

MINISTRY PAPER 8/2015

Interventions in the School Feeding Programme

1.0 Purpose

The matter for tabling is the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries interventions in the School Feeding Programme.

2.0 Background

To stimulate economic activity in Jamaica and in particular, rural agricultural development, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has strategically linked selected product growth areas to defined market opportunities. One such market opportunity is the School Feeding Programme (SFP). The Ministry's effort complements the mission of Nutrition Products Limited (NPL) which aspires '*to produce and distribute a nutritious meal to designated school children at the lowest possible cost, utilizing local resources whenever possible*'.

Through collaboration between the Ministries of Agriculture & Fisheries (MOAF) and Education (MOE), Jamaica has been working to improve the National School Feeding Programme, by introducing greater variety of local fresh foods/raw material. The Government's thrust is to improve the levels of food and nutrition security of the school population, as well as encourage increased consumption of locally available foods to promote proper nutrition for learning. This critical strategy is seen as one which will ultimately advance the nutritional outlook of school children and ultimately support efforts to reduce national malnutrition rates and strengthen early childhood development. These outcomes are in keeping with relevant policy-level documents including the Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the draft School Feeding Policy, and the Jamaica Social Protection Strategy.

3.0 School Feeding Programme (SFP)

The provision of nutrition to school children is largely administered by the Ministry of Education (MOE). Budgetary allocation for this purpose is channelled through three (3) conduits, namely, PATH; Cook Lunch Programme; and Nutrition Products Limited (NPL). The mix of fund

distribution, through the three (3) conduits and importantly, product selection, is constantly evaluated to determine the most efficient use of those funds. The MOE in leading this charge has indicated that the government's objective is pivoted on the inclusion of more nutritious and locally grown food in the School Feeding Programme. The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries/Rural Agricultural Development Authority (RADA) is expected to play a supportive role in the production and supply logistics of primary and secondary products.

Currently, a total of 137,000 students, enrolled in 836 schools at the early childhood, primary and Junior High levels benefit from the Nutrition Products Limited's (NPL) programme.

4.0 Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries/RADA Interventions in SFP

The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries/RADA has been instrumental in providing support to NPL. The use of locally produced liquid eggs in the production of NPL's solid offerings, first started in October 2013. At that time, the liquid eggs were used as a partial replacement for the imported fat (margarine and vegetable oil) component in the production of bulla, rock cake, spice bun and spice cake. Approximately 33% of the imported vegetable oil and margarine was replaced by liquid eggs in the production of these solids.

Subsequently, liquid egg has been added to four (4) new solid offerings introduced in 2014. These are:

- Carrot Bread
- Carrot Muffin
- Banana Bread
- Banana Muffin

As at 30th March, 2015 the value and volume of local produce used in School Feeding Programme are:

Product	Kilograms (kg)	Value \$J
Carrot	9,292	10,245,003
Ripe Banana	4,017	2,713,920
Liquid Egg	10,831	835,938
Ginger Powder	6,122	337,543
Mixed Spice	3,775	1,381,650

Increasingly, and within short time-frames, the Ministry has been successfully partnering with NPL to increase our children nutritional health with wholesome, locally produced items. To ensure consistency in the supply of the necessary raw material the Ministry/RADA has adopted a model that pairs local investors with irrigated growth areas in the Agro-Parks. This partnership has now expanded to include inputs of locally grown ginger and locally manufactured mixed spice, enhancing the taste and visual appreciation of the solid offerings.

5.0 Planned Activities for 2015/16

In the immediate future, there are plans to include local fruits in the suite of offerings to expand the nutritional intake necessary for a child's development. The Agro Parks have the capability to produce, on a consistent basis, increased quantities of fruits like bananas and watermelons for our nation's children. In addition to the variety of flavoured drink normally produced from imported inputs, a variety of juice drinks, made from local puree, is being offered to our children.

The Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries is presently engaged in discussions with NPL to provide a milk solution to the programme. This solution will involve packaging through the Tetra Pak system, satisfying the food safety requirements and also prolonging shelf life. The use of local milk will see the inclusion of yet another local input in the ever increasing domestic agriculture support for our children nutrition.

Of significant note is the fact that the inclusion of milk represents a re-introduction of the product through NPL. The initial offering in 1976 comprised a patty and milk offering, supported by the Government of Jamaica and the United States Government through the PL480 Programme.



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