

# Buy American Provision for School Meals:

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## What the law says:

Schools must buy **domestic food products** to the **maximum extent possible**.

- A **domestic product** means:
  - Grown in the U.S., and
  - Processed in the U.S. using mostly U.S.-grown ingredients.

## Exceptions are allowed – ONLY when necessary

You may use a non-domestic item **only if**:

1. It's **not available** in the U.S. in the quantity or quality you need.
2. A **U.S. product costs significantly more** than the imported version.

Before requesting an exception, ask yourself:

- Can I find this product from another domestic supplier?
- Is there a U.S. product I could substitute?
- Am I buying at the right time of year for the best pricing?

## Requesting an Exception

To use a non-domestic item, submit a **written request in advance**. Include:

1. **Domestic substitutes you tried** (with pricing and availability)
2. **Why is an exception needed** (check one):
  - Not available domestically
  - Domestic item is too expensive
 Include prices of both the domestic and non-domestic products.

## **Items Automatically Allowed (as of June 11, 2025)**

These foods are considered **non-available** and don't require exception documentation:  
**Bananas, Brazil Nuts, Cashews, Coconut, Coffee, Grapefruit, Canned Mandarin Oranges, Canned Pineapple, Spices and herbs, Water chestnut.**

## Tracking Worksheet: Non-Domestic Purchases Justification

List any additional foods not on the list above that the school purchases non-domestically and the reason why they cannot be procured domestically:

Food	Country of Origin	Justification: Price.of.Domestic.product.too.high-.Domestic.product.not.available	Check Documentation on file	Date
Grapes	Mexico	Pricing.from.distributor.shows.US.US_grown.grapes.are.double.in.price.at.this.time	√	12/1/2025