USDA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is asking states and food service companies, with the support of school food authorities, to pledge to make school meals and snack programs healthier.

REPLACE BREAKFAST PASTRIES WITH WHOLE-FOOD BREAKFAST OPTIONS

PREPARE MEATS AND MEAT ALTERNATIVES USING HEALTHY COOKING METHODS

SERVE 100% WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS

IMPROVE SMART SNACKS SERVED IN SCHOOLS

PRIORITIZE WHOLE FRUIT

SERVE WHOLE MILK

Together, states and food service companies that join this pledge affirm their commitment to supporting the health, well-being, and academic success of school children.

Harvest to Hallways

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER, AND LENDER.

USDA

REPLACE BREAKFAST PASTRIES WITH WHOLE-FOOD BREAKFAST OPTIONS

- Replace pastries with whole-food options such as egg sandwiches, yogurt parfaits with fruit, whole grain toast with nut butter, oatmeal, or overnight oats.
- Adjust menu cycles to emphasize eggs, yogurt, and 100% whole grains.
- Implement the added sugars cap now, rather than 2027.
- Food service companies will expand healthier breakfast options and will offer easy, allowable swaps.

PREPARE MEATS AND MEAT ALTERNATIVES USING HEALTHY COOKING METHODS

- Prepare animal-based protein foods such as beef, poultry, pork, and seafood using healthy cooking methods like baking, roasting, broiling, steaming, and stir frying.
- Avoid deep fried and breaded meat products.
- Prioritize meats with limited added sugars, refined carbohydrates or starches, or chemical additives.
- Food service companies will offer more un-breaded whole muscle meat products like roasted chicken, grilled chicken strips, and ground meats.

SERVE 100% WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS

- Replace whole grain-rich items with 100% whole grain breads and tortillas, brown rice or whole grain pasta, or whole grain breakfast cereals with low added sugar.
- Utilize commodity 100% whole grain items available through USDA Foods.
- Food service companies will increase availability of 100% whole grain ingredients and decrease their catalog of products with unnecessary preservatives or other additives.

IMPROVE SMART SNACKS SERVED IN SCHOOLS

- Don't offer beverages containing added sugars or artificial sweeteners.
- Remove foods with artificial flavors, petroleum-based dyes, and artificial preservatives.
- Only offer real foods like cheese sticks, hard boiled eggs, nuts, 100% whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Food service companies will clearly identify healthier alternatives in ordering systems and automatically replace discontinued products with the healthiest comparable option.

PRIORITIZE WHOLE FRUIT

- Choose fresh, canned, unsweetened dried, or frozen whole fruit instead of syrup-packed fruit, sweetened dried, or fruit juice.
- Expand purchases of seasonal fresh fruit through produce distributors or local suppliers.
- Food service companies will increase flexibility, allowing schools to replace national branded products with local or fresh options without contract amendments.

SERVE WHOLE MILK

- Include whole milk as an allowable option for all students, reflective of The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act.

Harvest to Hallways

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER, AND LENDER.