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SUBJECT: Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program

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- A. Purpose.** To provide policy and procedures for participation in the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FF&V) project.
- B. Scope.** These procedures apply to all National School Lunch Program (NSLP) schools and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors who participate in the DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program.
- C. Authority.** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the DoD have successfully joined together to deliver nutritious, high quality fresh produce to children in those schools participating in the NSLP and SFSP. This program supports the goals of the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children, USDA's comprehensive integrated plan to update the nutrition standards of school meals. Improving schools' access to high quality FF&V that will appeal to school children is an important component of this initiative. The project enables schools to increase their offerings of produce to school children and introduce them to new fresh fruits and vegetables. Exposing school children to attractive and tasty fruits and vegetables can contribute to lifelong nutritious eating habits and good health.
- D. Participation in the Project.**
1. If an RA wants to participate in the FF&V program, it notifies the Bureau by designating the desired dollar amount of its Planned Assistance Level (PAL) it wants allocated to the FF&V program. Based on the states allocation of DoD funds, the Bureau will determine, using RA meal counts, the actual dollar amount each RA will be allotted.
  2. Monitoring the Allocation for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. It is the responsibility of each RA and SFSP sponsor to monitor their allocation and to work with the Defense Subsistence Office (DSO) in Jacksonville, Florida in an effort to ensure that they do not exceed their allocation for the fresh fruits and vegetables program. The schools are to compare a summary of billing provided by the DSO with their own records. If a discrepancy exists, they should notify the DSO immediately.
- E. Ordering and Receiving Procedures.**
1. Submitting Orders. All schools will need to use the Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP) electronic ordering site (currently referred to as TAP-IT) to place orders and submit receipts after deliveries have been made and accepted. **Only domestically grown produce can be purchased under this program.** Questions should be submitted directly to the DSO in Jacksonville (1-800-795-5772 or FAX 904-387-3681). The vendors will submit their invoices directly to DSO Jacksonville for payment. The schools can obtain billing information directly from the DSO on an as required basis or on an established scheduled.

2. **Establishing Regular Delivery Schedules.** The schools will consult their locally approved vendors to establish acceptable delivery schedules for their schools.
3. **Inspection of the Shipment.** Before accepting a shipment, the school must count and verify the shipment and write down any overages or shortages on the vendor's ticket. When products are received that are damaged or not suitable for their intended use, the school should reject delivery of any or all of the shipment. The reason for the rejection is to be entered on the vendor's delivery ticket. If all of the shipment is rejected, the school must notify the DSO immediately. Examples of unacceptable quality are wilted, overripe, excess decay, etc.

#### **F. Perishable Subsistence Storage.**

1. **General.** All fresh fruit and vegetables, and chilled and frozen foods are highly perishable and subject to rapid deterioration when improperly displayed, temporarily held or stored for any period of time. Holding or storing perishable foods at temperatures that are too high or too low, under unfavorable conditions of humidity, without proper air circulation, or in unsanitary warehouses or storage rooms, can and usually will result in rapid spoilage of perishable foods.
2. **General Prevention of Deterioration of Perishable Foods.** Spoilage of perishable foods is normally caused by micro-organisms, e.g., bacteria and fungi, which grow rapidly under the right conditions, spread rapidly from the decayed items contaminating the surrounding perishable foods. Therefore, all perishable foods, whether on display, waiting to be displayed or in storage, must be inspected frequently. Spoiled or decayed items must be removed immediately to maintain the remaining perishable foods in top condition. Following these two steps can keep losses to a minimum.

**G. Storage Compatibility of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables.** General. Although it may be necessary to hold and sometimes store fresh fruits and vegetables together, there are some products that should be separated whenever possible. Apples, pears, plums, cantaloupes, ripe honeydew melons, avocados, tomatoes and other ethylene producing fruits and vegetables should not be stored with lettuce (causes russetting), carrots (become bitter), cucumbers, green peppers, acorn or Hubbard squash (loss of green color). Odors from apples and citrus fruits are readily absorbed by meat, eggs and dairy products. Pears and apples get an unpleasant earthy taste and odor when stored with potatoes. Other combinations that should be avoided in holding or storage rooms are apples or pears with celery, cabbage or onions; celery with onions or carrots; green peppers with pineapples; and citrus fruit with any strongly scented vegetable. Green peppers can taint pineapples if the two are held or stored together. Onions, nuts, citrus fruit and potatoes should each be stored separately whenever possible.

**H. Compatibility Groups.** Fresh fruit and vegetables are divided into eight compatibility

groups to improve holding and storage. These groups are divided by holding temperature, humidity, and sustainment to ice. Exhibit V provides information on these groups.

- I. Chill Injuries to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables.** Although the shelf life of many fresh fruits and vegetables can be significantly extended by storage at 32° Fahrenheit, there are some fresh fruits and vegetables that are subject to injury when stored at low but nonfreezing temperatures. It is essential that schools be aware of the types of injuries that may be caused to fresh fruits and vegetables. Awareness of these injuries can help to ensure that only the freshest and best quality fresh fruits and vegetables are provided in the NSLP and SFSP. Exhibit W provides information on the lowest safe temperatures for certain fresh fruits and vegetables