

CN Label and Product Formulation Statement Tips

1	CN Labels or Product Formulation Statements are tools used to determine how a specific food item, or product, contributes to the required meal pattern for school meals. Both CN Labels and Product Formulation Statements are developed by food manufacturers and provide important information to menu planners about how much grain, meat/meat alternate, vegetable, or fruit is in a product. This is necessary because most prepared products that are purchased have many ingredients. For accurate crediting to meet meal pattern requirements, menu planners must be aware of how much of each food component is contained in a food so that proper portion sizes can be planned and served.
2	Because there are many options for purchasing prepared products to use in these menus, it is impossible to specify exactly what product will be used. Menu planners must look at what the menu specifies for crediting amounts in the meal pattern for each meal component before purchasing products. These specifications can be found in the Menu and Meal Component pages for each week.
3	When using prepared foods, menu planners MUST find products with a CN Label or Product Formulation Statement and use this information to determine the required serving size to meet the meal pattern. Be aware that not all products have a CN Label or Product Formulation Statement available as it is up to the manufacturer to develop these. Products without a CN Label or Product Formulation Statement should not be used.
4	Some CN Labels are found on packaging for ease of use. Read these labels carefully and train all kitchen staff to read these labels especially on new products or products that have been substituted for those used regularly as each product will be different. Not reading these labels may result in either a failure to meet the meal pattern or product quantity inaccuracies leading to over or under purchasing which can be costly to the program.
5	Other CN Labels or Product Formulation Statements can be obtained from food distributors or directly from the manufacturer, often on manufacturer websites or by contacting the manufacturer directly and requesting the information.
6	A CN Label or Product Formulation statement will tell the menu planner exactly how much of a product should be served to meet the meal pattern requirement. For example, a product such as prepared meatballs will contain a variety of ingredients along with meat/meat alternate. Each manufacturer of meatballs will have a different recipe and hence a different amount of meat/meat alternate in each meatball. In addition, each meatball manufacturer will prepare meatballs of different sizes. Menu planners must exactly how many meatballs are required to meet the planned meal pattern for meat/meat alternate for each product being used.
7	It is important to distinguish between the weight of a product, often provided in ounces, and the ounce equivalent amounts required to meet the meal pattern. An ounce equivalent is a reference to the amount of the specific meal component that is contained in a product made from many ingredients. The weight of a product in ounces includes all the ingredients and should not be used to determine whether the product meets the crediting requirement for a specific meal component.



CN Label and Product Formulation Statement Tips (cont'd)

8	<p>Two of the best examples of the difference between weight in ounces and ounce equivalents are muffins and meatballs. A 2 oz muffin (by weight) will NOT contain 2 oz. of grain equivalent because there are many other ingredients in the muffin. It is necessary to have a CN Label or Production Formulation statement or recipe crediting sheet to determine the ounce equivalent of grain contained in each muffin in order to know how it contributes to the meal pattern. The same is true with a product such as meatballs which contain many ingredients and fillers. A .05 oz meatball by weight does not contribute that amount of meat/meat alternate to the meal pattern. The CN Label or Product Formulation Statement will provide the information about how many .05 oz meatballs (by weight) are required to meet the ounce equivalents necessary to meet the meal pattern.</p>
9	<p>Deli meats can be particularly difficult to credit, and CN Labels or Product Formulation Statements must be used to determine the amount of product necessary to meet the required amount for the meat/meat alternate component. This is because deli meat contains water and other products which add to their weight but are not meat/meat alternate products. Each manufacturer makes deli meat differently, so it is crucial to find a product with a CN Label or Product Formulation Statement that satisfies the required amount of meat/meat alternate planned in the menu.</p>
10	<p>Keep all CN Labels or Product Formulation Statement on file and easily accessible so that staff can consult them as needed and so that they are readily available for Site Reviews.</p>