



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1300 • Voice: (202) 720-4623 • Email: oc.news@usda.gov • Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

Release No. 0363.07

Contact:
Jimmie Turner (202) 720-6179
Billy Cox (202) 720-8998

CONNER ANNOUNCES PURCHASE OF UP TO 10.6 MILLION POUNDS OF TOMATO PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6, 2007 -- Acting Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner today announced USDA's plan to purchase up to 10.6 million pounds of canned tomato products which will be donated to child nutrition and other domestic food assistance programs.

Each year, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) purchases a variety of high-quality food products for distribution by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). These food products are used for the national school lunch program, the school breakfast program, the summer food service program, the food distribution program on Indian reservations, the nutrition program for the elderly, the commodity supplemental food program and the emergency food assistance program. USDA also makes emergency purchases of commodities for distribution to victims of natural disasters.

With today's announcement of USDA's intention to buy, FNS will survey potential recipients to determine how much product will be accepted for shipping. AMS will seek the lowest overall cost by publicly inviting bids to supply the desired quantity and by awarding contracts to responsible bidders.

Government food experts work to ensure that all the food purchased is healthful and nutritious. Food items are normally required to be low in fat, sugar and sodium. The commodities must meet specified grade requirements and be USDA-inspected or graded to ensure quality. AMS purchases only products of 100 percent domestic origin.

More information about USDA programs is available at <http://www.usda.gov>

#