

# Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CN Labeling Program is a voluntary federal labeling program for the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. It provides food manufacturers the option to include a standardized food crediting statement on their product labels. The USDA must approve labels prior to use and manufacturers must have quality control procedures and inspection oversight that meet USDA requirements. All manufacturers participating in the CN Labeling Program must have a quality control program approved by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

There is no federal requirement that manufacturers make CN labeled products or that schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs purchase foods with CN labels. Purchasing decisions are at the discretion of the local school food authority. If a school or institution requires a CN labeled product, this must be clearly stated in their local purchasing specifications.

## Contents of CN Labels

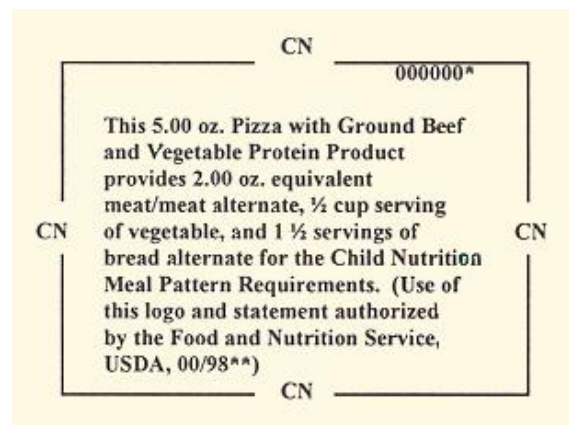
A CN label statement clearly identifies the contribution of a commercial product toward the USDA meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA's evaluation of the product's formulation. Manufacturers state this contribution on their labels, for example: "One serving provides 2 ounces of meat/meat alternate and ¼ cup of vegetable/fruit." CN labeling provides school nutrition programs with a warranty that the product contributes to the meal pattern requirements as printed on the label.

CN labels are available only for main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls and breaded fish portions. The CN label will also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products, for example:

- CN labeled pizza may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates, grains and vegetables components; and
- CN labeled breaded chicken nuggets may list contributions to the meat/meat alternates and grains components.

The CN label will be found on the actual product packaging and will look like the label on the right. A CN label will always contain the following:

- the CN logo, which is a distinct border;
- the meal pattern contribution statement;
- a six-digit product identification number;
- the USDA authorization; and
- the month and year of approval.



The USDA does not allow manufacturers to place the CN label on a fact sheet or any other product information. To document a product's compliance with the meal pattern requirements, schools must have an original CN label from the product package.



# Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, continued

## Revisions for Vegetable Subgroups and Whole Grain-rich Foods

The USDA is updating CN labels to be consistent with the new meal patterns for lunch and breakfast required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296). CN labels will include the five vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), starchy and other) and the whole grain-rich contribution to the grains component. The USDA is issuing temporary approvals expiring June 30, 2014, for CN label applications containing crediting for grains that are not whole grain-rich. These claims will continue to report “provides X servings of bread or bread alternate” so that program operators can distinguish between whole grain-rich claims and claims for grains that are not whole grain-rich.

Products containing both whole grain-rich and non-whole grain-rich claims, such as an enriched breaded chicken pattie on a whole grain-rich sandwich bun, will use both the terms “grains” for whole grain-rich items and “bread or bread alternate” for grains that are not whole grain-rich. These products will also receive temporary approvals from the USDA that expire on June 30, 2014.

The CN label on the right demonstrates the changes to the crediting statements. This sample product contributes toward three vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange and other) and meets the whole grain-rich criteria.



## Resources

### CN Labeling

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/cnlabeling/default.htm>

New link for Crediting on ODE Webpage

For more Information, contact:  
**Oregon Department of Education**  
**Child Nutrition Programs**

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Do we need to add non-discrimination statement?



