



## State of New Jersey

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To: All Sponsors Participating in the National School Lunch Program

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, M.S. *Arleen Ramos-Szatmary*  
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Date: November 8, 2023

Subject: Milk Supply Chain Challenges Related to Half-Pint Packaging Issues

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is aware that schools in multiple States are experiencing milk supply chain challenges related to half-pint cardboard milk packaging issues. New Jersey is among the states affected. To clarify, there is not a shortage of milk. The issue resides strictly with the cardboard packaging.

Program operators are expected to meet the fluid milk requirements to the greatest extent possible. School Food Authorities are strongly encouraged to work with their suppliers to obtain alternate milk varieties, which may include changes to flavor or fat content, packaging such as bulk packaging or plastic bottles, or shelf stable milk.

If other alternatives have been exhausted, Child Nutrition Program regulations found at [7 CFR 210.10\(d\)2, 220.8\(d\), 225.16\(f\)\(6\), and 226.20\(e\)\(1\)](#), may allow Program operators experiencing milk supply shortages to serve meals during an emergency period with an alternate form of fluid milk or without fluid milk. Supply chain disruptions, including disruptions that limit milk variety or affect serving size, would be considered a temporary emergency condition for purposes of this flexibility.

A waiver is not required to utilize the above flexibilities, however, any SFA that is not able to serve milk at any of their sites must notify the SNP Unit via <https://forms.office.com/g/wuWQNBi675> to attest that they have considered all alternate solutions before omitting milk from any of the meal types for any site. SFAs should maintain documentation of how milk supply chain challenges were handled and should consider the following in their decision-making process:

- Potable water must be available in schools for all students at lunch and also at breakfast, if breakfast is served in the cafeteria.
- The minimum number of food items at breakfast or components at lunch must still be selected by students in Offer vs. Serve meal service settings in order for the meal to count as a reimbursable meal.
- Under a Serve-Only meal service setting, SFAs may (although not required) offer students an extra food item/component while milk is not available. Note that meal pattern juice limits are not waived.

- Milk-Only Sponsors cannot claim milk that is not served.
- This flexibility does not apply to snacks claimed in the Afterschool Snack Program.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Food & Nutrition is working with the Division of Markets to obtain more information and identify solutions. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support.