



This USDA Program Is Looking to Make Vegan Dairy, Plant-Based Foods More Accessible

By Maxwell Rabb
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Forty-two percent of Americans believe that [plant-based foods](#) will overtake meat options [by 2032](#), and now, a major government program might help millions gain access to vegan dairy products such as dairy-free milk, yogurt, and more, along with other plant-based foods.

The United States Department of Agriculture is proposing to expand the number of vegan dairy products included in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The food-assistance program, which serves [about half](#) of all infants born in the United States, aims to support the health and general well-being of women and children nationwide who suffer from nutritional deficiencies or food insecurity.

The proposed measures will increase the level of dairy and eggs provided to WIC users, but the USDA included alternatives to give users a choice to eat plant-based. The USDA will include product substitutes such as soy yogurt and vegan cheese as well as tofu.

“USDA is committed to advancing maternal and child health through WIC, helping mothers, babies, and young kids thrive,” Tom Vilsack, U.S. secretary of agriculture, said in a statement. “These proposed changes will strengthen WIC ... by ensuring it provides foods that reflect the latest nutrition science to support healthy eating and bright futures.”

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About 94% of Americans suffer from at least one nutrient deficiency. By introducing more vegan options and plant-based whole foods to nearly 6 million participants nationwide, the USDA is effectively working to fill nutritional gaps. If the proposed changes are approved, WIC will also offer participants a greater number of whole grains, a larger volume of fruits and vegetables, and canned beans, in addition to dried.

“It is great to see USDA’s new proposed rule increase WIC’s fruit and vegetable benefit,” says Sen. Cory Booker. “The new WIC package will strengthen a program that is proven to help mothers and babies flourish.”

“For the more than 6 million moms, babies, and young children who participate in WIC—and the millions more eligible to participate—these proposed revisions have the potential to make positive, life-long impacts on health and well-being,” says Stacy Dean, USDA deputy undersecretary for food, nutrition, and consumer services.

The USDA is taking [comments](#) on its new proposed updates until Feb. 21, 2023.

To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#). For meal-planning support, check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK’s easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.