



# **FAQ: NSIP and Domestically Produced Food**

▶ **What does the Older Americans Act (OAA) say about the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) and domestically produced food?**

Section 311 of the OAA authorizes the Nutrition Service Incentive Program (NSIP) which provides grants to states, territories, and eligible tribal organizations to incentivize OAA senior nutrition programs to serve more meals. NSIP allocations may only be used to buy domestically produced foods that are a part of a meal.

In addition, Section 339 of the OAA encourages the use of locally grown foods in senior meal programs.

▶ **What is “domestically produced?”**

“Domestically produced” foods for senior nutrition programs are:

Food, beverages, and other food ingredients grown, processed and prepared in the United States, including its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands.

▶ **What are some easy ways to make sure NSIP funds are spent only on domestically produced foods?**

You can spend all your NSIP funds to purchase any of the items below up to the full amount of your NSIP award. That is an easy way to make sure NSIP funds are spent properly.

- Milk and bread produced domestically
- Local protein foods like beef, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese
- Local produce

▶ **How can I be sure food bought with NSIP funds is domestically produced food?**

- Work with vendors to source and document domestically produced foods.
- Verify origins of products on labels. See examples of what to look for below.

You can also choose to receive your NSIP grant as commodities (food) from the USDA, as these would already be identified as domestically produced items under USDA rules. The [USDA Food and Nutrition Service](#) lists State and Tribal Agencies to contact regarding USDA commodities.

**Pro Tip!**

- Include domestically produced requirements when writing RFPs and soliciting food bids
- Require foodservice partners to log lot numbers and origin of products

▶ **What are some common items that are typically accessible for purchase domestically? What are some common items that may be more difficult to purchase domestically?**

★ Common items usually available for purchase domestically
Dairy
Eggs
Beef
Poultry
Local produce
Breads

★ Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian traditional foods that are typically available for purchase domestically
Locally hunted or farmed animals Bison, Caribou, Venison Turkey Chicken Eggs
Locally caught marine products Fish Shellfish Freshwater fish (Walleye, sturgeon, trout, salmon)
Wild rice
Berries - salmon berries, blueberries, cloudberrries
Fiddlehead fern
Kalo
Beans - tepary beans, pinto beans
Squash
Corn
Potatoes

Common items that may be more difficult to purchase domestically (may depend on your location)
Fish
Shellfish
Some fruits, such as bananas or plantains
Culturally inclusive items that are imported into the United States Imported items found in local cultural grocery stores, including: Canned food Shelf stable food items

▶ **To find more examples of USDA commodities and foods** commonly found on USDA domestically produced food lists, organized by food group category, programs may also choose to review:

- [USDA Foods Available List for School Year 2022-2023 for Schools and Institutions](#)
- [USDA Foods Available List for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\) 2022](#)

► **What should I look for on labels?**

Check examples below for ways to make sure foods were produced or grown in the US. You can consider requiring foodservice partners to log lot numbers and origin of products for audit purposes.



► **How can I tell if a food is not domestically produced?**

Below are examples of foods that are not domestically produced and can not be purchased with NSIP funds.



## ► How can I use more locally grown foods and enter partnerships and contracts with local producers and providers of locally grown foods?

- Extension programs, [food hubs](#), and local farmers markets may serve as resources for locally grown foods. When exploring these partnerships, senior nutrition programs should work with partners to identify whether foods are locally produced or transported.
- Senior nutrition programs may consult local or Tribal food directories such as the [Local Food Directories | Agricultural Marketing Service](#) or the [Made/Produced by American Indians Directory | Intertribal Agriculture Council](#) to identify locally grown foods.

## ► For more information, please visit these links:

[Nutrition Services | ACL Administration for Community Living](#) – overview of the OAA Nutrition Program, includes purpose, performance and evaluation, eligibility, nutrition standards and federal grants (including NSIP allocations).

[Nutrition Services Incentive Program \(NSIP\) of the Older Americans Act \(OAA\) Guidance](#) – explains NSIP and NSIP requirements, as well as FY2022 ACL Title III Program, Reporting and Fiscal Updates.

[AMS Master Solicitation for Commodity Procurement](#) – explains USDA commodities bidding; pages 28 and 29 provide additional details of “U.S. Origin Product” and waivers for non-availability at fair and reasonable prices (aligns with senior nutrition program definition).

[Getting to Scale with Regional Food Hubs | USDA](#) – USDA blog post describing how the food hub infrastructure supports regional producers and consumers, with project examples.

[Local Food Directories | Agricultural Marketing Service](#) – use this directory to connect with local farms, farmers markets and food hubs.

[USDA Food Purchase Resources](#) – on this page, locate links to product-specific charts detailing USDA eligible vendors of domestically produced food items and qualified products under Agricultural Marketing Service Resources (USDA Vegetables, Fruit & Tree Nuts; USDA Dairy, Grain & Oilseeds; USDA Livestock, Poultry & Fish).

[USDA Foods Available List for School Year 2022-2023 for Schools and Institutions](#) – includes examples of the types of foods often found on USDA domestically produced food lists, organized by food group category.

[USDA Foods Available List for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\) 2022](#) – includes examples of the types of foods often found on USDA domestically produced food lists, organized by food group category.

### Pro Tip!

The most helpful item in this document is the definition of “U.S. Origin Product” and the language further explaining exceptions that are in the definition on pages 28-29. (This document also explains USDA commodities bidding, but most OAA programs don’t need those details. Don’t be overwhelmed.)

### Pro Tip!

Looking for vendors in your area that are already approved suppliers of domestically produced foods, and lists of products already approved by USDA? Use the links to the charts on this page.