take less than 3 minutes and will help the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs determine if this training will be offered this summer. Note that this training was previously referred to as the "new director's training."

Need to Know

Product-based Limits for Added Sugars in Breakfast Cereals and Yogurt, Effective July 1, 2025

Effective July 1, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes product-based limits for added sugars in breakfast cereals (cold and hot) and yogurt/soy yogurt for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program, (ASP). For more information, refer to the resources below.

- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE)
- [Crediting Yogurt in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE)
- [Added Sugars](#) (USDA webpage)

The NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns already have product-based limits for breakfast cereals and yogurt/soy yogurt based on total sugars. Effective July 1, 2025, these limits change to added sugars and will be the same as the limits for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12.

Note: The USDA resources below provide guidance on meeting the added sugars limits. While the USDA developed these resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the added sugars limits outlined in these documents are the same as those for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12, which will take effect on July 1, 2025.

- [Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
- [Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Yogurt in the CACFP](#)
- [Choose Yogurt That is Lower in Added Sugars in the CACFP](#)

Product-based Limits for Added Sugars in Flavored Milk, Effective July 1, 2025

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA's final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes product-based limits for added sugars in flavored milk offered in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP, and for flavored milk sold a la carte (separately from reimbursable meals). These limits are summarized below.

- **Flavored milk served in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks for grades K-12:** cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.
- **Flavored milk sold a la carte to elementary school students:** cannot exceed 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.

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- **Flavored milk sold a la carte to middle and high school students:** cannot exceed 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

These added sugars limits apply only to flavored cow's milk; they do not apply to non-dairy fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 01-2025](#): Fluid Milk Requirements for School Meals.

Updated List of Acceptable Food and Beverages Dated March 4, 2025

Updated lists of foods that comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) and beverages that comply with the state beverage statute are now available on the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

- **New products** on the lists are indicated by pink highlighting on the manufacturer and product name.
- Items that have been **added or deleted** since the last update are listed on the CSDE's [Summary of Updates to Approved Food and Beverages](#). **Note:** This summary includes only the changes since the last update; it is not a complete listing of all allowable products. For the complete list, visit the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage.

HFC schools must check that commercial foods and beverages are listed before they are sold to students. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [How to Evaluate Commercial Food Products for Compliance with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#), and visit the "[Evaluating Foods for CNS Compliance](#)" section of the CSDE's CNS webpage.

Note About Changes for School Year 2025-26: Effective July 1, 2025, the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards for school year 2025-26](#) require new limits for added sugars for breakfast cereals, yogurt, pudding, and smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice, based on the USDA's final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (refer to "Updated Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for School Year 2025-26" in the [School Lunch Tray for February 19, 2025](#)). In addition, the USDA final rule requires limits for added sugars in flavored milk effective July 1, 2025 (refer to "Product-based Limits for Added Sugars in Flavored Milk, Effective July 1, 2025" above).

Products that exceed the added sugars limits are indicated in red with pink shading on the following lists:

- list 5 (breakfast cereals);
- list 7 (yogurt and pudding);
- list 9 (smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fruits/vegetables/100 percent juice); and
- list 16 (milk).

These products will be removed as of June 30, 2025. Note that this information may change, as manufacturers reformulate their products. Future updates to the List of Acceptable Food and Beverages will reflect any changes submitted to the CSDE.

Connecticut School Recycling and Composting Laws: Effective July 1, 2026

The Commercial Organics Recycling Law (C.G.S. 22a-226e) requires every Connecticut municipality to designate a local recycling contact. Some towns have an employee whose primary responsibility is to manage the local recycling program; others designate a public official or town commission member to fulfill this role. The list of contacts for Connecticut's 169 towns is available on the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) [Local Municipal Recycling Coordinators](#) webpage.

In the 2024 legislative session, Section 6 (a) (5) of [Public Act 24-45](#) added K-12 schools to the Commercial Organics Recycling Law. Effective July 1, 2026, this law requires each K-12 public or non-public school building or educational facility to collect Source Separated Organic Materials (SSOM), such as food scraps, for composting if the school building:

- generates 26 tons or more per year; and
- is within 20 miles of an authorized SSOM composting facility.

Many schools in Connecticut are within 20 miles of an authorized SSOM composting facility. For more information, refer to "[Connecticut DEEP Webinar: Complying with School Recycling and Composting Laws in Connecticut](#)" under "Good to Know" below.

Recording Now Available for Rudd Center's Webinar, Introduction to the Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT)

The recording is now available for the Rudd Center's webinar on February 27, 2025, [Introduction to the Wellness School Assessment Tool \(WellSAT\)](#). As a reminder, the USDA's final rule, [Local School Wellness Policy \(LSWP\) Implementation Under the HHFKA of 2010](#), requires that each local LEA must complete an assessment of their LSWP at least once every three years. The second triennial assessment is due **June 30, 2025**, and is conducted using the WellSAT.

Resource Roundup: Reminder About Rudd Center's 2022 LSWP Triennial Assessment Report

As school food authorities work on their 2025 LSWP Triennial Assessment (due June 30, 2025), it may be helpful to refer to the 2022 LSWP Triennial Assessment report from the University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health. The Rudd Center created this triennial assessment report using Wellness School Assessment Tool (WellSAT) data from 110 National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) sponsors. For more information, visit the "[First LSWP Triennial Assessment: Due June 30, 2022](#)" section of the CSDE's School Wellness Policy webpage.

Good to Know

Connecticut DEEP Webinar: Complying with School Recycling and Composting Laws in Connecticut

On March 17, 2025, DEEP staff will review current recycling and composting laws including how to comply with Public Act 24-45 and Executive Order 21-3. DEEP will also share new tools and resources underway to support schools and provide time for questions and answers.

- Date and time: March 17, 2025, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
 - Registration: [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#)
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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's [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/2025/slt_03_05_2025.pdf.

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