

**ATTACHMENT A - USDA FOODS RESEARCH DESIGN**

This section outlines the research methodology for the proposed project. It also includes the audience matrix, which shows the number of focus groups Fleishman-Hillard (FH)/GMMB will conduct with each of the stakeholder audiences and the manner in which FH/GMMB will segregate the discussions for comparative purposes.

**Project Background**

USDA Commodities, a food distribution program managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), are distributed across the U.S. through six nutrition assistance programs. The largest portion of USDA Commodities go to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), which helps schools provide nutritious lunches free or at low cost to over 31 million children each school day spanning over 101,000 public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions across the United States. Participating schools are able to select from more than 180 types of food that are safe, wholesome, and 100 percent American-grown. USDA Commodities contribute to the nutritional value of the NSLP and provide schools with meals at a good value.

In addition to playing a vital role in providing food to schools and low-income people, improvements have been made to USDA Commodities over the past few years, such as adding low- and reduced fat options in compliance with program guidelines over the past few years. However, not all teachers, administrators, child nutrition professionals and parents are aware of these changes and some incorrectly believe the foods provided by USDA are unhealthy.

USDA is looking to improve public perceptions about USDA Commodities at large. This will be done through a rebranding process and communications campaign, which will serve to emphasize that USDA Foods are nutritious, safe, of good value, tasty, American-grown, and help feed students across the country, including those in need. The NSLP will serve as the platform from which to begin communicating these messages about USDA Commodities.

**Research Objectives**

In an effort to address and reverse this misperception, FNS has contracted with FH/GMMB to help improve the public's perception of USDA Commodities. More specifically, FH/GMMB will rebrand USDA Commodities and create a communications campaign which will emphasize that USDA Commodities are nutritious, balanced, safe, tasty, American-grown, and important for school-aged children across the country. The NSLP will serve as the platform from which to begin communicating these messages about USDA Commodities, with the goal of elevating USDA Commodities as a whole.

Through both qualitative and quantitative research methods, FH/GMMB will assess key audiences' awareness and knowledge of USDA Commodities, their perceptions of USDA Commodities and the perceived barriers to participation in the NSLP. Additionally, the research will obtain feedback regarding new program names, messages, taglines, logos, and other outreach materials to support the rebranding of USDA Commodities.

The proposed benchmark surveys will provide a baseline measure of key audiences' attitudes, awareness, and perceptions of the program, which FNS can track over time to evaluate the effectiveness of its outreach efforts.

FH/GMMB will direct its efforts toward five important audiences:

- Program messengers: Child Nutrition Professionals, teachers (Grades K through 12), Administrators (Grades K through 12), and USDA Commodities partners, both internal and external
- Program users: parents/guardians of school-aged children (Grades K through 12)

## RESEARCH DESIGN

FH/GMMB proposes conducting both qualitative and quantitative research with key stakeholder groups- focus groups, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and Web-based surveys. The table below outlines the proposed research design, and the subsequent sections outline the approach for each methodology in more detail.

With this blended approach, up to 1,740 individuals will participate in this research. Please note that this number does not take into account non-responses (those individuals who are screened and agree to participate, but do not actually participate).

RESEARCH DESIGN – SNAPSHOT	
TARGET AUDIENCE	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Child Nutrition Professionals (CNPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Web-based focus groups (n=32)</li> <li>• Web-based benchmark survey (n= 500)</li> <li>• Web-based tracking survey (n=500)</li> </ul>
K through 12 Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four, in-person focus groups (n=48)</li> <li>• Web-based benchmark survey (n=250)</li> <li>• Web-based tracking survey (n=250)</li> </ul>
K through 12 Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four, in-person focus groups (n=48)</li> </ul>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 to 20 telephone interviews with internal partners</li> <li>• 15 to 20 telephone interviews with external partners</li> </ul>
Parents/Guardians of School-Aged Children (K through 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six, in-person focus groups (n=72)</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>Approximately 1,740</b>

### Qualitative Research: Stakeholders Represented and Design

We propose conducting 14 in-person focus groups across the four U.S. Census Bureau regions (Northeast, South, Midwest and West), four Web-based focus groups via the Internet, and up to 40 in-depth telephone interviews (IDIs). Up to 240 individuals will participate in the qualitative discussions and interviews. For a full description of the audiences, please refer to “Composition/Structure of Focus Groups and In-Depth Interviews” that follows in the body of this document, or, the “Audience and Market Matrix” that also follows in the body of this document. The types of stakeholder groups included in this project are the following:

- **Child Nutrition Professionals** (includes food service directors and/or food service supervisors, as well as Food Service Management Company personnel if appropriate): four, Web-based focus groups. *Rationale: This group represents public and nonprofit private school employees who implement the NSLP in their respective school districts. This audience interacts directly with cafeteria managers, school teachers, school administrators, PTO/PTAs, and school-aged children. Child nutrition professionals serve as program marketers, messengers, and ambassadors. Because they have a significant role in educating students, parents, and teachers about the benefits of USDA Commodities, it is important that they understand, accept, and communicate USDA’s message about the nutritional value and benefits of USDA Commodities.*
- **K through 12 Teachers:** four, in-person focus groups. *Rationale: Teachers have a great influence on what children learn – in both content and attitude. Because they are in a position to encourage students to participate in the NSLP, and in turn eat USDA Commodities, it is important that they are aware of the nutritional, health and learning benefits of children’s participation in the NSLP.*
- **K through 12 Administrators** (includes principals, vice principals, associate administrators, assistant administrators and district administrators): four, in-person focus groups. *Rationale: Similar to teachers, school administrators are in a position to encourage students to participate in the NSLP. They also play a role in determining the schools’ level of participation in the NSLP. Because of this, it is important that school administrators understand the importance of USDA Commodities – both the financial and nutritional benefits – in the schools.*
- **USDA Commodities Internal Partners** (includes organizations such as the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA): 15 to 20 in-depth telephone interviews. *Rationale: Internal partners work with FNS to develop commodity specifications, issue and accept commodity bids from manufacturers, purchase products, and deliver commodities to State designated locations. It is important that these partners agree with and embrace USDA Commodities new brand and messaging.*

- **USDA Commodities External Partners** (includes organizations such as the American Commodity Distribution Association (ACDA) and the School Nutrition Association (SNA): 15 to 20 in-depth telephone interviews. *Rationale: External partners are representatives from an array of organizations that are very engaged in the child nutrition industry. They include manufacturers, brokers, distributors, consultants, researchers, advocates, and State Distributing Agencies. All play a role in communicating USDA Commodities' messages and the program's benefits.*
- **Parents/Guardians of children in Grades K through 12:** six, in-person focus groups. *Rationale: Parents/Guardians tend to influence whether their children participate in the NSLP. Studies also cite parents as children's role models for dietary and exercise behaviors. This audience's misperceptions about the program and USDA Commodities can prevent children from participating in the NSLP. Within these groups, FH/GMMB recommends segregating groups by participation in other nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It is important to identify parents'/guardians' misperceptions and other barriers to the program.*

### **Composition/Structure of Focus Groups and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)**

Several characteristics were taken into consideration when determining how many and which types of individuals to include in the focus groups and in-depth interviews. The lists below summarize the number of and types of groups/IDIs that will be conducted as part of the qualitative phase of the research design.

Stakeholder audiences:

- Child nutrition professionals (four groups)
- K through 12 teachers (four groups)
- K through 12 administrators (four groups)
- Internal partners (15 to 20 IDIs)
- External partners (15 to 20 IDIs)
- Parents/Guardians (six groups)

Urban/suburban versus rural segments (for teacher, administrator and parent/guardian groups only):

- Urban/suburban (10 groups and up to 30 IDIs)
- Rural (four groups and up to 10 IDIs)

Potential urban/suburban markets (for teacher, administrator and parent/guardian groups only):

- East Region: Washington, D.C. or Alexandria, VA (three groups)
- South Region: Atlanta, GA or San Antonio, TX (four groups)
- Midwest Region: Chicago, IL or Kansas City, MO (three groups)
- West Region: Los Angeles, CA or Portland, OR (four groups)

Per the above urban/suburban recommendations, following are close by rural communities (for teacher and parent/guardian groups only):

- Atlanta, GA – Gainesville, Jackson, Shady Dale, and Chestnut Mountain
- Kansas City, MO – Holden, Chillicothe, Harrisonville, and Sedalia
- San Antonio, TX – Pearsall, Beeville, and Gonzales
- Los Angeles, CA – Fresno and Salinas

*Please note that since child nutrition professionals are spread out across the country and are difficult to target at the market level, these focus groups will be conducted via the Internet using Web cameras. Participants will be located in school districts/markets that are actively involved in the NSLP. Internal and external partners are also dispersed across the country and will be interviewed via telephone. To the extent possible, FH/GMMB will ensure a mix of urban/suburban and rural participants. Please see the “Audience and Market Matrix” that follows in the body of this document for detailed information regarding the proposed locations for each in-person focus groups, the audiences for the Web-based groups and in-depth telephone interviews.*

#### **Demographic Composition of In-Person Focus Groups and IDIs**

For the consumer focus groups (e.g., parents), each group recruited will represent a diverse and fairly representative mix of stakeholders based on characteristics such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, occupation, presence of children in the household, and education level.

For the professional focus groups (e.g., CNPs, teachers, and administrators), each group will contain a mix of participants based on gender, tenure, age, and education level.

However, because each group is relatively small, FH/GMMB cannot control who shows up for the discussions. As a result, despite the best efforts to recruit a representative mix of stakeholders, those who actually show up for and participate in the discussions may not be quite as representative. For example, out of seven men and seven women recruited, it is possible that six women show up, but only one man. Additionally, if FH/GMMB is recruiting for only 12 individuals and nine women and five men show up, FH/GMMB will send two women home.

The following demographic composition of the 18 focus groups includes:

*Child Nutrition Professionals (four Web-based focus groups total)*

- Two groups with child nutrition professionals at mid- to large-size school districts
- Two groups with child nutrition professionals at small school districts

*Teachers (four in-person focus groups total)*

- Two groups with elementary school teachers (Grades K through 5 and in some cases through 6 depending on how schools define elementary grades. This can vary.)
- One group with middle school teachers (Grades 6, 7, and 8)
- One group with high school teachers (Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12)
- Within each group, FH/GMMB will recruit a mix of teachers based on tenure, subjects taught, gender, age, and school size
- Two groups will be conducted in a rural setting; two will be conducted in an urban/suburban setting

*Administrators (four in-person groups total)*

- Two groups with elementary school administrators (Grades K through 5 and in some cases through 6 depending on how schools define elementary grades. This can vary.)
- One group with middle school administrators (Grades 6, 7, and 8)
- One group with high school administrators (Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12)
- Within each group, FH/GMMB will recruit a mix of administrators based on tenure, gender, age, and school size
- All four groups will be conducted in an urban/suburban setting. Please note that due to the potential difficulty in identifying a rural market with a large enough sample of school administrators, focus groups with this audience will not take place in a rural setting.

*Internal and External Partners (up to 40 telephone IDIs)*

- 15 to 20 IDIs with USDA Commodities' internal partners; FH/GMMB will recruit a mix based on region and role/position
- 15 to 20 IDIs with USDA Commodities' external partners; FH/GMMB will recruit a mix based on region and role/position

*Parents/Guardians (six in-person focus groups total)*

- Three groups with parents/guardians with children in Grades K through 12 who qualify for SNAP
- Three groups with parents/guardians with children in Grades K through 12, who do not qualify for SNAP
- Within each group, FH/GMMB will recruit for a mix of parents/guardians with children who participate in the NSLP
- Within each group, FH/GMMB will recruit for a mix of parents/guardians with children who attend public and private nonprofit schools
- Within each group, FH/GMMB will recruit for a mix of parents/guardians based on race/ethnicity, age, occupation, gender, education, and number of children in the household
- Two groups will be conducted in a rural setting; four groups will be conducted in an urban/suburban setting

The following proposed markets are those in which FH/GMMB plans to conduct the in-person focus groups. However, the actual markets selected to represent each of the four regions (Northeast, South, Midwest and West) may change once FH/GMMB begins the process of identifying facilities for the in-

person focus groups and negotiating prices for the use of these facilities. Please note the child nutrition professionals groups will be conducted via the Internet and the internal and external partners will be conducted via the telephone.

### Potential Sites

Region	Recommended Sites	Alternate Sites
East Region	Washington, D.C. or Alexandria, VA	Philadelphia, PA or Boston, MA
South Region	Atlanta, GA or San Antonio, TX	Dallas, TX or Charlotte, NC
Midwest Region	Chicago, IL or Kansas City, MO	Minneapolis, MN or Denver, CO
West Region	Los Angeles, CA or Portland, OR	Phoenix, AZ or San Diego, CA

### Focus Group Sites/Facilities

FNS will work with FH/GMMB to determine the most appropriate markets for the focus group discussions. FH/GMMB's next step will be to locate vendors that have focus group facilities within each of the desired markets/regions.

For urban/suburban markets, focus groups will be conducted in professional focus group facilities. The facilities will consist of a focus group discussion room (meeting room with a conference table that comfortably seats eight to 12 people) and an adjoining room with a one-way mirror, from which the FNS staff and FH/GMMB representatives can observe and listen to the discussion.

For rural groups, FH/GMMB will locate community-based organizations and/or facilities in which to conduct the discussions such as Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) halls, hotel meeting rooms, banquet rooms of local restaurants, etc. With the rural groups, facilities with two rooms and the use of a closed-circuit video and television monitor will be used so that FNS staff and FH/GMMB representatives can observe and listen to the discussion from a room adjoining (or across from) the discussion group.

All focus groups will be audio-recorded.

Additionally, because transportation may be a challenge for some participants, where possible, facilities that are easily accessible to public transportation (and all facilities will be handicap accessible) will be chosen.

For the Web-based focus groups with child nutrition professionals, participants will participate in the focus groups from their home or office using a Web camera, which is supplied and set-up by the focus group vendor. Using this advanced Web-based software, *QualMeeting*, FNS and FH/GMMB will be able to conduct, view, and listen to the focus group discussions from their own computers. The focus group vendor will provide technical assistance to participants prior to and during the focus groups.

For the telephone interviews with USDA Commodities' internal and external partners, FH/GMMB will call participants on their preferred telephone number (home, work, or cell).

### **Identification and Recruitment of Focus Group and IDI Participants**

Up to 240 individuals will participate in the qualitative research – 18 focus groups and 40 IDIs.

Attachments B, C, D, E and F shows the recruitment screeners that the professional interviewers at the focus group facilities will use to identify and recruit qualified participants.

Regardless of the type of facility in which the discussions are held, FH/GMMB and USDA will adhere to the American Association for Public Opinion Research guidelines (See Attachment S). This will ensure that the participants are comfortable and confident that the research study is being conducted with integrity. Additionally, FH/GMMB will ensure that all focus group facilities are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

### **Recruitment:**

#### *Child Nutrition Professionals*

- FNS will provide a list of potential participants. In creating the list, USDA FNS will work with its external partners on pulling a representative sample of child nutrition professionals based on region, school type (e.g., public, nonprofit private, etc.), race/ethnicity, age, and gender. USDA FNS will compile a list of more than 1,000 names. However, FH/GMMB will not exceed 500 completes, which is reflected in the burden hours.
- Professional interviewers will conduct the screening and recruiting interviews by telephone by using a pre-approved script (see Attachment C). Supervisors will monitor their work to ensure quality control.
- FH/GMMB will review the completed recruitment screeners to ensure that those recruited meet all the required specifications.
- The focus group staff will mail a letter to those recruited (see Attachment G). This letter will confirm logistical details such as the date, time, and location of the focus group. The focus group vendor will provide technical support before and during the focus group discussions.
- The focus group staff will also make a reminder telephone call to all participants the day before the discussion group (see Attachment H).

*Teachers, Administrators, and Parents/Guardians*

- The focus group vendor will use its own database of individuals, as well as cold-calling methods to identify which participants to contact (see Attachments D, E and F for a detailed description of the methodology, which will ensure a broad mix of representatives).
- Professional interviewers will conduct the screening and recruiting interviews by telephone, using a pre-approved script (see Attachments D, E and F). Supervisors will monitor interviewers' work to ensure quality control.
- FH/GMMB will review the completed recruitment screeners to ensure that those recruited meet all of the required specifications.
- The focus group staff will mail a letter to those recruited (see Attachment G). This letter will confirm date, time, and location of the focus group, as well as provide directions. Focus group staff will also make a reminder telephone call to all participants the day before the discussion groups (see Attachment H).

*Internal and External Partners*

- FNS will provide a list of potential participants to FH/GMMB. Prior to FH/GMMB recruiting potential participants, FNS will notify its partners to inform them about the research project and the upcoming telephone interviews.
- FH/GMMB professionals will call the potential participants, invite them to participate in the interview, and schedule a time to conduct the interview. Interviewers will follow a pre-approved script. Supervisors will monitor the interviewers' work to ensure quality control (see Attachment B).
- FH/GMMB interviewers will collect participants' e-mail addresses and ask them to be at a computer with Internet access at the time of the interview in order to view creative concepts (see Attachment I), which will be e-mailed to them prior to the start of the interview, and which will also serve as a reminder.

**Participant Reimbursement:**

*Focus Group Participants – Child Nutrition Professionals, Teachers, Administrators, and Parents/Guardians*

- At the end of the discussion, participants will receive a reimbursement for their expenses (\$50 to \$75), depending on the market. The focus group staff will ask participants to sign a form acknowledging receipt of the reimbursement. The recipients can use this money in any way they wish (for example, they can reimburse a child care provider who watched their child during the focus group discussion, pay for parking, or in the case of the child nutrition professionals, apply the amount towards their telephone bill). The actual amount of reimbursement may vary due to area – rural or suburban/urban – and proximity to focus group site. For example, if participants are asked to drive a long distance, they may receive a larger reimbursement.

*IDI Participants – Internal and External Partners*

- Since these individuals have a professional interest in USDA Commodities, IDI participants will not receive any type of reimbursement for their expenses. However, efforts will be made to conduct the discussions during normal business hours and FH/GMMB will place the long-distance call to these professionals and incur the costs.

**Participation:**

*In-Person Focus Groups Only*

- A professional host/hostess will greet the participants (and observers) and escort them to the appropriate room. The host/hostess will be available throughout the discussion to help answer questions, deliver messages, and address any other issues that arise.
- Those recruited, as well as observers from FNS and FH/GMMB, will be asked to confirm their identity by showing their identification upon arriving to the focus group facility.
- The participants will be re-screened upon arriving at the facility to ensure that they qualify for the discussion. The burden hours account for 10 minutes for participants to be re-screened (see Attachments D, E and F) and fill out paperwork prior to the start of the discussions (see Handout A in Attachments K, L and M).
- Depending on the time of day, a light meal and/or snacks will be provided to the participants and observers at no cost to participants/observers.

**Confidentiality:**

- The participants (both focus groups and IDIs) will be informed of confidentiality and privacy act provisions before participating in the discussion or interview. The participants will be told the length of time the discussion or interview will require of them, both during the screening/recruiting process and immediately before beginning the discussion.
- The identity of focus group and IDI participants will remain confidential, and the participants will be assured that their names will never appear in any report to the USDA.
- The USDA's sponsorship of the research will be revealed to the participants during the recruiting process, as well as the beginning of the focus group discussions/interviews. The OMB control number will also be provided.

**Pretest of Discussion Guides and Interview Scripts**

A moderator's guide or interview script has been developed for each audience (see Attachments I, J, K, L, M). FH/GMMB will test the research instruments in order to assess the clarity of the questions and their relevance to the target audiences. The pretest will be conducted with no more than nine participants (one to two per audience); therefore, the time required for the pretest is not included in the burden hours. This exercise will also determine how well the guide/script is organized and flows from one question to another. FH/GMMB will implement this test by having professional research staff members conduct in-depth, one-on-one interviews (either in person or by telephone) with one to two members of each target audience.

During the pretest interviews, the professional research staff members who conduct the interviews will take notes and evaluate each question within the guide/script based on:

- How clear or easy it is for participants to understand (i.e., where appropriate, we can include questions during the pretest to assess participants' cognitive understanding of key questions).
- The extent to which the question is relevant and meaningful to respondents.
- How well one question flows to the next.

FH/GMMB estimates that these interviews will take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete, and we will reimburse participants (approximately \$25 to \$50) for their expenses. The actual length of the interview will vary depending on how engaged and responsive the participants are (e.g., some will be more talkative than others) and the extent to which participants ask for clarification or more information. The actual amount of the reimbursement will depend on the location of the interview – rural or suburban/urban. In addition, the reimbursement range cited here is slightly less than what is presented for the focus groups because the pretest is only 45 minutes, instead of a full 2 hours. While FH/GMMB does not anticipate making any significant changes to the research instruments, FH/GMMB will resubmit to OMB should any significant changes need to be made.

**Focus Group Moderating/IDI Interviewing**

- The focus group moderators and IDI interviewers will be professionally trained and experienced in leading discussions with a variety of consumers, and who understand how to build trust and confidence in participants.
- The responsibilities of the moderator/interviewers are to lead the discussion by ensuring that he/she asks all of the questions outlined in the discussion guide/interview script, encourages open and insightful discussion among all participants, minimizes any negative effects of uncooperative participants, and ensures that the feedback from participants is probed and explored.

- For the focus groups, there will be a note-taker present who will observe the discussions and summarize the participants' feedback. The note-taker will also respond to questions or inquiries about the discussion and ensure that questions are forwarded to the moderator.
- For the IDIs, the interviewer will take notes during the discussion as well as digitally record it (upon the participant's permission) for future reference.
- All discussions will be audio-recorded for future reference and permission will also be secured from participants at the beginning of the focus group discussions/interviews. For the focus groups, if participants are not willing to be audio-recorded, they will be excused from the discussion. Note: If more than 12 individuals show up for the discussion groups, FH/GMMB will put the remaining participants on hold for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, if these participants are not included in the group, they will receive a reimbursement for their time and will be allowed to leave. For the in-depth telephone interviews, if participants are not willing to be audio-recorded, FH/GMMB interviewers will turn off the recorder and take handwritten notes.
- All discussions will be conducted in English.

### **Discussion Length**

#### *Focus Groups*

Traditional: Each traditional in-person focus group will take 120 minutes to conduct and include 8 to 12 pre-screened individuals (please note that actual burden hours for the traditional focus groups are estimated to be 140 minutes, which includes time to screen participants and fill out paperwork prior to the group). During the traditional, in-person focus groups, the moderator will take a brief 2 to 5 minute break at the discussion's midpoint or toward the discussion's end. This will allow him/her to visit with the observers and collect any questions they may want clarified.

Web-based: Each Web-based focus group will take 90 minutes to conduct and include six to eight pre-screened individuals (please note that actual burden hours for the Web-based focus groups are estimated to be 105 minutes, which includes time to screen participants). During the focus groups, those who are observing can submit handwritten notes or electronic messages to the moderator by way of the host/hostess, note-taker, or Internet. The moderator will review the notes and incorporate appropriate questions/comments from the observers during the discussion. However, a new set of questions will not be added to the discussion guide. The moderator will simply probe to gain a better understanding of participants' opinions and positions.

#### *IDIs*

Each IDI will take approximately 45 minutes to conduct (please note that actual burden hours for the in-depth interviews are estimated to be 60 minutes, which includes time to screen participants).

### Burden Hours

Estimated burden hours take into account the amount of time required for participants to be screened, fill out relevant paperwork prior to the start of the group, and the time required to participate in the discussion (this also takes into account the screening process).

Estimated Burden Hours Associated with 18 focus groups and 40 IDIs

<b>Affected Public: USDA Commodities Program Messengers</b>					
<b>Type of Respondent</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Responses Annually Per Respondent</b>	<b>Total Annual Responses</b>	<b>Estimate of Burden Hours Per Response</b>	<b>Total Burden Hours</b>
Child Nutrition Professionals	32	1	32	1.75	56
K through 12 Teachers	48	1	48	2.338	112.224
K through 12 Administrators	48	1	48	2.338	112.224
Internal Partners (Federal employees)**	20	1	20	0	0
External Partners	20	1	20	1	20
Parents/Guardians	72	1	72	2.338	168.336
<i>Non-Response*</i>	24	1	24	0.0334	0.8016
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>264</b>				<b>469.59</b>

\*This reflects those individuals who were screened to participate in the research but do not show up and actually participate in the discussions.

\*\*Research with Federal employees does not count toward burden hours.

### Time Frame

FH/GMMB will conduct the focus groups and IDIs over a period of approximately six to eight business weeks and the discussions/interviews will be held on weekdays, depending on the availability of the stakeholder groups.

- **Child Nutrition Professionals.** These discussions will be held on a weekday (Monday through Thursday), depending on the availability of the participants.
- **Teachers.** These discussions will be held on a weekday (Monday through Thursday) evening hours.
- **Administrators.** These discussions will be held on a weekday (Monday through Thursday) evening or daytime hours, depending on the availability of the participants.
- **Internal and External Partners.** These interviews will be held on a weekday (Monday through Thursday) evening or daytime hours, depending on the availability of participants.
- **Parents/Guardians.** These discussions will be held on a weekday (Monday through Thursday) evening hours to accommodate participants' work schedules.

An example of how FH/GMMB may schedule the groups/interviews is shown in the table that follows. Please note that this does not include the time required for the pretest. As previously mentioned, a

pretest of the survey instruments will be conducted. While FH/GMMB does not anticipate making any significant changes to the research instruments, FH/GMMB will resubmit to OMB should any significant changes need to be made.

Region	Week Number
East	1
South	3
Midwest	4
West	5
Nationwide (Web-based groups)	3, 4
Nationwide (IDIs)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

### Data Collection

The focus group moderator/IDI interviewer will use a discussion guide/script to moderate each of the 18 focus groups and 40 IDIs. This guide/script is not a verbatim script of the questions (or order of the questions) that the moderator/interviewer will ask the participants. Instead, the moderator/interviewer will use the guide/script to direct the flow of the discussion and to ensure that all pertinent questions are asked. However, the moderator/interviewer may ask other probing questions that are not in the guide/script of the participants bringing to light new or unexpected issues or insights.

Each focus group/interview will be audio-recorded so that those analyzing the data and writing the reports can refer to and listen to the tapes to extract verbatim quotes and/or confirm the meaning/context of something that was said. In addition, for the focus groups, a representative from FH/GMMB will take notes during each discussion and the moderator will lead a debriefing session with the observers following each market's discussions. The purpose of the debriefing sessions is to share insights from the discussions and to reach conclusions regarding the most important findings.

### Data Analysis

The responses to and feedback from the focus groups and IDIs will be analyzed through a multi-step process performed by the FH/GMMB research staff:

- Conduct on-site debriefing sessions with the FNS observers immediately following each market's focus groups. The purpose of these sessions is to share, compare, and record key findings from the discussion. The FH/GMMB moderator will lead the debriefing sessions, which will take about 30 to 45 minutes each, depending on the number of issues or findings that arise from each group.
- Compile and review notes taken by the FH/GMMB note-taker during the 18 focus groups.
- Compile and review responses from the 40 IDIs.
- Tabulate, review, and analyze the findings from any self-administered questionnaires completed by focus group participants and/or closed-ended questions completed by the IDI participants.
- As needed, listen to key portions of the recordings from individual focus group sessions/IDIs in order to explore, confirm or clarify key findings, and to obtain insightful comments to be included as paraphrased quotes within the report or pull short audio files for an oral presentation.

### **Qualitative Research Report**

The qualitative research report will incorporate findings from both the focus group sessions and the IDIs and will be prepared for FNS. It will be narrative and include the following key sections:

- Introduction and explanation of focus group/IDI methods (in tabular form), dates and participant profiles.
- Executive summary of key findings and their communication implications.
- Detailed findings segregated into relevant and meaningful sections or chapters (for example, perceptions of USDA Commodities as a nutrition program and a separate chapter regarding reactions to creative concepts).

The findings outlined in this report will be used to revise, enhance, and guide the USDA Commodities communication plan.

**Focus Group and IDI Audience and Market Matrix**

Audience	East Region (Washington, D.C. or Baltimore, MD)		South Region (Atlanta, GA or San Antonio, TX)		Midwest Region (Chicago, IL or Kansas City, MO)		West Region (Los Angeles, CA or Portland, OR)		National Mix (CNP/IDIs)	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
<b>CHILD NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS (WEB-BASED FOCUS GROUPS)</b>										
CNPs @ mid- to large school districts										Mix of urban/rural
CNPs @ small school districts										Mix of urban/rural
<b>TEACHERS (IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUPS)</b>										
Elementary school	X			X						
Middle school					X					
High school								X		
<b>ADMINISTRATORS (IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUPS)</b>										
Elementary school			X				X			
Middle school					X					
High school	X									
<b>INTERNAL PARTNERS (TELEPHONE IDIS)</b>										
General mix based on age, gender, role, region									15	5
<b>EXTERNAL PARTNERS (TELEPHONE IDIS)</b>										
General mix based on age, gender, role, region									15	5
<b>PARENTS/GUARDIANS (IN-PERSON FOCUS GROUPS)</b>										
SNAP eligible	X			X			X			
SNAP non-eligible			X		X			X		

### Quantitative Research: Stakeholders Represented and Design

FH/GMMB proposes conducting national benchmark and tracking surveys with two key audiences to be used to assess the program messengers' awareness and perceptions of USDA Commodities, as well as their exposure to USDA Commodities' communication efforts. Results from these surveys will serve as benchmark measures, which will be used to track changes in attitudes toward USDA Commodities over time. FH/GMMB proposes conducting the benchmark surveys with up to 500 child nutrition professionals and up to 250 teachers, and FH/GMMB proposes conducting the tracking surveys with up to 500 child nutrition professionals and up to 250 teachers.

#### **Demographic Composition of Survey Participants**

For the child nutrition professionals benchmark and tracking surveys, the surveys will represent a nationally diverse mix of child nutrition professionals based on characteristics such as region, tenure, school district size, and race/ethnicity.

For the teachers benchmark and tracking surveys, the surveys will represent a nationally diverse mix of K through 12 teachers based on characteristics such as tenure, subject taught, school size, region, and race/ethnicity.

#### **Identification of Survey Participants**

##### *Child Nutrition Professionals*

No more than 500 child nutrition professionals will participate in the benchmark survey and no more than 500 will participate in the tracking survey. The actual sample sizes will be dependent on the size of the lists FNS is able to develop and share. Using a targeted e-mail list, individuals will be invited to participate in the Web surveys. (Please note that the participants will receive an e-mail from FH with a link to the Web site, which will include the introduction to the survey – see Attachment N. The actual URL will not be available until the survey is programmed.) The surveys will remain open for up to two weeks and FH/GMMB will send out up to three reminder e-mails to potential participants (see Attachment P).

##### *Teachers*

Approximately 250 K through 12 teachers will participate in the benchmark survey and approximately 250 will participate in the tracking survey. Working with an online Web panel, individuals will be invited by a market research vendor to participate in the Web surveys. (Please note that the participants will receive an e-mail from the vendor with a link to Web site, which will include the introduction to the survey – see Attachment O. The actual URL will not be available until the survey is programmed.) The surveys will remain open for up to two weeks and the vendor will send out up to three reminder e-mails to potential participants (see Attachment P).

**Participant reimbursement:**

- Child nutrition professionals will not receive a reimbursement for participating in the survey. Teachers will receive a small reimbursement for their time, which will not exceed \$50 and will be provided by the research vendor.

**Confidentiality:**

- The participants will be informed of confidentiality and privacy act provisions before participating in the surveys and the OMB control number. The participants will be told the approximate amount of time the surveys will require of them.
- The identity of the participants will remain confidential, and the participants will be assured that their name will never appear in any reports to USDA.
- The USDA's sponsorship of the research will be revealed to the participants during the surveys.

**Pretest of Survey Questionnaire**

The survey questionnaires have been developed (see Attachment N and Attachment O). FH/GMMB will test the survey questionnaires in order to assess the clarity of the questions and their relevance to the target audiences. This exercise will determine how well the organization of the questionnaire flows from one question to another. FH/GMMB will implement this pretest by sending the Web survey link to no more than nine participants (per audience), selected at random from a targeted list. While FH/GMMB does not anticipate making any significant changes to the survey questionnaires, FH/GMMB will resubmit to OMB should any significant changes need to be made.

**Survey Length**

Each survey will take up to 15 minutes to complete (on average) and will include 15 to 20 mostly closed-ended questions.

**Burden Hours**

Estimated burden hours take into account the amount of time required for participants to complete the survey.

## Estimated Burden Hours Associated with the Benchmark Surveys

<b>Affected Public: USDA Commodities Program Messengers</b>					
<b>Type of Respondent</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Responses Annually Per Respondent</b>	<b>Total Annual Responses</b>	<b>Estimate of Burden Hours Per Response</b>	<b>Total Burden Hours</b>
Child Nutrition Professionals (benchmark)	500	1	500	0.25	125
K through 12 Teachers (benchmark)	250	1	250	0.25	62.5
Child Nutrition Professionals (tracking)	500	1	500	0.25	125
K through 12 Teachers (tracking)	250	1	250	0.25	62.5
<i>Non-Response*</i>	150	1	150	0.0334	5.01
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	<b>1650</b>				<b>380.01</b>

\*This reflects those individuals who were invited to participate in the research but did not complete the survey.

**Time Frame**

FNS will conduct the benchmark surveys after FH/GMMB has submitted the final communications plan to USDA Commodities but before any of the outreach efforts are implemented. The surveys will be conducted over a two week period.

The tracking surveys will be conducted seven to nine months after FH/GMMB has implemented the communication plan and outreach efforts. The surveys will be conducted over a two week time period. The tracking surveys will measure any changes in attitudes and awareness of USDA Commodities from the benchmark period and provide us with feedback regarding the effectiveness of our efforts.

**Data Collection***Child Nutrition Professionals*

Using FH/GMMB's licensed software, NetMR, FH/GMMB will send out an initial e-mail (see Introduction of Attachment N) on behalf of USDA Commodities/USDA Food Distribution Division to potential participants inviting them to participate in the survey. Following this introductory e-mail, potential participants will receive an e-mail with a link to the Web survey. The actual URL will not be available until the survey is programmed. FH/GMMB will monitor responses as they are completed and send up to three reminder e-mails (see Attachment P) to these individuals.

USDA will work with its external partners to create a representative list of child nutrition professionals based on region (Northeast, South, Midwest and South), school type (e.g., public, non-profit private, etc.) race/ethnicity, age, and gender.

*Teachers*

FH/GMMB's market research vendor will send out an initial e-mail (see Introduction in Attachment O) on behalf of USDA Commodities to potential participants, inviting them to participate in the survey. Following this introductory e-mail, potential participants will receive an e-mail with a link to the Web survey. The actual URL will not be available until the survey is programmed. FH/GMMB will monitor responses as they are completed and send up to three reminder e-mails to these individuals (see Attachment P).

Working with FH/GMMB's market research vendor's online panel of teachers (who self-select to be a part of the Web panel), FH/GMMB will ensure a broad mix of participants based on region (Northeast, South, Midwest and West), race/ethnicity, age, and gender. FH/GMMB will set quotas by these demographic categories ensuring representation from all teacher segments.

**Data Analysis**

The responses from the benchmark and tracking surveys will be analyzed by the FH/GMMB staff. More specifically, FH/GMMB will:

- Tabulate, review and analyze the findings from the surveys.
- Identify any significant differences among subgroups (e.g., large school districts versus small school districts).
- Review verbatim responses to obtain insightful comments to be included in paraphrased quotes within the report.

**Survey Reports**

The survey reports will be narrative and include the following key sections:

- Introduction and explanation of survey methods (in tabular form), dates, and participant profiles.
- Executive summary of key findings and their communication implications.
- Detailed findings segregated into relevant and meaningful sections or chapters.

Findings from the report will provide a benchmark measure of child nutrition professionals' and teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward USDA Commodities. These findings will help guide USDA in revising the draft communications plan for USDA Commodities and develop additional outreach and communication recommendations. In addition, it will offer a way for USDA to measure the future progress of USDA Commodities through tracking surveys. These findings will be used internally and FH/GMMB does not anticipate publishing the results. The benchmark and tracking survey instruments are identical and will reach out to the same audiences (but different people).