



NEWS RELEASE

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EMBARGOED UNTIL SEPT. 10, 2003

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USDA CALLS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON TECHNICAL SUPPORT DATA FOR FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10, 2003 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture today called for public comments on proposed revisions to the daily food intake patterns that serve as the technical basis for the Food Guide Pyramid.

“The Food Guide Pyramid is an educational tool to help Americans choose a healthy diet,” said Veneman. “Public comment regarding the scientific data and the interpretation of that data is critical at this stage of the process.”

USDA is reassessing the Food Guide Pyramid, which was originally developed in 1992 to help Americans implement the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, to ensure that it continues to be based on the most current sound and comprehensive science to help Americans make better food choices. Proposed changes to the food patterns are evolutionary, building on the solid framework of the existing Pyramid and bringing it up to date with the latest national nutrition standards.

The proposed daily food intake patterns have been updated to meet new nutritional standards, including the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes for vitamins, minerals and macronutrients released between 1997 and 2002. The update of the Pyramid is being coordinated with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee as they review the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and recommend revisions to USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Food Guide Pyramid reassessment and updating process has three phases: (1) gathering information through technical research, professional and public input, and consumer research; (2) updating of the Pyramid’s daily food intake patterns to meet current nutritional standards; and (3) developing new graphic and educational materials that communicate Pyramid messages in ways consumers can more easily understand and put into practice.

USDA encourages written comments on the revised patterns and the technical assumptions behind them, including:

Proposed daily food intake patterns (what and how much the Pyramid suggests eating).

Energy levels for proposed food intake patterns, particularly the appropriateness of using sedentary, reference-sized individuals in assigning target calorie levels for assessing the nutritional adequacy of each food intake pattern.

Nutritional goals for proposed daily food intake patterns, particularly the appropriateness of the criteria used and how proposed patterns compare to these nutritional goals.

The appropriateness of using “cups” and “ounces” vs. “servings” in consumer materials to suggest daily amounts to choose from each food group and subgroup.

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The *Federal Register* notice, scheduled to be published on Sept. 11, calls for a 45-day comment period. Following the comment period, USDA will consider all input received in revising the daily food intake patterns for the Pyramid. Then, revisions to the Food Guide Pyramid graphic and consumer materials will be initiated, and a second *Federal Register* notice to solicit comments on the graphic design will be issued in 2004.

Final release of the updated Food Guide Pyramid and related consumer materials is scheduled for early 2005. For more information on the Pyramid and the *Federal Register* notice, visit USDA's website at www.cnpp.usda.gov. Written comments on the daily food intake patterns can be submitted to: Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034, Alexandria, VA 22302.

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