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**Date:** February 21, 2023

Comments on Docket No. FNS-2022-0007 “Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): Revisions in the WIC Food Packages”

Dear Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA,

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) is thankful for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed revisions to the WIC food package. IFT is a global organization of approximately 12,000 members. IFT’s vision is for a world where science and innovation are connected and universally accepted as essential to improving food for everyone. IFT seeks to connect global food system communities to advance the science of food and its application. We believe science is essential to ensure the global food system is equitable, sustainable, safe, and nutritious.

IFT commends the USDA on their efforts to update the WIC food packages to align with Federal dietary guidelines and the NASEM 2017 report. We agree that many of the proposed changes will provide WIC participants with a wider variety of foods that fit into a healthy dietary pattern and accommodate personal and cultural food preferences. The safety and quality of the foods provided in the WIC food package is of considerable importance as these foods supplement the diets of some of the most vulnerable in our population, infants, pregnant and lactating women, and young children. It is with this concern in mind that we recommend the USDA consider the revisions to the WIC food package through a lens of potential exposure to toxic elements and contaminants in certain foods.

Specifically, we request the USDA evaluate the current Closer to Zero efforts and consider the toxic element data within the FDA Total Diet Study as it relates to the WIC food package recommendations. This could help minimize exposure of the most vulnerable in our population to potential toxic elements. For example, balancing whole grains with higher amounts of cadmium and arsenic, with those that are lower in these toxic elements within the food package may need to be considered to ensure there is not over-reliance on single whole grain foods that could increase exposure of children to toxic elements. Likewise, some vegetables, are higher in cadmium than other vegetables. It would be advisable to ensure that the vegetable sources provided by vendors are varied enough to minimize potential exposures.

IFT appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed revisions to the WIC food package. We thank you for considering our comments. Please contact Anna Rosales, Senior Director Government Affairs and Nutrition ([arosales@ift.org](mailto:arosales@ift.org)) if IFT may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Anna Rosales

Senior Director Nutrition and Government Affairs, Institute of Food Technologists