



January 7, 2014

RAC Update

## **USDA Announces Special Purchase of California Raisins!**

A Special News Release from the Raisin Administrative Committee,  
Fresno, CA by Gary Schulz, President

Release No. 0002.14

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### **USDA to Provide Additional Support to Food Banks, Soup Kitchens, and Food Pantries Across the Country**

WASHINGTON, January 6, 2014 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture's intent to purchase up to \$126.4 million worth of fruit and vegetable products, to be distributed to needy families under The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The products to be purchased include tart cherries, processed apples, cranberries, fresh tomatoes, wild blueberries, and raisins. This purchase will expand efforts to provide high-quality, wholesome, domestically-produced foods to support low-income families in need of emergency food assistance.

"Food distribution programs are a vital part of our Nation's nutrition safety net, and today's food purchases will give communities additional means to help those in need," Vilsack said. "A comprehensive Farm



Bill is absolutely critical to these efforts, and Congress should adequately support feeding programs for American families by passing a new Farm Bill as soon as possible."

Foods distributed through TEFAP are either purchased with funds appropriated specifically for TEFAP, or are procured through USDA's market support programs. The foods are provided to states for distribution to local agencies, such as food banks. These local agencies further distribute the food to organizations, such as food pantries and soup kitchens that provide communal meals or distribute foods directly to low-income families.

The purchase announced today is part of the surplus removal program, which allows USDA to purchase foods in order to help stabilize prices in agricultural commodity markets by balancing supply and demand, while providing healthy food to low-income households. Products purchased in the past year have included fruit, vegetables, catfish, lamb, turkey, and chicken. Surplus products are provided to TEFAP, as well as the National School Lunch Program, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, and other USDA nutrition assistance programs.

Nearly 90 healthy products - including canned fruits and vegetables, dried beans, grains and pasta products, milk, juice, and meat products – are provided through TEFAP to local soup kitchens, food pantries, and community action agencies across the country. A recent analysis found that TEFAP foods achieved a score 89 out of 100 on the Health Eating Index<sup>®</sup>, a measure of diet quality based on the Federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

In Fiscal Year 2013, Congress appropriated \$311.34 million for TEFAP – \$265.75 million for food and \$45.59 million for administrative support for States and local agencies. In addition to these funds, TEFAP receives surplus foods purchased through USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to support American



agricultural markets. In FY 2013, 366.3 million pounds of food purchased for TEFAP through the congressional appropriation and another 270.8 million pounds of food through AMS surplus removal efforts. Surplus food purchases for TEFAP in FY 2013 totaled \$228.51 million.

USDA provides food for TEFAP to states according to the number of unemployed persons and people living below the poverty level. States set the income standards for the program, and can adjust the eligibility criteria to ensure that assistance is provided only to those most in need.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service oversees the administration of 15 nutrition assistance programs, including TEFAP, that touch the lives of one in four Americans over the course of a year. These programs work together to form a national safety net against hunger. Visit [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov) for information about FNS and nutrition assistance programs.

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**RAC Update Editor's Note:**

**Subsequent to receiving this press release from USDA-AMS, the Ag Marketing Service indicated to the Raisin Administrative Committee their intent to purchase \$36.4 million of California Raisins.**