

Memorandum

Date: September 23, 2014

To: Julie Wise, OMB Desk Officer, Food and Nutrition Service

Through: Lynnette Thomas 
Food and Nutrition Service, Planning & Regulatory Affairs;

Ruth Brown
USDA Office of Chief Information Office, Departmental Clearance Officer

From: Lindsay Walle, Program Analyst, Food Distribution Division
USDA – Food and Nutrition Service

Re: Under Approved Generic OMB Clearance No. 0584-0524
Request Approval to Perform Research for USDA Foods in Schools

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the USDA Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services is requesting approval for formative research under Approved Generic OMB Clearance No. 0584-0524.

This request is to acquire clearance for surveys to gather feedback on USDA Foods offered through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This package addresses two phases of research, the Unseasoned Chicken Strip pilot and broader USDA Foods product feedback, which will help FNS analyze the acceptability of current offerings and interest in new products under development. Specifically, FNS seeks to conduct online surveys with school food service directors who use USDA Foods in order to improve our program and better meet the needs of schools and students. This package includes final versions of both surveys that will be used during the research.

The following information is provided for your review:

1. **Title of Project:** USDA Foods in Schools Product Feedback
2. **Control Number:** 0584-0524, Expires 06/30/2016
3. **Affected Public:** School Districts
 - School food service directors in schools participating in the NSLP
4. **Number of Respondents:**

Surveys

| Audience | Number of states and territories | Number of respondents per state | Total number of respondents |
|--|---|--|------------------------------------|
| School Food Service Directors in Phase 1 | 9 | 58 | 522 |

| | | | |
|--|----|----|-------|
| School Food Service Directors in Phase 2 | 54 | 77 | 4,158 |
| Total | 54 | | |

5. Time Needed Per Response:

Time Needed Per Survey

| Title | Time (minutes) | Time (hours) |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Unseasoned Chicken Strip Evaluation Survey | 10 | 0.17 |
| USDA Foods Product Feedback Survey | 20 | 0.33 |

| (a) Affected Public | Respondent Type | (b) Survey Instruments | (c) No. Respondents | (d) Frequency of Responses | (e) Est. Total Annual Responses per Respondent (c x d) | (f) Hours per Response | (g) Total Burden Hours (e x f) |
|---------------------|--|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| School Districts | School Food Service Directors in Phase 1 | Unseasoned Chicken Strip Evaluation Survey | 522 | 1 | 522 | 0.17 | 88.74 |
| | School Food Service Directors in Phase 2 | USDA Foods Product Feedback Survey | 4,158 | 1 | 4,158 | 0.33 | 1,372.14 |
| TOTAL | | | 4,680 | | 4,680 | | 1,460.88 |

6. Total Burden Hours on Public:

7. Project Purpose, Methodology and Design:

Background

As authorized under Section 6 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1751 et al, the Department of Agriculture provides States with USDA Foods for use in preparing school lunches. USDA Foods comprise about 15 to 20 percent of the food served on the school lunch line. FNS maintains a Foods Available List of products schools may order through this program. Based on feedback we receive from schools, the agricultural market, industry capabilities, and evolving nutrition standards, we add new products to the list or revise existing offerings. In September 2014, in response to requests from schools, FNS began an Unseasoned Chicken Strip pilot in 9 states.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed research is to gain practical insight into schools' perceptions and utilization of USDA Foods in the NSLP. This research will gather input from school food service directors on the Unseasoned Chicken Strip pilot and other current and potential future USDA Foods offerings about which FNS is particularly interested. The data collected will guide our decision-making process regarding product development and the items on our Foods Available List for the upcoming School Year (SY) 2015-2016.

Methodology/Research Design

The research will be in the form of surveys, with a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions, administered in two phases. The proposed questions are included in Attachment A: Unseasoned Chicken Strip Evaluation Survey and Attachment B: USDA Foods Product Feedback Survey. The survey will be developed through Wufoo, the online survey platform of FNS, and the subsequent sections outline the approach in more detail.

Payments/Gifts to Respondents

There are no provisions for payment or gifts to respondents.

Design/Sampling Procedures

The sample will include school food service directors in relevant states and territories. The 9 states participating in the Unseasoned Chicken Strip pilot will receive that targeted survey, and all states and territories will receive the broader USDA Foods survey. Each state or territory will determine whether to send the survey to every school district or to a smaller selection of districts.

Recruitment of Participants

FNS will distribute the link to the online survey to states and territories and request that they send the information to their school district contacts, namely the school food service directors. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

Data Collection Timeline

FNS will launch the research in two phases. We will distribute the Unseasoned Chicken Strip Evaluation Survey to 9 states in October, and then we will distribute the USDA Foods Product Feedback Survey to 54 states and territories in November. This timeline will allow FNS to gather data in time to make changes as needed to USDA Foods offerings for SY 2015-2016.

Data Analysis

FNS will review the surveys and comments gathered and will also evaluate the data using the analytical tools provided through the Wufoo platform.

Outcome

The data gathered in this research will help FNS understand school food service directors' preferences and suggestions associated with our USDA Foods products. These insights will provide FNS with direction on expanding the Unseasoned Chicken Strip pilot to a permanent, nationwide offering, as well as on revising or adding other products on the Foods Available List.

8. Confidentiality:

Respondents will be asked to identify the state or territory in which their school district is located, but they will not be asked for any personal information.

No assurance of confidentiality is necessary for this information collection.

9. Federal Costs:

The estimated costs to the government for conducting the upcoming surveys will be approximately \$1,642.80 for labor hours.

10. Research Tools/Instruments:

- Attachment A: Unseasoned Chicken Strip Evaluation Survey
- Attachment B: USDA Foods Product Feedback Survey