

A comparison of the issues SNA submitted in its 11 page submission on the USDA proposed meal pattern regulation and comparison to the final regulation on the meal pattern.

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation	USDA compared with SNA position
Administrative Changes	CRE Frequency and Basis – SNA also recommends that USDA maintain the current one week menu analysis for the CRE review.	Done	Adopted
Administrative Changes	CRE Frequency and Basis – SNA recommends continuing to have reviews every 5 years and remain for lunch only.	CRE frequency and basis requirements were modified by Section 207 of HFFKA. USDA could not change.	Neutral
Administrative Changes	Maintenance of Nutrient Standard Menu Planning – SNA recommends that SFAs currently using nutrient standard menu planning be allowed to apply for a waiver that will allow them to continue using this menu planning option.	Not done	Did Not Adopt
Administrative Changes	Need for Training and Documentation Materials Prior to Meal Pattern Implementation – SNA strongly recommends that training and documentation materials, including revised Food Guides, be provided by USDA a minimum of one year prior to implementation of this meal pattern.	Guidance will be provided, but there will not be a full year before implementation	Adopted
Alternative State Standards	SNA does not support states imposing more restrictive meal components and nutritional requirements.	Not Addressed	Neutral
Conditions for Additional 6 Cents Reimbursement	SNA recommends that the Department provide some preliminary guidance or information on this matter as soon as possible to help both State Agencies and SFAs responsibly prepare for meeting the new meal standards	FNS will be providing	Adopted
Cost Concerns	Breakfast - SNA recommends that implementation of the revised breakfast meal pattern requirements be delayed until additional funding is available to help offset these costs.	Breakfast requirements delayed for one year	Adopted
Cost Concerns	Logistical Challenges - There are several logistical challenges that could pose a barrier to implementation. It will take time and additional funds to make these changes.	FNS recommends using USDA Foods to meet cost and logistical challenges until supplies increase in local areas.	Adopted

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation	USDA compared with SNA position
Food Service Management Companies (FSMCs)	SNA urges that the Department refrain from making what may be misinterpreted as an endorsement or suggestion for the retaining of FSMCs. SNA renews its request that the Department provide meaningful guidance and oversight regarding FSMC operations, and, to ensure the integrity of school meal programs, develop a model contract that may be used if an FSMC be retained.	Did delete reference to "beneficial impact of proposed rule" to FSMCs.	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	Breakfast in the Classroom - For those schools that offer breakfast in the classroom, SNA is concerned that the proposed requirement to offer 1 cup of fruit/vegetable could result in increased costs and logistical issues in serving.	Lesser FAV volume requirement responds to concern.	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	Crediting of Fruit and Grain Components - SNA supports the recognition of fruit and grain components in items such as crisps and cobblers using volume as the measure.	Crisps and Cobblers not referenced in final rule.	Neutral
Fruits and Vegetables	Crediting of Tomato Paste - SNA urges continuing current tomato paste crediting as outlined in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs at pages 2-3: "Vegetable and fruit concentrates are allowed to be credited on an "as if single-strength reconstituted basis" rather than on the actual volume as served."	Done	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	Juice Served at Lunch - SNA recommends that at lunch, just as at breakfast, half of fruit offered per week may be 100% fruit and/or vegetable juice with a serving of 100% fruit or vegetable juice limited to no more than 4 fl. ounces per meal.	Appears to have been done	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	Juice vs. Milk - SNA is also concerned that there may be unintended results in offering juice daily due to its relatively low cost and the possibility that children might take juice instead of milk.	Not Addressed	Neutral

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation	USDA compared with SNA position
Fruits and Vegetables	Local Foods - SNA recommends that some latitude be given for schools to have the flexibility to use their commodity dollars to purchase local fruits and vegetables to help further the “Know Your Farmer Know Your Food” initiative and to bring more local products into our school meal programs.	Since publication of the proposed rule, FNS has proposed pilot projects in Florida and Michigan.	Pilot in Progress
Fruits and Vegetables	Portion Size - SNA supports the provision requiring a fruit or vegetable on the lunch tray, but recommends that only a ½ cup serving be required.	Done	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	SNA also recommends that the final rule clarify the serving equivalency of fresh fruit.	Done	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	SNA recommends that the breakfast & lunch meal pattern tables be modified to indicate “servings” rather than “cups.”	Final rule changes serving requirement from one cup to one-half cup in order for the meal to be reimbursable.	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	SNA recommends that the Department take into account the impact of increasing fruits and vegetables on rural areas and states such as Alaska where there could be challenges on the true availability of “fresh” produce as well as the price fluctuations, variety and product availability during the winter months.	Schools may meet the fruit component at lunch and breakfast by offering fruit that is fresh; canned in fruit juice, water, or light syrup; frozen without added sugar, or dried. May also use USDA foods.	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	SNA recommends that the final rule provide direction for the Crediting of food served at Salad Bars and Self-Serve areas.	The Department would like to emphasize that schools may continue to use salad bars to enhance the variety of vegetables in the school menu. See FNS memorandum SP 02-2010 –	Adopted
Fruits and Vegetables	SNA recommends that the rule clearly identify that the 1 cup fruit and/or vegetable component at breakfast equals 2 – ½ cup servings, and that only a single ½ cup serving be required on the tray in order for the breakfast to qualify for reimbursement.	Done	Adopted

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation	USDA compared with SNA position
Fruits and Vegetables	Starchy Vegetables – SNA also recommends that the serving sizes of starchy vegetables should not exceed ½ cup and that there should be no second servings of potato products allowed.	Starchy vegetables not limited, and no reference to second servings.	Neutral
Fruits and Vegetables	Starchy Vegetables – SNA recommends that, if the Department does not follow the encouragement standard of the HealthierUS School Challenge, starchy vegetables for K-5 be increased to 2 cups per week and that there be no restrictions on starchy vegetables for grades 6-12.	Starchy vegetable ok, but only after other vegetable serving requirements have been met.	Adopted
Implementation Date	Delay the mandatory implementation of the rule until school year 2013-14 - encourage that the revised meal patterns be implemented voluntarily prior to that date.	Breakfast delayed.	Adopted
Meat/Meat Alternates	Processed Meats - SNA is concerned that discouraging the use of processed meats is unnecessary and unduly restrictive.	Not in Final Rule.	Adopted
Meat/Meat Alternates	Tofu - SNA encourages the Department to develop a standard definition for tofu which will help members to respond in a positive way to our students and parents request for vegetarian and vegan protein options.	Done	Adopted
Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast	Serving Size - SNA recommends that the Department allow weekly averaging of the meat/meat alternate.	The final rule does not require a daily meat/meat alternate in the SBP. Menu planners may offer a meat/meat alternate in place of grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met.	Adopted
Milk	Availability - SNA is concerned that this product mix is not yet sufficiently available in all regions of the country. SNA urges the Department to recognize these regional limitations, and to work with SFAs regarding the implementation of this requirement.	Nutrition requirements for fluid milk were changed by Section 202 of HRFKA. USDA could not change.	Neutral
Nature of Rule	Rule should be issued as an interim final rule with a comment period following adoption of its implementation.	Not done	Did Not Adopt
Offer vs. Serve	Minimum number of items offered - SNA recommends that USDA specify the minimum number of items that must be offered, as it already states the minimum number of items that must be served.	Meal pattern specifies minimums per day.	Adopted

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation	USDA compared with SNA position
Offer vs. Serve	Source of selection - SNA recommends that students should be able to select from a combination of fruits and vegetables to equal a required serving. This will take into account salad bars and self-serve.	Greater flexibility on FAV.	Adopted
Plate Waste Concerns	SNA urges the Department to provide oversight and monitoring of what changes are working and what are not working as part of the implementation of the final rule.	Serving sizes modified to respond to plate waste concerns.	Adopted
Saturated Fats	Standard - SNA supports retaining the current standard of less than 10% of calories from saturated fat, as recommended by the IOM, the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.	Implements the proposed saturated fat standard, which is the same as the restriction currently in place in the NSLP and SBP.	Adopted
Sodium	Implementation Time - Any changes in sodium standards should be based on a total of ten years from the date of the rule's implementation as proposed to correspond to the IOM ten year program.	Done	Adopted
Sodium	Interim Targets - SNA supports the IOM alternative for reaching sodium targets over ten years, with intermediate targets set for every 2 years coupled with ongoing assessments of progress and effects of the actions on student participation rates, food cost, safety, and food service operations to determine a reasonable target for the next period, as recommended by IOM in its report "School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children."	Done - second target date delayed and commitment to do evaluation before implementation	Adopted
Sodium	Naturally Occurring Sodium – SNA believes that allowance should be made for naturally occurring sodium, including revising sodium targets to compensate for naturally occurring sodium.	Not discussed	Neutral
Sodium	Near Term Challenges - SNA is concerned that achieving the sodium requirements in the near term will pose a challenge due to a reliance on canned items for certain geographic areas in the United States.	Sodium standard modified - urge use of USDA foods to meet standards	Adopted
Sodium	Nutrient Analysis Needed to Assess Sodium Levels - In the absence of conducting a regular nutrient analysis it will be virtually impossible for SFAs to assess how close they are to meeting the sodium requirements.	Agree to do an analysis before further sodium changes	Adopted

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation	USDA compared with SNA position
Sodium	Product availability and acceptability – SFAs traditionally order and sample products well in advance of a new school year. SNA is concerned that sufficient lead time for product development, testing, menu development, sampling, and procurement changes need to be provided so that SFAs can make the adjustments necessary to ensure program compliance, student acceptance and continued participation in school meal programs.	Urge use of USDA foods; slow future sodium standards	Adopted
USDA Foods	SNA recommends that the Department provide clear guidance regarding the use of remaining commodity foods inventory as the new meal standards are implemented. SNA also has concerns regarding artificial sweeteners and requests that they not be allowed in USDA Foods.	Not addressed, but further guidance will be forthcoming.	Adopted
Whole Grains	Implementation - SNA recommends that implementation of the whole grain requirement be delayed until SY 13-14 based on the final rule including the whole grain rich definition and any changes to the Grain/Bread Instructions. Future delayed implementation could be necessary if the final rule does not include the necessary guidance.	Defines whole grains; recommends use of USDA foods until product availability increases. For the NSLP, the whole grain requirement takes effect upon implementation of the rule. In SY 2012-2013 and SY 2013-2014 whole grain-rich products must make up half of all grain products offered to students. During this time only, refined-grain foods that are enriched may be included in the lunch menu. In SY 2014-2015 and beyond, schools must offer only whole grain-rich products. In the SBP, schools must offer the weekly grain ranges and half of the grains as whole grain-rich beginning July 1, 2013. All grains offered in the SBP must be whole grain-rich in SY 2014-2015 and beyond.	Adopted

Recommendations made as part of SNA's submission to the proposed meal pattern regulation – SNA felt that this should be addressed even though they were not in the proposed regulations.

Topic	SNA Recommendation	USDA Action - Final Meal Pattern Regulation
Adequate Meal Time	SNA recommends that the Department partner with the Department of Education to study, issue and periodically update “best practices” guidelines for school meal service to assist schools in improving their meal environment.	Not addressed
Cost Concerns	Need for Uniformity to Help Contain Costs – SNA recommends that USDA establish specific written criteria to ensure that all states administer and adhere to all program requirements uniformly.	Not Addressed
Evaluation of Meal Pattern Changes	SNA recommends that the proposed rule be amended to include a clear statement regarding how the revised meal pattern will be evaluated.	Not Addressed
Fruits and Vegetables	SNA recommends that no deep-fried heating preparation method be allowed for any vegetable components.	Not Addressed
Home Consumption Nutrition Education	SNA recommends that revised meal standards be coupled with a broader USDA-sponsored healthier home consumption nutrition education program.	Not Addressed
Innovative ingredients	The Department should provide a separate assessment of which innovative foods and food ingredients offer new opportunities, and which innovative foods and ingredients are particularly successful in securing student participation.	Not Addressed
Offer vs. Serve	Requirement - SNA recommends that offer vs. serve should be required at all grade levels.	Senior high schools (as defined by the State educational agency) must participate in offer versus serve. Schools below the senior high level may participate in offer versus serve at the discretion of the school food authority.
Offer vs. Serve	Waiver - SNA recommends that USDA should allow SFAs to apply for a waiver for modified meal plans for non-traditional meal settings.	Not Addressed
Student Acceptability and Participation Impact	SNA recommends that the Department establishes a baseline of school meal participation and monitor student acceptability and participation as the revised meal pattern is implemented.	Not Addressed
Condiments	SNA recommends clarification regarding the treatment of condiments under the new meal patterns.	Not Addressed