

The School Lunch Tray: March 24, 2021

Dear School Sponsors of Child Nutrition Programs:

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

- USDA Foods Reminder: Notifying Vendors about Menu Changes as Students Return to In-person Learning
- USDA Foods Update: Shredded White Cheddar Cheese, Material Code 10002
- Pandemic Electronic Benefits (P-EBT) for Children in Schools
- Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals: Deadline is April 23, 2021
- Free Dairy Resources Available for April
- Resource Roundup: USDA-approved State P-EBT Plans for School Year 2020-21

Please review and share with appropriate staff members. Thank you.



USDA Foods Reminder: Notifying Vendors about Menu Changes as Students Return to In-person Learning

As many schools plan to resume in-person learning in the coming weeks, it is important for schools to be proactive and communicate with vendors about anticipated changes to school menus. Please remember to update your vendors about changes to menu items and potential usage of USDA Foods. Net-off-invoice further processed USDA Foods and commercial products have been stocked based on your current usage. If schools will be using different menu items and increasing usage of other items, vendors need sufficient advance notice to adjust par levels in time to meet changing needs.

USDA Foods Update: Shredded White Cheddar Cheese, Material Code 10002

Please review your HPC allocation reports and plan to take all remaining shredded white cheddar cheese. This product is nearing the end of its shelf-life and should be used or frozen by **April 20, 2021**. If frozen, the product should be thawed in a cooler. The thawed product should be used within two days of thawing. The last date to order this cheese is **Friday, April 2, 2021**. If you do not plan on using your shredded cheddar cheese, please submit a [Request to Donate USDA Foods](#) Form by **Friday, March 26, 2021**.

Pandemic Electronic Benefits (P-EBT) for Children in Schools

The Department of Social Services (DSS), in collaboration with the CSDE, received approval to operate the most current version of P-EBT for children in schools (known as P-EBT 2.0 for school year (SY) 2020-21). P-EBT 2.0 is a federal program that provides a supplemental nutrition benefit for households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures, reduced attendance, or reduced capacity for five consecutive days or longer.

The basic P-EBT eligibility criteria for children in schools remains unchanged from the previous version. Under the current public health emergency, a school child is eligible for P-EBT benefits in SY 2020-21 if the child meets the two P-EBT conditions for eligibility:

1. The child would have received free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) if not for the COVID public health emergency.
2. The child does not receive free or reduced-price meals at school because the school is closed or has been operating with reduced attendance or hours for at least five consecutive days in the current school year.

Most Connecticut schools are offering meals at no cost to all students for SY 2020-21, due to the public health emergency. However, P-EBT student eligibility for free or reduced-priced school meals is determined using:

- a school meals application approved for free or reduced-priced meals on file with the student's school;
- direct certification for free or reduced-priced school meals through receiving SNAP, TFA, or Husky A ($\leq 185\%$ FPL) with DSS;
- direct certification for free school meals through determination as foster, homeless, runaway, and some Head Start; or
- enrollment in a school participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP).

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Eligible households will receive up to two benefit deposits. Deposit 1 covers the months of September 2020 through January 2021. Deposit 2 covers the months of February 2021 through the end of the school year. The amount a household receives depends on what the learning mode the student was in each month and could be different from student to student.

Dairy Grant Opportunity for School Meals: Deadline is April 23, 2021

The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board and New England Dairy are pleased to announce a funding opportunity from Connecticut Dairy Farmers to eligible Connecticut schools. This grant supports food service needs related to expanding school meal programs or serving new dairy menu items with current or new school meals programs. Visit NewEnglandDairy.com for details. The application deadline is **April 23, 2021**. This project is funded by New England Dairy and the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board.

Free Dairy Resources Available for April

Celebrate the arrival of spring with New England Dairy and Connecticut's dairy farm families! Ring in spring with dairy on **National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day (April 12)** and **Earth Day (April 22)**. Order free [I Love Cheese](#) stickers for your students who select grilled cheese on April 12. Teach your students how Connecticut dairy farmers take care of the land with the [Milk from Cow to You](#) poster, and encourage families to register for the free virtual [Farm to Family Night](#) on April 22. This project is funded by New England Dairy and the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board.

Resource Roundup: USDA-approved State P-EBT Plans for School Year 2020-21

This week's Resource Roundup highlights information about the P-EBT. Join us for tomorrow's Table Talk (March 25, 2021, from 2:00-3:00 p.m.) as we highlight two P-EBT webpages:

- the USDA's [State Guidance on Coronavirus Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) webpage, which includes all USDA-approved state P-EBT plans for school year 2020-21, guidance, and resources; and
- the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) [Pandemic EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) webpage, which provides guidance and resources for Connecticut schools.

Registration for the March Table Talk series is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8533924782955650575>. To submit questions in advance, visit https://sdect.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezIN3YJJqjkPGND.

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For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [School Lunch Tray Table Talk](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Training/TableTalk/SLT_03-24_2021.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;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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