4
00:02:22.950 --> 00:02:30.180
Sarah Fong: Well hello everyone. And good afternoon. Thank you for joining us in our webinar today.

5
00:02:31.140 --> 00:02:51.960
Sarah Fong: In our webinar we will be presenting an initiative from the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Food and Nutrition Service to use the Global Data Synchronization Network or GDSN as a tool to receive information from suppliers of USDA Foods.

6
00:02:53.340 --> 00:03:04.410
Sarah Fong: The Agricultural Marketing Service recently issued a request for information to gather input from industry on this potential new requirement.

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00:03:05.430 --> 00:03:23.760
Sarah Fong: In our webinar today, we will be providing an overview of the background behind this initiative, and we will also walk you through the information that would be requested through GDSN and and how we intend to use the information that's collected.

8
00:03:30.120 --> 00:03:48.840
Sarah Fong: My name is Sarah Fong and I am a nutritionist in the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Commodity Procurement Program. I am joined today by Janell Walker, nutritionist in the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Food Distribution Division.

9
00:03:54.300 --> 00:04:13.920
Sarah Fong: So before we get started, we would like to take a moment to review a few notes for this webinar, the presentation slides will be distributed to all participants after the webinar, please feel free to submit questions through the chat box at any time during the webinar.

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00:04:15.030 --> 00:04:34.320
Sarah Fong: Questions may be submitted directly to the host or to the speakers, we will be answering questions through a Q and A document that will be distributed after the webinar. You will receive this Q and A document and the presentation slides after the webinar.

11
00:04:45.330 --> 00:05:03.810
Sarah Fong: So we will start with a little bit of background behind the initiative to use GDSN in USDA foods programs. USDA foods are purchased for several food distribution programs, one of which is the National School Lunch Program.

12
00:05:04.950 --> 00:05:24.300

Sarah Fong: School districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program are required to plan menus according to nutrition standards that are set by the USDA, which includes specific standards for calories, saturated fat, and sodium served on a weekly basis.

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00:05:25.560 --> 00:05:37.230
Sarah Fong: Schools will seek out information on the product label to meet USDA standards and to provide students with information about the meals to be served.

14
00:05:43.080 --> 00:06:01.350
Sarah Fong: Schools that choose to serve foods purchased by the USDA may not consistently receive the same vendor's products every time since the foods that USDA purchases are procured through a competitive bid process.

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00:06:02.370 --> 00:06:22.020
Sarah Fong: So for the foods that USDA purchases for schools, USDA currently provides schools with an approximation of the nutrition information and schools can use this as reference data when planning menus to be compliant with the National School Lunch Program.

16
00:06:23.850 --> 00:06:33.750
Sarah Fong: So under the current process, USDA will reach out to individual vendors to collect vendors' product information sheets.

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00:06:34.290 --> 00:06:49.200
Sarah Fong: And then we will use those product information sheets to aggregate all of the vendors' nutrition information into a single nutrient profile that schools can use as reference data.

18
00:06:50.070 --> 00:07:12.240
Sarah Fong: Because this information is gathered through product information sheets which could potentially change after being submitted to the USDA the current process does not take into account any possible formulation changes or production changes that may have an impact on the nutrient profile.

19
00:07:17.850 --> 00:07:25.770
Sarah Fong: Currently ingredient and allergen information is not shared with schools prior to product delivery.

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00:07:26.460 --> 00:07:41.070
Sarah Fong: So as we reviewed in the previous slide USDA will aggregate the nutrition information into a single profile that will help schools to plan menus prior to product delivery.

21
00:07:42.060 --> 00:07:57.900
Sarah Fong: Because the ingredients and allergens can potentially have wide variances across suppliers, ingredient and allergen information cannot be aggregated in advance in the same way that the nutrition information is.

22
00:08:00.000 --> 00:08:11.010
Sarah Fong: Ingredients and allergens are very important components of meal planning and schools will share this information with students prior to meal service.

23
00:08:11.370 --> 00:08:16.980
Sarah Fong: Which is particularly important for students with food allergies or sensitivities.

24
00:08:17.610 --> 00:08:40.560
Sarah Fong: Because schools currently do not receive ingredient and allergen information from USDA before the product is delivered, school districts will often reach out to vendors directly to obtain this information, which may result in vendors receiving large volumes of requests for information.

25
00:08:45.510 --> 00:08:56.970
Sarah Fong: Because of these challenges, USDA sought a more efficient and direct method of communicating more complete product information with recipients.

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00:08:57.870 --> 00:09:07.410
Sarah Fong: The Global Data Synchronization Network or GDSN will potentially help in facilitating this communication.

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00:09:08.400 --> 00:09:25.050
Sarah Fong: As many of you may know GDSN is a platform that is widely used in the industry to communicate product information such as nutrition ingredients and allergen information from a seller to a buyer.

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00:09:26.130 --> 00:09:41.400
Sarah Fong: Many of you may be familiar with USDA Food Data Central which is administered by the Agricultural Research Service and houses the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database.

29
00:09:42.360 --> 00:09:54.690
Sarah Fong: Because USDA is already integrated into GDSN through the Global Branded Food Products Database, there is an opportunity for AMS and FNS

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00:09:55.770 --> 00:10:05.160
Sarah Fong: To use existing partnerships such as a partnership with GS1 to use the network in the USDA foods program.

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00:10:14.250 --> 00:10:39.750
Sarah Fong: Earlier this year, AMS and FNS completed a pilot to test the process for receiving product information through GDSN for a select number of USDA foods. This pilot was completed with the help of vendors that are currently integrated into the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database.

32
00:10:40.800 --> 00:10:54.570
Sarah Fong: GS1 and the data pool 1WorldSync and the University of Maryland also participated in the pilot and we will review each of the roles in the pilot on the next slide.

33
00:10:55.680 --> 00:11:14.040
Sarah Fong: So through the pilot, USDA was able to test the process for receiving product information through GDSN and we were able to make technical adjustments within the system so that the data would be collected in a format that would be useful for schools.

34
00:11:19.440 --> 00:11:32.910
Sarah Fong: So as I mentioned on the previous slide, there were several partners that participated in the pilot. The partners listed here are currently partners in the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database.

35
00:11:33.690 --> 00:11:54.210
Sarah Fong: Which, as I mentioned, is administered by the Agricultural Research Service. Because each of these partners are currently integrated into the USDA global branded food products database, USDA has the opportunity to continue working with these partners in this initiative for USDA foods.

36
00:11:55.650 --> 00:12:09.720
Sarah Fong: The first partner, GS1, is an organization that develops and maintains many sets of global standards, one of which is the data exchange network GDSN.

37
00:12:10.590 --> 00:12:22.080
Sarah Fong: 1WorldSync was another partner in the pilot and served as the data pool that received the product information submitted by vendors that participated in the pilot

38
00:12:23.400 --> 00:12:33.840
Sarah Fong: The University of Maryland was another project partner and they help to verify that the information submitted by the vendor was complete.

39
00:12:35.040 --> 00:12:44.550
Sarah Fong: The University of Maryland will also help to verify the serving size information and we will review that process in a later slide.

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00:12:55.980 --> 00:13:08.370
Sarah Fong: Because the pilot enabled USDA to test and refine the data transfer process, USDA is considering implementing a requirement for contractors of USDA foods.

41
00:13:08.880 --> 00:13:24.210
Sarah Fong: To submit nutrition allergen and ingredient information through GDSN, a request for information document was recently issued to collect industry feedback on the potential new requirement.

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00:13:25.410 --> 00:13:36.180
Sarah Fong: If this if this requirement is implemented, it would be incorporated into the master solicitation for commodity procurement domestic programs.

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00:13:36.990 --> 00:13:51.120
Sarah Fong: The requirement would only be applicable to products that are purchased for the National School Lunch Program as identified on the USDA foods available list, which is on the FNS website.

44
00:13:52.380 --> 00:14:00.510
Sarah Fong: There will be some exemptions to this requirement, including bulk products for further processing and fresh produce.

45
00:14:06.390 --> 00:14:22.230
Sarah Fong: The goal of this initiative is to improve customer service to state agencies and school districts by providing nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information in a more efficient and a more complete manner.

46
00:14:23.190 --> 00:14:38.670
Sarah Fong: In addition, it may also reduce the number of direct requests for nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information that vendors may currently receive from schools that seek this information for USDA-purchased products.

47
00:14:43.620 --> 00:14:52.770
Sarah Fong: So we will now provide an overview of the proposed process for submitting nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information through GDSN.

48
00:14:57.000 --> 00:15:10.200
Sarah Fong: This slide provides a high level overview of how GDSN works. GDSN is a product data network that is a widely used tool in many industries.

49
00:15:10.830 --> 00:15:18.810
Sarah Fong: So starting on the left side of the graphic, a seller will upload product information using a data pool.

50
00:15:19.620 --> 00:15:40.110
Sarah Fong: The seller can upload several product attributes to their data pool which includes nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information and the sellers data pool will also facilitate registration of the data within GS1's global registry of information.

51
00:15:42.420 --> 00:15:55.230
Sarah Fong: So once the information is uploaded into the sellers data pool, it is then communicated to the buyer's data pool which is shown on the right side of the graphic.

52
00:15:56.160 --> 00:16:14.040
Sarah Fong: The buyer will ultimately retrieve the sellers product information by accessing it through their own data pool. So on the next few slides we will focus on the process that the vendor would follow to supply information to USDA.

53
00:16:18.780 --> 00:16:35.130
Sarah Fong: The vendor would be required to subscribe to a certified data pool. We have provided a link here and the link is also in the RFI to a list of Certified data pools that vendors can choose from.

54
00:16:36.210 --> 00:16:49.170
Sarah Fong: The majority of Certified data pools are associated with a subscription fee. Vendors would be responsible for covering the cost of this subscription fee.

55
00:16:55.620 --> 00:17:05.940
Sarah Fong: The information that USDA would request within the system is listed here. This will include the Nutrition Facts, serving size,

56
00:17:06.660 --> 00:17:24.870
Sarah Fong: allergen information, ingredients, kosher certification, and the USDA material code number and also several other fields that GDSN would require, such as the product name, the brand name.

57

00:17:25.500 --> 00:17:31.260
Sarah Fong: item identification number, net weight and several other product features.

58
00:17:32.070 --> 00:17:45.000
Sarah Fong: For the nutrition facts and serving size, we would request that the information be provided in standard serving sizes that schools use in the National School Lunch Program.

59
00:17:45.870 --> 00:17:57.900
Sarah Fong: This would be a one half cup serving size for fruits and vegetables and a one ounce equivalent serving size for grains, meats and meat alternates.

60
00:17:59.250 --> 00:18:02.910
Sarah Fong: We will review this in greater detail on the next slide.

61
00:18:08.250 --> 00:18:18.780
Sarah Fong: So for the serving size, if the nutrition information is not entered in the requested serving size, which is

62
00:18:19.230 --> 00:18:35.520
Sarah Fong: One half cup serving or one ounce equivalent serving, then the system will ask the vendor to provide the weight that would be equivalent to one half cup or a one ounce equivalent serving.

63
00:18:37.170 --> 00:18:54.810
Sarah Fong: So, for example, a vendor might enter nutrition information for 100 grams of a fruit or vegetable product but 85 grams might actually be equivalent to one half of a cup.

64
00:18:56.250 --> 00:19:08.820
Sarah Fong: So in this case, the proportion of 85 grams over 100 grams will be used to calculate what the nutrition information would be for one half of a cup.

65
00:19:11.070 --> 00:19:22.830
Sarah Fong: If this calculation is needed, it will be done by the University of Maryland after the vendor has submitted their product information through their data pool.

66
00:19:23.970 --> 00:19:39.120
Sarah Fong: The University currently does this type of calculation for products that are uploaded to the USDA global branded food products database, which as we've mentioned is administered by the Agricultural Research Service.

67
00:19:44.040 --> 00:19:56.280
Sarah Fong: So for the purpose of this webinar, we will provide screenshots of just three of the sections that vendors would be required to complete for this initiative.

68
00:19:57.060 --> 00:20:07.740
Sarah Fong: Please note that there will be additional fields that would need to be completed in addition to the screenshots that we will be reviewing in this webinar.

69
00:20:09.960 --> 00:20:11.850
Sarah Fong: So on this screen.

70
00:20:12.900 --> 00:20:19.050
Sarah Fong: On this screen vendors will be required to enter allergen information.

71
00:20:20.070 --> 00:20:34.410
Sarah Fong: USDA will only collect allergen information for the top eight allergens and this includes eggs, fish, wheat, soy, peanuts, shellfish, milk, and tree nuts.

72
00:20:40.620 --> 00:20:47.370
Sarah Fong: And on this screen vendors would be required to enter their ingredient information.

73
00:20:48.570 --> 00:21:04.290
Sarah Fong: So each ingredient would be entered separately and it would be entered in the order of predominance, starting with the ingredient that's present in the highest proportion to the ingredient present in the lowest proportion.

74
00:21:05.040 --> 00:21:18.270
Sarah Fong: So in this example, chicken tenderloin is the primary ingredient, followed by the breading and then followed by the sub ingredients within the breading: flour and salt.

75
00:21:23.280 --> 00:21:35.760
Sarah Fong: Then on this screen, the vendors will be required to enter nutrition information in standard serving sizes that schools use in the National School Lunch Program.

76
00:21:36.690 --> 00:21:49.380
Sarah Fong: So as we've discussed before, this would be a one half cup serving for fruits and vegetables and a one ounce equivalent serving for grains meat and meat alternates.

77
00:21:50.040 --> 00:22:08.850
Sarah Fong: The system requires that nutrition information is entered for calories, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sugars, dietary fiber, and protein and sodium.

78
00:22:10.710 --> 00:22:12.450
Sarah Fong: So in addition to

79
00:22:14.340 --> 00:22:33.990
Sarah Fong: The data fields that we just reviewed, there are additional fields that will need to be completed, such as the product name and the USDA material code the item identification number, the net weight and other relevant information.

80
00:22:35.040 --> 00:22:43.350
Sarah Fong: So for the purposes of this webinar, we just wanted to provide a quick snapshot of what the GDSN system looks like.

81
00:22:44.220 --> 00:22:57.930
Sarah Fong: Some vendors may already use this system to submit information to buyers. But for those that may not be familiar with the system, there will be resources available to assist you.

82
00:23:01.260 --> 00:23:10.890
Sarah Fong: So once the vendor enters the required information and once the information has been received by USDA and data pool,

83
00:23:11.430 --> 00:23:26.400
Sarah Fong: The information will be reviewed to ensure that all mandatory fields have been completed, the University of Maryland will be the project partner that will assist with this verification.

84
00:23:27.660 --> 00:23:37.350
Sarah Fong: The university will review that all the mandatory data fields have been completed.

85
00:23:38.430 --> 00:23:51.180
Sarah Fong: If the university finds that data fields are missing, the information will be returned to the vendor's data pool and the vendor will need to provide the requested data.

86
00:23:52.980 --> 00:24:03.270
Sarah Fong: And as a reminder, if the vendor does not enter nutrition information in the standard serving sizes for schools,

87
00:24:03.960 --> 00:24:17.910
Sarah Fong: Which is a one half cup serving for fruits and vegetables or a one ounce equivalent serving for grains and meat or meat alternates, then the vendor will be required to enter the weight.

88
00:24:18.420 --> 00:24:28.140
Sarah Fong: That is equivalent to those serving sizes and the university will calculate the nutrition information for those serving sizes.

89
00:24:29.430 --> 00:24:44.670
Sarah Fong: So I will now hand it over to Janell from the Food and Nutrition Service and she will review how the information will ultimately be transferred and presented to state agencies and school districts

90
00:24:46.440 --> 00:24:56.700
Janell Walker: Thank you, Sarah for providing an overview of the initiative. I'm going to spend a few minutes discussing how state agencies in school districts will receive this information.

91
00:24:57.600 --> 00:25:05.820
Janell Walker: Once vendors enter product specific nutrition information into GDSN it is verified by the University of Maryland.

92
00:25:06.480 --> 00:25:18.630
Janell Walker: FNS will take this data, which is stored in an Excel file and will transfer it to a non editable Excel file that will be posted on the USDA Food and Nutrition website.

93
00:25:19.590 --> 00:25:31.230
Janell Walker: State agencies and school districts will be able to access this file online which will be updated monthly and will provide vendor specific nutrition information in an easy to read format.

94
00:25:35.010 --> 00:25:43.800
Janell Walker: This is a screenshot of the non editable Excel file that states and school districts will be able to access on the FNS website.

95
00:25:44.580 --> 00:25:53.010
Janell Walker: This file will allow stakeholders to view the nutrition, allergen and ingredient information for all vendors for each material code offered.

96
00:25:53.640 --> 00:26:10.680

Janell Walker: So let's walk through the process as to how state agencies in school districts would use this file. First, they would select a food category from the drop down list at the top of this spreadsheet, such as cheese, beans, vegetables, beef, etc.

97
00:26:11.760 --> 00:26:15.360
Janell Walker: A list of associated material codes will automatically populate

98
00:26:16.230 --> 00:26:27.480
Janell Walker: Then they will select the material code of interest and the spreadsheet will display the nutrition, allergen, ingredient and kosher information for all of the vendors that produce that product.

99
00:26:28.350 --> 00:26:38.400
Janell Walker: In the example on this screen, we are looking at nutrition information for material code 100002, white shredded cheddar cheese.

100
00:26:39.510 --> 00:26:52.380
Janell Walker: The far left column of this spreadsheet lists all of the attributes USDA is collecting and across the top in white font you will see a list of all of the vendors that offer the selected material code.

101
00:26:53.220 --> 00:27:01.800
Janell Walker: The spreadsheet will populate the nutrients, allergens, ingredients, and kosher fields as entered by the vendor in the GDSN system.

102
00:27:02.760 --> 00:27:11.280
Janell Walker: As you see the state agency or school district will now be able to see vendor specific information from every vendor that offers this product.

103
00:27:12.150 --> 00:27:22.710
Janell Walker: State agencies and school districts heavily rely on information provided by the vendor and since nutrition information is not required to be supplied in the package for institutional foods

104
00:27:23.100 --> 00:27:35.640
Janell Walker: This initiative will allow them to see variations in nutrients for allergens, which will help them better plan their menus and provide more accurate information to students and parents for the USDA foods they are serving.

105
00:27:36.720 --> 00:27:49.410

Janell Walker: This new process will also allow USDA to obtain nutrition information from vendors in a more frequent basis, providing an opportunity to capture any formulation changes or production changes.

106
00:27:50.760 --> 00:27:58.950
Janell Walker: The last thing I want to point out is that this spreadsheet will also contain the last updated date on the bottom right corner of the spreadsheet,

107
00:27:59.400 --> 00:28:08.130
Janell Walker: So that state agencies and school districts know when the data was last updated by the vendor. Now I'm going to turn it back over to Sarah to conclude the webinar.

108
00:28:20.520 --> 00:28:22.020
Sarah Fong: Okay, thank you Janell.

109
00:28:23.280 --> 00:28:27.120
Sarah Fong: So, as we mentioned at the beginning of the presentation,

110
00:28:28.200 --> 00:28:41.040
Sarah Fong: USDA is seeking comments from industry on this potential requirement to submit nutrition, allergen, and ingredient information through GDSN and GS1.

111
00:28:42.030 --> 00:28:48.750
Sarah Fong: We are requesting vendors to submit feedback on how feasible it would be to meet this requirement.

112
00:28:49.470 --> 00:29:03.990
Sarah Fong: For example, providing feedback on whether you are currently integrated into GDSN would be helpful and if it would be feasible for your company to use the system for products that you supply to USDA.

113
00:29:04.980 --> 00:29:17.400
Sarah Fong: We also invite comments to be submitted on the overall process that we've just reviewed for receiving the data and also for transferring the information to recipients.

114
00:29:18.660 --> 00:29:31.470
Sarah Fong: Comments may be submitted directly to my email address at Sarah.Fong@usda.gov by Wednesday, October 7.

115
00:29:40.140 --> 00:29:55.380
Sarah Fong: Thank you very much for attending our webinar today. We will be leaving the chat box open to allow you the opportunity to submit questions.

116
00:29:55.980 --> 00:30:12.960
Sarah Fong: So, as we mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, we won't be having a live Q and A, but we will be responding to your questions through a Q and A document and we will email this document to all participants after the webinar.

117
00:30:14.070 --> 00:30:24.540
Sarah Fong: And please feel free to reach out to me directly as well if you have any questions or if you are unclear about any part of the process.

118
00:30:26.460 --> 00:30:32.280
Sarah Fong: And so, thank you again for participating, and this now concludes our webinar.