



## REAL RESULTS FOR REAL PEOPLE: A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

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The Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Service ensures access to nutritious, healthful diets for all Americans. The nation's nutrition assistance programs provide a safety net to help the most vulnerable in our society meet their food needs. We also work to empower all consumers with knowledge of the link between diet and health and encourage consumers to make healthful food choices through nutrition education and promotion.



Under Secretary  
Eric M. Bost

Our goal is to continue a long history of helping families and individuals secure a nutritious diet, and build on this success with targeted improvements in three areas – increasing program access, promoting better eating habits, and strengthening stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Under President George W. Bush's leadership, we have achieved *real results for real people* across the Nation.

### IMPROVE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

#### Sustained Commitment to the National Nutrition Safety Net

- Led USDA in reauthorizing the Food Stamp Program as part of Farm Bill reauthorization, securing a package that adds \$6.4 billion in new funding to nutrition assistance programs over a 10-year period. Successfully advocated for restoration of food stamp eligibility to many legal immigrants – a critical step in improving assistance for those who face hunger and restoring fairness and equity. Supported successful implementation at the State level; 48 states have implemented one or more of the new options provided to simplify program administration and improve access.
- Developed recommendations for program improvements to pursue during the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition and WIC programs based on three principles of good stewardship:
  - To ensure that all children have **access** to nutritious meals;
  - To address the problems of overweight and obesity and establish **lifelong healthy habits** in children; and
  - To maintain high standards and **integrity** in the child nutrition programs.

Drawing on a nationwide series of outreach sessions that gathered input from 700 groups and individuals, FNCS offered recommendations for changes to improve program access for all those eligible for them, to encourage children to make positive choices about diet and physical activity, and to foster good stewardship of program resources, combining effective oversight with a minimum of red tape.



## Improved Access to Food and Nutrition Programs

- Served more participants in the major nutrition programs: in May 2003, over 4 million more people received food stamps, over 600,000 more children ate a free or reduced price school lunch, over 700,000 more children ate a school breakfast, and nearly 400,000 more people participated in WIC than in January 2001.
- Awarded a contract for a national media campaign to reinforce the importance of food stamps as nutrition assistance and work support, and highlight a commitment to ensuring that all eligible people receive benefits with dignity and respect.



- Distributed more than 2 million flyers and posters in English and Spanish as part of the *Food Stamps Make America Stronger* campaign, expanding efforts to increase program participation among those eligible. Informational materials including radio scripts that promote the nutritional benefits of the program are available to State and local communities and organizations.
- Launched outreach efforts to educate Spanish-speaking immigrants about changes in the Food Stamp Program through partnership meetings, 50 sixty-second capsules, guest appearances on weekly live call-in shows, and weekly columns in Spanish-language media.
- Provided new opportunities for Food Stamp Program access. FNS signed a memorandum of understanding with the Social Security Administration to expand the Combined Application Projects for applicants for SSI and food stamps. Launched new projects with Florida, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania to improve access for elderly and disabled persons.
- Distributed a significant volume of commodities purchased in support of agriculture markets through the commodity assistance programs. The value of bonus commodities—largely fruits and vegetables—distributed through the Emergency Food Assistance Program to supplement the diets of low-income Americans tripled between 2000 and 2002 – and we maintained a high level of commitment in 2003.
- Expanded the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to four new States – Kansas, Kentucky, Nevada and Puerto Rico. The program now operates in 35 states, 3 Indian Tribal Organizations, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.





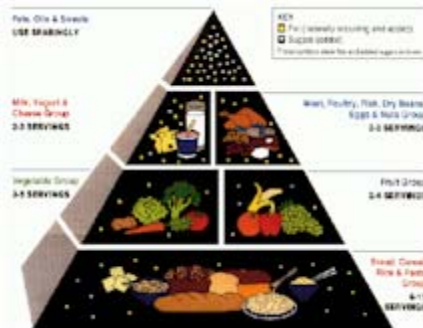
- Launched a nationwide initiative to promote children’s access to nutritious meals and snacks when school is not in session. Promoting the availability of summer feeding programs is critical, since only about 3 million children currently receive program meals during the summer, while 16 million low-income children receive them during the school year.

- Worked as supporter, enabler, catalyst and collaborator with Faith-Based and Community Organizations to promote access to Federal nutrition assistance programs. FNCS developed a range of actions to promote a “federal friendly” environment for such organizations, and to make funding more accessible, in order to improve program access and participation. FNCS also helped to place a focus on hunger by having the subject specifically addressed in the White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) Conferences.



- Mobilized teams in wake of September 11 terrorist attack to ensure continued program access to affected families. Emergency food stamps provided \$4 million in benefits to over 32,000 people in New York City alone. Since then emergency food stamps have provided help in more than 16 natural disasters, including ice storms in Oklahoma (\$7.4 million for 26,000), flash floods in West Virginia (\$2 million for 7,600 households), hurricane relief in Louisiana (\$6.2 million for 66,000 people), and wind storms in Tennessee (\$3.5 million for 9,100 households).

### PROMOTE HEALTHIER EATING HABITS AND LIFESTYLES



- Began revision of the Food Guide Pyramid to bring its recommendations up-to-date with the most current science and to make sure its messages are clear and useful to American consumers. The Pyramid, the most widely recognized food guide in history, continues to fulfill USDA’s historic responsibility for guiding consumer food choices.
- Partnered with Department of Health and Human Services to begin the development of the 2005

Dietary Guidelines for Americans—the cornerstone of Federal nutrition policy. An expert Advisory Committee has been appointed to review and recommend any changes if necessary to assure that the Guidelines are based on the latest science.

- Enhanced Americans’ ability to assess their diet—with USDA’s *Interactive Healthy Eating Index*. Over one million Internet sessions using the *Index* were recorded this year. The *Index* (at [www.cnpp.usda.gov](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov)) allows users to input their daily food intakes and receive a quick summary of the quality of their diet, as well as receive tailored recommendations that will help them improve their diet.



- Led efforts to support and motivate Americans to make concrete improvements in their diets and physical activities as part of the President's *HealthierUS* initiative. Key accomplishments include:

- An agreement with the National 5 A Day Partnership to pursue collaborative strategies with USDA to promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. Nutrition assistance programs provided over \$7 billion to support fruits and vegetable consumption among low-income children and families in fiscal year 2002. Developed and promoted the *Fruits and Vegetables Galore -- Helping Kids Eat More* tool kit.

- A partnership between the Departments of Agriculture, Education and Health and Human Services to expand school-based efforts to help children and young people develop healthy eating and physical activity skills that will last a lifetime.

- Expanded efforts to combat childhood obesity through the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ campaign. FNCS distributed nearly 15 million new educational resources to schools, child care centers, WIC clinics, and food stamp offices throughout the country, launching a new web site with an average of 129,000 hits per month, and providing downloadable screensavers, PSA's and Power Panther song.



- The first national nutrition education conference, to promote cross-program collaboration. Conference offered more than 160 presentations, 60 poster sessions, and 36 exhibits to over 900 registrants.

- Developed and distributed *Nibbles for Health*—nutrition education resources for the 1.5 million parents of preschoolers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Partnered with Food and Drug Administration to develop and distribute *Power of Choice*—nutrition education materials targeted for young adolescents in after-school programs.
- Partnered with the National Dairy Council to foster healthy nutrition environments in schools through *Changing the Scene*, an action kit developed in consultation with nutrition, health and education groups. Developed *Nutrition and Physical Activity the 100 Way* in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the mentoring organization 100 Black Men of America to promote sound dietary and physical activity practices among adolescent African-American males and their families.
- Developed and distributed *Fathers Supporting Breastfeeding* materials in an effort to increase breastfeeding rates. These materials are specifically targeted to African



American fathers, a group that has previously not had the benefit of targeted breastfeeding messages.

- Implemented a highly successful pilot program in 107 elementary and secondary schools in four States and an Indian Tribal Organization to promote fresh fruit and vegetable consumption among the Nation’s schoolchildren.
- Issued new standards to improve nutrition services for WIC participants nationwide, helping State agencies benchmark the quality of their nutrition services, identify areas needing improvement, and assess and encourage positive changes.
- Provided leadership and support to improve diets in other countries. Under Secretary Bost and his staff have collaborated with the Foreign Agricultural Service, the Agency for International Development, the World Food Program and the Five-A-Day Program to provide technical assistance and promote improved nutrition and food security in South Africa, Hong Kong, Brazil, Japan and several countries in the Caribbean and Central America.



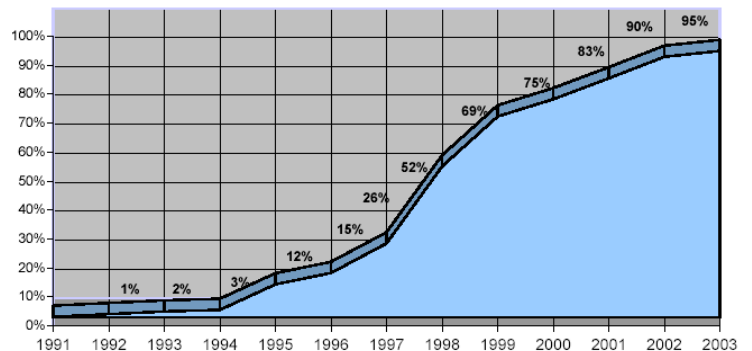
Under Secretary Bost visits with school children in South Africa

## IMPROVE FOOD PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

### Expand Electronic Government

- Expanded delivery of food stamps through electronic benefits transfer (EBT) to over 95 percent of all benefits. By October 2003, food stamp EBT systems will be operational statewide in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. Provided EBT to WIC participants in four States through the use of smart card technology and initiated a study of on-line magnetic strip card technology.
- Brought nutrition assistance customer service into the digital age through GovBenefits (<http://www.govbenefits.gov>), a citizen-centered guide to government assistance and benefits, including food stamps, school lunch and breakfast, WIC, and nutrition assistance in Puerto Rico.
- Launched *Food Stamps Step1*, a new prescreening tool that enables anyone with access to the Internet to determine their eligibility for food stamps and get an estimate of their potential monthly benefit. The site will soon be available in Spanish.

**Food Stamp Benefits Delivered through EBT**





- Implemented a web-based system for all States to order and track USDA commodities. One State is piloting the system allowing its school districts to directly enter orders.

- Launched the PartnerWeb, a web-based system to facilitate communication and information exchange between USDA and its nutrition assistance program partners.

### **Improve Financial Management**

- Achieved the highest ever level of food stamp payment accuracy while delivering \$18.3 billion in benefits in 2002. Overpayments were reduced to less than 6.2 percent of all benefits issued and underpayments were reduced to 2.1 percent, for a combined error rate of 8.26 percent.
- Since FY 2001, USDA has collected over \$14 million in sanctions from 7 States for unacceptably high payment errors – more than has ever been collected in the history of the Food Stamp Program
- Reduced the rate of food stamp trafficking to less than 2.5 cents of each benefit dollar issued. The cost of trafficking is down by one-third since 1996-98, down by half since 1993.
- Achieved a clean financial statement for the fifth consecutive year, in support of the President’s initiative to improve financial management across government.
- Set records for collection of delinquent recipient debt through the Treasury Department’s debt collection programs. More than \$650 million has been collected since FNS began participating in 1992.

### **Improve Human Capital Management**

- Acted on commitment to secure a highly qualified and diverse leadership team: about 60 percent of FNS’ senior leadership is women or minorities.
- Continued development of FNCS employees to succeed to positions of leadership through the FNS Leadership Institute. Nearly 60 employees have completed the program since its founding in 1999. A recent review found that the Institute’s components, when benchmarked against best practices, approach the “state-of-the-art” for comparable employee development efforts.
- Worked toward a more diverse workforce for the future through the 1890 and Public Service Scholarship Programs. Currently, FNCS sponsors 5 scholars from the 1890 program, and 5 scholars from the Public Service program.