

## Crediting Deli Meats in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

This guidance applies to meals for preschoolers (ages 1-4) and grades K-12 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP.

The meal patterns for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SSO list the meat/meat alternates component in ounce equivalents. The meal patterns for grades K-12 in the ASP and preschoolers in the NSLP, SSO, and ASP list the meat/meat alternates component in ounces. The amount of lean meat, poultry, or fish that equals 1 ounce equivalent or 1 ounce is the same (1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish).

The SBP meal patterns do not require the meat/meat alternates component. For grades K-12 at breakfast, school food authorities (SFAs) may substitute 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component for 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component at breakfast, after offering the minimum daily 1 ounce equivalent of grains. For preschoolers at breakfast, SFAs may substitute the meat/meat alternates component for the entire grains component up to three times per week. For more information, see the USDA's handout, [\*Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP\*](#).



The serving size of deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna) used in school meals must provide the required amount of the meat/meat alternates component. The amount of deli meat that provides 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component depends on the product's ingredients.

- Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight), e.g., 1 ounce of deli meat credits as 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component.
- Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces to credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component.

SFAs must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all deli meats with added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation includes an original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton, or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or a product formulation statement (PFS) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component contained in one serving of the product.

# Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP

For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) handouts, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program*, *Product Formulation Statements*, and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*.

## Liquids, Binders, and Extenders

The ingredients statements below show examples of turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders (indicated in italics).

- Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water*, *modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.
- Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.

Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component without a CN label or PFS that indicates the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if products are 100 percent meat or contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. Table 1 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders.

**Table 1. Examples of binders and extenders <sup>1</sup>**

Agar-agar	Dried milk	Reduced minerals
Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)	Dry or dried whey	Sodium caseinate
Bread	Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate	Soy flour (APP) <sup>2</sup>
Calcium-reduced dried skim milk	Gums, vegetable	Soy protein concentrate (APP) <sup>2</sup>
Carrageenan	Isolated soy protein (APP) <sup>2</sup>	Starchy vegetable flour
Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)	Locust bean gum	Tapioca dextrin
Cereal	Methyl cellulose	Vegetable starch
	Modified food starch	Wheat gluten
	Reduced lactose whey	Whey
		Whey protein concentrate (APP) <sup>2</sup>
		Xanthan gum

<sup>1</sup> Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA’s regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7).

<sup>2</sup> Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s requirements for alternate protein products (AAPs). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP*.

# Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP

## Developing Recipes for Deli Meats

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, SFAs should develop standardized recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees. The SFA's standardized recipes should indicate the deli meat's contribution to the meat/meat alternates component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. For ease of portioning, the weight of the deli meat in the recipe should be rounded up to the nearest measure. For example, the recipe should list 1.2 ounces as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces as 1.75 ounces.

If a SFA makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the standardized recipe should include the specific weight of each brand. For example, if a school makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, the standardized recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand and the required weight of XYZ brand. Alternatively, the SFA could develop a separate standardized turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat.

For information on standardized recipes, see the resources below.

- Crediting Foods Prepared on Site (CSDE webpage):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#PreparedonSite>
- Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes (Institute for Child Nutrition)  
[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Measuring\\_Success\\_Standardized\\_Recipes\\_NFS\\_MI.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Measuring_Success_Standardized_Recipes_NFS_MI.pdf)
- Menu Planner for School Meals: School Year 2018-2019 (chapter 4) (USDA):  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>
- Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (section 2) (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/MPGpreschool.pdf>
- Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (section 2) (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>
- Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/stdrecipeschools.doc>



# Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP

## Comparing Cost

The product with the lowest cost per pound might not be the least expensive. SFAs should consider the cost per ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component instead of the cost per ounce of meat. This provides a more accurate reflection of the product's cost in school meals.



Table 2 shows a sample cost comparison. Sample product A (deli meat with liquids, binders or extenders) costs \$2 less per pound than sample product B (deli meat without liquids, binders or extenders). However, when the SFA compares the cost based on 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component, a serving of sample product A costs 53 cents and a serving of sample product B costs 44 cents. Sample product A requires almost twice the weight of sample product B to provide 1 ounce equivalent of the meat/meat alternates component because of the added liquids, binders, or extenders.

Determining the cost per ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternates helps SFAs decide if the required meal pattern serving size for a specific brand of deli meat is reasonable and cost effective.

Table 2. Cost comparison of sample deli meats				
Food Item	Price per pound	Price per ounce	Amount needed to provide 1 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternates <sup>1</sup>	Cost of 1 ounce of meat/meat alternates
Sample product A: Deli meat with liquids, binders, or extenders	\$4.99	\$ .31	1.7 ounces <sup>2</sup>	\$ .53
Sample product B: Deli meat without liquids, binders, or extenders	\$6.99	\$ .44	1 ounce	\$ .44

<sup>1</sup> Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving.

<sup>2</sup> This information would be obtained from the product's PFS.

# Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP

## Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/AcceptDoc.pdf>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASPHandbook.pdf>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CNlabel.pdf>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditMMA.pdf>

Menu Planner for School Meals: School Year 2018-2019 (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/menu-planner>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-Preschoolers-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/MPGpreschool.pdf>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Product Formulation Statement for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS\\_Documenting\\_Meat\\_Meat\\_Alternate\\_Nov\\_2019.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Meat_Meat_Alternate_Nov_2019.pdf)

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/PFS.pdf>

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/APPreq.pdf>

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer\\_checklist.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf)

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMeatAlt.pdf>

Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/stdrecipeshools.doc>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

## Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP



For more information, review the CSDE's guides, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, *Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP*, and *Afterschool Snack Program Handbook*, 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/NSLP/Crediting/CreditDeli.pdf>.

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