



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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MEMORANDUM

To: Institutions and Sponsors Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

From: Sonja R. Adams, Director of Provider Services – Nutrition **(Original Signed)**

Date: September 13, 2019 (v.2)

Subject: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the CNPs

Legal Authority: USDA Policy Memorandum SP-34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, SFSP 15-2019, August 22, 2019 (*rescinding* SP 22-2019, CACFP 09-2019, SFSP 08-2019, *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the CNPs*, April 17, 2019; SP 02-2013, *Corn Masa (Dough) for Use in Tortilla Chips, Taco Shells, and Tamales*, October 3, 2012; and TA 01-2008, *Crediting of Corn Meal (Cornmeal) and Corn Flour for Grains/Breads Component*, December 11, 2007).

***Cross Reference/
See also:***

DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Update of Food Crediting System to Include Various Food Items Which Were Previously Uncreditable*, December 28, 2018.

This policy memorandum rescinds and replaces DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the CNPs*, May 17, 2019.

As stated above, this memorandum rescinds and replaces DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Corn Flour in the CNPs*, May 17, 2019 which was based on expanded Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) policy guidance originally released on December 4, 2018.¹ Such guidance sought to inform participating institutions and sponsors of the credibility of various food items which were previously uncreditable.

¹ USDA Policy Memorandum, SP 08-2019, CACFP 02-2019, SFSP 02-2019, December 4, 2018.

The updated guidance contained within this policy memorandum seeks to clarify *how* coconut, hominy, corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal will credit towards a reimbursable meal or snack.²

Additionally, the attached *Questions and Answers* provide more information about crediting these foods in the CNPs.

Definition(s)

“**Hominy**” is a traditional food in Mexican and Native American cultures commonly served as a vegetable or as a milled grain product (*e.g.*, hominy grits).

“**Masa**” is a dough or flour made from milled corn that has typically been soaked and cooked in an alkaline (lime) solution, which offers increased bioavailability of certain nutrients with a nutritional profile similar to whole grain corn. It is often used to make tortilla chips, taco shells, tamales, pupusas, and other popular corn products.

Crediting Guidance

I. Coconut and Coconut Water

Institutions and sponsors may credit *fresh* or *frozen* coconut as a **fruit** based on volume served. *Dried* coconut may credit as a **fruit** at twice the volume served. Like other fruits, at least 1/8 cup of fresh, frozen, or dried coconut must be served to credit towards the fruit component.

Coconut water, labeled as containing 100-percent juice, can credit toward the fruit component as juice per volume served.

Notably, coconut flour and coconut oil are not creditable.

Menu planners must consider coconut’s caloric and saturated fat content, which may limit its frequency of use in school menus due to the dietary specifications for calories and saturated fat.

II. Hominy

Institutions and sponsors may credit hominy towards the **vegetable** or **grain** component in a reimbursable meal or snack. Below details how hominy will credit based on its form.

- ¼ cup of canned, drained hominy or cooked, whole hominy (from dried hominy), credits as ¼ cup vegetable.
- ½ cup of cooked or (1) ounce (28 grams) of dry hominy grits credits as (1) ounce equivalent whole grain (1 serving grain for SFSP).

III. Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal

Institutions and sponsors may calculate contributions from corn masa, masa harina, nixtamalized corn flour, and nixtamalized cornmeal in the same manner as all other **grain** ingredients and food items.

Crediting is determined by weight as listed in Exhibit A: *Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs of FNS’ Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*; or by grams of creditable grain per portion. However, if any non-whole corn ingredient is labeled as *enriched*, or includes nutrients sub-listed after the corn ingredient in the ingredient statement, such as: *yellow corn flour (folic acid), riboflavin, niacin, and thiamine*), then the corn ingredient can contribute only to the enriched grain requirements.

² Previously, coconut and hominy did not meet the requirement for any component in the meal pattern but could be served as an “extra” food.

Note: Corn that is not “whole” or “enriched” or is not treated with lime (nixtamalized) does not credit as a grain in the CACFP or SFSP.

Questions and Answers

Crediting Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs

1. What is “nixtamalization”?

Nixtamalization is a process in which dried corn is soaked and cooked in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process increases the bioavailability of certain nutrients. Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, corn masa (dough from masa harina), masa harina (corn flour), and certain types of cornmeal. Nixtamalized corn, such as hominy, corn masa, and masa harina are considered whole grain when evaluating products for CNP meal requirements.

2. Is additional documentation required to count nixtamalized corn ingredients toward the WGR requirements?

Ingredients labeled as hominy, corn masa, or masa harina do not require additional documentation to count toward the whole grain-rich (WGR) requirements. However, some products made with cornmeal and/or corn flour ingredients may require additional information on a product formulation statement (PFS) to count toward the WGR requirement. If the PFS indicates that cornmeal or corn flour ingredients are nixtamalized, these ingredients can be considered whole grain.

3. What type of grits are creditable as whole grain in the CNPs?

Grits specifically labeled as *hominy grits* and products specifying that the corn is whole corn can be credited as whole grain. Products labeled as *enriched grits* may be credited as enriched grains. Grits labeled simply as *grits*, *stone ground corn*, or *degermed corn* are not creditable in the CNPs.

4. In addition to products labeled as corn masa, masa harina, and hominy, how can Program operators identify products made with nixtamalized corn?

There are two ways Program operators can identify products made with nixtamalized corn:

1) If a product made with corn includes one of the following Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved whole grain health claims on its packaging, the corn in the product is at least 50 percent whole grain:

- *Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.*
- *Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.*

Please note, for NSLP and SBP, any remaining grain(s) must be enriched. For CACFP, the whole product is considered WGR if the packaging includes the FDA whole grain health claim.

- 2) If the ingredient statement indicates the corn is treated with lime (for example, “ground corn with trace of lime” or “ground corn treated with lime”), then the corn is nixtamalized. Because it is nixtamalized, the corn ingredient credits as though it is whole grain.

5. Can Program operators use a State agency WIC list to identify WGR products?

Yes. If a product is included on any State agency’s Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-approved whole grain food list, it can credit towards the WGR requirements regardless if the product has non-creditable grain ingredients anywhere in the ingredient statement. Program operators can document compliance by obtaining a copy of any State agency’s WIC-approved whole grain food list. For a list of WIC State agency contacts, please see: www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts.

6. Should nixtamalized corn ingredients be evaluated as if they are whole grain when considering a product as part of the *Smart Snacks in School* standards?

Yes. Nixtamalized corn is considered a whole grain when evaluating products for the *Smart Snacks in School* standards.

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact the **Nutrition Health Educator** at (404) 463-8288.