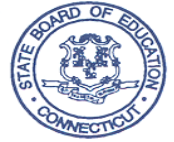




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs

FROM: Cheryl Resha, Education Manager *Cheryl Resha*
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: March 2, 2012

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum #11-12**
Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products

The *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* final rule was published on January 26, 2012. The final rule gives schools the option to offer commercially prepared tofu as a meat alternate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). This provision, which is codified under 7 CFR 210.10(c)(2)(i)(D) of the regulatory text for the NSLP and §220.8(c)(2)(i)(D) for the SBP, allows schools to further diversify the sources of meat alternates available to students and better meet the dietary needs of vegetarians and culturally diverse groups in schools. The provision is effective July 1, 2012.

This memorandum informs school meal programs how to credit tofu and soy yogurt products as a meat/meat alternate component in meal planning.

While tofu does not currently have a federal standard of identity, the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) encourage plant-based sources of protein such as tofu. According to the DGA, consumption of a balanced variety of protein foods can contribute to improved nutrient intake and health benefits. Tofu must be commercially prepared and meet the following definition established in 7 CFR 210.2 for purposes of the school meal programs as “a soybean-derived food...basic ingredients [in tofu] are whole soybeans, one or more food-grade coagulants (typically a salt or an acid), and water.” Noncommercial tofu and soy products are not creditable.

In the school meal programs, 2.2 ounces ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of commercially prepared tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein is creditable as 1 ounce equivalent of meat alternate. This is consistent with the DGA recommended serving size for tofu and provides protein and nutrients of concern at levels similar to other Child Nutrition (CN)-credited meat alternate foods.

Additionally, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 fluid ounces) of soy yogurt is creditable as 1 ounce equivalent of meat alternate. This is consistent with the crediting of dairy yogurt while allowing schools to provide a nondairy alternative.

Since school meals provide an opportunity for children to learn to eat healthy and balanced meals, foods served should be easily recognized by children as part of a food group that contributes to a healthy meal. Tofu is widely recognized as a meat substitute and can easily be included in school meals. Tofu is used to produce other meat substitute products such as tofu links and sausages, which are easily recognizable as meat substitutes and can be credited as such. However, products made with tofu that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes would not contribute to any component of the reimbursable meal and do not meet the customary and usual function of the meat/meat alternate component. For example, soft tofu blended into a recipe so that it is not recognizable (e.g., in a soup) or does not represent a meat substitute (e.g., tofu noodles) does not qualify as a meat alternate.

When considering processed tofu products (such as tofu links and sausages) as meat alternates for the reimbursable meal, the **tofu ingredient** must contain the required 5 grams of protein. This information is not shown on a nutrition facts panel. Therefore, the most appropriate way to ensure that the product meets the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements is to request that the product be manufactured under the CN Labeling Program following a federally approved quality control program.

Until the USDA updates the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, the following yield information can be used for purchasing and crediting (table attached):

1 pound of tofu with 37 grams of protein will have 7.28 quarter-cup servings per pound and provide 7.25 ounces of equivalent meat alternate for Food-based Menu Planning requirements.

Questions may be directed to:

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