United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
Mountain Plains Region
1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80204

Reply to Attn. of: SFSP-152

MAR 19 1992

Subject: Disposition of Leftover Food or Meals in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS (Special Nutrition Programs) - Colorado ED, Iowa, Kansas, Montana OPI, Nebraska ED, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming DHSS

At the recent national SFSP meeting in Kansas City, there was some discussion regarding whether, if consistent with local health ordinances, leftover food or meals could be disposed of by taking them to a homeless shelter, food pantry, or other facility which distributes meals or food to needy persons. In addition, conference participants wished to know how, if this practice was permissible, the sponsor should handle the meals on its claim.

**Distribution of Leftover Food Items or Meals to Homeless Shelters, Food Pantries, etc.**

The SFSP Regulations at Section 225.15(b)(3) require the ordering of one meal per child per meal service. The Regulations at Section 225.6(c)(2)(i)(C) require sites to have access to refrigeration in order to store leftover meals for later service. In addition, the Regulations at Section 225.15(b)(4) allow sponsors to claim reimbursement for a limited number of second meals. For all of these reasons, entire meals should not often be left over and unusable.

It might be more common to have a number of non-perishable food items (e.g., pieces of fruit) remaining on a "leftover table" at the end of the day. This may especially be the case at sites which serve large numbers of younger children who may not be able to consume the entire Program meal. However, sponsors of such sites should seek State Agency approval to serve these children smaller portion sizes, in accordance with the Regulations at Section 225.16(g)(2). The ability to adjust portion sizes for smaller children argues against the likelihood that there frequently will be a large quantity of leftover items at sites serving greater numbers of young children. In such an event, the leftover items may often be stored for the service of extra food to children on subsequent Program days.

However, despite sponsors' best efforts to order the appropriate number of meals, adjust portion sizes, refrigerate leftovers for later service, etc., they will, on occasion, find themselves with leftover meals or food items. In these instances, sponsors should explore other options for avoiding waste and disposing of leftover food, such as giving leftover food items or meals to homeless shelters, food pantries, and the like.

**Claiming of Leftover Food or Meals**

In the limited circumstances described above where sponsors are permitted to make leftover meals or food items available to homeless shelters or other entities providing food to the needy, the sponsor may claim the meals for reimbursement only when the meals were originally served to participating children. That is, if 50 meals were served to children, and 15 leftover pieces of fruit were taken to a shelter, all 50 meals served to children may be claimed for reimbursement. However, if 100 meals were ordered, 70 were served to children, and 30 entire meals were taken to a shelter, the 30 leftover meals should not be claimed for reimbursement. Instead, the cost of the 100 meals should be included in the sponsor's operating costs for end-of-the-month comparison to meals times rates.

Please feel free to contact our office at (303) 844-0359 for any clarification or additional information you may need.

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