

USDA Foods in Vermont: A Quick Guide

Brought to you by the VT USDA Food Advisory Group



STEP ONE: CYCLE MENU

USDA Foods, also called "Brown Box Foods", are frozen, canned, and dry foods. Preparing a **cycle menu** which includes these foods helps you plan what to purchase and how much. This is especially important because USDA Foods are ordered far in advance. With good planning and cycle menus you can balance USDA Foods with local and other purchasing.



STEP TWO: CALCULATE FOOD NEEDS

Determine how long your cycle menu will run. (4-6 weeks is recommended). Divide the number of weeks in a typical school year by the length of your cycle menu.

Multiply this number by the amount of each USDA Food item you expect to use on your cycle menu.

EXAMPLE $38 \text{ weeks} / 6 \text{ week cycle} = 6.3 \text{ times}$
Tomato Sauce
 $(6 \text{ cases in one cycle}) \times 6.3 = 37.8 \text{ cases needed}$

STEP THREE : COMPLETE USDA PRE-ORDER SURVEY

The **USDA Food Pre-Order Survey**, developed by the USDA Foods Advisory Group, helps AOE-Child Nutrition to determine which USDA Food items are most likely to be ordered in large enough quantities statewide to meet truckload requirements. The information **YOU** put in this survey will guide the development of the final **USDA Foods Catalog**.

STEP 4: PREPARE USDA FOOD ORDER

Find your USDA Foods Entitlement dollar amount in the **WEBSCM** (Web Based Supply Chain Management) System. You may hold some USDA entitlement funds to use for DoD Fresh food throughout the year. These funds are set aside and allocated to DoD by the AOE-Child Nutrition Office at your request. Using the remaining USDA Foods entitlement funds for your SFA, decide what USDA (Brown Box) foods and what quantities of foods to order to meet the needs of your cycle menu for the next year. The **USDA Foods Catalog** provided by AOE-Child Nutrition will help to organize and prepare for placing a final on-line order using all of your allocated funds.

STEP 5: PLACE YOUR FINAL USDA ORDER

The final USDA Food Order is placed directly with USDA using the **WEBSCM** (Web Based Supply Chain Management) System **ONLINE**.

Final orders are placed sometime in late Winter.

STEP 6: TRACK USDA CHANGES & UPDATES

Once orders are placed by SFAs, the AOE-Child Nutrition Office must compile all orders and fill trucks. In addition to possibly not having enough orders of one product to fill a truck, there are other circumstances that may lead to cancellations of certain products (weather, supply chain issues, product pricing). Checking the status of your order frequently to determine what you will receive at the start of the school year is important.

STEP 7: RELEASE USDA FOODS

USDA Foods are stored at a distribution warehouse and must be released with the ordering system your SFA has in place. Storage fees are incurred when USDA Foods are not removed. All USDA Foods must be released to the SFA by the end of the school year.

USE USDA FOODS TO SUPPORT UNIVERSAL SCHOOL MEALS IN VT