



State of Arizona
Department of Education
Office of Diane M. Douglas
Superintendent of Public Instruction

HNS# 08-2016

MEMORANDUM

To: Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

From: Mary Szafranski, Associate Superintendent
Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Services Division

Date: June 13, 2016

RE: HNS response to Extension Notice: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirement SP 33-2016

Original Signed

This memorandum supersedes the following previously issued memorandum: *HNS# 12-2015 HNS response to Requests for Exemption from the School Meal's Whole Grain-Rich Requirement SP 20-2015*. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) details regarding the extension to exemption requests for whole grain-rich menu items in the 2016-2017 school year (SY).

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) granted State agencies authority to extend approvals for School Food Authorities (SFA) product exemption requests through SY 2016-2017. These product exemptions were granted based on the SFA's ability to demonstrate hardship(s) in procuring, preparing, or serving specific whole grain-rich products that are accepted by students.

All requests which were approved by the Arizona Department of Education, Health and Nutrition Services (HNS) under this superseded memorandum may continue under the terms by which they were approved, through SY 2016-2017. In addition to these terms, **the SFA must submit a copy of the SY 2015-2016 approval letter along with a certified letter requesting an extension to ADE.**

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ADE will review new specific product exemption requests submitted by SFAs for one additional school year using the attached form titled “*Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Request Form*”. This form requires the SFA to provide details of the alleged hardship(s) as well as efforts made to find products that meet the whole grain-rich requirement and are accepted by students. When exemptions are granted, the LEA must ensure menus comply with the SY 2013-2014 requirement to offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich products. Additionally, LEAs must continue working to find acceptable whole grain-rich products to use beginning in SY 2017-2018.

When evaluating an exemption request, ADE will consider the written justification or other documented evidence (e.g., photos, meal count records) submitted by an SFA. Hardships that may be considered by ADE include, but are not limited to: Financial hardship, limited product availability, unacceptable product quality, and poor student acceptability. The exemption request form is also available on the HNS webpage at <http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition/meal-pattern/>. All completed exemption request forms should be submitted to your School Nutrition Programs Specialist. Please submit one request form per product.

For questions regarding this memo, please contact your School Nutrition Programs Specialist whose contact information is located on the NSLP CNPWeb home page or send an email to ADESchoolNutrition@azed.gov.

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Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Request Form

LEA Name: _____

School Food Authority Contact: _____

Product for which the exemption is requested: _____

Hardship(s) experienced in procuring acceptable whole grain-rich product (Check all that apply)

- Financial hardship (Attach documentation showing increased cost, and meal counts/production records documenting at least a 5 percent decrease in participation)
- Limited availability (Include documentation from vendors, with specific product names)
- Unacceptable quality (Include photos and specific product name)
- Poor student acceptability (Include meal counts/production records documenting at least 5 percent decrease in participation when whole grain-rich product is offered).

Describe in detail the hardships you indicated above.

Describe the efforts you have taken to find products that meet the whole grain-rich requirement and are accepted by students.

Describe the efforts you will make to meet the whole grain-rich requirement for all grains by School Year 2017-2018.

- Check here if you are requesting an exemption for more than 2 products.
- I understand that this exemption request only applies to the product identified above. I also agree that approval of this exemption does not exempt the entire menu from meeting the 50 percent whole grain-rich requirement.

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: _____ Approved: Yes No Specialist Signature: _____

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