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Agricultural Outlook Forum  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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## USDA Food Plans

Mark Lino





# USDA Food Plans

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**Mark Lino, PhD**

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
U.S. Department of Agriculture







For over 100 years, USDA has prepared guides for selecting nutritious diets at home at different cost levels

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## **USDA Food Plans**

- **Thrifty**
- **Low-Cost**
- **Moderate-Cost**
- **Liberal**





# Thrifty Food Plan

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- Provides a healthy, minimal-cost meal plan that shows how a nutritious diet can be achieved with limited resources
- Used as basis for SNAP (food stamp) allotments
- 1 in 7 people receive SNAP







# Low-Cost and Moderate-Cost Food Plans

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- Provide healthy meal plans at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartiles of food spending
- 30% and 63% higher cost than the Thrifty
- Used by bankruptcy courts (1.5 million people), to set alimony and child support payments





# Liberal Food Plan

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- Provides a healthy meal plan at 4<sup>th</sup> quartile of food spending
- Double the cost of the Thrifty
- Used by DoD to set Basic Allowance for Subsistence (food allowance) for 1.4 million service members







# Dietary Standards of Food Plans

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- 1997-2005 Dietary Reference Intakes (e.g. RDAs for vitamins)
- 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (e.g. saturated fat and cholesterol recommendations)
- 2005 USDA Food Guidance System intakes (e.g. fruit and vegetable recommendations)





# Food Plans Do Not Contain

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- Food away from home
- Dietary supplements
- Alcohol







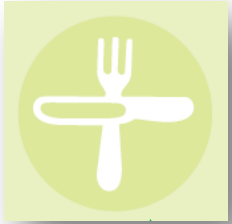
# Food Plan Market Baskets

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- Each plan has 15 market baskets (for 15 age-gender groups) specifying the type and quantity of foods (29 food groups) that people could consume at home to obtain a nutritious diet
- All four plans represent nutritious diets at different cost levels
- Foods in plans change, more expensive healthy foods







# Age-Gender Groups

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1 year old

2-3 year old

4-5 year old

6-8 year old

9-11 year old

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12-13 year old female

12-13 year old male

14-18 year old female

14-18 year old male

19-50 year old female

19-50 year old male

51-70 year old female

51-70 year old male

71+ year old female

71+year old male



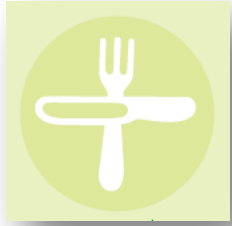


# Foods/Food Groups (examples)

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- **Grains:** whole-grain breads, rice, and pasta; whole-grain cereals; non-whole-grain breads, cereal, rice, pasta, and snacks
- **Vegetables:** potato products; dark-green; orange; canned and dry beans
- **Fruits:** whole fruits; fruits juices
- **Milk Products:** whole milk and yogurt; lower fat and fat-free milk and yogurt; cheese
- **Meat and Beans:** red meat; poultry; fish; nuts and nut butters; eggs
- **Other Foods:** gravies and sauces; coffee and tea; soft drinks; sugars and candies; soups





# Example:

## Thrifty Food Plan for Male, Age 19-50

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- Weekly cost (Dec. 2010): \$46.80
- Market Basket:
  - 2.8 lbs of whole-grain breads, rice, and pasta
  - 2.5 lbs of potatoes
  - 1.2 lbs of dark-green vegetables
  - 6.7 lbs of whole fruits
  - 10.8 lbs of lower fat and fat-free milk and yogurt
  - 2.6 lbs of poultry
  - .08 lbs of sugars and candies, etc.





# Food Plan Cost Updates

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- Each Plan updated monthly using Consumer Price Indexes
- Indexes for each food group
- Cost of Plans increasing at low rate in past year (<1.0%)





## Weekly Cost of Food Plans for a Family of Four\* (Dec. 2010)

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- Thrifty: \$135.60
- Low-Cost: \$176.60
- Moderate-Cost: \$221.00
- Liberal: \$268.50

\* Husband/wife + two children





# USDA Periodically Updates Food Plan Market Baskets

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- To reflect latest dietary standards
- To reflect latest food consumption trends and food prices





# Data Current Food Plans Based on

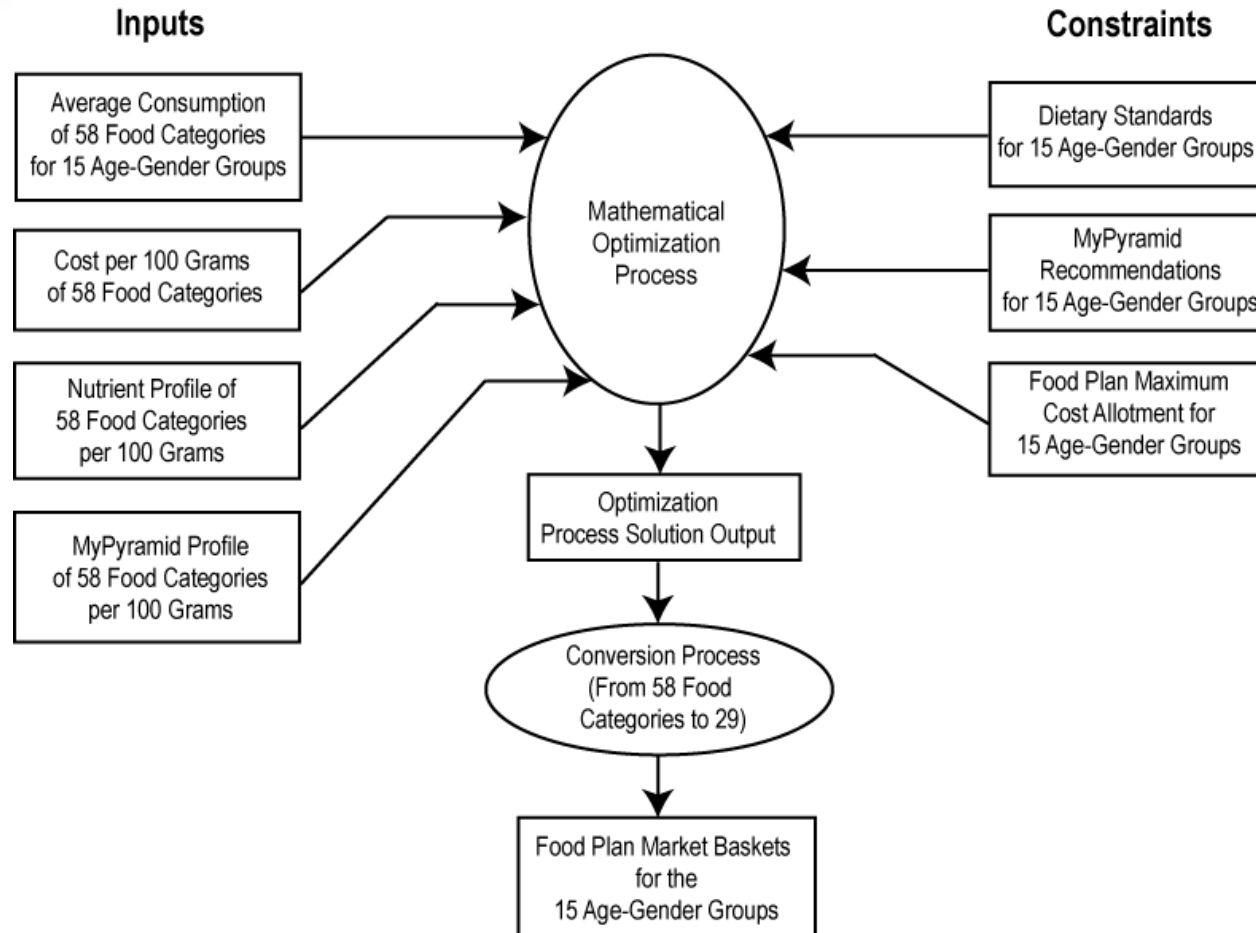
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- 2001-02 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey: contains food consumption and nutrient content of food information
- 2001-02 Food Prices Database: based on ACNielsen Homescan data





# Model







# Food Plan Market Baskets Meet Dietary Recommendations for

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- Vitamins A, C; calcium; iron; folate, etc.
- Total and saturated fat; cholesterol
- USDA Food Guidance System intakes  
(grain, vegetable, fruit, milk, and meat and  
bean intake)





## But, Food Plan Market Baskets Do Not Meet Dietary Recommendations for

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- Vitamin E and Potassium: market baskets meet at least 63% of recommendations; meeting recommendations would require major changes from current consumption
- Sodium: market basket limited to no more than current consumption; meeting recommendation would require major changes in food manufacturing practices





# Low-Cost Food Plan Market Basket vs. Current Consumption

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## Difference in lbs. of food per week

Grains	+20%
Vegetables	+116%
Fruits	+157%
Milk products	+131%
Meat and beans	0%
Other foods (fats, oils, sweets)	-58%





# Eating the Thrifty Way

<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/index.php>

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

**SNAP-Ed Connection**

Home About SNAP-Ed Connection SNAP-Ed Talk Databases Help Contact Us

You are here: Home / Recipe Finder

## Recipes

### Recipe Finder

**Search SNAP-Ed Connection**

- Search all USDA
- Advanced Search
- Search Tips

**Browse by Subject**

- Recipes**
- National SNAP-Ed
- Resource Library
- State Gates
- Photo Gallery
- Professional Development Tools

**En Español**

We invite you to search the database of recipes submitted by nutrition and health professionals and organizations. Nutrition educators in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other FNS nutrition assistance programs and their partners are encouraged to use the database to support their nutrition education messages.

- About the Recipe Finder Database
- Recipe Review Criteria
- Add a Recipe
- Rate a Recipe
- Questions and Answers about Recipe Finder Cost Data
- Food Demonstration Tips
- Tips For Involving Children In The Kitchen
- Food Safety Tips
- MyPyramid.gov

[View Shopping List](#)

**Search by ingredients:**

Having trouble finding a recipe by ingredient? [View a list of ingredients](#)

**More search options:**

**Search by recipe name:**

Browse all recipes alphabetically  
Browse all recipes by ratings  
Browse all recipes by author

**Search by the following categories:**  
Choose a search item from the categories below (limit one each) then use the **search** button **at the bottom of the page** to view the results.

**Nutrition Education Topic:**

<input type="radio"/> Eat Calcium Rich Food	<input type="radio"/> Eat More Fruits and Vegetables
<input type="radio"/> Eat Whole Grains	<input type="radio"/> Eat Less Saturated Fats, Trans Fats and Cholesterol





# May Search by

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- Menu item (e.g. main dish, soup, etc.)
- Audience (e.g. Hispanic, older adults, etc.)
- Ingredients
- Cost (all low-cost recipes)
- Cooking time





# Recipe Criteria

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- Submitted by programs receiving USDA funding
- Reviewed by dietitians
- Compatible with Dietary Guidelines
- Use low-cost, readily available ingredients
- Easy directions





# Future Plans

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## **New Dietary Standards of Food Plans**

- 1997-2010 Dietary Reference Intakes
- 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- 2010 USDA Food Guidance System intakes





# Future Plans

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- Update Food Plans with 2007-08 National Health and Nutrition Examination data and 2007-08 Food Prices data
- Cost targets of the Plans will not change





# Future Plans

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- Revise and add to Recipe Finder Database





# For More Information

[www.cnpp.usda.gov](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov)

The screenshot shows the homepage of the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP). At the top, the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture" and "Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion" are visible. The OMB Number 0584-0535 is also present. A navigation bar includes links for Home, About Us, News & Media, Publications, and Contact Us. The main content area features a search bar, a "Browse by Subject" list, and a "Spotlights" section with various resources. A sidebar on the right contains "In the News" updates and a "DiscussShare" button.

**USDA** United States Department of Agriculture  
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

OMB Number 0584-0535

Home About Us News & Media Publications Contact Us

**Search CNPP**

**Go**

- Search all USDA
- Search Tips

**Browse by Subject**

- MyPyramid
- Dietary Guidelines
- Healthy Eating Index
- Nutrient Content of the U.S. Food Supply
- USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food
- Expenditures on Children by Families
- USDA's Nutrition Evidence Library
- Nutrition Insights
- Internship Program
- Other CNPP Projects
- Resources

You are here: Home

**Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion**  
*Improving the nutrition and well-being of Americans*

The USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) works to improve the health and well-being of Americans by developing and promoting dietary guidance that links scientific research to the nutrition needs of consumers. CNPP is an agency of USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services.

**Spotlights**

-  **MyPyramid** replaced the Food Guide Pyramid in 2005 (En Español)
-  **MyFood-a-pedia** provides quick access to food groups, calories, & comparisons
-  **The Dietary Guidelines for Americans** give the basics for healthy eating
-  **The Food Planner** helps you reach your personal goals
-  **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food:** Nutrition from farm to table
-  Try out the **Cost of Raising a Child Calculator**

**In the News**

- January 31, 2010.** Washington, DC: The Secretaries of USDA and HHS release the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*.
- October 15, 2010.** Alexandria, VA: Written comments submitted on the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's report are now online.
- September 29, 2010.** Washington, DC: Secretary Tom Vilsack announces the winners of the Apps for Healthy Kids competition — a part of the First Lady's Let's Move! campaign.

[usda.gov/open](http://usda.gov/open)

**DiscussShare**

..... [OPEN.GOV](http://OPEN.GOV)