



2008 Farm Bill: Wisconsin Focus **TITLE IV – NUTRITION PROGRAMS¹**



Key Features

The Food Stamp program has a new name. It will now be called “SNAP” which stands for **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**. \$5.4 billion is provided over the next ten years to end the erosion in purchasing power for food assistance benefits and partially restore benefit levels that have been lost since the mid 1990s. The nutrition title includes a provision which would encourage low-income families to save for the future by making sure that the value of any retirement and education savings accounts do not make them ineligible to participate in SNAP. The bill also increases assistance to families with high child care expenses by allowing a full deduction for child care expenses in calculating family income and benefit levels. The 2008 Farm Bill raises the SNAP minimum benefit to \$14 and indexes that level to future inflation. (The current minimum benefit is set at \$10 and has not been raised in over 30 years.)

There are major expansions in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides free fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income children in schools. Over the next ten years, \$1 billion is invested in this initiative, which will allow it to serve as many as 3 million low-income children. The farm bill provides \$1.256 billion over the next ten years to nearly double the commodity purchases for food banks. Food assistance for low-income seniors will be expanded by \$50 million over the next ten years in order to help them purchase agricultural products at farmers’ markets, roadside stands and other community-supported agriculture programs. \$50 million is provided for USDA to set up and expand competitive grants to eligible organizations for community food projects, such as school gardens.

Section 4111 clarifies the legal basis and requirements for nutrition education in SNAP.

Section 4141 authorizes USDA to carry out pilot projects to develop, test and evaluate methods of using the SNAP program to improve the dietary and health status of households eligible for or participating in SNAP and to reduce overweight and obesity. It provides \$20 million in mandatory funding for a project to test point-of-purchase incentives for healthful foods.

Annual Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodity purchases will increase to \$250 million from the current \$140 million and will be adjusted for inflation by 2012. It also includes donated wild game in the list of allowable uses of TEFAP funding.

Section 4211 authorizes the purchase of bison meat for FDPIR recipients (Native Americans). It authorizes \$5 million in appropriations for USDA to purchase traditional and locally-grown foods for FDPIR participants if such products can be purchased cost-effectively, and requires a survey of FDPIR participants to determine which traditional foods are most desired. It also

¹ Author Contact: Susan Nitzke, Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Nutrition, UW-Madison (608) 262-1692, nitzke@nutrisci.wisc.edu.

requires study of the FDPIR food package in comparison to the SNAP, to the Dietary Guidelines, and to the needs of low-income Native Americans. (No funds provided.)

Section 4221 adjusts priorities for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Section 4231 authorizes honey as one of the eligible foods in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Section 4301 requires the Secretary to report on the effectiveness of each State in enrolling school-aged children receiving SNAP benefits for free meals through direct certification.

Section 4302 directs USDA to encourage institutions to use geographic preference in procurement activities to purchase unprocessed locally grown and raised agricultural products.

Although no specific funds are provided, section 4303 expands grant priorities to include promotion of healthy food education in the school curriculum, and establishes a pilot program for high poverty schools to target grants to public or non-profit entities in up to 5 States to develop and operate community gardens at high-poverty schools.

Section 4304 which provides grants to all States to make free fresh fruits and vegetables available in elementary schools throughout the day apart from the regularly scheduled meal service limits participation to schools with 50 percent or greater free- or reduced-price enrollment, and gives priority to the highest poverty schools, and establishes per student grant levels of \$50 to \$75.

Sec 4305 authorizes the purchase of whole grains for school meals in addition to regular commodities. Section 4404 increases requirement to use Section 32 funds to purchase of fruits, vegetables and specialty crops beyond the current \$200 million level. It requires the purchase of at least \$50 million in fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops for distribution to schools and service institutions.

How is Wisconsin Affected?

According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), the nutrition title of the Farm Bill will provide \$8 million in additional benefits (budget authority) for Wisconsin and \$527 million nationwide in FY2009. In the next 10 years, Wisconsin would receive an additional \$119 million in benefits (of \$8.7 billion nationwide).

Where can I get more information?

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2008. [Farm Bill Conference Agreement Contains Significant Domestic Nutrition Improvements](#), May.
- Congressional Research Service, 2008, [Food Safety Provisions](#)
- 2008 Farm Bill: [Title IV \(Nutrition\)](#)
- House and Senate Fact Sheets
 - ✓ [House Fact Sheet](#)
 - ✓ [Senate Fact Sheet](#)

UPDATED: July 7, 2008