



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA CALLS FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON REVISION OF THE FOOD GUIDANCE SYSTEM

Public Meeting Slated for Aug. 19

WASHINGTON, July 12, 2004 – Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced that USDA will seek written comments and hold a public meeting to provide opportunity for public input into its comprehensive review and update of the Food Guidance System.

“Effective food guidance can help educate the public on healthy diets and lifestyles,” Veneman said. “We are seeking public input on how to best present the most current nutritional science in a form that assists the public in personalizing the information so they can make healthier choices.”

The reassessment of the Food Guidance System parallels the revision of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans currently underway. Development of the new food guidance system has been conducted in phases. In the first phase, USDA gathered information through technical research, professional and public input and consumer research to update the guidance system’s daily food intake patterns to meet the latest nutritional standards. The next and final phase includes developing an updated graphic image and educational materials that communicate in ways that consumers can more easily understand and put into practice.

Today, USDA published in the *Federal Register* a notice seeking public comments on the graphic image along with the motivational and educational messages for a new Food Guidance System. While USDA encourages written comments on all aspects of the proposed Food Guidance System, the *Federal Register* notice identifies six particular areas of interest, including the configuration of the new graphic, strategies to improve awareness and motivation for using the information, methods to assist consumers in personalizing the system, strategies to improve educational messages, interactive tools to demonstrate the messages and communication delivery channels for the messages.

The *Federal Register* notice calls for a 45-day comment period. In addition, a public stakeholder meeting will be held Aug. 19, 2004, from 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. in the Jefferson Auditorium, USDA South Building, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC. Requests to participate in this meeting must be received by 5:00 P.M. EST on Aug. 12, 2004. Submit requests to participate to respond@cnpp.usda.gov. Following the comment period, USDA will consider all input received in developing the new Food Guidance System.

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Final release of the new Food Guidance System and related consumer materials is scheduled for early 2005, following the release of the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

For more information on the new Food Guidance System and the *Federal Register* notice, visit USDA's website at www.cnpp.usda.gov. Written comments received during the comment period will be made available to the public and will be posted at www.cnpp.usda.gov/pyramid-update. Written comments can be submitted to: Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034, Alexandria, VA 22302. No electronic written comments will be accepted or considered.

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