

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

Nick George, President
608-255-9946

Nick.George@mwfpa.org

Brian Elliott
Dir. of Communications
608-255-9946

Brian.Elliott@mwfpa.org

Food Products Association Applauds National Academy of Sciences Fruit and Vegetable WIC Recommendations

The Midwest Food Products Association ([MWFPA](http://www.mwfpa.org)) today commended the latest proposed changes by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) WIC (women, infants, and children) feeding program guidelines.

Under a congressional mandate, the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA must re-evaluate the WIC feeding program every 10 years. Under the latest reevaluation, the NAS recommends that all WIC programs in the U.S. offer two forms of fruits and vegetables in their food packages: fresh, and either frozen, canned, or dried. Currently, states are required to offer only fresh produce.

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According to MWFPA President Nick George, “Broadening WIC as recommended by the NAS would bring it into line with the USDA’s Dietary Guidelines – which recommend processed, as well as fresh, fruits and vegetables. This is a major step forward.”

WIC food "packages" allow participants to obtain foods that provide specific nutrients for pregnancy, growth, and development. Foods offered through WIC must align with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which are revised every five years. WIC is one of the largest nutrition programs in the U.S., providing not only access to specific foods but also nutrition education and health and social service referrals for low-income infants; children up to age 5; and women who are pregnant, breast-feeding, or postpartum.

NAS also made a cost-neutral recommendation to significantly increase the amount of money WIC participants can spend on fruits and vegetables each month to better meet nutrition gaps of potassium and fiber. Foods currently provided in lower amounts or consumed less adequately – such as whole grains, vegetables, and fruits – were increased in the recommended new packages. Foods that already provided at least 100 percent of the recommended intake of several nutrients and food groups were proposed to be reduced – such as juice, peanut butter, legumes, and infant foods.

George noted that “processed fruits and vegetables, including frozen, canned, and dried, make a valuable contribution to the American diet and, especially, America’s child nutrition programs. Compared to fresh produce, processed fruits and vegetables are nutritionally similar and occasionally superior, less expensive to purchase, less expensive to serve, and often more food safe.”