



## **The Ohio WIC Program**

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR FOODS

On Behalf of the

### MIDWEST REGION WIC PROGRAMS

**Applications must be received  
by midnight Eastern Daylight Time on May 9, 2008**

**Contact Name and Address:**

**Ohio Department of Health  
Bureau of Nutrition Services  
246 North High Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Attn: Robert Parker  
[Robert.parker@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:Robert.parker@odh.ohio.gov)  
(614) 728-2877**

This Request for Information (RFI) for Foods for the Midwest Region WIC Program is presented in three sections: 1) Introduction which includes Background, Purpose, and Request for Information subsections; 2) Foods Specifications and Response Requirements; and 3) Instructions on Completing the Midwest States WIC Food Items Information Survey.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### Background

WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. WIC helps income eligible pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who recently had a baby, infants and children up to five years of age who are at health risk due to inadequate nutrition. WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support; supplemental, highly nutritious foods such as milk, eggs, cheese, juice, cereal, beans, peanut butter, and iron-fortified infant formula; referral to prenatal and pediatric health care; and other maternal and child health and human service programs (examples: Head Start, Medicaid and Food Stamps). During federal fiscal year 2007 (10/1/06 to 9/30/07), the Midwest Region states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin) provided services to a monthly average of 1,186,152 women, infants, and children.

The Midwest Region states use a retail system to provide foods to participants. WIC food instruments (FIs), which include coupons, vouchers, or EBT cards, are issued to participants who have been certified as WIC-eligible. These FIs may specify the quantity, size, and types of food that may be purchased. Participants make their purchases from authorized retail vendors, which include grocery stores and pharmacies. There are approximately 8,300 retail vendors authorized to accept WIC coupons in the Midwest Region.

During federal fiscal year 2007 (10/01/06 to 9/30/07), the Midwest Region expended over \$544.1 million in USDA funds on WIC foods, which represents an average of about \$45.3 million per month. It is expected that this expenditure level, with inflationary increases, will continue for the next several years.

### Purpose

The Ohio Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) on behalf of the Midwest Region States, is seeking information to develop revised WIC food packages in accordance with the final interim rule made by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that expands the varieties of WIC foods provided to participants. Recently, USDA, which oversees WIC nationwide, proposed adding other types of foods to increase the nutritional appropriateness and cultural acceptability of WIC's food benefits. These proposals are detailed in the following regulation: "Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC): Revisions in the WIC Food Packages; Interim Rule" Federal Register Vol. 72 (6 December 2007): 68966-69032. States must implement these regulations by October 2009. Information on the Interim Rule can be found at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/regpublished/foodpackages-interimrule.htm>

Each State WIC agency is responsible for selecting the foods that can be purchased with WIC food instruments in its state. These foods must meet or exceed the requirements set by USDA in federal regulation. In addition, State WIC agencies have the authority to establish additional criteria such as other nutritional standards, competitive cost, container size, availability, and participant appeal.

To prepare for these changes, Ohio WIC is seeking information on the availability, cost, packaging and nutritional content of the additional foods as well as information on selected, currently approved WIC foods. The responses to this Request for Information (RFI) will be used by Midwest Region states to review and/or select food items for their respective authorized foods lists.

**To ensure that your food items will be considered for inclusion on any of the Midwest states' authorized foods lists, entities must respond to this RFI according to the instructions provided in Section III of this document. The deadline for responding is May 9, 2008 at midnight Eastern Daylight Time.**

#### Request for Information

The Midwest Region is seeking information about the following categories of foods:

#### BREAD, CEREALS, AND GRAINS

- Whole Grain Breakfast Cereal
- Regular Breakfast Cereal
- Whole Grain Bread
- Brown Rice
- Bulgur
- Oatmeal
- Whole Grain Barley
- Soft Corn Tortillas
- Whole Wheat Tortillas

#### MILK ALTERNATIVES

- Goat's Milk
- Tofu
- Soy-based Beverages

#### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Canned Fruits
- Frozen Fruits
- Dried Fruits
- Canned or Frozen Vegetables
- Dried Vegetables
- Pre-packaged Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

#### PROTEIN FOODS

- Dried eggs mix or pasteurized liquid whole egg
- Mature Legumes (canned beans and peas)
- Salmon (canned or shelf-stable)
- Sardines (canned or shelf-stable)
- Mackerel (canned or shelf-stable)

#### INFANT FOODS

- Infant Fruits & Vegetables
- Infant Meat or Poultry

All foods submitted will be considered using the following criteria:

1. Nutritional content: The specifications for each of the food categories are described on the survey spreadsheet.

Many of the foods are required to meet the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity for that food. These standards are contained in Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations Parts 131-169. Background information and links to the regulatory language can be found at the web site for the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov>

2. Cost: The retail prices of foods relative to competing food items.
3. Availability: Extent of availability within each individual state (Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin).
4. Retail Market Longevity: Number of months on the market.

With regard to reviewing and selecting food items for the WIC Authorized Foods lists, each state reserves the right to:

1. Issue subsequent requests for information to obtain any needed information not received in response to this RFI, to respond to changes in USDA requirements, or otherwise to promote the best interests of the respective WIC programs;
2. Follow up with responders to this RFI to obtain clarification or additional information;
3. Use the information provided as a result of this RFI to produce short-term or partial foods lists as needed during the introduction of the new foods into the WIC program; and
4. Approve only those categories of foods needed to serve WIC participants in the aforementioned states.

## **II. FOODS SPECIFICATIONS & RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS**

Specifications, nutrient requirements, packaging, types and forms for each of the food items for which information is requested are included on the Excel survey worksheets for this RFI. Also detailed on the survey are food-specific response requirements. Section III provides instructions on how to complete the food-specific charts and submit a complete response to this RFI. **All responses to this RFI must be sent via email by midnight, Eastern Daylight Time on May 9, 2008 to [WIC-Price-Survey@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:WIC-Price-Survey@odh.ohio.gov)**

### III. INSTRUCTIONS ON COMPLETING THE MIDWEST STATES WIC FOOD ITEMS INFORMATION SURVEY

1. Open the spreadsheet from the website. Do a “save as” and save the spreadsheet under your company name, for example “ACME.xls”
2. The spreadsheet document contains 27 individual worksheet tabs: a contact and food items list worksheet, a state maps worksheet, a worksheet to post JPG pictures of food items and labels, and 24 worksheets which are used to collect data for various food items. Figure 1 shows the first worksheet tab titled “Contact and Food Items List.” After completing the contact information, please check all the food items manufactured or distributed by your company. After checking the appropriate items, simply click on the food item name to go to the food item survey worksheet.

Figure 1

Midwest States WIC Food Items Information Survey

**Contact Information & Food Item List**

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please place a check next to the food items your company manufactures or distributes. For items checked, please click on the food item name and complete survey worksheet for that food item.

Food Item	Check if Produced	Food Item	Check if Produced
1 <a href="#">Whole Grain Breakfast Cereal</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13 <a href="#">Canned Fruits</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 <a href="#">Regular Breakfast Cereal</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14 <a href="#">Frozen Fruits</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 <a href="#">Whole Grain Bread</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15 <a href="#">Dried Fruits</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 <a href="#">Brown Rice</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16 <a href="#">Canned or Frozen Vegetables</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 <a href="#">Bulgur</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17 <a href="#">Dried Vegetables</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 <a href="#">Oatmeal</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18 <a href="#">Pre-packaged Fruits and Vegetables</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 <a href="#">Whole Grain Barley</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19 <a href="#">Dried eggs mix or pasteurized liquid whole egg</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 <a href="#">Soft Corn Tortillas</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20 <a href="#">Mature Legumes (canned beans and peas)</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 <a href="#">Whole Wheat Tortillas</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21 <a href="#">Salmon</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Click here to go the food item worksheet

3. As shown in Figure 2, the contact information automatically populates each food item worksheet. If you want a different contact for an individual food items, simply type in that person's name and phone number. Carefully read the criteria regarding the package/container size, nutrition requirements, food specifications, and type/form descriptions. Complete a survey worksheet for each food item manufactured or distributed by your company. **It is very important that you enter only those food items that meet all specified criteria.**

Figure 2

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following content:

Row 1: [Click Here to Return to the Contact & Food Item List worksheet](#)

Row 3: **Whole Grain Breakfast Cereal Midwest States WIC Food Items Information Survey**

Row 4: **Product Affiliation**

Row 5: 1

Row 6: Contact: John Doe

Row 7: Phone: 555-555-5555

Row 8: Company Name: ACME

Row 11: **Product Category:** Cereal & Whole Grains

Row 12: **Package / Container Size:** 9-36 Ounces

Row 13: **Nutrition Requirement:** 28 mg iron per 100 grams of dry cereal 21.2 grams or less of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal. For whole grain cereals: < 1 g saturated fat, < 20 mg cholesterol < 6.5 g total fat, and < .5 g trans fat per RACC

Row 14: **Food Specifications:** Must meet labeling requirements for making a health claim as a "whole grain food with moderate fat content" as defined by the FDA in its December 9, 2003 Health Claim Notification for Whole Grain Foods with Moderate Fat Content and must contain a minimum of 51 percent whole grain as determined by documentation of weight validation of the percentage of the whole grain content compared to the total weight of the sample size.

Row 15: **Type/Form:** Hot or cold: cooked-instant or non-instant or ready-to-eat

Row 18: Table with columns: Entire UPC Code, Brand Name, Whole Grain Breakfast Cereal Name, Container Size (9 - 36 ounces), \* % Whole Grain, Suggested Retail Price, Kosher Available (Yes / No), A1

Row 19: (Empty cells corresponding to the table headers above)

4. Figure 3 shows the information for whole-grain cereal food items. For each food item, please enter the following information:
- the entire UPC code, including UPC Check Digit;
  - brand name (e.g., the manufacturing company such as ACME);
  - product name;
  - container size;
  - for whole-grain food items enter the percentage of whole-grain contents;
  - the suggested retail price;
  - kosher (yes/no); and
  - length of time the food item has been on the market (less than one year, one to five years, greater than five years)

**Figure 3**

Midwest States Survey.xls [Compatibility Mode] - Microsoft Excel

1 [Click Here to Return to the Contact & Food Item List worksheet](#)

2

3 **Whole Grain Breakfast Cereal**      **Midwest States WIC Food Items Information Survey**

4 **Product Affiliation**

5      1

6

7      Contact: 0

8      Phone: 0

9      Company Name: 0

10

11	<b>Product Category:</b>	Cereal & Whole Grains
12	<b>Package / Container Size:</b>	9-36 Ounces
13	<b>Nutrition Requirement:</b>	28 mg iron per 100 grams of dry cereal 21.2 grams or less of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal. For whole grain cereals: < 1 g saturated fat, < 20 mg cholesterol < 6.5 g total fat, and < .5 g trans fat per RACC
14	<b>Food Specifications:</b>	Must meet labeling requirements for making a health claim as a "whole grain food with moderate fat content" as defined by the FDA in its December 9, 2003 Health Claim Notification for Whole Grain Foods with Moderate Fat Content and must contain a minimum of 51 percent whole grain as determined by documentation of weight validation of the percentage of the whole grain content compared to the total weight of the sample size.
15	<b>Type/Form:</b>	Hot or cold: cooked-instant or non-instant or ready-to-eat.

16

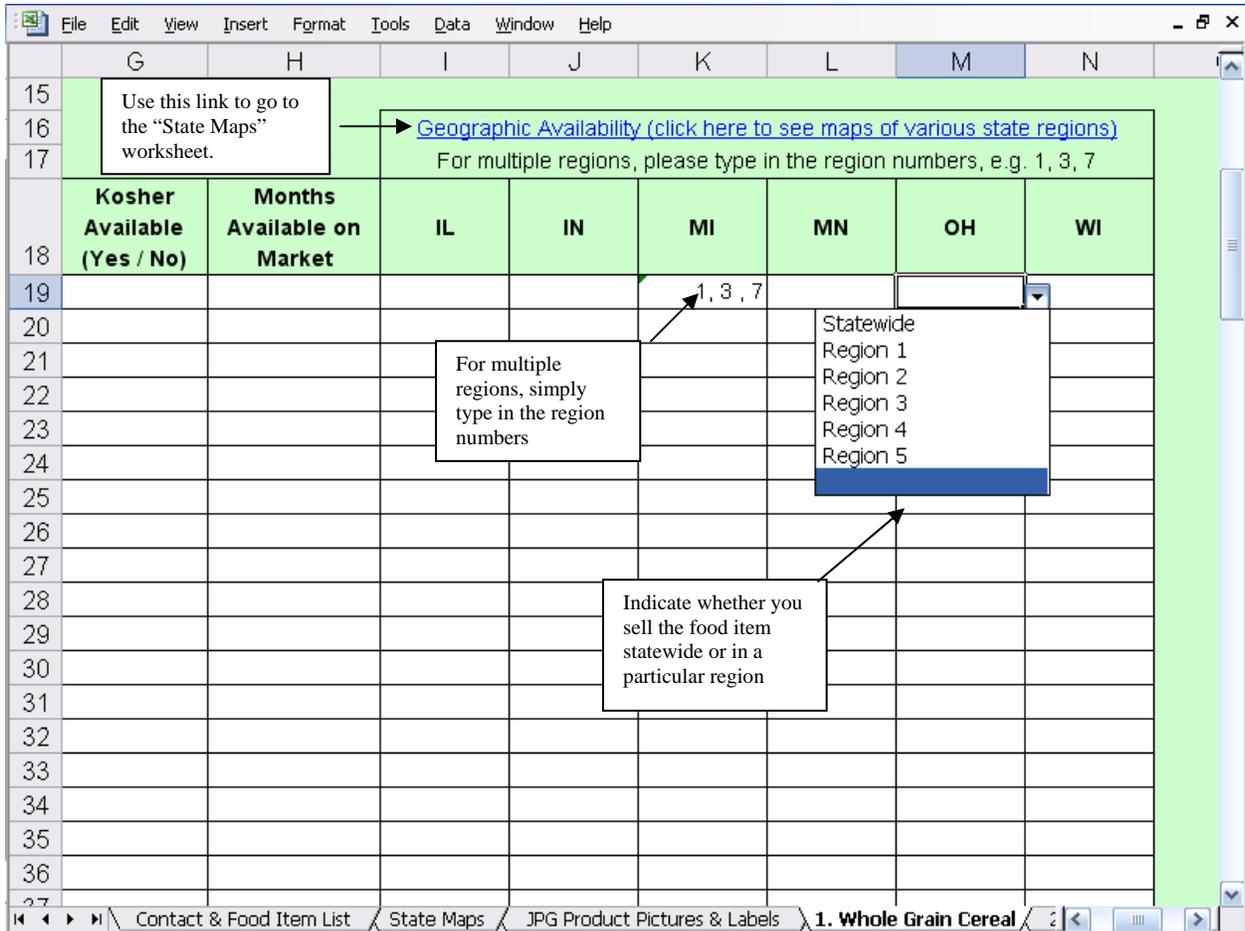
17

18	Entire UPC Code, inc. check digit (12 digits)	Brand Name	Whole Grain Breakfast Cereal Name	Container Size (9 - 36 ounces)	*% Whole Grain	Suggested Retail Price	Kosher (Yes / No)	Le T
19								
20								

14    Contact & Food Item List    State Maps    JPG Product Pictures & Labels    1. Whole Grain Cereal    2. Regular B

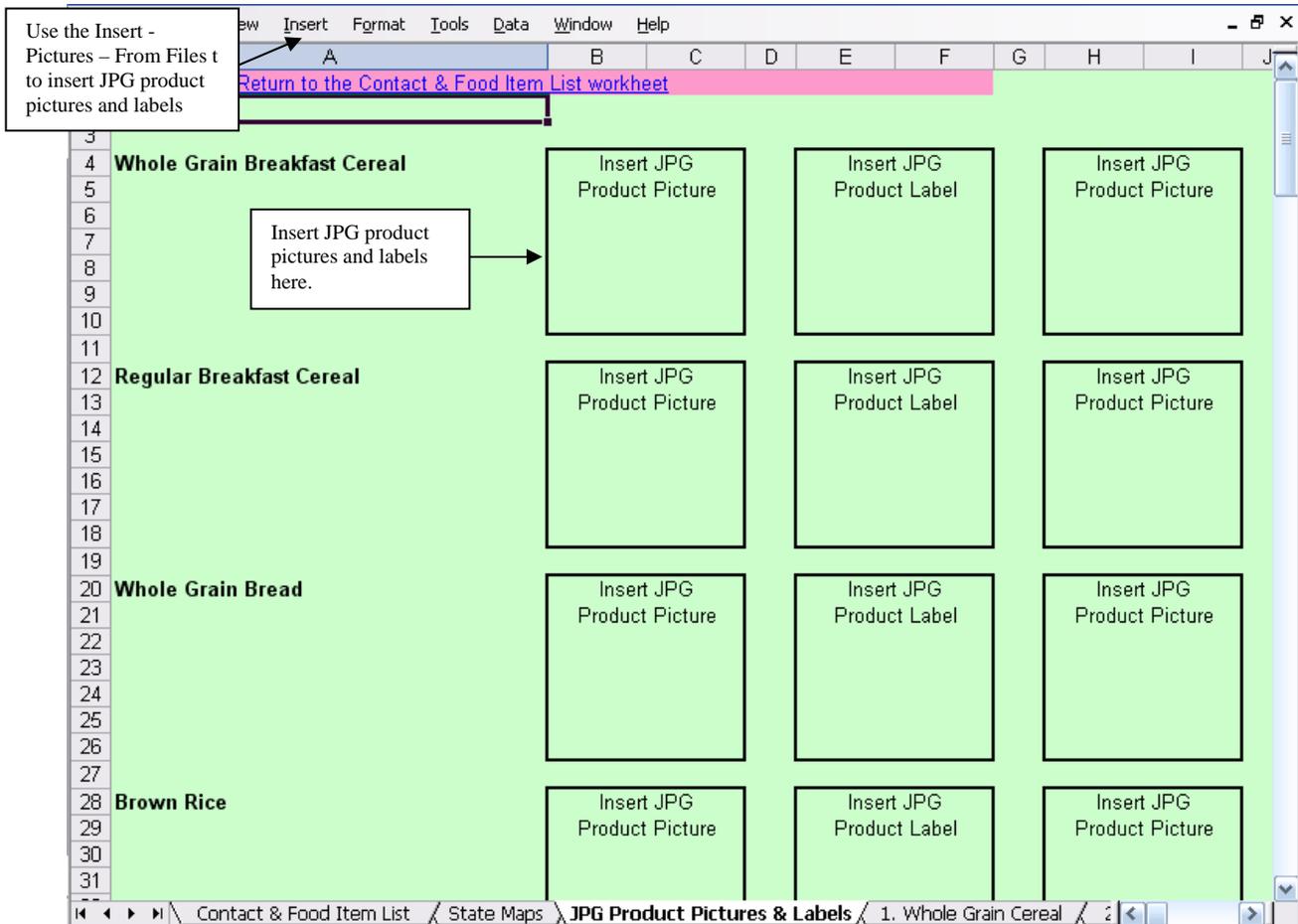
5. Figure 4 shows the columns for entities to indicate the Midwest Region states where they sell their food items. Each worksheet cell contains a “drop-down” box that lists whether the food item is distributed statewide or by a particular region. For food items that are offered in several regions, but not statewide, please type in the region numbers (for example: 1, 3, 7). Food item distribution patterns can be determined by viewing the state maps on the worksheet tab titled “State Maps” or by clicking on “Geographic Availability.”

**Figure 4**



- After entering the data for each food item, please paste a JPG picture of the item and label on the worksheet tab titled “JPG Product Pictures & Labels” and shown in Figure 5. Include the “package flat” meaning pictures of front, back and side that includes nutritional information. Assure the UPC of the product is included in the picture. Please ensure that the item name is clearly visible and that it exactly matches the food items name described on the worksheet.

**Figure 5**



After completing the survey, please email it to: [WIC-Price-Survey@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:WIC-Price-Survey@odh.ohio.gov) by midnight, Eastern Daylight Time, May 9, 2008. Please contact Bob Parker at Ohio WIC (614) 728-2877 if you have any questions or need assistance. Thank you for your cooperation in completing this survey.