



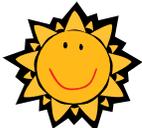
In Good Taste



UPDATE FROM NCDA&CS FOOD DISTRIBUTION DIVISION
SUMMER 2008

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Gary Gay

Up,Up,Up. How high will food and fuel prices go? That is the question everyone is asking these days. I am sure you know, as well as anyone, the impact higher prices of transportation and food are causing. We are seeing it here first hand with the increase in commodity prices. As I will explain in more detail in the newsletter, USDA has already told us to move many commodity orders planned for the July through November time period because higher food prices have resulted in federal dollars not purchasing the planned amounts of products. This seems to be a vicious circle we are caught in - higher oil prices leads to more corn and soybeans being used for alternative fuels, which in turn leads to higher food prices, and there is no end in sight. We are all concerned about what the coming year holds. Higher commodity prices means your entitlement dollars will not go as far, and then add the factor of the reduction in Bonus commodities we have seen over the past few years, it paints a bleak picture. I do not like to write articles like this. I like to stay focused on the positive side of things. I hope the Farm Bill will provide some relief, and USDA will use their wisdom in making good sound decisions when purchasing commodities. A saying I like to use is: "Tough times don't last, but tough people do" and we will get through this.



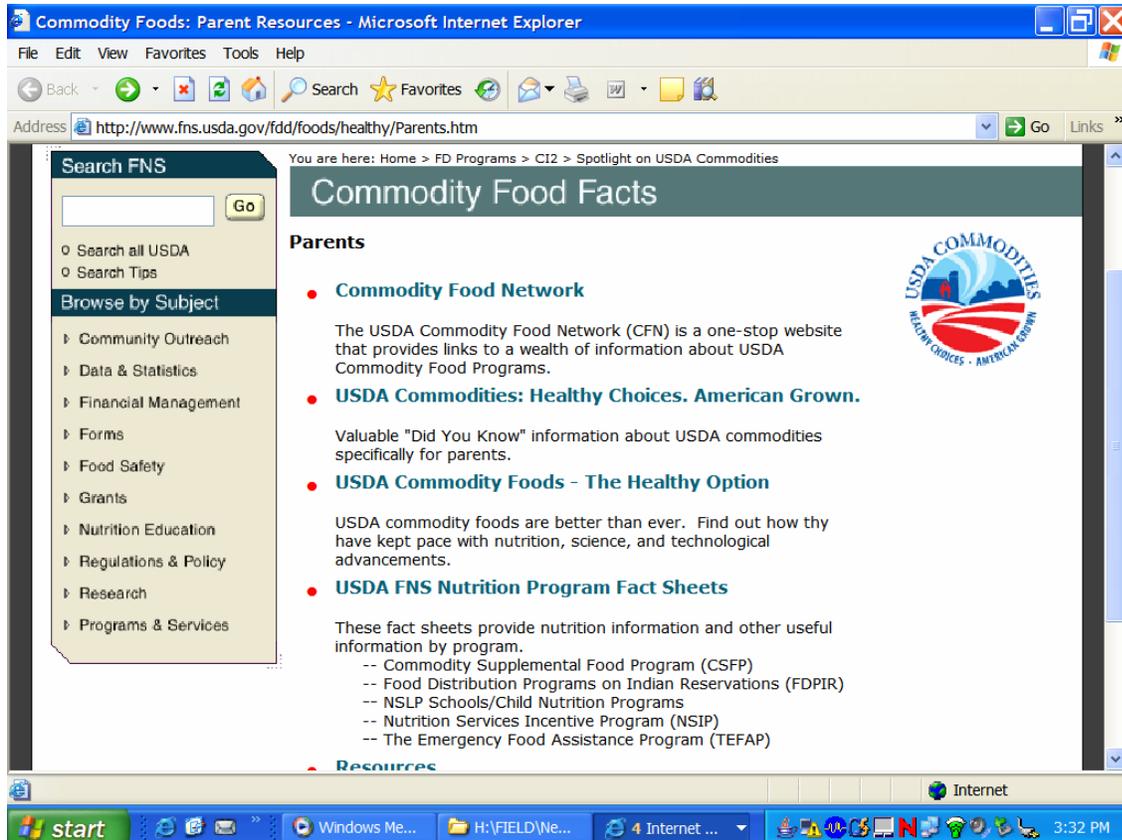
COMMODITY OUTLOOK

USDA Pushes Back Commodity Orders

USDA's goal every year is to purchase 40% of your entitlement commodities between July and November 15. This year, due to the increase in prices for commodities, USDA can only fund 33%, so all states are having to move commodity orders that were originally planned for July through November 15 back to November 30 through April 30. This movement of orders affects every commodity category: fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and meats. Processed and non-processed orders will also be affected. So yes, this will have an impact on everyone in some way.

Please review your district's first 209 Report carefully, and take note of the changes. The Report will be mailed out in July.

Commodity Food Facts Website



This FNS/USDA website we hope you find useful. It offers a wealth of information on all Food Distribution Programs. Just click on NSLP Schools/Child Nutrition Programs and begin your adventure. You can link into commodity fact sheets for your favorite commodity item as well as many other informative websites.

www.usda.gov/fdd/commodityfoodfacts.htm



NC FARM-TO-SCHOOL NEWS

The North Carolina Farm-to-School Program

As many of you know, back in 1997 NCDA&CS, along with DOD, partnered to start a Farm-to-School Program in North Carolina, and up until 2007 this was good partnership. But, due to circumstances, DOD decided to privatize their end of the business which placed NCDA&CS in more of a consulting role in this program. After much discussion, Commissioner Troxler decided NCDA&CS should start a NC Farm-to-School Program. We are in the planning stages now and hope to roll this out in August 2008. Currently our plan is the program will operate very closely to what we have done in the past. NCDA&CS will be the purchasing agent for the schools, and by doing this, we will follow federal procurement regulations in purchasing NC products. We want this program to provide good quality produce. We will require our suppliers to be GAP Certified (Good Agriculture Practices). This will mean that the farmers supplying produce to this program are following and meeting criteria that will give you a safe and quality item. We are very excited about what the future holds for this program.

NC Farm-to-School Strawberries

Ted Fogleman



NC Farm-to-School Strawberries has once again set a new mark in sales to our North Carolina Schools. Fifty-eight school systems participated and purchased 13,886 flats of NC Strawberries at more than \$200,000 over a 3 week period in May.

Mother Nature was very kind to us with very warm, mild temperatures and most of the rain came during Mothers Day weekend when we were not shipping strawberries. We could not have asked for a better Spring season to close out the school year. I can't say it enough, thank you, Child Nutrition Directors, Supervisors, Managers, and Staff for all you do in providing healthy foods to our kids for a better today and a better tomorrow.





2008 FARM BILL UPDATE

Well, it has finally come to pass. The 2008 Farm Bill is now law. After both the Congress and Senate worked out their differences in the Farm Bill, and the Bill was passed on to the President to sign, the President vetoed the Bill. Then both Congress and the Senate voted to override the President's veto. So finally, we have a Farm Bill. NCDA&CS Food Distribution will provide more information on what this will mean for your School Lunch Program as we receive information on how North Carolina will be impacted. So watch for future updates.



CHANGES COMING TO ECOS

Fortunately, we may not see it for a year or two, but there will be future changes to our ECOS system. USDA is developing a new computer system to replace the very outdated main frame system. The new system will be called Web Based Supply Chain Management and it will reach all the way down to ECOS. The function of ECOS will be the same but the operating features will be different. As we learn more, we will pass this information along to school districts. Hopefully, NCDA&CS Food Distribution will be able to provide input on this project as it develops.



RECALL UPDATE ON WESTLAND MEAT COMPANY GROUND BEEF

On February 17, 2008, USDA issued a **RECALL** on A594 Commodity Course Ground Beef, from Westland Meat Company in California. Twenty school systems in the State were affected by this recall, which is now being called the largest beef recall in history. Nationwide, 143 million pounds of ground beef was recalled. In North Carolina, NCDA&CS Food Distribution Division handled 120,407 pounds of the recalled beef. Many school systems were directed to dispose of their inventory on site if they had less than 50 cases.

We are currently waiting on our USDA reimbursement which is in excess of \$183,500.00 in commodity value and an additional \$158,285.00 in processing fees and administrative costs.

We are happy to report no illnesses were reported in the State associated with this recall.



SNA OF NORTH CAROLINA NEWS

2008 SNA of NC Summer Conference

Bob Sitton



June is just around the corner! I'm sure you and your staff have your calendars marked for the School Nutrition Association of NC Annual Conference June 17-20, 2008 in Greensboro.

The conference planning committee has been very busy, dotting the "I's" and crossing the "T's" for this conference. I can tell you, it promises to be a good one, so make sure your staff is in attendance with plans on networking, meeting, and conversing with some of the very best Child Nutrition staff in the state. For the speakers, you will need pen and pencil for taking notes, and a tissue to wipe away the tears from laughter. Hopefully, you will take from the educational

sessions and depart the conference with much more insight and some new ideas for the next school year.

Tuesday, June 17, we look forward to Gary's Advisory Council Meeting and the State Bid Meeting. We will close out the day judging some of the finest culinary arts entries from across the state. Be sure to stop by our booth during the New Horizons Trade Show, Wednesday, June 18 and register for your chance to win a gift basket of goodies.

We will also be presenting twice on Thursday, June 19th, a mini session on Hold and Recall Procedures, which encompasses standard operating procedures for Administrative Offices and school sites. You will not want to miss this one.

On Friday, June 20th, we welcome Commissioner Steve Troxler during the General Session.

We look forward to seeing you there!!

SNA-NC Legislative Action Conference

SNA-NC held its Legislative Action Conference on May 19-20, 2008.

The conference was well attended by 145 of child nutrition's determined professionals who met with their respective legislators.

The conference was to gain legislative support to receive funding needed to implement legislation enacted in 2005 that established statewide nutrition standards for school meals. After pilot programs demonstrated the cost of implementation, the General Assembly delayed the mandate to 2008. The funding would provide approximately \$.25 per plate K-5 in all 1170 elementary schools. The cost is \$20 million. These funds are necessary for Child Nutrition Programs to serve the children of our state.

SNA-NC continued

One hundred twenty four elementary schools in seven districts volunteered to pilot the nutrition standards in 2005. Total revenue loss exceeded \$330,665 for just five months. Revenue loss for the increase in food costs, labor costs, and loss in student participation are not included in the total revenue loss.

Most of North Carolina school districts have begun to implement the standards and are experiencing financial difficulties. Financially, 87 of 115 districts ended in a deficit last school year. North Carolina is the 8th largest school meals program in the nation serving 1.4 million students, and employing 15,000 people.

Senator Vernon Malone (D-Wake) stated during the conference luncheon at the Holiday Inn Brownstone on May 19, how he was appalled the General Assembly had mandated the nutrition standards and not approved any funding to support them.

As of the release date of this issue of "In Good Taste," this matter is still on the table. The SNA-NC could use your help. It is important over the next two weeks; you contact your members in the State House of Representatives and Senate in reference to HB 2226 and SB1898. Tell them you need their support of these bills to continue nutritious meals for students in your district.

You may also contact Cindy Marion, Public Policy and Legislative Chair for more information at cindy.marion@stokes.k12.nc.us.

Information compiled from SNA-NC's fact sheet and materials.

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**2008 MARCH ACROSS CAROLINA**



It is not too early to mark your calendars for the upcoming March Across Carolina. We will be marching from the coast to the mountains. See schedule below:

- Tuesday, November 4, 2008 - Riverfront Convention Center, New Bern, NC
- Wednesday, November 5, 2008 - Dorton Arena, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, NC
- Thursday, November 6, 2008 - Hickory Metro Convention Center, Hickory, NC

## WELCOME NEW CHILD NUTRITION ADMINISTRATORS

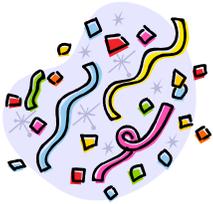
Ms. Jeannie Baker (Interim) Martin County Schools  
Ms. Tina Farmer Cabarrus County Schools

Please join us in welcoming these child nutrition professionals to their new positions. We look forward for the opportunity to assist each one as they settle into their respective counties.

If we have overlooked you in this edition, please contact us to ensure we were notified of the change and we will see that you make the next edition of our newsletter.



## Contest Winners



NCDA&CS Markets Division and Food Distribution Division are proud to announce the winners for the Farm-to-School Banner promotion contest. The winners will be recognized at the June conference where Commissioner Steve Troxler will present the awards to the following:

- 1st Place      Rockingham County Schools  
                  Douglas Elementary School  
                  Submitted by: Tracey Lanier, Cafeteria Manager
- 2nd Place      Catawba County Schools  
                  Catawba Elementary School  
                  Submitted by: Lynne Henderson, Cafeteria Manager
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place      Burke County Schools  
                  Drexel Primary School  
                  Submitted by: Nicole Byles, Cafeteria Manager

Many thanks to all of those who participated in this contest.



## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Here are several dates for you to mark on you calendars:

### **June 17-20, 2008**

#### SNA-NC Conference

Sheraton Greensboro Hotel at Four Seasons  
3121 High Point Road  
Greensboro, NC 27407

### **October 16-26, 2008**

#### NC State Fair

State Fairgrounds  
Raleigh, NC



### **October 22-24, 2008**

#### NCDPI Fall Conference

Sheraton Imperial Center  
4700 Emperor Blvd.  
Durham, NC 27703

### **February, 2009**

NCDA&CS Food Distribution Division  
Commodity Academy  
2582 West Lyon Station Road  
Creedmoor, NC 27522



## **FOOD DISTRIBUTION EMPLOYEE RECOGNIZED**



Gail Weams, Field Representative for Food Distribution Division, has received the Commissioner's Award for Excellence in Public Service. She was also NCDA&CS Employee of the month for November 2007. Gail received her award from Commissioner Steve Troxler during the department's Employee Appreciation Ceremony on May 21, 2008.

Gail has 27 years of service with our division, and she works with schools and agencies that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Programs. Gail not only performs her duties for Food Distribution Division in an exemplary manner, she gives back to the community by volunteering for charities including the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society which named her Asheville's 2003 Women of The Year, and the WNC Down Syndrome Alliance and many others.



### **ACRONYM LIST**

- ACDA - American Commodity Distribution Association
- AMS - Agricultural Marketing Service
- CND - Child Nutrition Division
- DoD - Department of Defense
- ECOS - The Electronic Commodity Ordering System
- FDA - Food and Drug Administration
- FDD - Food Distribution Division
- FNS - Food and Nutrition Service
- FFAVORS - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Ordering and Receipt System
- FSIS - Food Safety and Inspection Service
- SNA - School Nutrition Association
- SY - School Year
- USDA - United States Department of Agriculture



Steve Troxler ..... Commissioner of Agriculture  
Gary W. Gay ..... Director of Food Distribution  
Bob Sitton.....Editor/Administrator for Field Services  
Allison Medlin .....Publisher

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