



United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

May 17, 1995

Dear Software Industry Executive:

In January 1994, the first release of the National Nutrient Database for Child Nutrition Programs, the CNP system components and file format document, and the SFSSS specifications and functional requirements document was made available to computer software companies. Technical assistance and guidance was provided for developing computer programs capable of performing the fundamental tasks of Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP). The documents provide important information about the structural and operational aspects of the National Database for Child Nutrition Programs, and how it needs to be incorporated into nutrient analysis software systems capable of Nutrient Standard Menu Planning.

During the past several months, USDA has evaluated many software programs submitted for approval for NSMP. As of May 1995, three software packages have been approved for NSMP (SNAP, CAFS, NUTRIKIDS).

The testing process, conducted by the software evaluation team at the National Agricultural Library, has revealed that some additional information may be necessary to assist you in the development of software that meets the requirements of NSMP. As a result, a supplement was developed to provide some clarity and definition of issues and common problem areas encountered by the software industry. It is intended that this information will provide further guidance for developing a NSMP computer program that can be approved by USDA.

This supplement document provides detailed information about the file structure of the National Nutrient Database for Child Nutrition Programs and the importance of maintaining the structural integrity of this relational database in your development of a software system. Food categories and nutrients are defined. Food includes and subcodes are discussed to illustrate the categorization and relationship of similar foods by measure, weight, and nutrient composition. Food measures and weights are outlined to show the relationship of the food codes to common measures and weights. The information about the food buying guide and food buying guide link files are presented to demonstrate the importance of providing the program user access to purchase and yield information for foods in the database, during the recipe development process. Guidelines for incorporating nutrient data from local sources (schools, industry) are also discussed; correct data entry is essential for accurate nutrient analysis in NSMP. And, the procedure for automating the calculation of moisture and fat changes in the preparation of processed foods is outlined and presented with examples.

We hope that this information will be helpful to you. Please feel free to phone Renee Prioleau at (703) 305-2556, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Vogel
Acting Director
Nutrition and Technical Services Division

Enclosures

Note: This document is document #16 in the packet sent to software developers by FNS. The original letter was signed by Ronald J. Vogel. Word version of this document was created May 2007. The name of the National Nutrient Database for Child Nutrition Programs (NNDCNP or NND-CNP) was changed to the Child Nutrition Database (CN Database).