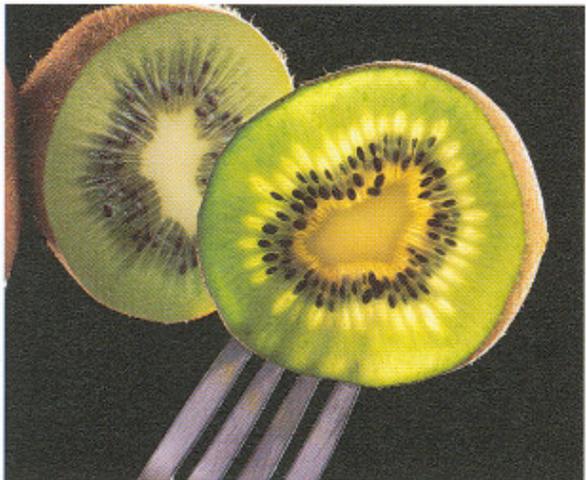


CHOICE PLUS: A REFERENCE GUIDE FOR FOODS AND INGREDIENTS



*Helping you make informed decisions
as you purchase food for school meals...*

THIS MANUAL WAS PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH...

Nutrition and Technical Services Division
Food and Consumer Service
United States Department of Agriculture

By...

The National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi
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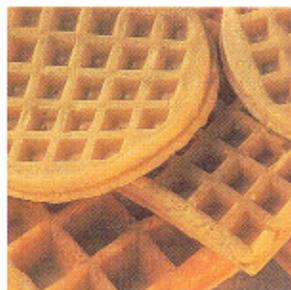
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You have a key role in a changing world...

USE THIS MANUAL TO HELP YOU.

A lot has changed for local school lunch and breakfast program operators since the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) was passed in 1946.

A manager working 50 years ago often bought chickens live, then slaughtered and dressed them on school grounds. That same manager may have had a staff of one or two people, and a couple hundred children was a large number to serve. Today, in contrast, many products are purchased ready to use, and student customers often number in the thousands.

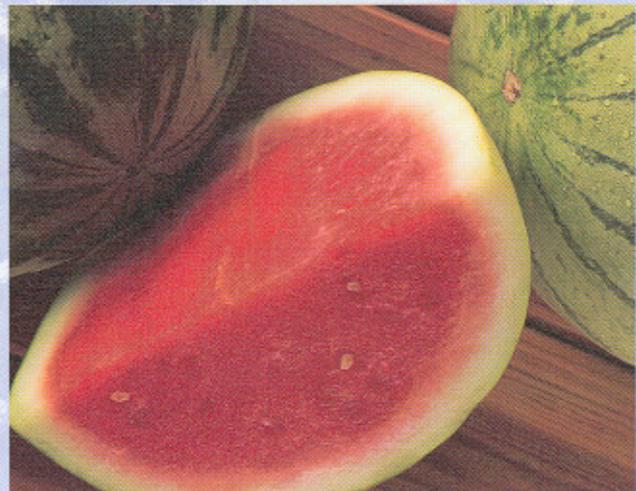
Today's school food service manager works in a world changed by scientific discoveries, too. In the past 50 years, and especially in recent decades, the nutrition research community has learned a great deal about nutrients in food and their relationship to health.

Menus in the 1990s reflect changes suggested by these nutrition findings. So do food products, as manufacturers work to meet public demands for "healthier" and more convenient foods.

To help the public understand what it means to eat for good health — and translate this into practical steps — the nutrition and health communities helped the federal government develop a set of recommendations for healthy Americans over the age of 2 years. These are called *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The guidelines, which are updated periodically, recommend:

- Eat a variety of foods.
- Balance the food you eat with physical activity.
- Maintain or improve your weight.

(continued on next page)

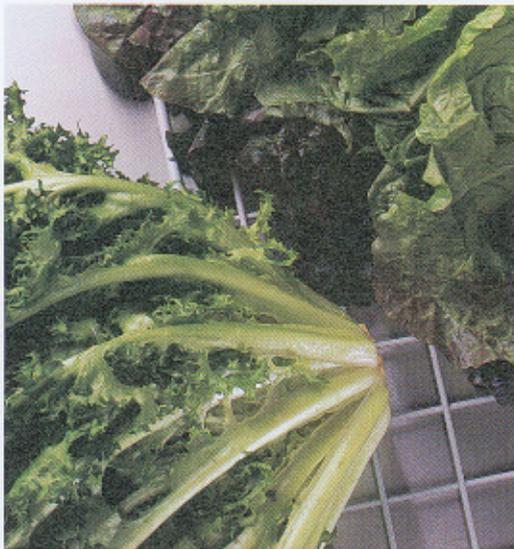


- Choose a diet with plenty of grain products, vegetables, and fruits.
- Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- Choose a diet moderate in sugars.
- Choose a diet moderate in salt and sodium.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

Across the country, state agencies and local program operators are working together to

implement changes in school meals to reflect these Dietary Guidelines.

USDA has published this reference guide to meet schools' need for better food specifications, consistent with new nutritional goals and knowledge. It provides information that will help you, the program operator, make informed decisions when you purchase products for use in your school lunch and breakfast programs. ♦



Serving health-smart meals begins with you, the purchaser.

BUYING FOR QUALITY...

When you're purchasing food for the child nutrition programs, you're working in a dynamic environment. Because of the changing nature of the marketplace, you're constantly having to evaluate products and the way you purchase them.

What foods you choose to purchase and how you write specifications to order them are crucial. They directly affect the ability of you and your staff to plan and serve nutritious meals that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines.

As you know, there are several important steps in the purchasing process. These involve:

- Planning menus
- Determining products needed to produce menus
- Estimating product quantities required
- Developing quality standards
- Determining policies for moving products
- Documenting the purchasing process
- Determining the purchasing system
- Issuing request for prices
- Determining a product supplier
- Placing orders

- Receiving products
- Storing products
- Preparing meals

These steps are the same for you as they are for buyers in the private sector. But your job brings added challenges and responsibilities.

Since you're feeding children with the help of taxpayers' dollars, you need to be accountable in ways that private sector purchasers do not. And your goals are different, too.

You not only want to keep your young customers satisfied and coming back for more, you want to serve them meals that will help them be healthy now and in years to come. You also want to set an example of what it means to eat for good health.



To get what you want, you have to know how to ask for it.

DEVELOPING QUALITY STANDARDS...

This manual concentrates on the fourth step of the purchasing process — developing quality standards. As you know, to make sure you get the quality you're after, you need to be able to communicate with vendors — and not just in general terms.

By writing detailed specifications, you can tell a vendor, for example: the quality of raw products you want used; the maximum levels of fat that will be acceptable; and the processing methods and packaging materials you prefer — to name just a few.



By specifying a USDA grade or Department of Commerce standard, you're indicating what you expect and will accept. In addition, there are a variety of laws that help ensure food value, and you can refer to these as well in your specifications. You'll find information on important laws and regulations in Appendix 1.

These laws are designed to protect consumers as they shop for themselves and their families. You'll be glad to know the laws also contain a number of provisions that protect you in your public role as a buyer for school meals.

These are just some of the "quality indicators" you can include in a well-written product description.

Sample product sheets can be a helpful starting point.

USING SAMPLE FOOD PRODUCT SHEETS...

This guide contains sample food product sheets for a variety of products commonly used in school meals. These are aimed at showing you examples of:

- (1) what type of information you might select to include as quality indicators and
- (2) how to place this information in a format to communicate clearly.

For most products, many different versions of a description can be developed. The samples in this guide are not intended to present all of the possible combinations of quality indicators.

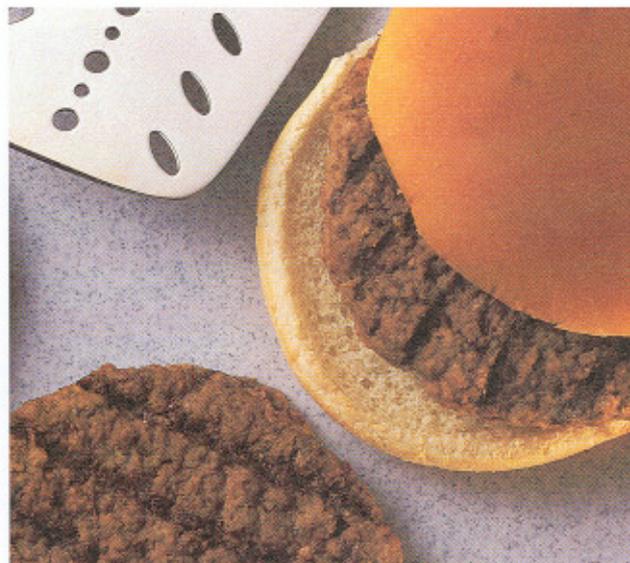
You'll find sample product sheets organized in four sections:

- Fruits
- Grains/Breads
- Meats/Meat Alternates
- Vegetables

To use the food product sheets, first choose the food. Then review the major subheadings to determine if that quality indicator should be included in the particular food description you are writing. Keep in mind how you will be using this food in your menus.

The sample food product sheets contain information that will help you in many ways. For example, there are tips on what to look for when you receive the foods, how to store them, and how quickly they should be used. This information can affect your purchasing decisions in significant ways.

The "Nutrition Facts" panel on food labels is another useful tool that can help maximize your chances of getting high quality products. In Appendix 3, you'll find an illustration of a typical food label.



Being as specific as possible gets the best results.

DECIDING WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PRODUCT DESCRIPTION...

As you look through the sample product sheets, you'll see that subheadings vary from food to food. What you'll want to include in your product descriptions will also vary from food to food.

Here's an example of a product sheet on fresh apples. It includes some of the major subheadings you'll find in the fruit section of this guide, such as size, grade, popular varieties, how packed, and when in season. It also includes in italics some questions you

might want to ask yourself as you make purchasing decisions, and some possible answers.

Look over this example, then compare it to the actual product sheet for "Apples, Fresh." Find the sample description at the end of the actual product sheet. Notice how it's written and think about how you would write your own description for apples.

Also compare the sample description for "Apples, Fresh" to descriptions for other products. This will give you a good idea of how you'll be using this guide.



NAME OF PRODUCT

Apples, Fresh

SIZE

Will count and diameter both be used in the description?

Generally vendors refer to apples by count, so only count size will be included.

DECISION

You specify 113 count.

GRADE

There are two grade standards: "Washington State" and "All Other States."

Which grade standard to use?

The Purchasing Tip for "Apples, Fresh" states that 75% of apples are grown in Washington State.

DECISION

You specify to be packed to U.S. Fancy or Washington Fancy grade standard.

POPULAR VARIETIES

Twelve are listed.

How will our schools be serving this product? What do students prefer?

You find out your students prefer red apples, served raw.

DECISION

You specify Red Delicious.

HOW PACKED

Do I specify how to be packed?

DECISION

No information from this subheading is necessary for this particular order.

IN SEASON

Do I need to specify months of purchase?

DECISION

Apples are available year-round. Therefore, months of purchase are not necessary for this order.

PURCHASING TIPS

Are there any additional special considerations I need to keep in mind?

DECISION

No additional information listed in the Purchasing Tips appears to be important to the description for this order.

Multiple-ingredient foods can be your biggest challenge.

PRIORITIZING YOUR TIME...

Developing quality standards (specifications, descriptions, or identifications) is the most difficult step in the purchasing process. It's also one of the most important, and it can be time-consuming.

Most school food authorities, with their multiple functions, can devote only a small percentage of time to purchasing. Nevertheless, the purchaser must acquire detailed knowledge of all the necessary food products.

The types of foods purchased by schools today, many of them highly processed, require complex quality standards. With rapid changes in manufacturing processes, product knowledge is difficult to acquire and becomes outdated quickly. The types of food purchased by school food authorities can be classified as follows:

1. One-ingredient foods (plain foods):

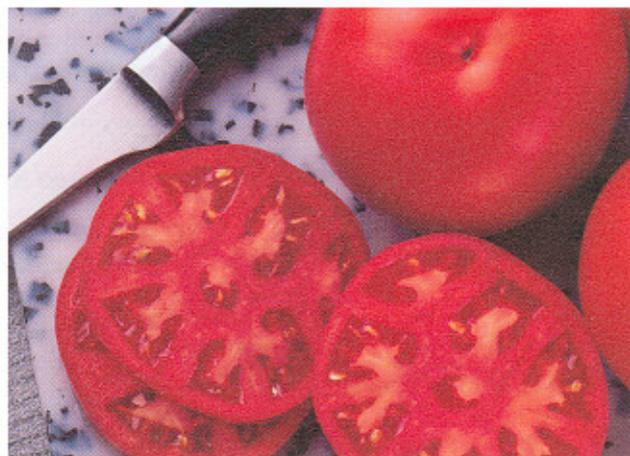
These are products made from a single ingredient. Quality standards for these products rarely change. Some examples include: flour, herbs, spices, salt, sugar, fresh fruits, and fresh vegetables.

While fresh fruits and vegetables are considered plain foods, the short shelf life of these products presents a challenge. How they are handled from harvesting to serving is critical to maintaining their quality.

2. One-major-ingredient foods:

These are products that are canned or frozen and contain one major ingredient plus other ingredients for seasoning.

The standards of identity established by FDA and the grade standards of identity established by USDA have been in use for many years. Product information is stable.



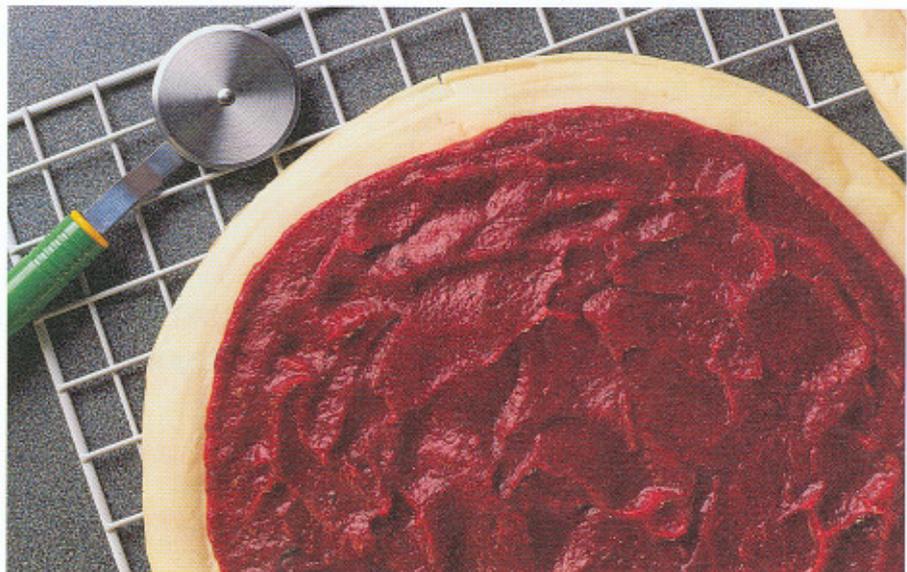
3. Multiple-ingredient foods (highly processed foods):

These are products made from many different ingredients. The manufacturing process for these products changes very rapidly.

When school food authorities are establishing priorities for the use of time to develop quality standards, purchasers should focus on highly processed food. This is because quality standards for these products are difficult to develop. No two manufacturers use exactly

the same ingredients, and product information often is not available from independent sources.

Many meat/meat alternates and grains/breads used in school meals programs are multiple-ingredient foods. ♦



Being informed can make a big difference.

BUYING FRESH PRODUCE...

There are several special considerations to keep in mind when you're buying fresh produce. To make the best decisions, you'll want to know something about:

1. Grading and standards
2. Ideal storage for preserving farm freshness (and what to do if yours is less than ideal)
3. The costs and benefits of using "fresh-cut" produce...
 - what you get for added cost
 - sources for ordering
 - food safety issues
 - what to look for when receiving

Let's look at each.

Grading and Standards

Very few of the fresh fruits and vegetables sold in the United States are actually graded — they are termed "ungraded" or "unclassified." However, USDA has established what are called *grade standards*, and these can be extremely helpful as you make purchasing decisions, communicate with vendors, and check for quality when you receive deliveries.

By referring to grade standards in your product descriptions, you are communicating in very specific terms *what you want* and *what you expect* to receive.

Many of the sample descriptions in this reference guide mention federal grade standards. Look, for example, at the sample description for fresh plums, which states: "to be packed to U.S. No.1 Grade standard." This indicates the purchaser will accept ungraded product but expects it to meet the USDA grade standard defined in federal regulations.

The United States enjoys one of the safest food supplies in the world. The laws and regulations required to achieve that safe food supply are lengthy and complicated. A realistic goal is to understand the basic purpose of each law and know where to go for additional information when necessary.

The purposes of the food laws are stated in the 1977 edition of *Food Purchasing Pointers for School Food Service*, published by the Food and Nutrition Service (now Food and Consumer Service) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Those purposes remain true today. In short, the laws are designed to:

- Ensure real food value.
- Maintain integrity of foods.
- Protect quality and quantity of all basic foods.
- Protect the health of the buyer.
- Promote honesty.
- Provide informative labeling.

Here is a brief review of the laws that accomplish these purposes:

The Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act

The Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act was passed in 1938. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is responsible for administering it. To contribute to the safety of our food supply, this law...

- Prohibits the shipment in interstate commerce of a misbranded food product.
- Considers a food mislabeled if it contains false or misleading statements.
- Prohibits shipment in interstate commerce of adulterated food products.
- Establishes definitions, standards of identity, standards of quality, and standards of fills for containers of food.

The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act

The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) of 1990 made several important changes in the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. The NLEA requires a nutrition facts label on most food products sold in grocery stores. Institutional foods were exempt from the labeling requirements, but many food manufacturers voluntarily include the nutrition facts label on products for school use. This voluntary labeling provides valuable information for school food authorities working to implement the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in menus. A copy of a sample nutrition facts label is shown in Appendix 3.

The Agriculture Marketing Act

The Agriculture Marketing Act authorizes USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to provide a voluntary inspection and grading service for fruits and vegetables. This service has proved to be extremely valuable for purchasers of processed fruits and vegetables.

Most processed fruits and vegetables that schools purchase are not graded by USDA, but processors base their packing on USDA grade standards.

One of the many excellent references on private label quality designations is the National Food Service Management Institute's *First Choice, A Purchasing Systems Manual for School Food Service*.

The Meat Inspection Act

The Meat Inspection Act was passed in 1906 and has been amended several times. It is administered by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). The basic requirements of this law are:

- Meats sold in interstate commerce shall be inspected for wholesomeness.
- Meats shall not be manufactured containing harmful substances.
- Meats shall not be labeled in a false or deceptive manner.
- Meats shall be processed in a clean and sanitary manner.
- Meats shall be labeled with the federal inspection stamp.

Consistent with this law, all meat products must show the establishment number of the manufacturing facility where the product was converted to the form in which it is sold. School purchasers should look for this establishment (est.) number to identify the manufacturer of a product. Inspection seals look like this:



The Tariff Act of 1930

The Tariff Act of 1930 regulates imported foods and is administered by the U.S. Customs Service. The regulations for it are in *Code of Federal Regulations*, Volume 19.

The Poultry Products Inspection Laws

The Poultry Products Inspection Laws require inspection of all poultry moving across state lines and in foreign commerce.

This reference guide was carefully assembled to provide product descriptions helpful to child nutrition professionals who purchase food for school meals. All of the information in this guide was thoroughly checked. It came from several sources.

Government agencies responsible for quality issues — in other words, grade standards and standards of identity — were asked for that information. Some state departments of agriculture, as well as national trade and individual product organizations, were asked for general product information.

In addition, many manufacturers were contacted to obtain information on product forms, product sizes, varieties marketed, case packing units, factors necessary for producing a quality product, and costs of product grades available. Some information conflicted, and some organizations failed to respond. The authors chose the majority opinion when there were differences in information supplied. If there was no clear majority opinion, both viewpoints were presented in the product fact sheets.

Information on products was limited to those most often used in institutional food service. The sample descriptions are based on the products that the industry partners indicated schools use.

Specific references are listed below:

REFERENCES

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

Title 7, Parts 46 to 51	Fresh fruits, vegetables, and nuts
Title 7, Part 52	Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables
Title 7, Parts 52 to 209	Dairy products and meats
Title 9, Part 200 to end	Animals and animal products
Title 50, Parts 200 to 599	Wildlife and fisheries
Title 21, Parts 19 to 199	Food and drug (standards of identity for food products)

Food Identification and Standards, 1992, second edition. (Policy memos related to standard and labeling and institutional meat purchase specifications by Food and Industry Services Group, Dunellon, FL)

Food Service Purchasing Pointers for School Food Service, 1977. USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (now Food and Consumer Service), Program Aid No. 1160, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Fresh Facts for Food Service, 1991. United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, Arlington, VA 22314.

Frozen Food Book of Knowledge, tenth edition, 1992. National Frozen Food Association, Inc., Harrisburg, PA 17112.

Glossary of Baking Terms, 1995.
American Institute of Baking, 1213 Bakers
Way, Manhattan, KS 66502.

Handling Guidelines for Fresh-Cut Produce. National Association of Fresh Produce Processors, by the Packer and Vance Publishing Corp., 1993. International Fresh-Cut Produce Association, Arlington, VA 22201.

How to Properly Spec Seafood in Primary and Secondary Schools, 1994. Coldwater Seafood Corp., Rowayton, CT 06853.

Purchasing French Fry Potatoes, Vol. 6, third printing, 1992. Food and Industry Services Group, Dunellon, FL.

Quantity Food Purchasing.
By Lendal H. Kotschevar, and Richard Donnelly, fourth edition, 1994, MacMillan Publishing Co.

The Buying Guide for Fresh Fruits, Vegetables, Herbs, and Nuts, seventh edition, 1980. Blue Goose, Inc., Hagerstown, MD.

The Food Service Guide to Fresh Produce. Produce Marketing Association, Newark, DE 19714-6036.

The Packer - 1995 Produce Availability and Merchandising Guide. Vance Publishing Corp., Lenexa, KS 66214-1631.

The PMA Fresh Produce Reference Manual For Food Service, 1989. The Produce Marketing Association, Newark, DE 19714-6036.

USDA Commodity Description, USDA FNS Instruction 716.1, Revision 2, 1987 with revisions through 1990. Food and Consumer Service, Alexandria, VA.

Printed Materials from:

Archer Daniel Midland, 4666 Faries Parkway, Decatur, IL 62526.

Armour Swift - Eckrich Food Service, 2001 Butterfield Road, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

Bil Mar Foods, 8300 96th Avenue, Zeeland, MI 49464-0305.

Bordens Pasta Group, Prince County, P.O. Box 489, Lowell, MA 01853-0489.

Bryan Foodservice, P.O. Box 1177, West Point, MS 39773.

California Apricot Board, 1280 Boulevard Way, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

California Kiwifruit Commission, 1540 River Park Drive, Suite 110, Sacramento, CA 95815.

California Strawberry Commission, 41 Hangarway, PO Box 269, Watsonville, CA 95077-0269.

California Table Grape Commission, P.O. Box 5498, Fresno, CA 93755.

APPENDIX 2: SOURCES OF INFORMATION (CONT)

California Iceberg Lettuce Commission, P.O. Box 3354, Monterey, CA 93942.

Canned Fruit Promotion Service, P.O. Box 7111, San Francisco, CA 94120.

Central Soya Co., P.O. Box 2507, Ft. Wayne, IN 46801-2507.

Comsource Independent Foodservice Companies, Inc., P.O. Box 724945, Atlanta, GA 31139.

Doskocil Foods, Wilson Food Service, Hutchinson, KS 67504-1570.

F.A.B. Inc., Frosty Acres, P.O. Box 4850, Norcross, GA 30091-4850.

Florida Tomato Commission, 4401 East Colonial Drive, P.O. Box 140635, Orlando, FL 32814.

Florida Department of Citrus, 1115 East Memorial Bend, Lakeland, FL 33802-0148.

Flowers Family Bakeries, Inc., Research and Development Department, Thomasville, GA 31792.

Gabriele Macaroni Co., Inc., 17651 E. Railroad Street, City of Industry, CA 91748.

Idaho Potato Commission, P.O. Box 1068, Boise, ID 83701.

Lamb Weston, Inc., 315 Wellsian Way, Richland, WA 99352.

Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission, P.O. Box 113, Opelousas, LA 70571-0013.

McCarty Foods, P.O. Box 2718, Jackson, MS 39207.

National Watermelon Association, 406 Railroad Street, Merven, GA 31638.

National Watermelon Board, P.O. Box 140065, Orlando, FL 32814-0065.

National Pasta Association, 2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 920, Arlington, VA 22201.

North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission, Inc., 4008-201A, Barrett Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Oregon/Washington/California Pear Bureau, Suite 601, 813 SW Adler, Portland, OR 97205-3182.

Our Special Touch Frozen Breads, Chaska, MN 55318.

Pacific Coast Canned Pear Service, 300 Elliott Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119.

Pierre Frozen Foods, 9990 Princeton Road, Cincinnati, OH 45246.

Pocahontas Foods, USA, P.O. Box 9729, Richmond, VA 23228.

Rich's Operators Guide and Rich's Pizza Dough, Rich Products Corp., World Headquarters, 1150 Niagra Street, Buffalo, NY 14213.

Sun Glo of Idaho Corp., P.O. Box 98, Revburg, ID 83440.

Sunkist Growers, Inc., P.O. Box 7888, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7888.

Super Bakery, 201 McKnight Park Drive, Pittsburg, PA 15237.

TriValley Growers, 1255 Battery Street, San Francisco, CA 94120-7114.

Washington State Potato Commission, 108 Interlake Rd., Moses Lake, WA 98837.

APPENDIX 3: NUTRITION LABEL

Nutrients are per serving size. The size is the amount of food customarily consumed, given in both household and metric measurements.

Daily Values show how this food fits into the overall daily diet. The percentage of any of the 14 nutrients the food may contain is compared to the daily recommended intake for the average person.

The list includes nutrients important to health, including these that we want to limit –

– as well most of these (except for sugars) we want in recommended amounts.

All ingredients must be listed on the label in descending order of predominance by weight. The list of ingredients tells what goes into the product.

Labels show calories from fat here.

NUTRITION FACTS

Serving Size ½ cup (114g)
Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 260 **Calories from Fat** 120
% Daily Value*

Total Fat	13g	20%
Saturated Fat	5g	25%
Cholesterol	30mg	10%
Sodium	66mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate	31g	11%
Dietary fiber	0g	0%
Sugars	5g	
Protein	5g	
<hr/>		
Vitamin A	4%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium	15%	Iron 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-Calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 Carbohydrate 4 Protein 4

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