



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Dear Software Developers:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) would like to inform you of several changes to the Child Nutrition (CN) Database which will have an impact on USDA-approved software. Additionally, FNS would like to take this opportunity to point out a decision made during the October 7, 1999, Software Vendor Meeting regarding Child Nutrition Program (CNP) codes to clarify how food items from the CN Database marked with a "d" should be handled, and to differentiate between data containing zeros versus missing data.

Changes Affecting USDA-Approved Software

1. FNS has completed the revisions to the *USDA Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs*. If your software program incorporates these recipes as recipes with ingredients and preparation instructions, your software product will need to be updated to include the new and revised USDA Recipes or remove them altogether. You may access these recipes from the following URL:
http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/school_recipe_index_alpha.html
2. Release 10 of the CN Database (CN10) is scheduled for March 2006. This release will include the addition of trans fat as an optional nutrient that manufacturers can provide for monitoring purposes. The Standard Reference is already including trans fat data whenever available. At this time, there is no nutrient standard established by the Child Nutrition Programs for trans fat.
3. The removal of vitamin A data in Retinol Equivalents (RE) from the CN Database has been delayed until further notice, pending the change in the regulation regarding nutrient standards for Child Nutrition Programs.

CNP Codes 900,000 through 999,999

It was determined at the Software Vendor Meeting, held on October 7, 1999, that USDA will reserve CNP codes 900,000 through 999,999 for local input. This range was chosen so that locally added data would not be overwritten or be required to change the CNP code. If the data in the CN Database reach the 900,000 range, FNS will increase the data field to seven digits and leave the designated range for local input undisturbed. The letter to the software industry executives outlining the vendor meeting and the meeting minutes have been enclosed for your reference. Please ensure that your software utilizes the designated range of 900,000 – 999,999 for all locally added data. (Programs that require the user to set up a separate "working" or "inventory" database may not need to follow this numbering system.)

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CN Database Items with Status of “d”

The status field of the CN Database is intended to indicate to users of USDA-Approved Software which food items and other data, such as weights, are active as designated by an “a” in the status field and which food items are being discontinued and therefore designated by a “d” in the status field. The contractor managing the CN Database will not remove food descriptions marked with a “d” until the next release. This is intended to notify users of approved software that products they may have been incorporating into menus will no longer be included in the next release of the CN Database and will provide software users with ample time to replace the product. Please ensure that your software does not interfere with this alert mechanism intended to inform the end users when product data will no longer be available. **The data marked with “d” should not be removed prematurely from the program’s database until it is physically removed from the CN Database at the next Release.**

Differentiating Between Data Containing Zeros and Missing Data

Nutrient data represented by a zero means that the food item was tested for that nutrient, but there was no amount of that nutrient found in the food. For example, a value of zero for food energy or calories means that this food contains no calories. Values of zero are not to be interpreted as missing values or blanks; they must remain zeros. Please notify FNS if you find any food items with missing values or blanks for any of the 12 required nutrients: protein, total fat, carbohydrate, food energy, total dietary fiber, calcium, iron, sodium, vitamin A in IU, vitamin C, cholesterol, and saturated fat. Foods that do not provide values for all 12 required nutrients should not be included in the CN Database.

In the case of optional nutrients (ash, moisture, vitamin A in RE and with CN 10 - trans fat), blank nutrient values may exist. Blank nutrient values are not to be interpreted as zeros. Blank nutrient values should be interpreted and marked as missing values; for example, an asterisk with a footnote would indicate that the optional nutrient value has not been provided. Additionally, any nutrient total containing a missing value must also be indicated as missing nutrient data. **Use of a zero to represent a missing value is incorrect.** Optional nutrients are the only acceptable nutrients to be assigned missing values in the CN Database.

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If you have any questions or want to discuss any of these issues, please contact Tim Vázquez at (703) 305-2853 or by e-mail at Tim.Vazquez@fns.usda.gov. Thank you for your cooperation and continued support.

Sincerely,

Stanley C. Garnett
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Enclosure

FINAL:USDA:FNS:CND:NPTB:TVazquez:
Doc:I:cndnptb:tas:Vazquez:For Final:Software Letter 11012k5.doc