

Reinforcing the Nutritional Value of Potatoes in Federal Policies



ACTION REQUESTED

- ✓ The 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans must recognize what we all know: potatoes are a vegetable.
- ✓ Congress must continue to allow equal access for potatoes in federal school meals regulations through the appropriations process.
- ✓ The Administration should eliminate provisions in the School Meals Proposed Rule that classify potatoes differently than other vegetables.
- ✓ Ask your House and Senate members to sign on to the Congressional letter to Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Becerra.

The 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans must recognize what we all know: potatoes are a vegetable.

As the 2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) process has begun, the Administration posed a question to the Advisory Committee whether potatoes should be a vegetable or a grain. The Committee must reflect the overwhelming science-based determination that potatoes are a vegetable and consumption should be encouraged as they are nutritionally valuable, flexible and low cost.

The National Potato Council recognizes that certain activist voices will be extremely loud during this process and intend to place burdens on potatoes and/or attempt to reclassify America's favorite vegetable into another category entirely (grains). Such efforts have no basis in science, raise costs for consumers, and further burden already-expensive federal nutrition programs with huge new costs. Those costly, misleading and unscientific efforts should be rejected by the DGAs and all federal policymakers outright.

The House and Senate have put together letters to USDA and HHS that oppose the reclassification of potatoes as a vegetable or the swapping of potatoes for grains. Please ask your members of Congress to sign on to these letters.

Congress must continue to allow equal access for potatoes in federal school meals regulations through the appropriations process.

For seven years, a bipartisan provision has been included in every fiscal year's enacted Agriculture Appropriations Bill that prevents USDA from enforcing limitations on potatoes in accessing the school breakfast program. While the regulations are being reconsidered, they still propose to limit potatoes in support of other vegetables and do not reflect current science.

Congress has appropriately stepped in and prevented the regulations from being enforced, as they raise costs on the federal government and burden individual school districts in their daily attempts to comply with overly-complicated mandates for school meals. Potatoes should be an option for those school meals professionals in constructing school breakfasts that kids will consume.

This appropriations provision must continue to be maintained and/or updated as school meals regulations evolve.

➤ OVER



The Administration should eliminate provisions in the School Meals Proposed Rule that classify potatoes differently than other vegetables.

In February 2023, USDA released a proposed rule to update federal school meals regulations. This proposed rule does allow greater access for potatoes in school breakfasts than the prior overt limitations but continues to restrict potatoes from being served in school breakfasts all five days of the week.



The proposed rule continues to classify potatoes (via the “starchy vegetable” category) as materially different than other vegetables. Due to this inaccurate difference, the proposed requires that other vegetables are offered first before potatoes can be served two times in a row.

There is no nutrition science to support this limitation and the reference data that USDA utilizes as justification is nearly a decade old. School meal operators should be able to choose any vegetable that they believe will be accepted by children.

The National Potato Council strongly urges that potatoes be considered as equivalent with other vegetables. Additionally, we encourage Congress to maintain and enhance the appropriations provision to ensure that current AND future regulations do not constrain potato access to the school meals programs.

