

Menu Planning Part II: How To

*Texas Department of Agriculture
USDA Division*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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Food and Nutrition Division
Food Distribution Program

Acknowledgement Statement

You understand and acknowledge that:

- The training you are about to take does not cover the entire scope of the program; and that
- You are responsible for knowing and understanding all handbooks, manuals, alerts, notices, and guidance, as well as any other forms of communication that provide further guidance, clarification, or instruction on operating the program.

Course Introduction

Course Outline
and Objectives



Foundations: Menu Planning Part II Course Outline

01

Introduction

Course Objectives

02

Cycle Menu Overview

Understanding cycle menu purpose, benefits, and process

03

Pre-Planning

Step 1: Balancing food costs, availability, and nutrition requirements

04

Building A Cycle Menu

Steps 2-6: Building three-week cycle menu that includes required meal components

05

Incorporating USDA Foods

Tips on how to use available USDA Entitlement Foods to build menus

Part II Objectives and Outcomes

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand how to create a cycle menu incorporating USDA Foods while balancing:
 - Food costs
 - Availability
 - Student preference
 - Nutrition requirements

- Understand steps in building a three-week cycle menu

Cycle Menu Overview

Cycle Menu Purpose and Benefits



Menus repeated over a time period (~ 2-6 weeks).

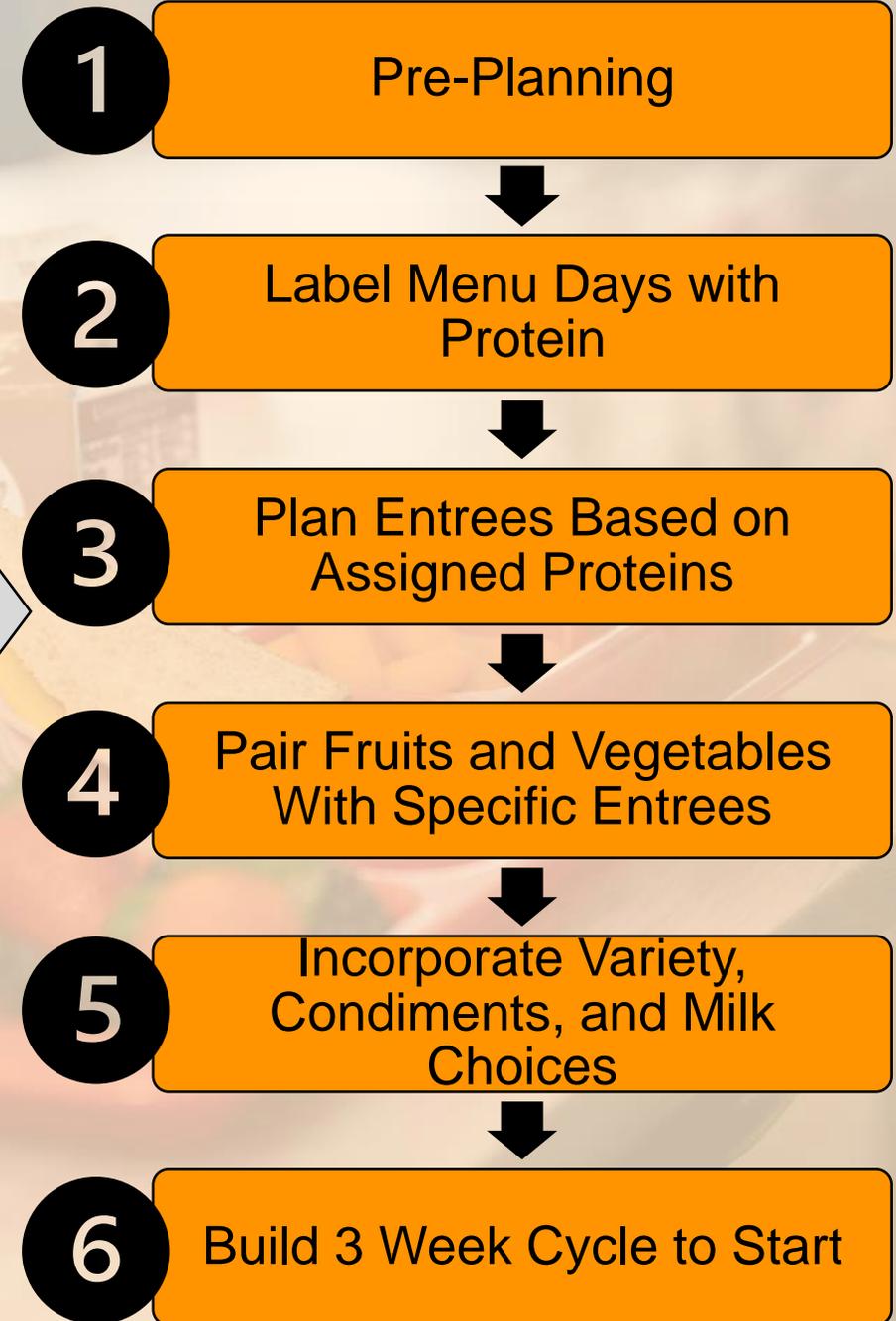
Benefits Include:

- Planning and calculating amount of USDA Foods to request
- Quick grocery shopping
- Maximizes use of entitlement
- Controls costs, saves time

Cycle Menu Process

Apply Menu Planning Part I:

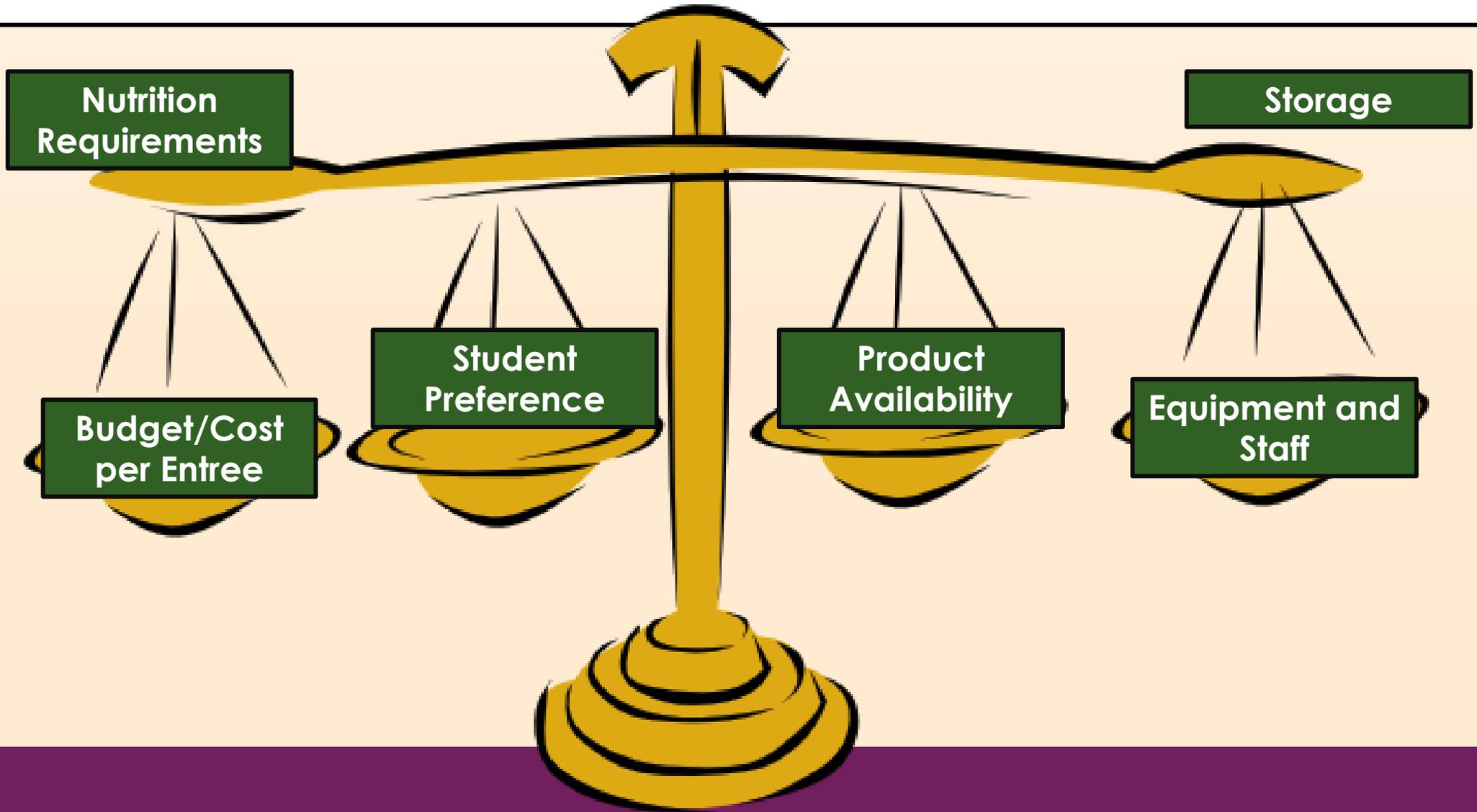
- Nutrition Standards
- Meal Components
- Calorie Limits
- Fat Limits
- Sodium Limits



03

Pre-Planning Step 1

Pre-Planning: Considerations to Balance



Pre-Planning:

Pull Historical Data

- ❑ Start with Food
Production Records and
Student Preferences
- ❑ Write down list of
student favorites



**What menu items
have you seen as
student favorites?**

Pre-Planning:

- What kind of kitchen do you have?
- Can you bake, equip, etc.?
- Number of entrees to be served?



Pre-Planning:

Nutrient analysis software is available and can help with analyzing:

- Calories
- Saturated fat
- Substitutions
- Extra grain for meal



04

Menu Building Steps 2-6



Step 2.
Menu Building:
Labeling Proteins

Step 2: Labeling Proteins

Label Proteins for the Week:

- Label menu days with proteins to ensure variety
- What protein will you assign to each day of the week?
 - Chicken
 - Vegetarian
 - Beef
 - Fish
 - Pork

Lunch Menu K-8					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Beef	Chicken	Vegetarian	Chicken	Fish
Week 2					
Week 3					



Step 3.
Menu Building:
Plan Entrees

Step 3: Plan Entrees

- ❑ Plan Entrees Based on Assigned Proteins
- ❑ Use recipes for student favorites, USDA Foods, and existing inventory

Lunch Menu K-8					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Beef ↓ Hamburger	Chicken ↓ Baked Chicken	Vegetarian ↓ Cheese Enchilada	Chicken ↓ Chicken Chalupa	Fish ↓ Fish Taco
Week 2					
Week 3					



Step 4.
Menu Building:
Pair Fruits and
Vegetables

Step 4: Pair Fruits and Vegetables

Plan most challenging fruit and vegetable sub-groups first

Entrée: Burger

Mixed Vegetables
(paired vegetable)

Lunch Menu K-8					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hamburger ↓ Mixed Vegetables	Baked Chicken ↓ Broccoli	Cheese Enchilada ↓ Fiesta Salad	Chicken Chalupa ↓ Mexicali Corn	Fish Taco ↓ Roasted Cauliflower
Week 2					
Week 3					



**Step 5.
Menu Building:
Add Variety**

Step 5: Add Variety

Incorporate variety and meal appeal by:

- Adding a variety of colors to the plate
- Choosing fruits based on texture, color, shape
- Listing milk choices
- Adding condiments



Lunch Menu K-8

Step 5: Add Variety

***Be sure to include condiments in your daily menus**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hamburger	Baked Chicken	Cheese Enchilada	Chicken Chalupa	Fish Taco
	Mixed Vegetables	Broccoli	Fiesta Salad	Mexicali Corn	Roasted Cauliflower
	Milk: 1%, Fat Free, Fat Free Chocolate				
Week 2					
Week 3					



Step 6.
Menu Building:
Build Cycle

Step 6: Build Cycle

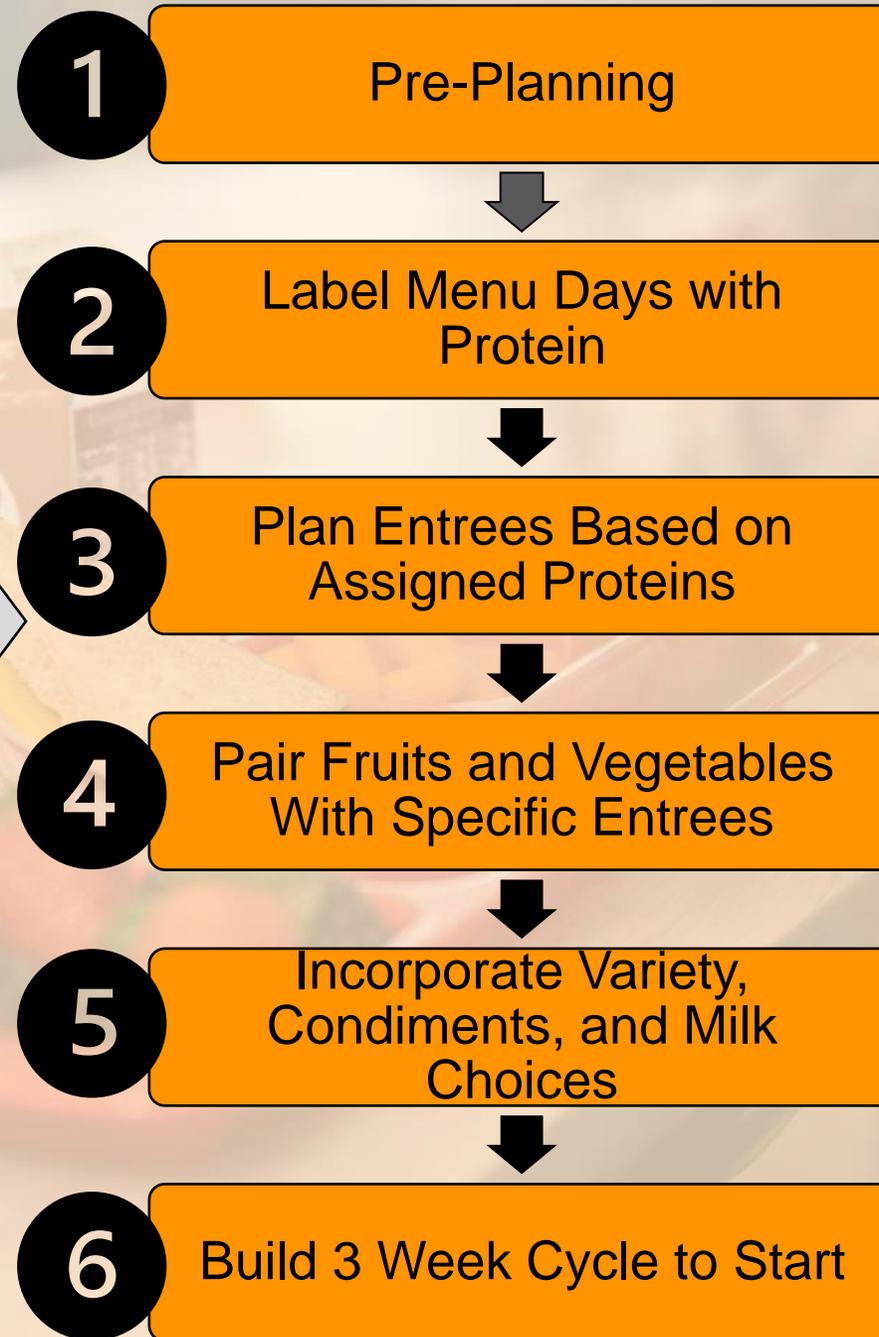
- Build three-week cycle to start
- With supply chain issues, some may have moved to two-week cycles
- Look at last year's numbers and remove items that were low in popularity

Lunch Menu K-8					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hamburger	Baked Chicken	Cheese Enchilada	Chicken Chalupa	Fish Taco
	Mixed Vegetables	Broccoli	Fiesta Salad	Mexicali Corn	Roasted Cauliflower
	Milk: 1%, Fat Free, Fat Free Chocolate				
Week 2	BBQ Chicken	Meat Loaf	Chicken Wrap	Penne Pasta	Crispy Fish Sandwich
	Herb Carrots	Mixed Vegetables	Roasted Broccoli	Harvest Salad	Green Beans
	Milk: 1%, Fat Free, Fat Free Chocolate				
Week 3	Steak Fingers	Chicken Tacos	Vegetarian Lasagna	Turkey Hot Dog	Pulled Pork Sliders
	Crinkle Cut Fries	Black Beans	Italian Herb Vegetables	Mashed Potatoes	Charro Beans
	Milk: 1%, Fat Free, Fat Free Chocolate				

Cycle Menu Process

Apply Menu Planning Part I:

- Nutrition Standards
- Meal Components
- Calorie Limits
- Fat Limits
- Sodium Limits



A person wearing a red and white plaid shirt is holding a large green tomato. The background shows a field of green plants under a blue sky with clouds. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent green rectangle.

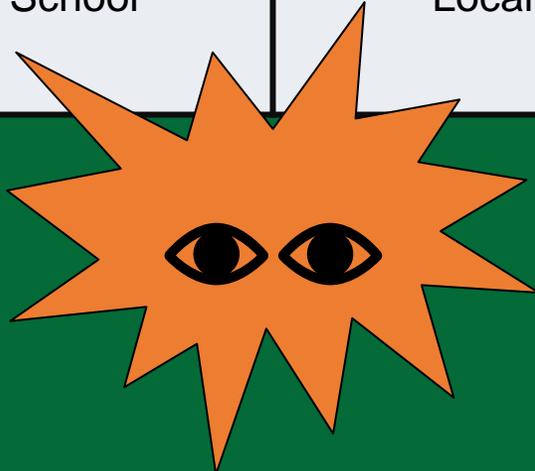
05

Incorporating USDA Foods



Terminology Changes

Prior to 2023	2023
Regular/"Brown Box"	Direct Delivery
Farm to School	Local Grown



USDA Foods



Direct
Delivery
(Brown Box)

Processing
Diversion

DoD
Fresh

Local
Grown
(Farm to
School)

Including USDA Foods in Cycle Menus



- Know products available
- Be aware of delivery capabilities
- Consider Processing Diversion vs. Direct Delivery (formerly Brown Box)
- Use of DoD Fresh
- Use of Local Grown (formerly Farm to School)
- Plan for unexpected changes; include matching commercial end products in bids

Including USDA Foods in Cycle Menus: Serving Models

- Determine serving model
- Determine storage space availability
 - cooler, freezer, dry storage
- Determine proper equipment

- Review staffing
- Review products with shorter shelf life
- Review inventory levels
- Talk to industry, brokers, etc.

Questions?

WBSCM Transition Page QR Code:

Scan QR Code to visit the
Food Distribution Program
WBSCM Transition website



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