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Current Trends in Domestic Food Programs

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Participation and program costs discussed in this article compare the April-June quarter of 1985 with the same 3 months of 1984, unless otherwise noted. Preliminary data are reported as of August 1985 and are subject to revision. Entitlement and bonus commodities are included where applicable.

The average number of food stamp participants fell 4 percent during the second quarter of 1985, from 20.9 million people to 20.1 million. Food stamps help low-income households purchase a nutritionally adequate diet. Average monthly food stamp benefits per person increased from \$42.51 to \$44.88.

Federal expenditures for the Food Stamp Program totaled \$2.9 billion, a 1.5-percent increase from the second quarter of 1984. The value of benefits distributed to participants rose 1.3 percent, from \$2.67 billion to \$2.70 billion (table 1), while administrative expenses rose 4.3 percent, from \$225.3 million to \$234.9 million. The Federal share of State administrative expenses, including State antifraud monies, declined by 0.6 percent from \$201.8 million to \$200.6 million, while other administrative expenses, such as those for printing, transporting, and handling stamps, rose 46 percent from \$23.5 million to \$34.3 million.

Child Nutrition Programs

Average participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) increased by 247,000 children to 23.2 million participants in April and May 1985. The program is designed to provide approximately one-third of the daily nutritional

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Entitlement and Bonus Commodities

USDA regularly provides commodities to the National School Lunch Program, Child Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Nutrition Program for the Elderly, the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, and the Charitable Institution Program.

Two types of commodity assistance are provided—entitlement and bonus. In some of the programs, State agencies are “entitled” to receive commodities based on performance. For example, USDA

is required by law to give the State agencies 11.75 cents worth of commodities for each lunch served under the National School Lunch Program. These are referred to as entitlement commodities.

In addition, State agencies may receive commodities which were obtained from price support and surplus removal operations. These commodities are referred to as bonus commodities and do not count against the State’s mandatory allocation of entitlement commodities. In recent years, dairy products have constituted a large share of the bonus commodities.

needs for children aged 10 to 12. Lunches served under the NSLP consist of food from the following groups: meat or meat alternate, fruits and vegetables, bread or bread alternate, and milk. Free and reduced-priced lunches are provided for students who cannot afford the full price of lunch. Eligibility for these lunches is based on family size and income. Approximately 42.7 percent of all participants received a free lunch in April-May 1985, 6.6 percent received a reduced-price lunch, and 50.7 percent paid full price.

Federal expenditures for the NSLP rose 3.7 percent, from \$765.5 million in the second quarter of 1984 to \$793.5 million in 1985. Cash expenditures increased from \$605.6 million to \$637.8 million, while the value of commodities

(including cash-in-lieu of commodities) distributed to schools fell from \$159.9 million to \$155.7 million.

The School Breakfast Program provides breakfast for those who do not eat at home for a number of reasons, including lack of money, time, or parental help. Free and reduced-price meals are available to children whose families meet the eligibility criteria. Approximately 30,900 schools offered the School Breakfast Program to 15 million children at the beginning of the 1984-85 school year.

An average of 3.49 million children participated in the School Breakfast Program in April and May 1985, compared with 3.47 million a year earlier. Of the students in the program in April-May 1985, 83.7 percent received free meals, 4.6 percent paid a reduced price, while 11.7 percent paid the full price. During the same

period of 1984, 84.9 percent of the students received free breakfasts, 4.3 percent paid a reduced price, and 10.8 percent paid the full price.

Federal expenditures for the School Breakfast Program amounted to \$97.3 million in the second quarter of 1985, up from \$91 million a year earlier. No commodity assistance is given for the School Breakfast Program.

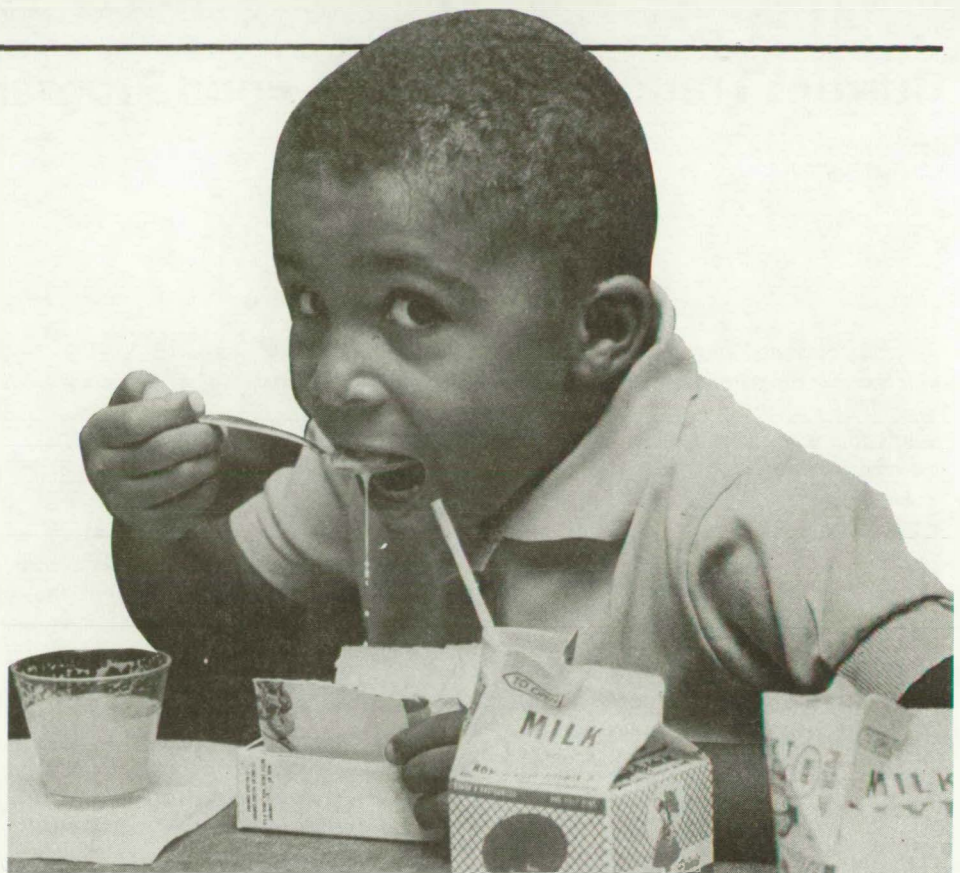
Average daily attendance at facilities offering the Child Care Food Program rose from 872,300 in June 1984 to 965,300 in June 1985, a 10.7-percent increase. Day care homes and child care centers provided an average of 56.2 million breakfasts, lunches, suppers, and snacks per month in the second quarter of 1985, up from 51.3 million a year earlier. Food costs for the Child Care Food Program rose 10.8 percent from \$97.1 million to \$107.7 million.

The total number of half pints of milk served under the Special Milk Program dropped 4.1 percent from 40.7 million in the second quarter of 1984 to 39 million in 1985. Federal expenditures declined about \$165,000 from \$3.87 million to \$3.71 million.

Approximately 14.4 million meals were served to children through the Summer Food Service Program during May-June 1985, a 6-percent increase from the same period in 1984. This program provides children with meals and snacks when school is not in session. It operates in areas where at least half of the children are from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the poverty guidelines. Food distributed under the Summer Food Service Program was worth \$20.2 million in the second quarter of 1985, compared with \$19 million a year earlier.

Supplemental Food Programs

Participation in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) increased from an



The number of half pints of milk served under the Special Milk Program dropped 4.1% to 39 million in the second quarter of 1985.

Reimbursement Rates Rise for School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

Category	July 1984- June 1985	July 1985- June 1986	Percent change
	Cents per meal ¹		
School Lunch			
Free ²	125.50	130.25	3.8
Reduced-price ²	85.50	90.25	5.6
Paid ²	12.00	12.50	4.2
Commodities ³	12.00	11.75	-2.1
School Breakfast			
Basic rates			
Free	65.50	68.00	3.8
Reduced-price	35.50	38.00	7.0
Paid	9.50	9.75	2.6
Severe need⁴			
Free	78.75	81.75	3.8
Reduced-price	48.75	51.75	6.2
Paid	9.50	9.75	2.6

¹ Rates are higher in Alaska and Hawaii. ² Rates are 2 cents higher than indicated in schools serving 60 percent or more meals free or at reduced prices in the second preceding school year. ³ Commodity assistance is provided to participating schools for each lunch served. ⁴ A school qualifies as a "severe need" school if 40 percent or more of the lunches are served free or at reduced-price and regular reimbursement rates are insufficient to cover program costs.

Source: Food Program Update for April 1984, p. 38; Federal Register, July 9, 1985, pp. 27,995-27,997; and Federal Register, July 24, 1985, p. 30,216.

Table 1. Federal Cost of USDA Food Programs¹

Program	1982	1983	1984	1984 (Quarters) ²				1985 ²	
				I	II	III	IV	I	II
Million dollars									
Family Food									
Food Stamps	10,376	11,120	10,677	2,770	2,668	2,535	2,703	2,771	2,703
Nutr. Asst. Prog. in Puerto Rico ³	412	825	825	206	206	206	206	206	206
Food Distribution									
Food Distribution on Indian Reservations	33	36	48	10	13	13	12	12	13
Schools ⁴	781	823	837	276	162	149	249	277	156
Other ⁵	161	234	233	71	64	43	54	48	40
Temporary Emergency Assistance ⁶	301	1,130	1,064	271	271	249	273	265	254
Cash in lieu of Commodities ⁷	112	121	136	33	34	38	31	36	35
Child Nutrition ⁸									
School Lunch	2,245	2,443	2,550	827	606	318	800	807	638
School Breakfast	327	357	378	119	91	50	119	117	97
Child Care Food and Summer Food Serv. Prog.	358	401	452	93	107	155	97	100	121
Special Milk	20	17	16	5	4	4	4	4	4
WIC ⁹	1,002	1,194	1,418	349	351	354	363	368	377
Total ¹⁰	16,128	18,701	18,634	5,030	4,577	4,114	4,911	5,011	4,644

¹Calendar years. Administrative costs are excluded unless noted. ²Preliminary. Quarterly data may not add to annual total due to rounding. ³Puerto Rico transferred from the Food Stamp Program to a substitute nutrition assistance program on July 1, 1982. Includes special projects expenditures. ⁴National School Lunch, Child Care Food, Summer Food Service programs and commodity schools. ⁵Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Elderly Feeding Pilot Project, Nutrition Program for the Elderly, and donations to charitable institutions. ⁶Initiated December 1981. ⁷Child nutrition programs and the Nutrition Program for the Elderly. ⁸Cash expenditures. ⁹Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Includes administrative costs. ¹⁰May not add because of rounding.

Source: Monthly data from the Food and Nutrition Service.

average of 3.07 million persons in the second quarter of 1984 to 3.14 million in the second quarter of 1985. About 51 percent of the participants during those periods were low-income children between 1 and 5 years old who were at nutritional risk.

Food costs for WIC totaled \$303 million in the second quarter of 1985, a 7-percent increase from \$283.3 million a year earlier. Monthly average benefits per person rose from \$30.74 to \$32.20. WIC provides participants with foods that are good sources of protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C, the nutrients often lacking in the diets of the program's target population. The foods

include iron-fortified cereal, eggs, juice, milk, cheese, dry beans, peas, and peanut butter.

Average participation in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) declined 2.1 percent, from 140,300 persons in the second quarter of 1984 to 137,400 in the same period of 1985. The program operates in 28 sites (primarily counties) in 12 States and the District of Columbia. The number of women participants rose by 0.5 percent during the comparison period, while participation by infants and children fell by 4.3 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively.

Monthly average food costs per person under the CSFP rose from \$21.76 in April-June 1984 to \$24.59 in 1985. Total

food costs amounted to \$10.1 million in 1985, compared with \$9.2 million in 1984. The food packages distributed to participants include infant formula and cereal, nonfat dry milk, juice, egg mix, dry beans, canned meat and poultry, and canned fruits and vegetables. Bonus commodities, such as cheese, are usually available.

An average of 19,500 persons participated in the Elderly Feeding Pilot Projects in the second quarter of 1985, an increase of 29.1 percent from 15,100 persons a year earlier. These projects operate under the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in Detroit, Des Moines, and New Orleans. The Elderly