

2024 OSEC Kosher and Halal Prospective Vendor Outreach Meeting

Frequently Asked Questions

November 4, 2024

Q1: What are some examples of market research information that will inform AMS of the need for additional halal products (proteins specifically)? Follow-up: Is this something that we can request from the relevant specialist?

A: AMS Commodity Procurement Program (CPP) conducts market research in a few different methods. These methods may include social media, notice to trade, Request for Information letters (RFI), GovDelivery notification, etc. These market research attempts vary based on product procurement needs. Vendors can request items for FNS/CPP review to us directly, or via their prospective program areas, just want to emphasize that procurement is based on recipient demand and all requests will be reviewed but are not guaranteed to be procured. Any questions or concerns please contact the Nutrition Specification and Management (NSMD) team at CPPNPDNutrition@usda.gov.

Q2: AMS said that in order to get new products added to the list, they would need evidence of market demand for the new products. What kind of information should be submitted in order to show there is that demand? e.g., letters from state governments? School boards? charitable organizations? Citizen petitions? Follow-up: Are we talking about school boards sending letters of support?

A: FNS encourages feedback from program recipients, including states, ITOs, school districts, food banks, food pantries, and other program participants. These requests can be shared with USDA at USDAFoods@usda.gov.

For vendors seeking to have a new product added to one or more program's [USDA Foods Available List](#), there must be documented demand for the product in a similar program setting. To demonstrate documented demand, the supplying vendor must provide actual annual sales volumes of the product in truckload quantities, broken out by state and by recipient (i.e., schools and food banks). Verbal or written confirmation of interest or intent to order by recipients is not sufficient to demonstrate demand.

Additional information regarding the minimum criteria for a new product to be considered can be found on the [How to Get Your Product Considered for USDA Foods](#) website under [USDA Foods Minimum Criteria](#).

Several products have already been identified as in demand by program recipients including:

- Kosher certified beef
- Kosher certified chicken
- Halal certified beef
- Halal certified chicken
- Kosher certified frozen vegetables (green peas, corn, mixed vegetables)
- Kosher certified canned vegetables (carrots, mixed vegetables, cream style corn, green peas)
- BJE kosher certified* vegetable oil (peanut and soybean oil free)
- BJE kosher certified* falafel balls
- BJE kosher certified* yogurt
- BJE kosher certified* fish sticks

*The Board of Jewish Education of Greater NY (BJENY) Kosher Resource outlines the BJE kosher certification requirements for USDA Foods purchased for BJENY schools.

FNS welcomes vendors that supply these products to submit product information for consideration to USDAFoods@usda.gov.

Q3: Are distributor shipments sufficient evidence of demand? Producers typically sell schools through a two-step route to market, so having operator purchase data is a challenging requirement to meet.

A: Yes, distributor shipments are sufficient evidence of demand and should be included in the overall actual annual sales volumes for a particular product.

Q4: How is international demand for programs such as USAID determined? Nutrient density of the product and malnutrition issues addressed?

A: Demand for USAID Title II commodities is determined by our implementing partners such as WFP, UNICEF and the Private Voluntary Organizations. They conduct needs assessments in the regions where they are proposing to work and then they submit a proposal to us that includes the list of culturally appropriate commodities that they would like to program. The proposal will include a list of targeted beneficiaries and what their caloric and nutritional needs are (based on SPHERE Standards). That is how the ration size and composition is determined. Sometimes, the implementing partner doesn't program a full ration. In other words, their goal may only be to supplement and not provide for all of a beneficiary's food aid needs. An example of this would be a household that receives Ready-to-Use Supplemental Foods (RUSF) or Super Cereal Plus for very young children only.

Under Title II, the only food aid commodities that USAID provides in-kind that contain dairy are the Ready-To-Use Food (RUF) products. They are halal-certified but contain no markings on the packaging.

Q5: What constitutes halal produce? Like no GMO? Halal doesn't seem to be something we identify for produce.

A: Fresh produce is generally considered halal (permissible) for consumption. When produce goes through a canning, preserving or processing may require a halal certification to ensure supply chain and ingredient integrity.