




## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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To: School Business Administrators, Charter School Leads; Non Public School Administrators; Food Service Directors of Schools Participating in the School Nutrition Programs

From: Arleen Ramos-Szatmary, Coordinator   
School Nutrition Programs

Date: June 15, 2016

Subject: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirement for School Year 2016 - 2017

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued memo SP33-2016 *Extension Notice: Requests for Exemption from the School Meals' Whole Grain-Rich Requirement for School Year 2016-2017*, which extends the ability for School Food Authorities (SFAs) to request exemptions from the whole grain-rich requirements in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program through School Year 2016-2017.

SFAs may apply for an exemption to the whole grain-rich requirement for School Year 2016-2017 by completing the New Jersey Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Form #279 available in SNEARS. Please note that all previously approved whole grain-rich exemptions, including Pasta Waivers granted for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, will expire at the end of School Year 2015-2016. SFAs are encouraged to include specific types of pasta and whole grain-rich products in the Whole Grain-Rich Exemption Form.

The USDA has granted this exemption in order to allow SFAs additional time to transition to a menu with 100% whole grain-rich products in School Year 2017-2018. To this end, SFAs granted the exemption will need to describe how they plan to identify, evaluate and incorporate new, acceptable whole grain-rich products into their school menus.

The approval process will begin July 1, 2016, and will be effective for School Year 2016-2017. SFAs granted the exemption must comply with the School Year 2013-2014 requirement to offer at least half of the grains as whole grain-rich products. It is the responsibility of the SFA to ensure compliance with this requirement, and grain offerings will be monitored as part of the administrative review. A copy of the Exemption Form, State Agency notification of approval and any other documentation to support the request should also be maintained on file.

The New Jersey Whole Grain Rich Exemption Extension Form is available in SNEARS under the tab "Resources" and then in the subcategory, "Equipment Requests/Waivers." The completed form **must** be sent by email to: [snpspecialprojects@ag.state.nj.us](mailto:snpspecialprojects@ag.state.nj.us).

Direct any questions to the School Nutrition Programs unit at 609-984-0692.

