

# **CHILD AND ADULT FOOD PROGRAM**

## **SURPLUS COMMODITIES**

### **FACT SHEET**

#### **QUALITY**

All of the food that U.S.D.A. purchases must be certified by the Department's inspection services to meet established specifications. Only high grades of meat, fruits, and vegetables are accepted.

Specifications for the quality of the foods that U.S.D.A. purchases have been updated. The revised specifications have reduced the fat, sugar and salt contents of foods purchased for donation. For example, U.S.D.A. is buying unsalted peanuts, canned meats with less salt, ground beef with a lower fat content, and ketchup with a lower sugar content. The specifications for canned fruits now require either light syrup or fruit juices as the packing medium.

Updated specifications also improve the cooking quality of the foods purchased for donation. Specifications for the flour used in macaroni and spaghetti have been changed to assure that these products donated by U.S.D.A. have desirable cooking qualities.

#### **PROCEDURE**

At the beginning of each school year, each sponsor who chooses surplus commodities must complete an application provided by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture. Each month the commodities office sends the sponsor a list of available food items and maximum quantity which they can receive for the following month. After the sponsor makes their selections, they receive an assigned pickup date and time for the warehouse. Once the commodities are received, the sponsor is billed a handling charge of 8 percent of the value of the commodities.

Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture visit sponsors at least once a year to see that food is being properly stored, used for the intended purpose, ordered in reasonable quantities, etc.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- ❖ Sponsors can refuse any or all commodities that are offered each month.
- ❖ The commodities office only offers food items when sufficient quantity is available for everyone. For example, if there is not enough canned fruit to offer to all schools and day care centers, it will not be listed; however, a sponsor may write and request canned fruit and receive what is available.

- ❖ The number of times a year commodities are offered is based on the size of the sponsor's enrollment:

Less than 20 participants	-	Once a year
20-49 participants	-	March, once in the summer and September
50 or more participants	-	Every month during the school year and once during the summer

- ❖ From time to time, new items are offered and a description is mailed to each participation sponsor.
- ❖ Certain foods are difficult to use either because of their basic form or the unit size. For those items, the commodities office contracts with a commercial food processor to make a prepared food. For example, bulk powdered milk can be processed into mozzarella cheese or flour and cheese can be made into pizza. Sponsors can then buy the finished product for the cost of the processing only directly from the processor.
- ❖ Only a minimum amount of paperwork is required.
- ❖ The commodity office is flexible about rescheduling the pickup date.

The Child and Adult Food Program and the commodity office prefer that you take commodities for at least one year. However, if a sponsor is not satisfied, they may switch to cash in lieu of commodities.