

October 7, 2020

Questions & Answers:
**USDA Foods Nutrition, Allergen, and Ingredient Submission through the Global
Data Synchronization Network (GDSN)**

1. Have you defined "vendor"? Would this include a distributor who doesn't make food but has a private label?

Response: The vendor that is responsible for fulfilling this requirement is the entity that holds a contract with USDA. This requirement applies only to USDA Foods in Schools, identified on the [Foods Available List](#). Bulk ingredients for further processing, highlighted in yellow, and fresh produce are exempt.

2. Will vendors have access to the monthly excel file?

Response: The non-editable monthly report of vendors' nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information will be available to vendors once the file has been uploaded to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service's website and is publicly available.

3. So the information is entered for the material - not the finished good. i.e., cheese vs. the burrito that uses that cheese.

Response: The requirement would apply to the direct delivery items that USDA buys. This will not apply to bulk items that are sent to further processors or any further processed end items. The foods that are included in this requirement are listed on the USDA Foods in Schools Foods Available List <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA%20Foods%20Available%20List%20SY20-21.pdf>

Because bulk products that are purchased for further processing will be exempt from this requirement, the bulk cheese in the example that is sent to another manufacturer for further processing into a burrito would be exempt. Fresh produce will also be exempt from the requirement.

4. Will USDA be considered a customer in which a vendor pays a subscription for, so USDA may access my data?

Response: The vendor would enter product information through a data pool of their choice, and USDA will access the product information as a customer.

5. If we are not set up to send 1/2 cup or 1 oz, do I understand correctly that the University of MD can use the 100 gram nutrients and the 1/2 cup or 1 oz equivalent to calculate?

Response: Correct. If nutrition information is provided in 100 grams, then the vendor would be required to additionally provide the gram weight of the requested serving

size: ½ cup for fruits and vegetables or 1-ounce equivalent for grains and meat/meat alternates. The University of Maryland will use this gram weight to calculate the nutrition information for ½ cup or 1-ounce equivalent using the information provided for the reference portion.

6. Do I understand correctly that we would need to enter each ingredient in the ingredient statement separately?

Response: The format may vary depending upon which data pool a vendor subscribes to, but each ingredient should be reported in the manner it would appear on the product label.

7. If this is a requirement of the Master Solicitation, will the information need to be entered in GDSN before bid submission or will it be a requirement for bid award?

Response: We invite comments to be submitted on the feasibility of submitting the information to GDSN prior to bid submission.

8. For products that may be a proprietary recipe, will other vendors be able to view ingredient lists? Also, in canned goods you have retail-sized purchases. Since these don't go to school districts, will that need to be entered as well?

Response: The ingredients submitted to GDSN would need to reflect the ingredients that would be stated on the product label, as required by the FDA. The final non-editable report that will be posted on the Food and Nutrition Service's website will display the ingredient statement that each vendor provided through GDSN.

This requirement would only apply to products that are purchased for USDA Foods in Schools (for canned products, No. 10 can sizes are typically purchased for schools): <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA%20Foods%20Available%20List%20SY20-21.pdf>

9. Would this be required for every bid? Could we submit the nutrition, allergen, ingredient, serving size, and kosher statements one time?

Response: If the information has not changed since the vendor uploaded it for a previous bid, then the information would not need to be entered again. The vendor would be responsible for ensuring that the information is current. We invite comments to be submitted on the feasibility of providing the information prior to bid submission.

10. We are assuming that the ½ cup requirement will be ½ drained weight.

Response: Correct, for canned fruits and vegetables, USDA would request that the nutrition information be entered using a ½ cup, drained serving.