TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

3E'S OF HEALTHY LIVING
EDUCATION, EXERCISE AND EATING RIGHT

October 2026 Monthly Newsletter

Join Us for the October School Call!

The **Monthly School Call meetings will return to Zoom**, starting this month! Only a single registration will be required to join the ongoing monthly School Call series. Once registered, simply click the link up to 15 minutes before the call and be prepared to receive TDA updates and ask questions.

The invitation link for each month will be available on:

• The **SquareMeals homepage** under "**Quick Links**"

• The **Program Year Calendar page** under the **October table**

• The **NSLP Resources page** on SquareMeals under the "**Webinars**" section towards the bottom of the page.

Click here to **register for the Monthly School Call series**. This is a one-time registration and will allow you to join the School Calls every month.

NSLP-USDA Foods Inventory and Contract Management

Ensure you are organizing your current storage space and monitoring your inventory in conjunction with your menu planning. If you have any questions regarding your menus and/or inventory, contact your Education Service Center (ESC) representative.

As a reminder, keep your USDA Foods inventory levels below 6 months on hand (MOH) to maintain compliance with the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for SY27. Monitor your Best-If-Used-By Dates, Expiration Dates, and Pack Dates to maintain optimal inventory quality.

Ensure all invoices are paid within 30 days of receiving your inventory/private storage fees.

TDA has been reviewing the SY27 Private Storage reports from all FDP Regions and has instructed State Contracted Warehouses to force-ship inventory that has been sitting for over 45 days to your sites. Please place your delivery orders accordingly.

Final Rule Memorandum: Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in Child Nutrition Programs

On September 30, 2026, USDA Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) released SP11-2026, CACFP 05-2026, SFSP 05-2026, Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in the Child Nutrition Programs. This memorandum provides information on the direct final rule published by FNA on September 9, 2026, titled, Simplified Geographic Preference Procurement in Child Nutrition Programs (91 FR 57245) effective November 9, 2026.

Now Available! Revised Professional Standards Resources

Team Nutrition recently revised three Professional Standards resources which support school nutrition professionals as they successfully operate the National School Lunch Program NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). The revised resources are the Summary of Professional Standards Flyer, the Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals, and the Professional Standards Training Reward Badges packet.

Click the headline title to view the **full article**.

Promoting Real Food in Child Nutrition Programs

USDA's Team Nutrition is pleased to announce the release of nutrition education and training resources designed to help Child Nutrition Program operators promote the clear, common-sense message of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030: Eat real food.

These resources focus on eating whole, nutrient-dense foods. These foods include protein foods, dairy, healthy fats, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Additionally, it highlights the importance of limiting the intake of highly processed foods, added sugars, and refined carbohydrates.

Click the headline title to view the **full article**.

Midweek Webinar Series - New Session Added!

The Nuts and Bolts of Processing
November 4, 2026 | 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. (Central Time) via Microsoft Teams Webinar
Register Here: The Nuts and Bolts of Processing

Click the headline title to view the **full article**.

Direct Certification

All school food authorities (SFAs), regardless of size and counting and claiming methods (including CEP and Provision 2), are required to use Texas-ELMS to conduct Direct Certification (DC) matching.
• Before school begins,
• Once a month when school is in session, and
• With new student enrollment, as appropriate.

Please refer to the Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM), Sections 4 and 5, for more information.

Attachment B Uploads

Attachment B Uploads opened in TX-UNPS on July 1, 2026, and close on October 31, 2026.

Click here to view the **full article**.

School Year 2026-2027 Verification Reporting Timeline

The **School Year 2026-2027 Verification Reporting timeline** has been released.

Buy American Survey of Purchases Made During School Year 2025-2026

TDA has just released the Buy American Survey of Purchases Made During School Year 2025-2026. TDA is seeking input from School Food Authorities (SFAs) about their non-domestic purchases made during SY 2025-2026 so that TDA can assess the number of SFAs that may be eligible for an accommodation based on non-domestic purchases exceeding the 10% threshold made in SY 2025-26.

Click the headline title to view the **full article**.

USDA Foods Ordering Updates

October's important USDA Foods updates for schools include FFAVORS reminders, delayed materials, and Squaremeals resources, along with ESC support.

Click the headline title to view the **full article.**

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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