

# Frequently Asked Questions

## USDA Foods 2022 Ordering Kick Off

1. **If USDA food remains unused at the processor can it be carried over to school year (SY) 2021-22?**
  - A. Pounds not utilized by Contracting Entities (CEs) during school year (SY) 2020-2021 will be redistributed for use for SY2021-2022. The non-utilized pounds will be removed from CE accounts and taken up to state level (in a state account) but there will be opportunities for CEs to repurpose the pounds.
2. **Does a CE receive all of its entitlement for SY 2021-22 even if it is currently operating the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)?**
  - A. As of this time, USDA has not provided any information or guidance that indicates a change to the usual way NSLP entitlement is formulated (NSLP/Seamless Summer Option meals x the USDA rate of assistance). TDA has sought such guidance and will continue to do so. In the meantime, TDA must follow the normal procedure.
3. **When and where will TDA post the new map of the warehouse service regions?**
  - A. CEs can access their assigned "FDP region" by clicking the "View" link under the "FDP Contract" Form Name to their FDP contract packet (right above the Contracting Entity Information Update form name). The FDP region maps will be posted in SquareMeals (Programs > Food Distribution Program for CN Programs > TDA Contracted Warehouses) by July 1, 2021.
4. **When and where will TDA post the USDA Foods ordering webinar recording and associated documents?**
  - A. This recording has been posted on [www.Squaremeals.org](http://www.Squaremeals.org). It can be accessed by selecting "Training" under F&N Resources and expanding the USDA Foods section of this screen to view all available trainings for USDA Foods.
5. **What is the usual amount of entitlement awarded for the DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD Fresh)?**
  - A. Within the past three school years, about 16-17% of state entitlement has been awarded for DoD Fresh and Farm to School (combined). The beginning amount awarded has increased each year. For SY 2021, TDA has currently been approved to use \$35 million in both programs.
6. **How does TDA carry over entitlement from the current SY to SY 2021-22?**
  - A. Unused entitlement at the CE level does NOT "carry over" to the CE from school year to school year. However, unused entitlement credited at the state level by USDA is redistributed out to all NSLP CEs participating in USDA Foods for the following school year.
7. **How should a CE estimate how much USDA food to order if that CE experienced a significant decrease in participation due to the pandemic?**
  - A. Understanding this is a difficult task for CEs to forecast in such an unpredictable set of circumstances, CEs should assess current inventory levels of food (commercial and USDA



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Foods) and analyze meal distribution trends as best as feasibly possible to help with making informed decisions on how much food to order. CEs can also seek the assistance of their ESC Child Nutrition Department for guidance and forecasting assistance.

- 8. Will TDA review proposals with a goal of reducing high delivery fees from contracted warehouses?**
  - A. TDA evaluates and scores bid proposals based on several factors which include price, logistical approach and workplan, understanding of project requirements, and experience and qualifications. The reasonableness of the bid price is taken into consideration before a contract is awarded to a vendor.
- 9. Brown box items and Farm to School foods added to the order a week before delivery can be a management problem because our local distribution has already been planned.**
  - A. DoD Farm to School product can be requested for specific weeks that align with a CE's delivery route schedule. Given the short shelf life of the product, it must be taken in the week it was allocated to the CE. When completing the Farm to School surveys, a CE should take into consideration the quantity requested and the week the product is requested to arrive. Brown box items with a short shelf life should also be ordered the next available delivery period after the allocation occurred. CEs should keep this in mind when filling out survey requests and placing orders with their commercial distributors.
- 10. Is March 1 also the due date for the processing export files?**
  - A. Yes.
- 11. Will TDA make available additional DoD Fresh food items if a CE also retains unused USDA food items?**
  - A. TDA is currently assessing the appropriate level of entitlement to request for additional use in DoD Fresh for the remainder of SY 2021, along with determining the process of how CEs can request to receive those funds. More concrete information to be disseminated.
- 12. Will TDA post a list of updated values of USDA food items and of Farm to School food items?**
  - A. TDA will post an updated list of USDA Foods values (regular/brown box, USDA for further processing and Farm to School) on SquareMeals in January.
- 13. How does TDA ensure delivery to the warehouse in a timely manner, including when normal delivery date might be a holiday, for the Farm to School program?**
  - A. Farm to School produce arrives at the state contracted warehouse the Thursday of the preceding week from a CE's scheduled delivery week/request in the Farm to School survey. For example, if a CE has a delivery date during the week of January 25, the produce physically arrives at the warehouse on Thursday, January 21. CEs should identify when scheduled delivery dates clash with holidays. In those instances, CEs can contact their respective state contracted warehouse to see if an alternate delivery can be arranged. If so, it is important that the CE communicates this with TDA and that the



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Farm to School survey is accurately completed. TDA orders the Farm to School produce with DoD one week in advance of the scheduled delivery to the warehouse (typically at least two weeks before the CE scheduled delivery date).

**14. If a CE does not currently participate in DoD Fresh can it join in January if funds become available?**

- A. CEs that have not utilized DoD Fresh can request to receive DoD Fresh funds but will need to update their SY20 FDP contract packet and provide delivery location and contact information to participate.

