



This information is to keep you informed of any changes in policies and procedures and of new communication originating from the State Office this month.

December 3, 2018 CE Edition

Attachments with this issue:

[SP03-2018 - National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Q&A](#)

2018 NSLP Equipment Grants

The application website for the 2018 National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants will open at 8 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, December 4. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) will award the grants for school nutrition programs to purchase nonexpendable, tangible property with a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of **\$1,000** or more. Schools have used past grant awards to purchase new serving lines, coolers, carts, steamers and more.

More information about the 2018 NSLP Equipment Grant and a link to the application website will be posted on SquareMeals [here](#). The application will close at 7 p.m. central standard time on Thursday, December 20. Late applications will not be accepted.



Art Contest for National School Lunch and Breakfast Weeks!



The Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) *You Art What You Eat* statewide student art contest offers Texas students a chance to earn statewide recognition for themselves and their school. You can help encourage participation in the contest by ordering TDA's promotional items for your schools today! The colorful posters are available at no cost and they can be displayed in school hallways. This year TDA is also offering student bookmarks at no cost to remind students and parents to participate in the contest! Posters and bookmarks are in **both English and Spanish** (front and back). The deadline to order is **December 7, 2018**. Quantities are limited, so order today by clicking [here](#).

To enter, students must create artwork highlighting good nutrition and TDA's themes for National School Lunch Week 2019 and/or National School Breakfast Week 2020. More information about the art contest, including full Guidelines and the Submission Packet can be found on SquareMeals.org/artcontest. This year TDA provides teachers with a

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and please join TDA in encouraging students to focus their artistic talents on healthy school meals by entering the You Art What You Eat statewide student art contest.

Community Nutrition Conference

Community Nutrition Conference

February 11-13, 2019

Sheraton Georgetown Hotel

For the first time ever, we are combining the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) conference and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) conference. The **Community Nutrition Conference** will provide education, networking opportunities and a special view of TDAs processes behind the scenes! Please note this is for CACFP and SFSP only. Seamless Summer Option will not be addressed.

Join us at the Sheraton Georgetown. You can book a room at the negotiated price of \$103 per night at the link below. Hurray, space is limited.

[Reserve your room here](#)

For more information click [here](#).



TX-UNPS Updates



USDA Foods Notifications

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has recently installed a communication update in TX-UNPS. Beginning last week, automatic email notifications will be generated whenever USDA Foods are allocated to Contracting Entities. These notifications will be sent to the Food Service Director and Ordering Contact(s) listed in the Food Distribution Program (FDP) Contract Packet of TX-UNPS. TDA anticipates that this new functionality will improve communication between TDA and CEs and assist CEs with their inventory management for USDA Foods.

The email notifications will be sent whenever a new allocation is posted for Annual Survey Allocations, Periodic Survey Allocations, Farm to School Allocations, End Product Shipment Allocations, and Special Allocations. Please keep in mind that these are automatically generated emails that will not allow replies. Any questions regarding the content of the emails should be directed to our general mailbox CommodityOperations@TexasAgriculture.gov or 1-877-TEX-MEAL (1-877-839-6325) PROMPT #4.

2019 Texas Summer Mandate Notification and Waiver

Texas Legislation requires school districts in which 50% or more of the enrolled children are eligible to receive free/reduced price NSLP meal benefits to participate in a summer meal program, based on the March 2018 claim. All mandated school districts received an email notification of their requirement as well as instructions for submitting their intent in TX-UNPS.

If requesting a waiver, state law requires the board of trustees to send a written notice of the district's intention to the local school health advisory council (SHAC) **no later than** November 30. The notice must include an explanation of the district's reason for requesting a waiver of the requirement. CEs should retain this letter for their records, but TDA does not need a copy of this letter as part of the mandate process.

Please submit your intent for summer 2019, or submit a mandate waiver request in TX-UNPS by the January 31, 2019 deadline. More information as well as the instructions and the notification letter that CEs received can be found at www.squaremeals.org/summerwaivers.

Policy News

USDA Professional Standards for NSLP

USDA has recently released new enhancements to the Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool (PSTTT) 2.0. Enhancements include:

- the capability for managers to print a certificate of completion once an employee has met the annual required training hours;
- automatic bi-annual email notification to users with reminders on days left to complete the required training hours;
- training videos, showing step-by-step instructions to utilize the different features of the tool; and



- directors and managers will receive separate notification listing employees due to complete the annual required training hours.

Visit <https://pstrainingtracker.fns.usda.gov/> to learn more about this tool!

USDA Policy Memo

SP03-2018 - *National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast: Q & A for Charter Schools* is attached. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is providing updated Questions and Answers (Q&As) for charter school participation in the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program and other Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). Since charter schools are held to the same standards for operating CNPs as traditional public or non-profit private schools, this memorandum does not contain any new CNP policies. Program operators can use the Q&As as a resource to assist charter schools and non-profit private, rural, or small schools that have similar questions to operate successful CNPs. This memorandum supersedes SP 07-2008: *Charter School Involvement in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs*, January 15, 2008.

Additional Guidance: Financial Updates

TDA recently released Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), *Section 14, Financial Information Concerning School Nutrition Funds*. While there are a variety of updates made to this section, there are three topics that will be of high interest to contracting entities (CEs):

1. Indirect Cost Rate—Updated guidance to align to recent Texas Education Agency guidance for use of indirect cost rate and provided additional examples.
2. Unpaid Student Meal/Milk Debt—Updated guidance to reflect additional flexibility in designating delinquent debt as bad debt.
3. Capital Expenditures or Capital Improvements—Updated guidance to provide more detailed guidance on maintenance and repair costs and capital expenditures.

Clarification Guidance: Allergen Free Tables

CEs must provide accommodations to students with a medical disability as described in Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), *Section 13, Accommodating Students with Medical Disabilities and Special Dietary Needs*. Sites often want to provide an allergen free zone to provide a safe environment for a student with a disability. The CE must keep the following in mind in creating this safe environment:

- A site cannot segregate the student with disability, i.e., create an allergen free table where the student is segregated from other students.
- A site can create an allergen table—by creating an allergen table, the site is not isolating the student with the disability, it is isolating students with allergen products.
- When using this option, be sure that the allergen zone is select tables or tables and the rest of the cafeteria is allergy free for all students.

Texas Farm Fresh Initiative



Funding for Farm Fresh Fridays in Schools! Applications due Thursday, December 6th!

Do you want to build a school garden? Are you interested in students taking field trips to local farms? How about local foods taste-testing opportunities in the classroom? Your school can apply to receive grant funds to support all these activities in the 2019-2020 school year! The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is accepting applications for the Expanding the 3Es (X3E) Nutrition Education Grant. Applications must be received by December 6, 2018. For details, please visit the 3E's Grant Programs Web page. Learn more about Farm Fresh Fridays by visiting FarmFreshFriday.org. Farm Fresh resources and success stories from past grantees are available at SquareMeals.org/TexasFarmFresh.

Stay Connected — Subscribe to TDA's Farm Fresh E-Harvest

This newsletter provides a monthly update on farm to school and includes resources such as funding opportunities, a schedule of upcoming trainings and webinars, and more. Archive issues of the E-Harvest are available here. Subscribe today!

Connect with your partners at TDA today at FarmFresh@TexasAgriculture.gov.

USDA Foods Updates

Romaine Lettuce Investigation

On November 20, 2018 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued this recommendation:

"The FDA, along with CDC, state and local agencies, is investigating a multistate outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 illnesses likely linked to romaine lettuce. The Public Health Agency of

Canada (PHAC) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency are also coordinating with U.S. agencies as they investigate a similar outbreak in Canada.



Genetic analysis of the *E. coli* O157:H7 strains tested to date from patients in this current outbreak are similar to strains of *E. coli* O157:H7 associated with a previous outbreak from the Fall of 2017 that also affected consumers in both Canada and the U.S. The 2017 outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 was associated with leafy greens in the U.S. and romaine in Canada. This year, romaine lettuce is the suspected vehicle for both the U.S. and Canadian outbreaks. There is no genetic link between the current outbreak and the *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak linked to romaine that occurred in the Spring of 2018.

The FDA is conducting a trace back investigation to determine the source of the romaine lettuce eaten by people who became sick. Additionally, FDA and states are conducting laboratory analysis of romaine lettuce samples potentially linked to the current outbreak. The most recent illness onset in the U.S. in the current outbreak was October 31, 2018. For this outbreak investigation, the average interval between when a person becomes ill and when the illness is reported to CDC is 20 days".

** DoD Fresh Program/FFAVORS: **

Until this has been resolved, romaine lettuce will not be available on the FFAVORS catalog and will be removed from any pending orders. If you ordered and recently received romaine lettuce dispose of the product and clean the area where it was stored. The vendor is not responsible to give you a credit for the romaine. This is still an open investigation, not a recall and no common grower, supplier, distributor, or brand has been identified at this time.

Recommendation: People should not eat romaine lettuce until more is known about the source of the contaminated lettuce and the status of the outbreak. Please feel free to contact us at 1-877-TEX-MEAL (1-877-839-6325), then press #4 if you have any questions. We will release new or updated information as we receive it.

USDA Foods Processing

USDA has posted the Average Material Price report for School Year 2019-2020. The link can be found here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/processor-material-prices>.

There are three files posted for School Year 2020:

1. Average Material Price for Processors – this is the calculated annual average purchase price for purchases made by USDA in calendar year 2018. These are the values that will be used on Program Year 2020 SEPDS's. If no price per pound is shown in Column C, no purchases were made. Please contact our office should a processor have inventory of these foods.
2. Average Cheese Prices Explanation.
3. November 2018 List of Materials report (generated November 2018) – this file contains the last USDA purchase price for all materials. This file was formerly known as the "November 15th Average File Report".

Note: Texas Department of Agriculture uses the cost per pound pricing from early to mid-January from the WBSM Material List report to charge against Entitlement when creating Processing Surveys in TX-UNPS for a new Program Year.

MENU Module Update

ESCs 9 and 14 Use Teamwork to Increase Training Impacts

Travis Neville and Barbara Braden, program specialists with ESC Regions 9 and 14, respectively, work together as a team to provide both regions' MENU module training in one classroom. Even with two ESC specialists, Travis and Barbara recommend class sizes of no more than 10 participants. ESC Regions 9 and 14 also host open lab hours to provide specific technical assistance after the class. To ensure administrations are on board, Travis and Barbara emphasize the no-cost aspect of MENU module when discussing the software with district leaders, especially in smaller districts. Currently, ESC Region 14 has 56 percent of CEs with MENU access and ESC Region 9 has 33 percent. Please send your information about best practices for MENU outreach to tda.menu@texasagriculture.gov.



Previous Issue



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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