

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

USDA COMMITMENT TO SCHOOL MEALS
May 1, 2017

By the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS schools across the Nation are committed to serving healthy and appealing school meals, giving millions of children the opportunity to enjoy foods that contribute to a nutritious diet; and

WHEREAS schools have worked diligently to overcome operational challenges in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs created by meeting sodium, whole grain-rich, and milk requirements; and

WHEREAS schools need flexibility in menu planning so they can serve nutritious and appealing meals and encourage student participation in the meal programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, because States need continued flexibility in serving whole grain-rich foods in school meals, I, Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture, direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin the regulatory process to provide schools with additional options in regard to the serving of whole grains. While the process is underway, I will continue to provide States the authority to grant exemptions to schools experiencing hardship in obtaining whole grain-rich products acceptable to students, for any type of grains on the menu for school year 2017–2018.

Additionally, schools that meet sodium Target I for school years 2017–2020 will be considered compliant with USDA sodium requirements. The Department will take all necessary regulatory actions to implement this change. I am also dedicating USDA resources to provide significant technical assistance to schools as they continue to develop menus that are healthy and appealing to students.

Because milk is a critical component of school meals, and providing schools with the discretion to serve flavored, 1 percent fat milk provides more options for students selecting milk as part of their lunch or breakfast, I am directing USDA to begin the regulatory process to provide that discretion to schools. In addition, I am committed to providing USDA resources for technical assistance during implementation of the new regulations to ensure that schools may use this option effectively.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 1st day of May 2017, the two-hundred forty-first year of the Independence of the United States of America.

SONNY PERDUE
Secretary