

Hearst Newspapers

(Ran in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Bend Bulletin, San Antonio Express)

Potato advocates are fighting back

By KYLE GLAZIER • Hearst Newspapers

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WASHINGTON - With the U.S. Department of Agriculture threatening to eliminate potatoes from school lunches around the country, the nation's spud advocates pushed back Wednesday with nutritional and financial arguments that school cafeterias shouldn't discriminate against the widely consumed tubers.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 required the USDA to propose new school nutrition standards and provide a 6-cent-per-lunch funding increase for school districts that meet the new standards. Those standards would likely go into effect in mid-2012 unless revised by Congress.

The problem, the National Potato Council says, is that the standards, which would limit the amount of potatoes, corn and certain other vegetables that schools could serve each week, are half-baked.

"That simply makes no sense whatsoever," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, who spent part of her childhood picking potatoes for a local farmer. Collins noted that potatoes contain large amounts of vitamin C, potassium, calcium, and dietary fiber, nutrients that the USDA has said Americans aren't getting enough of.

A 5.3 ounce white potato provides 45 percent of the recommended daily amount of vitamin C, 18 percent of the recommended potassium intake, and is fat-free. Schools can currently serve them every day, but would be limited to twice a week under the USDA proposal.

"The white potato is not getting the credit it deserves," Collins said at a Wednesday discussion hosted by the Potato Council at the National Press Club.

Collins suggested that people with a negative view of potatoes, which are grown in 36 states, go beyond eating french fries and instead enjoy them "baked, broiled, roasted, in chowders, and in soups."

Martelle Esposito, a public policy nutritionist at the non-profit National WIC Association, said Collins and the Potato Council are making an argument that no one disputes. The WIC Association advocates for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children—a federal program.

"Nobody is arguing against the nutritional value of potatoes," Esposito said. "They do have all of the good things they say they have."

Margot Wootan, the Center's nutritional policy director, said the real problem is that children choose potatoes whenever they are offered and pass up greens such as spinach and broccoli. Fewer than 7 percent of kids eat a vegetable other than potatoes as part of their school lunch, Wootan said, and french fries are the most commonly-eaten vegetable in schools.

Actually, the potato advocates claim just the opposite. Dayle Hayes, a dietician critical of the USDA plan, said the potato encourages children to eat more vegetables. If offered baked potatoes, children will top them with green vegetables, Hayes said.

"In fact, they (potatoes) are becoming a vehicle for those vegetables."

Wootan said the idea of potatoes as a "gateway vegetable" is funny, but not realistic.

"It's a brilliant PR move, but it's not based in science," Wootan said.

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_15978/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=hpDvvb1Y

Washington Times

Spud fans rally to block school lunch rules

Ben Wolfgang The Washington Times

October 5, 2011

The potato will not be kicked out of the nation's school cafeterias without a fight.

Fearful that the Obama administration's planned "healthy lunch" guidelines will be worse than blight for growers, the spud industry is rallying school leaders and members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to its crusade to halt implementation of the rules before they take effect as scheduled next year.

The regulations, which are now under internal review after the Agriculture Department was flooded with more than 100,000 comments from opponents and supporters, would apply to students who qualify for low- or no-cost meals under the federal School Lunch Program and would greatly limit what schools could serve up each day.

The practical upshot, potato partisans fear, will be fewer tater tots, hash browns and french fries on cafeteria trays nationwide.

"The rule simply goes too far. It makes no sense whatsoever," said Sen. Susan M. Collins, a Republican from the potato stronghold of Maine, speaking at a Wednesday luncheon hosted by the National Potato Council.

The potato, she added, "isn't getting the credit it deserves" for being a rich source of potassium, fiber and vitamins.

Students could eat only one serving of potatoes, peas, lima beans or corn during lunch each week. A cob of corn or a cup of peas on Monday, for example, would mean no potatoes for the rest of the week. Students may have to bid farewell to home fries and hash browns, because spuds for breakfast are expected to be outlawed.

Proponents of the changes want to limit the amount of starch and sodium youngsters can scarf down in the cafeteria as part of the effort to fight child obesity, a cause championed by first lady Michelle Obama and Agriculture Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack.

Mr. Vilsack last week said the dietary guidelines came about because research found there was "too much fat, too much sodium, too much sugar, not enough fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy and whole grains" in school lunches.

Saying the final rules are still being worked on, he said on NPR that "oftentimes, it isn't the potato - it's the way in which the potato is produced or made available to students that may create an issue."

But critics see the proposal as a half-baked plan to micro-manage lunchtime and the nation's diet.

In a bipartisan show of strength, Ms. Collins intends to team up with fellow Maine Sen. Olympia J. Snowe, a Republican, Sen. Mark Udall, Colorado Democrat, and others to maintain local freedom in deciding what students can eat each day. They also plan to highlight the unintended consequences that the USDA's rule will have.

The new regulations are expected to cost at least \$6 billion over the next decade, since districts will be forced to nearly double the amount of fruit students must be served. Educators believe much of that food will be wasted, since many children have trouble finishing current portions.

"If you prepare a meal and it ends up being dumped into the trash, you're not doing those students any good," Ms. Collins said.

She and other opponents also fear the creativity of school cooks will be restricted to the point that many students opt to brown-bag it, defeating the purpose of ensuring that children get at least one balanced, healthy meal in between classes.

To put pressure on the USDA, the Potato Council on Wednesday rolled out a new survey, which asked school food service directors from across the country what they think of the proposed guidelines.

Forty percent believe the quality of children's health would decrease if the rules are implemented. Sixty percent expect the cost of running meal programs to rise dramatically. More than 60 percent believe more food will end up in the trash can, and 65 percent believe fewer students will eat in the school cafeteria.

Ms. Collins and her allies plan to use that data in their efforts to, at the very least, push back the USDA's planned implementation date of August 2012.

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_15978/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=rTZMmzrO

Pioneer Press

Peas, Corn and Other Starchy Veggies at Center of Furor Over USDA School Lunch Guidelines

By Tom Webb twebb@pioneerpress.com

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In the valley of the Green Giant, not everyone is jolly.

The federal government wants to restrict schools from serving peas and corn to America's schoolchildren. But that idea isn't producing many ho-ho-hos in Minnesota, the No. 1 grower of the green peas and sweet corn that schools serve.

"Aren't peas a vegetable, and didn't they always tell us that vegetables are good for you?" asked Jerry Groskreutz, who has grown peas in Waseca County for 25 years.

Yes, they did. But the fight against childhood obesity has taken an odd twist, with the government wanting kids to eat more vegetables - but not more peas and corn, though many parents would cheer if their children did.

In January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture proposed new rules aimed at boosting healthy foods in the school nutrition program. What raised eyebrows were the strict limits proposed for "starchy vegetables" - potatoes, peas, lima beans and corn.

Under USDA's plan, a high school would be limited to serving one cup of "starchy vegetables" a week. That's one meal's worth.

"That's just an outrageously low number," said Nick George, president of the Midwest Food Processors Association, whose members include vegetable canning companies. "We're trying to get kids to eat vegetables, so why limit them?"

Opposition from farm groups and food processors is one thing. But the USDA proposal also rankles a more formidable group: the nation's school lunch ladies.

"We do indeed need to move to reduce sodium and fat levels (and) to provide greater availability of fruits and vegetables," the School Nutrition Association wrote about the USDA plan. But "limiting starchy vegetables will create unappealing and confusing menu options for students."

No one knows how much corn and peas are consumed each year in school lunches. But there are 31 million children nationally who eat school lunches.

USDA received some 122,000 comments about its school-lunch proposal. Many applauded the shift to healthier fare and away from such choices as Tater Tots, chocolate milk and mystery meat.

But the comments also carry a strong undercurrent that USDA went too far, at least in the real world of the school cafeteria.

"Starchy vegetables prepared with no added fat, sugar or salt are invaluable to our students because they actually consume them!" wrote Margaret Hudson, a dietitian for a North Carolina school district.

The St. Paul Public Schools district has drawn acclaim for expanding offerings of healthful fruits and vegetables while eliminating the deep fryers. Nowadays, said nutrition director Jean Ronnei, "if your child is eating lunch, he or she can have as many fruits and vegetables as they want."

Like other school nutritionists, Ronnei applauded the drive for healthier foods but would prefer "a more moderate approach when it comes to starchy vegetables."

And no, she said with a laugh, she has never had a parent complain about a child eating too many vegetables.

USDA is reviewing the comments and is expected to produce final rules late this year or early in 2012.

Margo Wootan, a nutrition specialist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest, is a fan of the USDA proposal. She cheered the emphasis on adding whole grains, doubling the servings for fruit and vegetables and lowering salt and fat levels. She conceded, though, that peas are an innocent bystander.

"I would say that peas kind of got dragged along with their fellow starchy vegetables in this," she said. "I haven't heard any complaints about overconsumption of lima beans or peas."

Potatoes, however, are a different story, she said.

"The focus on starchy vegetables is mostly because of french fries and white potatoes, but also some concern about corn," Wootan said. "The way kids are eating starchy vegetables is, first and foremost french fries, but also as potato chips and corn chips.

"Potatoes and other starchy vegetables crowd out other vegetables from kids' food choices, and from the school lunch tray," Wootan added. "It's important to give other vegetables a chance."

On Capitol Hill, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, is steamed about potatoes and is trying to block the funding needed to implement the guidelines.

"I certainly agree that french fries is not the healthiest choice, but a baked potato can be a good source of potassium for our children," Collins said.

Minnesota is the nation's top state for growing peas and sweet corn for processing. The crops cover nearly 200,000 acres of state farmland. Wisconsin ranks third.

This region's warm-but-not-scorching summers are usually perfect for growing a persnickety crop like peas. Just not this summer.

"It was a terrible year, probably one of the worst I can remember," said Groskreutz, a farmer and a farm broadcaster on KDHL-AM in Faribault. "It was too wet early, and then it got too hot."

Minnesota is also a major potato-growing state, particularly in the Red River Valley. At Moorhead High School, the sports teams are proudly known as the Spuds, in honor of the local potato-growing tradition.

"We're all for improving nutritional standards for our students; absolutely we support that," said Wayne Kazmierczak, Moorhead's assistant school superintendent. "But we also hope some common sense gets brought into the discussion."

Potatoes currently appear on the school lunch menu in Moorhead about three times a week, Kazmierczak said.

"The french fries here are baked," he said. "The quality of the food is much better than it used to be, when I was in school in the '80s."

Whatever USDA decides on school-lunch vegetables, Moorhead High School is likely to keep its team name.

"I think we're going to remain the Spuds," Kazmierczak said. "I don't think we're going to become the Legumes."

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_15978/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=6b4ygGuh

Education Week's blogs > Politics K-12

Proposed Rules About School Meals Remain a Hot Potato

From guest blogger Nirvi Shah

October 5, 2011 6:00 PM

If some folks had their way, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposed rules about school meals, in particular the part about potatoes, might be better off without a section limiting starchy veggies.

On Wednesday, the National Potato Council hosted a press briefing (complete with a hot potato bar brought in by the Alexandria, Va., school district) to make its case for why potatoes should have more of a showing on school lunch trays than the USDA is proposing. The agency's proposal would limit potatoes (and fellow starchy vegetables corn, green peas, and lima beans) to one cup a week.

The reduction in servings of starchy vegetables is one of many changes to school meals proposed by the USDA to reflect recommendations from the Institutes of Medicine. The changes, which generated more than 130,000 comments, also require more green and orange vegetables, less fat in milk, more whole grains, and less sodium. The USDA is expected to finalize the rules about school meals later this year or early next, and school cafeterias would have to put them into practice during the 2012-13 school year.

As U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, noted, that means if baked potatoes were served on Monday, corn on the cob couldn't be served Thursday. Fish chowder or beef stew made with potatoes would be out, too.

Collins, who grew up in a region of Maine where potato farms are plentiful and whose first job was picking potatoes, also said that she and her siblings ate potatoes every day, but neither she nor her five brothers and sisters are overweight.

She sponsored the discussion, entitled USDA's School Meals Make No Sense, with other lawmakers from potato-growing states, including Sen. Olympia Snowe, R, Maine, Sen. Mark Udall, D-Colo., Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., and Rep. Jean Schmidt, R-Ohio. (Not all lawmakers from the country's many potato-growing states are united on this issue. U.S. Rep. Jared Polis, D-Colo., has asked people to thank Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for the proposed nutrition standards, in particular the limits on potatoes.)

Collins noted, as has the National Potato Council, that potatoes have more potassium than bananas and are a good source of fiber.

She pledged to try to force the USDA's hand when the agriculture spending bill comes up for discussion on the Senate floor, something she had suggested she would do in the past.

"The bottom line is the department's rule simply goes too far," Collins said Wednesday. "It would unfairly hurt a vegetable that is easily accessible and popular."

And cheap. Food service directors at the meeting, from Virginia, Colorado, Maine, Pennsylvania, and California predicted dire scenarios if the meal rules take effect unchanged. For one thing, they say, their costs are expected to go up significantly, in part because they will be buying more fruits and vegetables, including many that cost more than potatoes. (The USDA will pay districts a little more per meal, and schools must charge students who pay full price for meals more to make up for some of the new costs.)

Between the changes about what vegetables to serve and others that carry a price tag and are required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (which passed in Congress last year with bipartisan support), some cafeteria managers worry they will have to make some major changes to their meal programs to cut costs. Some districts won't be able to serve breakfast, the food service officials warned. At schools where an overwhelming majority of students are poor, universal free breakfast or lunch programs could disappear. Perhaps students will be served cold meals or have no options from which to choose how to load their trays. Students will end up throwing away a lot of food because the proposed rules require larger servings of fruits and vegetables, they warned.

But after the meeting, Jeffrey Mills, who runs the District of Columbia's school meal program, was quick to point out that his district put into effect the meal recommendations and has cut costs and increased the number of meals it is serving. And a Maine cafeteria manager endorses the USDA's limits on spuds.

The USDA has reasoned that it wants to limit the amount of potatoes served at school because American children eat plenty of them in and outside of school. The Institutes of Medicine, which created guidance about meals that the USDA drew from to create its school meal rules, says 29 percent of the vegetables kids eat, nearly a third, are some form of potatoes. Most are in the form of chips or fried fries—rather than the baked fries most school cafeterias now serve.

But Leo Lesh, the just-retired director of Denver's school food service program, said that isn't the school cafeteria's responsibility, especially when students are in school for only part of the day for typically 180 days a year.

"School lunches don't cause obesity," he said. "I can't account for the other 186 days [of the year] or whatever it is."

The panel at Wednesday's tuber talk also invoked the federal government's push to increase the amount of vegetables all Americans should eat. They noted First Lady Michelle Obama's work on school nutrition. (The First Lady was hosting students from two District of Columbia elementary schools at the same time as the tuber talk. They were helping her harvest the White House garden, which I believe does not include potatoes.)

The food service directors also said potatoes often serve as the catalyst for getting students to eat other vegetables. The potato bar offered diced carrots, diced tomatoes, spinach, and steamed broccoli as toppings (along with reduced-fat cheddar, low fat sour cream, turkey chili, and butter). Mark Szymanski, spokesman for the National Potato Council, told me some schools mix sweet potato fries in with white potato fries so students will eat the sweet potatoes.

The potato industry already is on the defensive because the WIC, or Women, Infants, and Children, program, no longer allows its vouchers to be spent on white potatoes. The program provides money for some low-income pregnant women or mothers to buy food. Schools buying fewer potatoes could be a huge blow to the \$3.2 billion industry.

"That's a slippery slope to saying potatoes are not vegetables anymore, that potatoes are not nutritious, and they don't have any value," Szymanski said.

Although a reporter pointed out that the meal rules aren't final, it sounded like the panelists were sure that the USDA won't adjust its proposal on potatoes at all, despite the thousands of comments it received.

Dayle Hayes, a dietician and author of the School Meals That Rock page on Facebook, conceded that point.

"We don't know what exactly is being considered for the final rule," she said.

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2011/10/if some folks had their.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2011/10/if_some_folks_had_their.html)

The Denver Post

Former Denver school official sees loss of free meals if nutrition rules take effect

By Allison Sherry

October 6, 2011

WASHINGTON — Denver Public Schools lunch director Leo Lesh told a group of journalists and schools advocates today that his district would likely cut free breakfast and lunch programs for poor schools if new nutrition standards take effect that require schools to serve more fruits and vegetables.

The panel discussion was sponsored by the National Potato Council, which represents potato farmers who say they will suffer under the new USDA guidelines that include lowering calorie counts and delivering more fruits, leafy green vegetables and whole grains. They also would limit the servings of starchy vegetables – including potatoes, lima beans, corn and peas – to one cup, once a week.

Lesh said DPS runs a robust farm to table program and that if the new standards took effect, it would cost the cash-strapped district more and officials may have to cut out programs that promote local vegetables and meats. He also said the 81 DPS schools that automatically offer free breakfast and free lunch may not be able to do that anymore.

“They (potatoes) are the least expensive so it gives me more money to buy . . . local bison and other vegetables,” Lesh said at a lunch of, guess!, baked potatoes and red chili. “These programs are in jeopardy if the costs increase.”

The potato issue has pitted Democrats Sen. Mark Udall and Rep. Jared Polis in Colorado’s delegation.

Udall opposes the new standards and has co-authored a letter trying to block funding that would go to implementing the standards. Polis calls the push from potato farmers misleading because schools could still serve potatoes, they just couldn’t serve them every day.

The USDA has tried to take into account additional costs for school districts and the Senate passed a bill last year (supported by both Udall and Sen. Michael Bennet, also a Democrat) devoting \$7.5 billion extra to schools to implement the more veggie-saturated diet.

USDA officials are looking at more than 130,000 comments they received over the new standards, and officials hope to put them into effect fall of 2012.

http://www.denverpost.com/politics/ci_19051001

Maine Today

D.C. event intensifies pro-potato pressure

By Jonathan Riskind

October 5, 2011

WASHINGTON — Doris Demers, the nutrition program director for York and Kittery schools, had a blunt response today when asked about proposed federal guidelines limiting white potato servings as part of the federally funded school lunch program.

"It's ridiculous," Demers said, adding that three York and Kittery schools today featured baked potato bars full of healthy topping choices such as chili, broccoli and beans.

Demers participated in an event at the National Press Club in Washington held by the National Potato Council.

The council released a survey contending that of 245 school food service professionals surveyed, only 5 percent believe the new guidelines will improve the quality of children's health while 60

percent or more think the rules would increase food costs, lead to decreased student participation in school lunch programs and result in more wasted food.

That's not the position held by a number of national and Maine health care and nutrition advocates, who say potatoes and other starchy vegetables contribute to obesity and laud as sound science the proposed federal guidelines limiting starchy vegetables while increasing green and orange vegetables.

But the potato council, along with legislative allies like GOP Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine and Democratic Sen. Mark Udall of Colorado, is trying to persuade – or potentially force, through legislation – the U.S. Department of Agriculture to alter the rules before they go into effect later this year.

Collins, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, says that if the USDA doesn't revise its guidelines – she wants them to focus on requiring healthier preparations of potatoes, meaning baked, roasted and boiled rather than fried – she will attempt to force a revision on the agency when the 2012 agriculture spending bill reaches the Senate floor this fall.

Collins attended today's potato council event, saying that if the guidelines go into effect as written it would mean that a school that serves a medium baked potato on Monday could not serve an ear of freshly grown corn later in the week. Collins also noted that Demers has told her that York schools serve french fries just twice a month, but that they are baked french fries one day and sweet potato fries the other day.

"I have been trying to convince USDA for months," Collins told reporters after the event, reiterating her oft-made argument that potatoes meet USDA's own general nutrition guidelines if they are prepared correctly. "I don't like taking the legislative route, which would be a funding restriction until they revamp the rule. The overall goal of increasing fruits and vegetables is one that I wholeheartedly support. But this simply goes too far."

Snowe did not attend the event, but released a statement charging that the proposed guidelines are "problematic and misguided" and could result in students eating fewer, not more, vegetables if potatoes are taken away.

The growing of white potatoes is big business in Maine, the sixth-largest potato-producing state in the nation in 2010, according to the Maine Potato Board in Presque Isle. Maine farmers grow about 55,000 acres of white potatoes, selling \$140 million worth in 2009, the potato board has said.

U.S. Department of Agriculture officials say they are not bashing potatoes, but note that after studying the issue of improving the nutrition of food for federal nutrition assistance programs, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine recommended a focus on green, leafy vegetables, orange vegetables and whole grains.

The issue of potato consumption and nutrition gained attention earlier this year when a Harvard study found the potato to be a prime obesity culprit. French fries and potato chips were the worst uses of the potato, but even boiled potatoes contributed to weight gain, according to the study.

In proposing new food guidelines for those programs, which offer free and reduced-price meals to low-income children, the USDA wants to limit to one cup a week the amount of starchy vegetables – potatoes, peas and corn – that can be served as part of the school lunch program. It would ban the potato completely from the breakfast program.

The Washington-based Center for Science in the Public Interest responded to today's potato council event by saying in a release that the USDA has proposed "common-sense standards – a giant step toward curbing our nation's growing child obesity crisis. Unfortunately, some in Congress are now trying to block USDA's efforts in order to benefit potato lobbyists who want to keep other vegetables out of school lunches at the expense of our kids."

In Maine, pediatric dentist Jonathan Shenkin of Augusta has picked up the campaign to uphold the USDA school lunch standards that limit potatoes in any form. Shenkin says Maine politicians are putting agriculture and corporate interests ahead of what's best for the children eating school lunches and ahead of the need to attack the nation's childhood obesity problem.

Shenkin has said that the Maine congressional delegation – Democratic Reps. Mike Michaud and Chellie Pingree also oppose the guidelines – are ignoring scientific evidence that starchy vegetable consumption leads to obesity and making "more of an economic decision."

The American Heart Association joined the fight today as well, issuing a press release at the potato council event that said the association urges "the USDA to finalize the nutrition standards as soon as possible and uphold the proposed limit on starchy vegetables."

The association, however, also urged the federal agency to clarify its rules to ensure that the weekly serving limits do not apply to potatoes and other starchy vegetables used in soups and similar dishes as long as requirements for serving legumes, dark green and orange vegetables are met.

"If the USDA's proposed standards are implemented, they have the potential to improve the health and well-being of our children," the heart association said.

<http://www.kjonline.com/news/DC-event-puts-potato-war-in-spotlight.html>

Keiser Health News

Potato Fight In The Capital

By Phil Galewitz

October 5th, 2011, 3:35 PM

When the potato lobby speaks, it always puts its best spuds forward. Today, at a National Press Club lunchtime briefing to promote the nutritional value of the vegetable, that meant a full bar of baked potatoes, french fries (baked, not fried) and all the requisite trimmings – sour cream, cheddar cheese, chopped tomatoes, spinach and broccoli. Yes, according to sources close to the food, it was scrumptious.

The keynote speaker at the National Potato Council event, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, didn't stop for a bite, even though her home state is one of the biggest producers of potatoes. She said she had other plans for lunch.

But Collins gave the potato lobby what it wanted. As she's done for most of the year, she spoke out against the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposed school nutrition guidelines that would limit helpings of white potatoes and other starchy vegetables such as corn, peas and lima beans to one cup a week. Health experts say the move is an effort to reduce the amount of french fries kids eat and open up opportunities for kids to get other vegetables such as carrots or green beans.

"This means if a school serves a medium baked potato on a Monday it could not serve a full serving of corn or more potatoes for the rest of the week," Collins said "That makes no sense whatsoever." In other words, the plan is half-baked.

Collins and other potato supporters stressed the nutritional value of the spud, including potassium and dietary fiber. Moreover, they claimed potato bars which are growing more common in public schools to help entice kids to eat other vegetables and important foods like low fat cheese and broccoli and spinach.

A final ruling from the USDA is expected early in 2012.

Collins noted she and her five siblings ate some type of potato almost every day growing up in rural Maine. And none are overweight, she said.

The Potato Council released a survey of 245 school food service directors showing how most thought the new rules would lead to higher costs and more "plate waste."

And about those french fries, the council said, only 10 percent of schools even have a fryer today.

"Today's school lunch is not your school lunch you remember," said Dayle Hayes, a registered dietitian, said at the briefing.

<http://capsules.kaiserhealthnews.org/index.php/2011/10/potato-fight-in-the-capital/>