

FRESH BITES NEWSLETTER

August 2021

Back to School SY 2021-22

Ready or Not, It's Back to School Time!

Are you ready for SY 2021-22?

Hard to believe it's that time of year... the days are getting shorter, summer is winding down and it's back to school time!

Whether your school is already back in session or if you're gearing up to head back in the coming weeks, NutriStudents K-12 and this issue of Fresh Bites can help you prepare for the year ahead.

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MSNA Conference & Drawing Winner

New On the Client Portal

Tired of hunting down nutritional information on individual recipe cards? We've got a new guide on the client portal highlighting key nutrients and crediting amounts. NutriStudents K-12 clients can check it out in the Toolbox.



Are students or parents asking for vegetarian meal options on your menus? Looking to participate in Meatless Mondays this upcoming school year?

Great news! We've made it even easier for you to select our vegetarian meals to serve as meatless options and fish options for those following a pescatarian diet (pro tip: earmark these for Lenten Fridays!). A new Vegetarian Recipes page featuring 18 meat-free entrées and 2 fish-based dishes are now available on the client portal. Vegetarian recipes are considered lacto-ovo vegetarian, meaning they contain both dairy and eggs.

The highlighted meals can easily be slotted into menus as a second entrée option. Just pair the vegetarian meal with entrees of a comparable nutrition value (found at the bottom of each recipe card) and serve the same additional required components as your main entrée – vegetable, fruit and milk.

Each meal includes sized recipes (including entrée, meat/meat alternate, grain, sides) and an editable food production report (FPR). Each meal has been formulated to credit as 2 meat/meat alternate and 2 whole grain rich to meet or exceed all NSLP/CACFP component values.

What sorts of meals will you find? Delicious meat-free entree options that students will love, including:

- **Comfort foods** like Macaroni & Cheese, Grilled Cheese & Tomato Soup, and Peanut (or Seed) Butter Sandwich
- **Breakfast classics** like Pancakes with Yogurt, Scrambled Egg Wrap, French Toast Sticks, Cheese Omelet, and Yogurt Parfaits
- **Southwest and Mexican inspired options** like Bean and Cheese Burrito, Cheese Quesadilla, and Queso Omelet
- **Student favorites** like Bosco Sticks, Pizza Crunchers, and Soft Pretzel with Cheese
- **Pescatarian options** like Baja Fish Tacos and Fish Bites

Yum! You can check out these vegetarian meal options in the client portal now. Not a client? Schedule a demo now to preview these options.



If school year 2020-21 was challenging for school nutrition programs, its looking like the upcoming school year isn't going to be any easier. Throughout the summer, social media posts from foodservice professionals indicated COVID-related cracks in the supply chain and challenges with food suppliers canceling contracts. While it's hard to predict when supply chains will return to normal, utilizing USDA Commodities could potentially alleviate some of the stress.

What's causing all the disruption? A recent [Wall Street Journal](#) article suggests that a combination of inflation, labor deficiencies and supply chain issues are creating significant challenges for school nutrition programs heading into School Year 2021-22.

Schools are struggling to secure food for student breakfasts and lunches ahead of classrooms' planned reopening in the fall.

Some cafeterias are cutting menu choices as food suppliers face labor shortages and transportation challenges that are adding costs and limiting supplies. Food distributors and school officials say they expect to run low on everything from canned fruit to lunch trays, and some worry that the lack of options will deter students from getting meals at school.

Across the country, school cafeterias are preparing to welcome back students after running hybrid or remote learning operations for much of the past school year, when they offered prepackaged or to-go food. Many now find themselves at the center of supply-chain woes gripping the broader food industry: Manufacturers are cutting flavors or halting production because of capacity problems, while some distributors dropped deliveries to schools. Some school districts are struggling to hire cooks.

To cope with these supply chain woes, schools are turning to USDA Foods/Commodities more than ever before. If you're looking for some help with incorporating commodities in your school meals, look no further!

NutriStudents K-12 is here to support you in navigating USDA Commodities. First, our menu options are designed to use USDA Commodities first, saving you money. Additionally, we can help you maximize the use of USDA Commodities with our precise Commodity Forecasting Calculator, saving you hours of planning.

Schedule a demo to see this tool in action today. NutriStudents K-12 users can access the USDA Commodity Calculator in the [Toolbox](#) in our client portal.

It's so much more than a meal application.

Even though school meals are free this year, we encourage you to turn in your meal application today to take advantage of additional benefits for you and your family, while also helping our school.

School Funding
May provide additional funding for state and federal programs and services at our school.

Athletics
May result in free or discounted fees to participate in activities.

Internet Access
May qualify you for discounted rates on home internet service.

P-EBT
Determines eligibility to receive Pandemic EBT benefits.

Academic Tests
May qualify you for reduced registration fees for AP, SAT, and/or ACT tests. May also qualify you for discounted rates associated with college admissions.

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SCHOOL MEALS ARE FREE

All students will receive school meals at NO CHARGE for the 2021-2022 school year.

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Packing a lunch from home?

Pick 3, It's FREE!

This year, lunch is free for all students. If you pack a lunch from home, you can grab a fruit, vegetable, and milk at no charge. Just remember, students **must** pick all 3 to count as a free lunch.

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As we head back to school this fall, there are still many school meal-related benefits available to students and families this year due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic. It's likely many still don't know about them.

To help you spread the word and help you boost your meal participation, we've created three free downloadable resources for you to share. Just click the images above or the linked titles below. The printable, 8 1/2" x 11" PDFs include:

1. [School Meals Are Free mini poster](#) to promote the availability of free meals during the 2021-22 school year.
2. [Pick 3, It's Free mini poster](#) reminds students who bring lunch from home they can enhance their meals with a fruit, veggie, and milk for free.
3. [It's So Much More Than a Meal Application flyer](#) explains the importance of filling out free/reduced meal applications this year even though meals are free for all students.

The team at NutriStudents K-12 wishes you all the best for a safe and healthy school year!



It's not too late to use

COVID-19

relief \$\$ to save!

If you have COVID relief funds available, consider investing in your program's future success by pre-paying for a NutriStudents K-12 subscription.

You will lock in our current risk-free pricing of \$289/month for years to come, plus you will also receive an additional 5% cash discount, a great annual cost savings. Email info@nutristudentask-12.com for more info.



As summer winds down, it has been such a highlight for our team to attend a few state-level School Nutrition Association conferences. We just wrapped up our final conference of the summer at the Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) in St. Cloud.

It's been such a joy to reconnect with clients and speaking with conference attendees about all the benefits of NutriStudents K-12.

We are excited to announce the winner of a one-year free subscription to NutriStudents K-12 from MSNA:

Cindy Smith
Bluffview Montessori
Winona, MN



Director of Client Relations Shelly Miller, President Eldon Brustuen and Director of Sales Amanda Craig at the NutriStudents K-12 MSNA booth.



Amand and Shelly chat with Cindy Smith of Bluffview Montessori.



Nancy Semmler of Walker Hackensack Akeley School District stopped by the booth.

Let's stay in touch!

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Schedule a Demo

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