Costs of refined-grain products compared to whole grain-rich foods for a California purchasing cooperative

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Introduction

• The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010 required USDA school meal program menus meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).
• New regulations for school lunch implemented July 1, 2012 required increased quantities of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk.
• At least 50% of the grain in a “whole grain-rich” food must be whole grain with the remaining grain enriched.
• Refined grain products contain less than 50% whole grain with the remaining grain enriched.

Purpose of Study

• Compare costs of refined-grain food products used in USDA school meal programs to products recently reformulated to meet whole grain-rich criteria and consider impact on school districts’ budgets.

Literature Review

• 2001 – 2004 NHANES study indicated less than 1% of school aged children consumed amounts of whole grain foods recommended by the DGA (Krebs-Smith, Guenther, Subar, Kirkpatrick & Dodd, 2010).

Methodology

• Bid prices for 10 non-commodity refined-grain products and their whole grain-rich counterparts were obtained from the SUPER Cooperative, a large commodity and purchasing cooperative in California.
• Differences between purchase cost per serving of refined-grain and whole grain-rich counterparts were calculated for each product set.

Results

• Serving cost for three whole grain-rich products was less than refined-grain counterparts with a range of -$0.010 to -$0.039 per serving.
• Serving cost for two whole grain-rich products was the same as refined-grain counterparts.
• Serving cost for five whole grain-rich products was more than refined-grain counterparts with a range of $0.002 to $0.035 per serving.

References


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• Paired t-tests indicated no significant differences in cost between whole grain-rich and refined-grain products.
• Review of ingredient lists indicated few differences in products other than source of grain.

Implications

• Education and training for school meal program menu planners addressing selection of lower cost food items that meet whole grain-rich criteria will help keep food costs affordable.
• As food manufacturers innovate and reformulate food products, the cost of whole grain-rich items should stabilize.
• Additional funding included in HHFKA with targeted training should assist school meal programs in defraying increased food costs for whole grain-rich products and ensure new nutritional standards are met.