



1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 3522-S, STOP 0239
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September 18, 2020

**Request for Information:
Industry Comment on Nutrition, Allergen, and Ingredient Submission through the Global
Data Synchronization Network (GDSN)**

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Commodity Procurement Program is seeking industry comment on a potential new requirement for contracted suppliers of domestic food distribution programs to submit nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information through the [Global Data Synchronization Network \(GDSN\)](#). GDSN provides the framework to fulfill a requirement in the National School Lunch Act for the sharing of product information with State agencies that administer the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the school districts that serve USDA Foods to students across the nation. The goal is to improve customer service to school foodservice operators by providing nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information in advance of product receipt that will assist in program administration and meal planning. By making this information readily accessible to State agencies and school districts, this may also reduce the number of direct requests for nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information that vendors currently receive from recipients of USDA purchased products.

In partnership with GS1, 1WorldSync, the University of Maryland, and industry, AMS and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) have completed a pilot to test the process for receiving vendor-specific product information through GDSN. The pilot provided an opportunity for USDA to refine the data transfer process between each of the participating partners.

AMS is seeking industry comment on a possible wider implementation effort that would require vendors to submit nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information through GDSN for products provided to USDA Foods in Schools. AMS will host an informational webinar on **Monday, September 28, 2020 at 2:00 pm ET** to review the proposed new requirement, which is described in detail below. Vendors can register for the webinar at the following link:

https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlscOqqqTsiHu2XzCix3_RCknpU0TB-lrM

Proposal of New Requirements for Suppliers of Domestic Food Distribution Programs

Under the new requirements, vendors will subscribe to a [certified data pool](#) to facilitate data transfer in GDSN. Vendors will be responsible for covering the cost of the subscription fee, which varies by data pool. USDA will also subscribe to a certified data pool to receive information from vendors through GDSN.

USDA will provide vendors with an implementation guide that will outline the product information required which includes nutrition facts, allergen information, ingredient information, serving size information, and Kosher certification information. Nutrition information will be requested in standard serving sizes used in Child Nutrition meal programs: ½ cup for fruits and vegetables or 1-ounce equivalent for grains and meat/meat alternates.

Vendors will upload information to their data pool of choice, and USDA's data pool partner will receive the information. Submission of product information into GDSN will only be required for items supplied to schools as identified on the [USDA Foods Available List](#). In addition, bulk products for further processing and fresh produce will be exempt from the GDSN submission requirement.

USDA is also partnering with the University of Maryland in this effort. The USDA data pool partner will provide the University of Maryland a report of the data, and University of Maryland will verify completion of

data fields. If data fields are missing, the information will be returned to the vendor's data pool and the vendor will need to resubmit data for the requested fields.

It is critical that nutrition information be entered in the Child Nutrition serving sizes requested (½ cup for fruits and vegetables or 1-ounce equivalent for grains and meat/meat alternates). Should a vendor choose to provide an alternative serving size, such as 100 grams, the vendor will be required to provide the gram weight that is equivalent to the Child Nutrition serving size. The University of Maryland will use that information to manually calculate the nutrition information for the appropriate Child Nutrition serving size. This manual calculation will only occur when a vendor chooses to provide nutrition information for a serving size that differs from the requested Child Nutrition serving size.

Transfer of Information to USDA Foods Recipients

FNS will receive the data from the University of Maryland for all vendors and products. This data will be transferred into a non-editable report and posted on the FNS website. This will allow State agencies and school foodservice operators to view vendor-specific product information for USDA Foods in Schools. The publicly available report will be updated on a monthly basis.

Webinar & Request for Industry Comment

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If implemented, this requirement will be incorporated into the AMS Master Solicitation for Commodity Procurement – Domestic Programs. AMS is seeking comments from vendors on this potential new requirement. Please provide feedback on the feasibility of meeting this requirement and comments on the proposed process. Comments may be submitted to Sarah Fong at Sarah.Fong@usda.gov by **Friday, October 16, 2020**.