

Tuesday Tidbits

August 2013

Tuesday Tidbits are weekly e-mail blasts sent to school nutrition sponsors in Connecticut providing simple suggestions, reminders, resources and advice to help run a successful school nutrition program.

► August 6, 2013: Promoting Your School Meals Program

As the new school year is about to begin, be ready to promote all the good things about your school meals! The first four Tuesday Tidbits this year will provide you with resources to “hit the ground running” with ideas to get the word out about your school *nutrition* program.

The State of Washington Office of Public Instruction has some colorful posters (11x17) you can print and laminate to promote the vegetable subgroups. You will also find some helpful talking points that could be used on the monthly menu, on the Web site or in newsletters to highlight the great nutrition provided to students in their school meals. Links to these are below.

Don't be afraid to talk about ALL the good things that are happening in school meals!

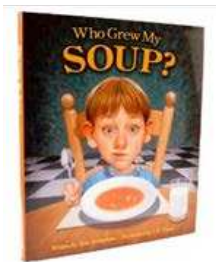
Vegetable Subgroup

- [Dark green subgroup](#)
- [Red/Orange subgroup](#)
- [Beans/Legumes subgroup](#)
- [Starchy subgroup](#)
- [Other subgroup](#)
- [Vegetable Subgroup handout](#) (color version)
- [Vegetable Subgroup handout b/w](#) (black and white version)
- [Meal Pattern Promotion and Talking Points](#)

► August 20, 2013: Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Week, September 30-October 4, 2013

The State Department of Education wants to hear about the delicious, locally grown items you are serving in your cafeterias. In addition to highlighting items on your menu, consider the following suggestion to help you celebrate the great things you do and reach out to make the classroom to cafeteria connection.

1. The designated book for the 2013 Ag Literacy Campaign is [Who Grew My Soup?](#) Sponsored by the Connecticut Agriculture Education Foundation, it targets grades K-4. It comes with a lesson plan for the teacher. Connect with one or more K-4th grade classrooms and find a teacher interested in having the book read in their class. If you are one of the lucky districts that have a Regional Ag Ed Program, contact the director to see if one of their students can volunteer to read the book. Your high school might also have a list of students willing to volunteer their time to meet community service requirements. You or one of your staff can be the volunteer reader too!
2. Contact me and I will get you the Volunteer Reader Form through the CT Coordinator for Ag in the Classroom. A copy of the book and corresponding activities will be sent to you.
3. Use the USDA recipe for Vegetable Soup. A cup of soup provides a half cup serving of vegetables (can be used as additional vegetables for your week). Prepare using locally grown produce as available. Serve on the same day the book is being read in the classroom.
4. Students will be thrilled to see the same soup from the story being served in the cafeteria that day. Bet you get a lot of kids to try it!



Tuesday Tidbits, continued

5. Invite me to your event! I am the new Farm to School representative for the State Department of Education and I would love to see what great things are going on in your district- Monica Pacheco, monica.pacheco@ct.gov

► August 27, 2013: Outreach Toolkit to Promote School Meals

This [School Meals Outreach Toolkit](#) was created by the California Professional Nutrition Education Training Center at San Jose State University to help you promote the work you are doing to serve delicious, fresh meals to your community's school children. You will find a wide variety of up-to-date no-cost/low-cost resources on this Web site that you can use to promote your school nutrition program, improve community perception, and increase meal participation. This Outreach Toolkit has something for every district, regardless of size or finances. It has made it easy for you to get started.

September is National Honey Month

Honey is the only food item that will not spoil. It is a good source of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and amino acids. Try some honey this month in your drinks, meals and snacks. Eating local honey helps relieve the discomfort of seasonal allergies as well as support local economy.

- Bees must tap over two million flowers to make one pound of honey.
- Legend says that Cupid dipped his love arrows in honey before aiming them at unsuspecting couples.
- Writings about the use of honey date back as far as 2100 B.C.



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Tuesday Tidbits

September 2013

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► **September 3, 2013: National School Lunch Week**



National School Lunch Week: October 14-18, 2013

The [National School Lunch Week](#) (NSLW) 2013 theme is “**School Lunch Across the USA.**” It’s about celebrating the regional flavors, ingredients, and traditions from across the country. Whether you live in Boston or Biloxi, you’ll be sure to find fun and exciting ways to celebrate NSLW in your cafeteria.

Every part of the country is known for different food—whether it’s New England chowder, southern black-eyed peas, Florida oranges, or southwestern salsa. “**School Lunch Across the USA**” allows you to celebrate the popular flavors in your own region, and across the country too!

Recognizing NSLW can help you:

- increase student participation for your program;
- spread the message to parents that you’re serving healthy and tasty meals;
- earn media coverage from local papers, blogs and TV stations; and
- connect with teachers and administrators at your school or in your district to spread the word that school meals are healthy.

[NSLW Toolkit](#): 10+ pages of creative ideas, tips, and brand-new resources to help you celebrate

► **September 10, 2013: Farm to School Month**

Get ready for October: “Theme of the Day” calendar celebrates Farm to School Month



[National Farm to School Month](#) kicks off October 1, but schools and organizations are making plans now! To celebrate and spotlight the many aspects of farm to school, the National Farm to School Network put together a “[theme of the day](#)” calendar that you can use to plan your activities. During October, each theme day will be accompanied by a blog post containing information and activity ideas. To further aid your planning process, a preview of all of the blog posts will be available on farmtoschoolmonth.org starting in mid-August. The blog posts will be written by a variety of partner organizations throughout the month, providing unique perspectives and stories. Download this [PDF version](#) of the calendar, and check out our other resources as well as the items in our shop, such as these “I ate local food today!” stickers.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► September 17, 2013: COMPLETE Food Production Records are Required

Production records have always been required in school nutrition programs and now they are essential to document compliance with the new meal pattern. In addition, during administrative reviews, *the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will now apply fiscal action when the production records are not completed in compliance with these regulations*. During validation reviews conducted in school year 2012-13, the CSDE continued to see production records used incorrectly, with many incomplete or incorrectly filled out.

Note: The state agency (CSDE) must also verify that milk, whole grain-rich and vegetable subgroup requirements are met, so although these are not REQUIRED on production records, it is best practice to include this information.

Continue to train your school staff on the requirement for production records and the proper way to complete these forms. Remember to include milk counts by type of milk (e.g., skim flavored, skim unflavored) and don't forget the condiments!

For more information on production records, see the CSDE's [Production Records](#) Web page.

► September 24, 2013: Announcing the All New *Healthy Food Choices in Schools Community of Practice!*

http://www.extension.org/healthy_food_choices_in_schools

A free online resource dedicated to providing easily applicable tools and information including eating behavior insights, interventions, and practical steps for food service directors and staff, teachers, school administrators, wellness committees, and parents to encourage kids to make healthy food choices in schools.

Brought to you by [Cornell University's Center for Behavioral Economics in Child Nutrition Programs](#), the [Smarter Lunchrooms Movement](#), and [eXtension.org](#).



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Tuesday Tidbits

October 2013

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► **October 1, 2013: Farm Viability Grant (FVG) Program**

For *Municipalities & 501 c(3) Agricultural Non Profits*

Are you in need of equipment or have a project that will help support Farm to School initiatives? You may be eligible for funding through the Connecticut State Department of Agriculture's Farm Viability Grant Program. This is a competitive matching grant program that may only be used by municipalities, regional planning agencies, association of municipalities, and 501 c(3) agricultural nonprofits.

These grants may be used for capital projects, agriculture friendly land use regulations, planning projects or for initiatives to support agriculture. Applicants may apply more than one time even if have previously received FVG grant money.

For more information, visit <http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=3260&q=419408>. The deadline is November 8, 2013, so there is still plenty of time to apply!

► **October 8, 2013: Grants for Free Salad Bars for Schools**

Apply Today for a FREE Salad Bar for your School!

<http://saladbars2schools.org/>

Any K-12 school district participating in the National School Lunch Program is eligible to apply. There is one application that accommodates requests for either a single salad bar package or, for larger districts, multiple salad bar packages.



How Does This Process Work?

1. Submit application, including signed verification form from the foodservice director and superintendent.
2. You will receive an acknowledgment that your application has been received and is being processed to determine whether your application is approved.
3. Once you receive notice that your application has been received and that your school/district is approved to receive salad bar donations, your district will appear on a list of districts eligible for community donations. Your district will then be eligible to receive donations in support of your salad bar program. Donations for your district can also be sent via snail mail directly to Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools.
4. Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools contacts you when funds become available for your salad bar(s)
5. Once funded, your salad bar(s) is/are ordered for shipment and will be delivered to your school(s).
6. Your students eat more fruits and vegetables.
7. Your district is required to complete an evaluation twice over the two years following your grant.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► October 15, 2013: Free Paper Goods Scam

Watch Out for this Apparent Scam

At various times over the past 10 years, food service directors from Connecticut school districts have reported receiving phone calls offering free or donated paper goods from an unfamiliar company. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has received e-mail reports of these calls going back to 2002. The most recent report of the paper goods offer came last week. The e-mails below are some examples of the reports to our office.

- *“I wanted you to be aware of a buying scam that I was alerted to yesterday. Apparently, a company claiming to be out of Ohio is contacting CT school food service programs claiming that they know or have spoken to the superintendent of schools and would like to donate some items (e.g., aluminum foil, plastic wares, napkins and straws) to the food service program. They also ask you if you would be interested in receiving some plastic gloves (for a charge). They send the gloves and other items along with an invoice which lists the gloves (and sometimes the donated items as well) at an extraordinary cost. If they deliver the items to a school and a manager signs off on the invoice (not knowing that it is a scam), it can lead to a difficult, frustrating situation. Also, when the food service director contacted the Superintendent, he had never heard of this person or company.”*
- *“A few years back there was a company that was calling the school food service directors and saying that their superintendent said to call them about giving them donated paper products. What really happened was the company sent the school food services the few free items and 10 or 20 other cases of paper items and billed the food services for the other items that no one ordered. It was a nightmare to get rid of the bill and the company. Don’t know if this is a scam again but, yesterday I received a call from a company. My superintendent said he never heard of them and asked no one to call me about free paper goods. May be a scam!!!!!!”*
- *“I got one of those calls today from a company called XXXX claiming they had paper products to donate to my department and that they were referred to me by our superintendent. Sounded fishy so I told her to send me a list of what they wanted to donate and I would get back to them if I could use anything. They also claimed to have ½ a shipment of gloves that were supposed to be shipped in October. When I asked who ordered them she gave me the name of someone who hadn’t been the director in a few years. Don’t know if any other districts got called, but wanted to let you know in case you hear of others.”*



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Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► October 22, 2013: Crediting Hummus in School Meals

Hummus can credit as either a meat/meat alternate or a vegetable but not both in the same meal. A serving of hummus must contain enough garbanzo beans and/or tahini (sesame paste) to equal the **minimum creditable serving** for either meat/meat alternates (¼ ounce equivalent) or vegetables (⅛ cup). The rest of the minimum daily serving for each grade group must be met by adding other meat/meat alternates or other vegetables.

- Garbanzo beans and tahini both credit as a meat/meat alternate. A **¼-cup serving of garbanzo beans** or **2 tablespoons of tahini** credit as 1 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternate.
- Garbanzo beans also credit as a vegetable (beans and peas subgroup). Vegetables credit based on the **actual volume** served.

Districts are responsible for **maintaining documentation** that shows how a serving of hummus provides an appropriate amount of each meal pattern component being credited.

- **Commercial products** credit only with an original **CN label** from the product carton or a **product formulation statement** signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of meat/meat alternate or vegetable in the product per serving.
- For **hummus made from scratch**, menu planners must evaluate the meat/meat alternate or vegetable ingredients in the hummus recipe and be able to document the amounts per serving based on the USDA *Food Buying Guide*.

► October 29, 2013: Farm to School Census Results

Congratulations Connecticut! The Farm to School Census results are now available and Connecticut's efforts are outstanding! See the attached letter about the Farm to School Census site (a wealth of information about Farm to School across the state and country), how you can still be included if you didn't complete the census in the spring and how you can update your district's information. There are also two handouts included that are great marketing tools to help you promote your Farm to School Program. Here are a few statistics from the site.

CONNECTICUT

In the great state of Connecticut there are approximately **156** public school districts, **115** of which completed the USDA Farm to School Census. **80** districts representing approximately **562** individual schools with an estimated **277,849** children in attendance are bringing the farm to school.



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Tuesday Tidbits

November 2013

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► November 5, 2013: Disclosure of Eligibility

Do you have requests to share your free and reduced price master list of students? If the answer is “yes,” then you should always have the person making the request complete the *Request for Release of Free or Reduced Eligibility Status* form, which may be found under “D” on the CSDE’s [Forms for School Nutrition Programs](#) Web page.

Remember that the free and reduced price eligibility information is highly confidential. This is outlined in the [USDA Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#) under Part 7 – *Confidentially/Disclosure*.

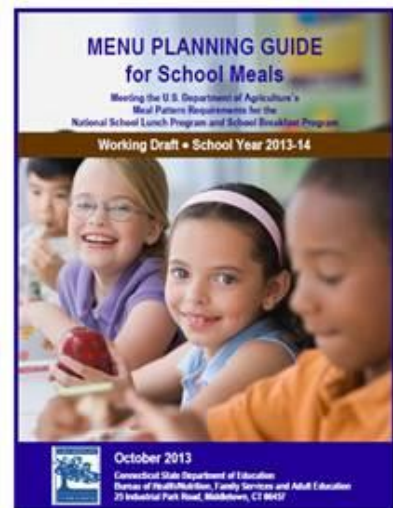
► November 12, 2013: Menu Planning Guide for School Meals

In October 2013, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) released the new online [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#). This comprehensive resource contains valuable information and guidance to help schools plan menus to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal pattern requirements.

Schools should use this guide as the definitive resource for information about the new meal patterns. The CSDE strongly recommends that all school food authorities print the guide double-sided and keep in a three-ring binder for easy reference.

It is important to note that the contents are subject to change. **This guide is a working draft that applies only to school year 2013-14.** The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policy and guidance.

Please contact Susan Fiore at susan.fiore@ct.gov if you find any edits, experience any glitches with the links or have any suggestions for future updates.



Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► November 19, 2013: Smarter Lunchrooms Makeover Pilot

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) encourages schools to apply for the **Smarter Lunchrooms Makeover Pilot (SLMP)**, an exciting opportunity for **Connecticut public schools** participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The SLMP will provide a state model for identifying effective strategies to positively influence students' daily food choices and increase selection of reimbursable meals. Selected applicants will receive a **\$5,000 stipend** and **personalized technical assistance and training** on using successful Smarter Lunchrooms strategies in the school cafeteria. The pilot period is January 2014 through June 2015.

The application deadline is **Tuesday, December 3, 2013**. The SLMP overview and application form are available on the CSDE's **Connecticut Team Nutrition** Web page (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=333840>).

► November 26, 2013: Do you know your apples?

If you ever question which apples are good for eating and which ones are better for baking, this [apple chart](#) is for you! Thanks to Jane Slupecki at the Connecticut Department of Agriculture for sharing the chart, *Apple Varieties Grown in Connecticut!*



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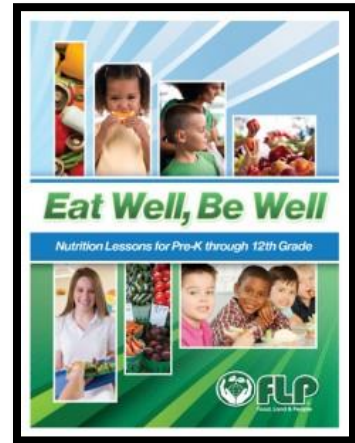
Tuesday Tidbits

December 2013

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► **December 3, 2013: Eat Well, Be Well Now Available**

Connecticut Project Food, Land & People (FLP) has been providing excellent classroom materials on understanding food systems and agriculture through integrated methods for science, language arts and math for over 15 years. In keeping with changes in education and school nutrition, FLP announces *Eat Well, Be Well*, an educational CD featuring nine nutrition lessons for Prekindergarten through grade 12. These hands-on lessons are correlated to the common core standards and provide critical thinking activities and timely background information with measurable objectives that connect classroom to cafeteria and supports school garden activities.



The FLP state coordinator at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Susan Quincy, is available to help provide you with these materials and arrange for supporting workshops with staff. To find out more, contact Susan at susan.quincy@ct.gov. The cost of the CD is \$30.

► **December 17, 2013: Connecticut Green LEAF Schools**

Is your school a HealthierUS School (HUSSC) participant?

Yes? That's great. You are also well on your way toward recognition in the Connecticut Green LEAF Schools program. Contact ctgreenleaf@ctgreenschools.org for more ideas to help you connect your nutrition program with the core education mission of your school, and get recognition for your school for the great work you are doing.

Not yet? Contact Allison Calhoun-White at the Connecticut State Department of Education at allison.calhoun-white@ct.gov for help in getting started. Now is a great time to get your school going!

Connecticut Green LEAF Schools: Leading, educating, achieving and fostering healthy, green schools for all. Is your school a Green LEAF? Visit us at www.ctgreenleaf.org.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► December 24, 2013: Whole Grain-rich Requirement for School Meals

During school year 2013-14, **at least half** of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be whole grain-rich. Effective July 1, 2014, **all grains** at lunch and breakfast must be whole grain-rich.

Whole grain-rich products contain **at least 50 percent whole grains** and any other grain ingredients must be **enriched**. The following CSDE resources provide information on the whole grain-rich requirement and how to determine whether products credit toward the grains component.

- [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains](#)
- [Crediting Breakfast Cereals](#)
- [Crediting Enriched Grains](#)
- [Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods](#)
- [Identifying Whole Grains](#)
- [Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents Requirements for School Nutrition Programs](#)

For more information, see “Grains” in section 2 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

► December 31, 2013: Child Nutrition (CN) Labels and Product Formulation Statements

How can you tell if a commercially prepared food meets the meal pattern requirements? You must have either a **Child Nutrition (CN) label** or **product formulation statement**.

- **CN Labels**
CN labels are available for **commercial main dish entrees**, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls and breaded fish portions. They identify a product’s contribution toward the meat/meat alternates component and may also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products, for example CN labeled pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains and vegetables components. CN labels provide school nutrition programs with a USDA **warranty** that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements as printed on the label.
- **Product Formulation Statements**
Product formulation statements (PFS) are developed by manufacturers to provide specific information about their products. Since PFS are **not regulated**, their information varies from manufacturer to manufacturer. **Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims for reimbursable meals.** Their crediting information should be checked by the school food authority for accuracy **prior** to the item being included in the reimbursable meal.

Schools must keep CN labels and PFS on file to document meal pattern compliance for auditing purposes. For more information, see “Crediting Commercial Entree Products” “CN Labels” and “Product Formulation Statements” in the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).



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Tuesday Tidbits

January 2014

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► **January 7, 2014: Crediting Legumes in School Meals**

Dry/mature beans and peas (legumes) may be offered as **either** a meat/meat alternate or a vegetable (legumes subgroup). However, a serving of legumes cannot count toward both components in the same meal. Menu planners must determine in advance how to count legumes in a meal.

Legumes can be offered as either component in different meals. For example, a serving of refried beans can be offered as a **vegetable** at one lunch and as a **meat/meat alternate** at another lunch. The refried beans offered as a vegetable count toward the weekly bean/peas subgroup requirement but not toward the minimum weekly meat/meat alternates requirement.

If a meal includes two servings of legumes, the menu planner can choose to count one serving as a vegetable and one serving as meat/meat alternate. For example, a meal contains a salad with garbanzo beans and chili made with kidney beans. The menu planner may count the garbanzo beans as the vegetables component and the kidney beans as the meat/meat alternates component.

For more information, see “Meat/Meat Alternates” in section 2 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

► **January 14, 2014: New School Cuisine: Nutritious and Seasonal Recipes for School Cooks by School Cooks**

The recipes in this book were developed by school chefs for school chefs. Most of the ingredients used are not uncommon in school kitchens. In addition, the recipes feature foods required by the latest *USDA Meal Pattern for School Meals*, including meats and meat alternates, fruits, a variety of whole grains, and the vegetable subgroups.

This cookbook is organized by meal component. You will notice that each recipe indicates the season for which it is most appropriate based on the type of dish and the fruits and vegetables used. This allows you to plan for using local products when available. If you use seasonal produce, you can create opportunities to connect the food you are serving in the school cafeteria with the farms where it is grown and the farmers who grow it.

Find the cookbook here: <http://www.vtfeed.org/tools>

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► January 21, 2014: National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) 2014

It's time to highlight and grow your breakfast program! The NSBW 2014 theme is "Take Time for School Breakfast."

Whether it's traditional breakfast in the cafeteria, breakfast in the classroom or grab and go, school breakfast can be a real timesaver for families during those busy weekday mornings. Use the 2014 NSBW theme to promote your school breakfast program by spreading the word to parents and students that school breakfast is convenient, healthy and a real timesaver!

If you would like help starting or growing breakfast in your school, the Connecticut Breakfast Expansion Team can help! Just let Jackie Schipke know you would like some help, at jackie.schipke@ct.gov.

For more information, visit the School Nutrition Association's NSBW Web page at http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Level2_NSBW2014.aspx?id=18805.



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Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► January 28, 2014: Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks



Cookbooks are now available in print!

- **Cookbook for Homes**
Recipes for 6 servings
- **Cookbook for Child Care Centers**
Recipes for 25 and 50 servings
- **Cookbook for Schools**
Recipes for 50 and 100 servings

FREE for those participating in a child nutrition program.

-Includes schools, child care centers,
and family child care providers

Get yours at www.teamnutrition.usda.gov

Choose the Resource Order Form for print copies
or download from the Resource Library



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The top 30 kid-tested, kid-approved recipes from the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Competition* sponsored by USDA in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative and based on the new school meal patterns.

These cookbooks will become your go-to for nutritious and delicious healthy recipes!

For more about Team Nutrition, go to <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer



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Tuesday Tidbits

February 2014

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► February 4, 2014: Vegetable Subgroups

The lunch meal pattern requires weekly servings of **five vegetable subgroups**, which include **dark green**, **red/orange**, **beans/peas (legumes)**, **starchy** and **other** (a distinct grouping of food items classified by the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*). The “other” vegetables requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange and beans/peas (legumes) vegetable subgroups but not the starchy subgroup.

The vegetable subgroups can be offered **in any order and amount** throughout the week as long as each day’s lunch includes the minimum serving of vegetables and the menu meets the minimum weekly totals. There is no daily requirement for the specific vegetable subgroups. **However, all students must have access to the appropriate quantities of all vegetable subgroups each week.** If a school has multiple serving lines, each serving line must offer all vegetable subgroups on a weekly basis.

For more information, see the CSDE’s [Vegetable Subgroups](#) handout and the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

► February 11, 2014: Procurement and Child Nutrition Programs

Did You Know?

- ... *There are formal and informal purchasing procedures?*
- ... *You need to know the small purchase threshold for your town?*
- ... *Even an informal purchase requires documentation?*
- ... *These rules apply to all purchases made with funds from the non-profit school food service account, including Farm-to-School purchases?*

It is important to note that in the near future, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be requiring state agencies to conduct a comprehensive review of the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) procurement practices in all school food authorities participating in the school nutrition programs, e.g., public, nonprofit, private and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). This includes those districts that are using purchasing cooperatives and those that contract with food service management companies.

There will be training opportunities to help you navigate these rules. Procurement Training is being offered with the USDA Foods Processing Food Show on March 25, 2014. To register, click on the attached flier. The deadline to register is **February 21, 2014**.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► February 18, 2014: Watch Your Portions!

State school nutrition consultants have been out every week conducting the new Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs throughout the state in districts big and small. One common error we are finding is the under-portioning of meal components on student trays.

We recommend that all directors, when conducting school visits, double check the portions actually being given to students. Often, even when the correct portion is planned *and* the correct tool for measurement is used, the portions are inadequate. Staff must be trained to completely fill a spoodle or scoop when portioning food, cold or hot.

School staff should also become familiar with the [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) to use as a reference in determining the correct portions for fresh fruits and vegetables. Often whole fruits will credit differently depending upon the size purchased.

SPECIAL REQUEST: If you are celebrating *International School Meals Day* on March 6, 2014, please let our office know so we can share your event with USDA! For more information, go to <http://www.internationalschoolmealsday.com/>.

► February 25, 2014: Health Inspections Required

USDA regulations require each site participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program to receive **at least two health inspections each school year**.

If you have not received the first inspection by now, you should write to your local health department to remind them of this requirement. While the CSDE recognizes that there may be difficulty in obtaining the two food safety inspections, we would like to stress that you are responsible for requesting such inspections and documenting such efforts. When two health inspections are not conducted, each sponsor is responsible for requesting the inspections and documenting these efforts. Retain a copy of the letter sent to the health department to document your attempt to comply with this regulation.

A sample letter requesting a health inspection is attached to this e-mail.



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Date:

To: _____ (*Name of Local Health Department Director*)

The purpose of this letter is to request that a food safety health inspection be conducted at the school(s) listed below. As you know, section 111 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265) amended section 9(h) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires that at least two food safety inspections be conducted at each school participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs.

As of the date of this letter, _____ (*Name of School(s)*) located at _____ (*Address*) has not received the required two food safety inspections. Therefore, we respectfully request that your office conduct such inspection at your convenience, but no later than _____ (*Last Serving Day*).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____ (*Telephone Number*) or via electronic mail at _____ (*Email Address*).

Sincerely,

Name
Position

Tuesday Tidbits

March 2014

Tuesday Tidbits are weekly e-mail blasts sent to school nutrition sponsors in Connecticut providing simple suggestions, reminders, resources and advice to help run a successful school nutrition program.

► March 4, 2014: Crediting Commercial Soups in School Meals

Only certain types of commercial vegetable soups can credit toward the vegetables component. Based on the USDA's *Food Buying Guide*, one cup (8 fluid ounces) of specific types of vegetable soup credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of "additional" vegetables. One cup (8 fluid ounces) of bean soup such as split pea or black bean credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the **beans/peas (legumes)** subgroup.

To credit a commercial soup product differently from the *Food Buying Guide* yields, schools must obtain a **product formulation statement** (PFS) from the manufacturer stating the specific contribution of all vegetables toward the vegetable subgroups. The manufacturer's PFS must provide the information specified in the USDA's *Product Formulation Statement (PFS) for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits*.

Schools cannot use any other type of manufacturer product information such as sales literature or product specification sheets to document the meal pattern requirements for the vegetable subgroups.

For more information, see the CSDE's *Crediting Soup* handout and "Soups" in the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals*.

► March 11, 2014: Salad Bars

Students must select all the components for a reimbursable meal, including vegetable subgroups on a salad bar, from the regular lunch lines **before** the point of service (POS). This ensures that each student's selections from the salad bar meet the required portions for an entree or food/menu item.

If a school is not able to position the salad bar in a location prior to the POS, the school food authority (SFA) may request that the CSDE authorizes alternatives to the POS lunch counts. **The school food authority must submit a written request to the CSDE and receive approval before using any salad bars that are positioned after the POS.** This request must describe the specific procedures that the school will use to ensure that meals are reimbursable and contain the proper portions.

Without CSDE approval, foods served on an unmonitored salad bar after the POS are considered "extras" that are **not** part of the reimbursable meal but count toward the dietary specifications. For more information, see *USDA memo SP 31-2013* and "Salad Bars" in the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals*.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► March 18, 2014: Crediting Cereal and Granola Bars in School Meals

Menu planners must carefully consider the **serving size** of cereal bars, breakfast bars and granola bars when crediting them toward the grains component.

Plain bars are in group D of [USDA ounce equivalents chart](#) and require **2 ounces (55 grams)** to provide 1 ounce equivalent of grains.

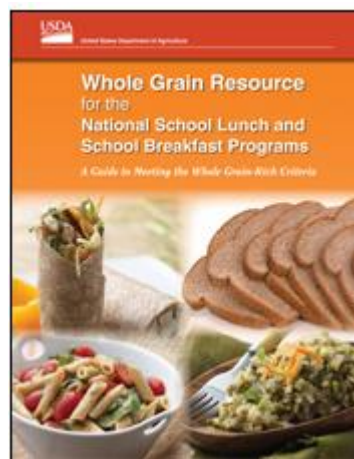
Bars with additional ingredients such as nuts, dried fruit and chocolate pieces are in group E and require **2.4 ounces (69 grams)** to provide 1 ounce equivalent of grains.

These products often require more than one bar to meet the minimum daily grains requirement. For example, a fruit-filled cereal bar that weighs **37 grams** provides **½ ounce equivalent** of grains. Schools must serve two of these cereal bars to provide 1 ounce equivalent of grains. These serving sizes may not be practical or cost effective.

For more information, see the “Grains” in section 2 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#).

► March 25, 2014: Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

This resource provides an in-depth look at the whole grain-rich criteria for school meals. It updates and expands the previous whole grain resource from the HealthierUS School Challenge Application Kit, which now applies to all school meal programs. It includes exercises on identifying products that meet the whole grain-rich criteria and calculation examples. It is available in PDF only at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/whole-grain-resource>.



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Tuesday Tidbits

April 2014

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► **April 1, 2014: Community Eligibility Provision Web Page**

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for school meals is available nationwide for school year 2014-15. The CEP provides an alternative approach for offering school meals in local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools in low income areas, instead of collecting individual household applications for free and reduced-price meals. Qualifying schools can apply through **June 30, 2014**. Check out the Connecticut State Department of Education's new [CEP Web page](#) for information on:

- how the CEP works;
- CEP benefits;
- what schools are eligible;
- how to apply; and
- CEP resources and guidance.

► **April 8, 2014: FoodCorps**

Would you like to have a FoodCorps Service Member in your community in 2015? FoodCorps is a nationwide team of leaders that connects kids to real food and helps them grow up healthy. Working under the direction of state and community partners, our corps members dedicate a year of public service to ensuring that children grow up in healthy school food environments: places where kids learn what real food is and where it comes from—and have daily access to it in their school meals.

The [FoodCorps Connecticut](#) program, coordinated in partnership with UConn Extension, currently consists of 12 members in communities across the state. We hope to continue expanding the program as funding becomes available.

In an effort to lay the groundwork for possible expansion, we would like to share our [Site Capacity Form](#). Interested community organizations and schools/districts may submit this form to indicate their interest. **The deadline is April 30**. Sites for 2014 have already been selected, so prospective new sites will be considered for September 2015 depending on available space.

Contact Dana Stevens (dana.stevens@foodcorps.org), or Jiff Martin (jiff.martin@uconn.edu) if you have any questions.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► April 15, 2014: Farm to School

Farm to School is not just fruits and vegetables! Do you have a farm to school program in your cafeteria? Do you and your students want to know where dairy foods come from? Moo News can help! Moo News is a quarterly electronic newsletter from a dairy farmer in your state, delivered to your inbox four times a year. Each issue highlights what's happening on the farm and features a student question and answer section. Creating a Moo News bulletin board in your cafeteria is a great way to make the **dairy** farm to school connection. Register and find our bulletin board toolkit by visiting NewEnglandDairyCouncil.org and click on [Moo News](#).

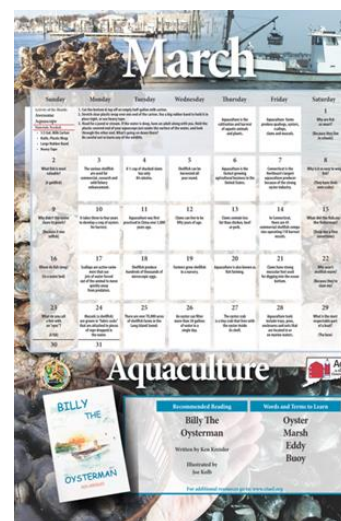
Don't forget, June is National Dairy Month, start planning now!



► April 22, 2014: Ag in the Classroom Monthly Calendar

The [Ag in the Classroom Monthly Calendar](#) from the Connecticut Agriculture Education Foundation is now online. You can download and print the monthly calendar from their site. What a great way to connect the classroom to the cafeteria. Share this with teachers and then pick a featured item to have in the cafeteria that month!

March 2014: Aquaculture: Each month, we'll be posting an agriculturally themed calendar page filled with ag-related classroom activities, fun ag facts and trivia, as well as recommended reading. Just click a link, or the calendar image, below to download a copy of the page to use in your classroom!



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Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► April 29, 2014: School Nutrition Environment and Wellness Resources

Looking for resources to help you implement your local school wellness policy and create a healthier school environment? The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) requires all school districts to establish and implement local school wellness policies that meet minimum standards designed to promote sound nutrition, student health, reduce childhood obesity, and provide transparency to the public on the school nutrition environment.

Team Nutrition just launched a new Web site that consolidates school wellness resources in a way that will make them easier for you to find. Check out the new [School Nutrition Environment and Wellness Resources Web site](#) for information and resources on:

- [Local School Wellness Policy Process](#) steps to put the policy into action;
- [Required Wellness Policy Elements](#) to meet the federal requirements;
- [Healthy School Nutrition Environment](#) improvements related to food and physical activity;
- [Samples, Stories, and Guidance](#) ideas for your school;
- [Research Reports](#) on school wellness; and
- [Grants/Funding Opportunities](#) related to child nutrition and physical activity.



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Tuesday Tidbits

May 2014

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► May 6, 2014: Professional Standards Training Web Site

The Child Nutrition Team at the Food and Nutrition Information Center is in the process of developing a [Professional Standards site](#). This site allows school nutrition staff to search for training that meets their learning needs in one easy-to-use website.

- The site includes information about currently available training that meets specific learning objectives. The materials include recorded webinars, online modules, self-paced training, training materials, manuals, etc.
- Users can browse through trainings by clicking on the main learning objectives on the left side: Nutrition, Operations, Administration or Communications/Marketing.
- The user will then see a listing of sub-topics. Each topic can be clicked on to see trainings that meet that learning objective
- Searches are also available for more specific topic areas.

► May 13, 2014: Making Breakfast Reimbursable

Do You Operate an A La Carte Breakfast Program? Why not “bundle” the required components of a reimbursable breakfast together and offer a well-balanced nutritious start to the day to your student body?

Many secondary schools in Connecticut offer breakfast items for sale *but* do not participate in the USDA School Breakfast Program. The School Breakfast Program is available for **all schools** providing nutritious, balanced breakfast choices to all students regardless of need. If you already have the staff and the student customers in place, it is simple to combine some foods to offer a reimbursable breakfast into your school nutrition program.

If you would like assistance in adding a reimbursable component to your breakfast program, the Connecticut Breakfast Expansion Team (CBET) can help! CBET can provide assistance where you need it, including planning, promoting, financing and advocating for the SBP in your school.

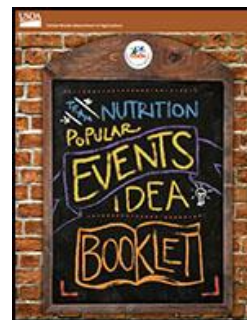
Just e-mail Jackie Schipke at jackie.schipke@ct.gov if you'd like someone from CBET to come help you bring a reimbursable breakfast to your students.

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► May 20, 2014: Team Nutrition Popular Events Idea Booklet

Are you looking for fun ways to promote nutrition and physical activity at your elementary or middle school? Use this events idea booklet to get started! This free events booklet has:

- ideas for 20 themed events, large and small;
- spotlights of real-life events at team nutrition schools;
- handouts, templates, and other free resources to support events;
- ways to team up for success; and
- connections for school, home, cafeteria, classroom, community and media.



Available in PDF at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/popular-events-booklet>. Print copies will be available in summer 2014.



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Tuesday Tidbits

June 2014

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► June 3, 2014: No Kid Hungry School Meals Calculator

This is an interactive calculator, created in collaboration with Deloitte Consulting that provides decision-makers in schools and districts with a business model to understand the financial feasibility of feeding students by maximizing three federal nutrition programs: school breakfast, afterschool meals and summer meals. Based on information entered, results will automatically populate to show users their annual estimated costs, reimbursements and increases in student participation for the meal programs.

<http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/business-model-tool-0>

► June 10, 2014: Summer Meals

Childhood food insecurity remains at unacceptable levels across the country and children are most acutely at risk in the summer when they do not have access to school meals. There were over 500 sites in the summer of 2013 across Connecticut offering free meals to children under the age of 18, yet only 1 out of 4 children who qualify for free or reduced meals are being reached.



Schools communicate regularly and effectively with the families of children in your community. You can help reach out and connect these families with summer meals before the school year ends and continue to make a difference in the lives of your students even after the school year ends.

PLEASE NOTE: Even if you do not have a summer feeding program in your town, children ages 18 and under may visit open summer feeding sites anywhere in the state to receive a meal. Please take the time to share this valuable information with the families in your community.

Please send the information below home to families or post on your Web site (attached are the Web button codes).

Tuesday Tidbits, continued

► June 17, 2014: Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Schools

CDC's new tool kit, *Increasing Access to Drinking Water in Schools*, helps schools make the healthy choice the easy choice for all students by ensuring access to free drinking water as an alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages before, during, and after school. The easy-to-use tool kit includes needs assessment tools, implementation strategies, and evaluation guidance to improve access to drinking water as part of a healthier nutrition environment in schools.



Drinking water in place of sugar-sweetened beverages can help students stay hydrated and may improve cognitive function. Children and adolescents spend much of their time at school, and by providing access to healthier choices, students can stay healthy and ready to learn.

School health councils, nutrition services providers, principals, teachers, parents, and other school staff can follow key steps and use the planning guide and resources to:

- Meet USDA *Smart Snacks in School* requirements to provide free drinking water in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.
- Help make free drinking water readily available across the school campus.
- Promote water as a healthy beverage.

► June 24, 2014: Free Discover MyPlate Training Materials

The **Discover MyPlate Curriculum Training for Teachers** guide and accompanying slides are for State agencies, school districts, nutrition educators, and curriculum coordinators to use in providing a training session or professional workshop for kindergarten teachers. The training materials are designed to:



- Support the integration and teaching of Team Nutrition's **Discover MyPlate** curriculum in schools across the United States.
- Boost teacher confidence in teaching nutrition concepts and conducting food preparation activities.
- Show how to collaborate with school nutrition professionals and other parts of the school to support and reinforce classroom lessons.
- Review nutrition basics to familiarize teachers with subject matter content.

Share news about your Discover MyPlate activities by emailing teammnutrition@fns.usda.gov



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Questions?

Contact:

Shannon Robins, Connecticut No Kid Hungry Campaign

(860) 560-2100 Ext. 309

srobins@endhungerct.org