

# P.O.W.E.R. Buying Group New Product Process Meeting

December 9, 2015

## Questions and Responses

Q 1: Must steps be completed by the quarterly dates on the timeline?

A 1: Yes

Q 2: On individually wrapped products, should picture be of wrapping or product inside?

A 2: the wrapped product.

Q 3: Are additional flavors to be submitted as new product request?

A 3: Yes

Q4: Do vendors need to determine which member(s) agree to test product prior to submitting the form?

A 4: Yes

Q 5: If a product has been submitted correctly and has positive test results is it automatically approved for a price solicitation?

A 5: No, product must have unique feature not available in currently awarded products.

Q 6: Do vendors need multiple members to test products?

A 6: Currently, one member's test results are required, additional results may be submitted.

Q 7: Does the member's program ADP factor in the review of submissions?

A 7: All requests are reviewed equally. However how US Foods may successfully purchase smaller quantities of an item might impact decisions.

Q 8: Is there a place on the US Food's price solicitation form for minimum shipment information?

A 8: Yes, vendors may enter information in the last column on the pricing form.

Q 9: Are vendors able to receive a copy of the PBG Customer Master with all product info except pricing?

A 9: PBG will consider this.

Q 10: Do reformulated food products need to have student testing?

A 10: Yes, student testing is part of the reformulated product review process.

Q 11: Are members permitted to receive and test partial cases?

A 11: Members are encouraged to test a minimum of 50 students and use product from one complete production case.

Q 12: Can samples be sent to members via US Foods?

A 12: Yes, with vendor authorization to send sample case of products currently stocked at US Foods.

Q 13: Is it acceptable for certain products to be intended for certain student age groups?

A 13: Yes, vendors are to communicate this intention to members.

Q 14: Is it acceptable for another member to test a product with unacceptable student test results?

A 14: Yes, the vendor will submit a request for the same product specifying another member that has agreed to test the product.

Q 15: Can multiple members be selected on the same product form?

A 15: The current form accepts one member. This change would require a software enhancement. This will be reviewed.

Q 16: Does PBG need to limit the number of members that test a product?

A 16: This will be reviewed by PBG.

Q 17: When are new item submissions reviewed by the committee?

A 17: Submissions are reviewed quarterly.

Q 18: How similar do new flavors nutrition and crediting per serving need to be?

A 18: A few calories or mg. of sodium difference are permitted, but not significant differences such as 50 calories or mg. of sodium. Meal pattern crediting must be the same.

Q 19: When a product changes significantly and does not qualify for reformulation, what is the process?

A 19: The product may be submitted as a new product request.

Q 20: Where can a vendor enter info on the unique feature of a new product?

A 20: Select Yes to the question below the upload button on the form. A comment box will open and vendor will be able to address new product difference.

Q 21: Are vendors allowed to zip together pricing solicitation files?

A 21: Yes, as long as each product has only one complete specification file per product.

---

Q 22: Will US Foods accept price solicitation submissions via Dropbox?

A 22: No, US Foods staff is not permitted to access Dropbox on their work computers.

Q 23: Does each food specification include a portion size?

A 23: Product specifications include a suggested portion size, but when meal pattern crediting is included, the crediting must be met as specified.

Q 24: If USDA changes the meal pattern or dietary specifications, will products need to be rebid?

A 24: No, unless the current specification is not compliant with the revised USDA guidelines.

Q 25: Are we able to get a list of the current members?

A 25: Yes, email your request to the PBG Executive Director at: [powerbuyinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:powerbuyinggroup@gmail.com) .

Q 26: What if a product is being ordered significantly less than forecast?

A 26: US Foods reps remind members of “slow moving” products. Members are encouraged to try the products with slower than expected movement. Vendors may market products to members.

Q 27: Is it possible to include estimated dates for the pricing solicitation distribution added to the timeline?

A 27: This will be reviewed by PBG.

Q 28: Menu changes result in specific product usage increases and subsequent decreases of replaced products. How is this facilitated by US Foods?

A 28: US Foods has a process within each Division for members to request changes of products and/or planned product usage on a monthly basis.

Q 29: What are PBG’s criteria for a “like item”?

A 29: Products that meet the same PBG-prepared price solicitation specification for primary ingredients, nutritional content, meal pattern crediting, delivery state, and basic preparation are considered “like items”.

Q 30: Does the USDA Buy American guidance require members to purchase domestic canned fruits if the imported are less expensive?

A 30: All USDA-reimbursable school meal programs must comply with Buy American guidelines to purchase domestic foods except for products with insufficient availability and/or a significant (10% or more) price difference less than an imported product.

Q 31: Is quality a factor for canned fruit purchases?

A 31: Yes, to the extent possible due to the meal pattern requirements.

Q 32: Can vendors receive product usage reports from US Foods more frequently than once each year?

A 32: US Foods is considering this request.

Q 33: Can US Foods provide new product usage information to vendors?

A 33: US Foods is requesting new product planned usage information from members.

Q 34: Can vendors send samples to members currently not using certain awarded products?

A 34: Yes, vendors may market their awarded products to members. Vendors are encouraged to send samples only after products are requested by members.

Q 35: Are pricing solicitations for new products open to other vendors?

A 35: Yes price solicitations follow competitive pricing guidelines.

Q 36: Are vendors able to prepare the specifications for the price solicitation?

A 36: No, the PBG Executive Director prepares all specifications.

Q 37: Do all products have 12 month pricing?

A 37: Yes, however severe events may occasionally precipitate a need for a product price change. An example is the Avian flu impacted egg product prices.

Q 38: Is there a schedule for meetings for vendors to display and sample products to members?

A 38: PBG does not have a product sampling meeting scheduled. PBG will invite vendors to sample the newly awarded products at the next PBG member meeting. Awarded vendors will be contacted with detailed information by the PBG Executive Director.

Q 39: Can members currently using a similar product be the members selected to test a lower-price product for a price solicitation?

A 39: PBG does follow this practice whenever possible.

---