

641—73.8(135) Food package. The authorized supplemental foods shall be prescribed for participants by a CPA in the contract agency from food packages outlined in 7 CFR 246.10 and in accordance with the following:

73.8(1) Prescription of foods. Food packages shall maintain a balance between cost and nutrition integrity. There are two components to this balance: (1) administrative adjustments by the department; and (2) nutrition tailoring by both the department and the CPA in the contract agencies.

a. Administrative adjustments include restrictions in the packaging methods, brands, sizes, types, and forms (but not quantities) of the federally allowable foods in order to establish the approved food list for the state. Administrative adjustments include decisions to eliminate more expensive brands or prohibit more costly food items allowed by regulations. Criteria for considering foods for inclusion in the approved food list are found in 73.8(3).

b. Nutrition tailoring includes changes or substitutions to food types, forms, and quantities in order to prescribe food packages that better meet the nutritional needs of participants. Tailoring is done to reduce quantities of foods based on nutritional needs, to accommodate participant preferences, to accommodate household conditions, such as lack of refrigeration or other special needs and problems of homeless or transient participants, and to recommend or prescribe specific forms of the allowable WIC foods based upon a participant's nutritional needs or goals.

73.8(2) Tailoring to meet individual nutritional needs. Food packages are individually tailored to meet the needs of specific participants according to USDA regulations and the Iowa WIC Policy and Procedure Manual.

73.8(3) Criteria for approving products for inclusion in the WIC food package.

a. A product shall meet the federal regulations governing the WIC food package.

b. Variety in the food package is encouraged to increase the likelihood of products being used and to allow participants to exercise responsibility in shopping.

c. Inquiries from food companies about new and continuing products can be submitted at any time. Food items that are required to be listed by brand on the approved food list will be reviewed and approved on a quarterly basis. Food items that are not required to be listed by brand on the approved food list will be reviewed and approved as they are received. The state reserves the right to change the food list more frequently if necessary.

d. Cereals shall meet federal guidelines for content and shall also meet the following conditions:

(1) The brand is carried by current Iowa WIC-approved vendors.

(2) The department reserves the right to limit the number of approved cereals for administrative efficiency.

e. Juices shall meet the federal guidelines for vitamin C content and all of the following conditions:

(1) Juices are 100 percent juice and contain no added sugar, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners.

(2) The brand is carried by current Iowa WIC-approved vendors.

f. The following conditions apply to dairy products:

(1) To qualify, brands of whole, 1%, or fat-free skim milk marketed in Iowa must contain or be fortified with vitamins A and D to meet the federal standards. The department reserves the right to disqualify brands which have a retail value of 115 percent or higher than the state average for this product.

(2) Fluid milk with added bacterial cultures or enzymes, including but not limited to sweet acidophilus or lactose-reduced milk, may qualify. Brands are approved by the department on a case-by-case basis.

(3) All brands of natural cheese designated in the USDA WIC regulations qualify. The cheese shall have no added flavors (e.g., smoke flavoring, peppers, wine).

(4) Yogurt shall meet federal guidelines for content and shall also meet the following conditions:

1. The brand or any private-label (store) brand is carried by current Iowa WIC-approved vendors.

2. Nonfat, lowfat, and whole yogurts cannot contain artificial sweeteners. No frozen yogurt, yogurt tubes, or drinkable yogurts are allowed.

g. All brands of packaged dried beans or peas are approved; however, no soup mixes and no dried beans or peas with added vegetables, fruits, meat, sugars, fats, or oils are allowed.

h. Peanut butter must meet federal guidelines. Brands may be either refrigerated or nonrefrigerated.

i. Eggs shall be fresh, Grade A large chicken eggs. Eggs which have a retail value of 115 percent or higher than the state average for this product may not be approved.

j. If a vendor offers specialty eggs for retail sale, the vendor shall maintain an inventory of conventional eggs for retail sale sufficient to meet federal and state requirements for participation in the WIC program.

k. Any brand of tuna or salmon qualifies if it is either water- or oil-packed, in cans or pouches, chunked, solid, or flaked. Fish packaged with other items such as crackers, relish or other flavorings may not be purchased. Albacore tuna is not allowed.

l. Commercial infant formula shall meet the following conditions:

(1) It is registered with the Food and Drug Administration as complying with the legal definition of infant formula.

(2) It complies with the calorie and iron content prescribed by the USDA.

(3) It is approved by the USDA for use in the WIC program.

(4) The product form and marketing approach are consistent with the promotion of good nutrition and education.

m. At least two whole grain options that meet federal guidelines will be provided.

n. Infant food fruits, vegetables and meats must meet the federal guidelines.

o. Fresh and frozen vegetables and fruits that meet federal guidelines will be available for purchase with cash-value benefits specifically for fruits and vegetables.

p. Soy beverages shall meet federal guidelines.

q. Tofu shall meet federal guidelines.

r. Products will be evaluated for use in the Iowa WIC program based on nutrient content, packaging, container size, labeling, availability to wholesale distributors, cost and participant preference. The state reserves the right to limit the number of foods, infant formulas, exempt infant formulas, and WIC-eligible nutritionals for the WIC-approved food list based on accessibility, availability, retail value of product, USDA recommendations, increased number of WIC participants, changes in appropriation of funds and administrative efficiency.

s. The approved food list provides more specifics on what is allowed or not allowed for each of the WIC-approved foods.

t. In addition to the criteria specified above, the department reserves the right to further restrict the number and types of brands of any products in order to contain the cost of the food package through competitive procurement of rebate contracts or other similar means.

u. The department reserves the right to discontinue specific brand names and products if the cost is 115 percent or more higher than the state average for that particular product.

v. If a group of food products within a food category from one manufacturer have similar names and package designs and some of the food products do not qualify, the department reserves the right to not approve those types that would otherwise qualify, to reduce the potential for confusion by retail vendors and participants.

w. The department reserves the right to make changes to the criteria for approving products for inclusion in the WIC food package.

x. The department reserves the right to add or delete products pursuant to federal regulations.

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