

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NATIONAL SCHOOL

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

Lunch Program

March 2026 Monthly Newsletter

[Get Ready for MegaCon 2026!](#)

Commissioner Sid Miller and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) invite you to attend MegaCon 2026 — in Waco, Texas, April 6–8, 2026.

With a new location, a new layout, and a new emphasis on networking with Texas agricultural producers, MegaCon 2026 brings new connections and new opportunities for a Texas-sized Farm Fresh experience.

Organizations participating in the TDA-administered federal nutrition programs and TDA's Farm Fresh initiatives will join us for three days of collaboration, learning, and engagement.

Make plans now to connect with TDA and your colleagues from across the state! For registration details and access to group GSA hotel rates, please visit the [official MegaCon website](#).

Click the headline to view the [full article](#).

[FRESH TRAYS Networking Event](#)

TDA and Texas Agrilife have partnered to implement FRESH TRAYS, a grant-funded training program connecting school nutrition and local agricultural producers. You are invited to join a FRESH TRAYS networking event on March 25 in College Station. You will meet producers from the area interested in selling their products to local school districts. Find out more [here](#).

[FRESH TRAYS Local Procurement Training](#)

This advanced training is designed for child nutrition operators participating in the National School Lunch

Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Meals Program (SMP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) who are interested in purchasing local foods and supporting Texas agriculture. This in-person training will be held at your Education Service Centers - Visit [SquareMeals](#) for upcoming trainings.

CEP Reporting Reminder Due March 20, 2026

All CEs must complete in TX-UNPS the CEP Site Eligibility for School year 2025-26 (commonly called the CEP List) annually.

The CEP list reporting screen in TX-UNPS can be found by first navigating to the Applications tab. Once in the Applications tab, select Community Eligibility Provision. Select Add under the Action column for School year 2025-2026 located within the CEP Site List.

Please ensure accurate data entry as the data will have a direct impact on claims for those that participate in CEP. The data entered is also reported to USDA and the Public.

USDA Foods Ordering Updates

Program Year 2026-2027

The PY27 WBSCM Catalog is closed as of Friday, February 27, 2026.

Click the headline title to view the [full article](#).

New Guidance and Resources on Incorporating Local Beef into Meals

USDA Food and Nutrition Service has issued new memo SP 03-2026, CACFP 02-2026, SFSP 02-2026, Incorporating Local Beef into Child Nutrition Program Meals, which provides helpful resources and strategies for Child Nutrition Program (CNP) operators and ranchers to incorporate local beef into meals. Resource topics cover procurement, funding resources, food safety, crediting, and technical assistance contacts from the Farm to School Program.

The full memo can be found [here](#).

2026 Summer Non-Congregate Feeding Webinar Now Available!

On February 18, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) hosted the Summer 2026 Rural Non-Congregate Feeding Program Overview webinar, which covered the requirements, flexibilities, updates, and resources associated with rural non-congregate feeding during Summer 2026. This presentation and the accompanying presentation slides are now available for viewing on the [Summer Non-Congregate Feeding Program page of SquareMeals](#).

USDA Foods for Further Processing

ROUTINELY CHECK ACCOUNT BALANCES

Every month, Recipient Agencies should check their processing end balances in the tracking systems - [Processor Link](#) and [K12Foodservice](#). Routinely checking balances can ensure that pounds are being drawn down properly, that credit for USDA value has been applied, that transfers have been posted, and that the correct end products are being ordered. If you do not have access to the tracking systems, contact your local [Education Service Center](#) for technical support.

ANNUAL TRANSFER EXERCISE

[Form H4529.1- Authorization to Transfer USDA Foods](#)

Transfers to and from the state account and school-to-school transfers are being conducted from January to April 30, 2026. RAs meeting the transfer criteria of balances being one month or less on hand can request up to three months of inventory, according to their average monthly usage. State account pounds are not always available.

Review your account balances in the tracking systems and check the [State Account Balances](#) before requesting transfers

[Annual NSLP Financial Report](#)

The Annual NSLP Financial Report opens on January 5, 2026, and closes March 27, 2026. School food authorities (SFAs) will use data from school year 2024-2025 to complete this report.

The Annual NSLP Financial Report and resources can be found [here](#).

If the Annual NSLP Financial Report identifies an excess fund balance of the SFA's six-month average operating expenses, the SFA must complete an Excess Net Cash Resource Plan and submit to School.Operations@TexasAgriculture.gov.

The Excess Net Cash Resource Plan can be found [here](#).

[USDA Releases New Guidance on New Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030](#)

On January 7, 2026, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 (Guidelines). USDA strongly encourages child nutrition program operators to familiarize themselves with the key recommendations and consider how these Guidelines can be incorporated into program meals and snacks to promote healthy outcomes and healthy families.

Click the headline to view the [full article](#).

[Join Us for the March TANS Talk!](#)

[Mark your calendar for Thursday, March 12 from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. \(CDT\)!](#)

TANS Talk is an office hours session that will allow Organizations (formally known as CEs) to review TANS related updates. We are excited to share all of the new updates about this platform and answer any questions.

How to Participate in TANS Talk:

Use this [TANS Talk Feedback Form](#) to submit any TANS questions you would like to see reviewed during the call. We will cover questions received at least 48 hours prior to the call, allowing our team time to prepare for the meeting. Visit the [TANS homepage](#) and [Resources page](#) for access to past TANS Talks, updates, trainings, and more.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



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