Module 5 Update: Applying Geographic Preference for Local Agricultural Products

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Effective October 9, 2009, the National School Lunch Act allows institutions receiving funds through the Child Nutrition Programs to apply a geographic preference when procuring unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products. In addition, the Farm Bill allows SFAs and other institutions to apply geographical preference when procuring unprocessed agricultural products. This applies to operators of all of the Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

Unprocessed agricultural products mean only those agricultural products that retain their inherent character. The following handling and preservation techniques are not considered as changing an agricultural product into a product of a different inherent character and are allowed in specifications: cooling, refrigerating, freezing; size adjustment through size reduction made by peeling, slicing, dicing, cutting, chopping, shucking, and grinding; drying/dehydration; washing; the application of high water pressure of "cold pasteurization"; packaging (such as placing eggs in cartons) and vacuum packing and bagging (such as placing vegetables in bags); butchering livestock, fish and poultry; and the pasteurization of milk.

Section 4302 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-246 (Farm Bill), amends section 9(j) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42, USC 1758(j). See the following policy bulletins for more information:

- NSLP 06-11 Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As
- NSLP 29-09 Geographic Preference for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in the Child Nutrition Program
- NSLP 27-09 Applying Geographic Preferences in Procurements for the Child Nutrition Programs – Updates
- NSLP 18-08 Applying Geographic Preferences

(Bulletins can be found at: http://www.schools.utah.gov/cnp/Bulletins.aspx)