



Illinois State Board of Education
Nutrition Programs Division
Food Distribution Program

Illinois Commodity System Instruction Manual

This manual provides guidance in the usage of the Illinois Commodity System (ICS). The Illinois Commodity System is used to order and manage United States Department of Agriculture commodities for schools in Illinois. Please print these pages and keep them as a reference.

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Accessing the Illinois Commodity System

The Illinois Commodity System (ICS) website is an interactive site that allows schools to manage their commodities online. You can access the Message Board, Annual Order Forms (AOFs), Monthly Commodity Bulletins, Delivery Requests/Reports, Lanter delivery schedule, Anticipated Commodities Chart, and processing end product reports. This website can be accessed from any computer with Internet access; the computer does not have to be located in the school.

Each school should have one “user” and a back-up. If your school contracts with a food service management company (FSMC), it is still very important that someone from the school accesses the system on a regular basis.

1. Before you can access the ICS website, you must register as a first time user. In order to do this, click on *ICS New User Registration Form* located on the Food Distribution Program (FDP) website (www.isbe.net/business.htm). Print, complete, and fax the form to 217/782-4550. Indicate if you are replacing a former employee so we can make them inactive. After you register, you will receive an email from our office confirming your login identification and password.

2. Make note of your login identification and password for later reference. Keep them in a safe place. If you forget your password, the system will allow you to retrieve it by answering a security question you set up the first time you log in.
3. Type in the FDP website address (www.isbe.net/business.htm). (Save this as a favorite to eliminate the need to reenter it each time you logon.) Near the bottom of the page, click on *Illinois Commodity System*. This will link you to the ICS Login screen. Login with your login identification and password. (We recommend that you always access the FDP website first, and then link to ICS from that site in the event that the URL address has changed.)

Message Board

One of the main features on the ICS is the Message Board which contains current and time-sensitive information. This is the first page when you log into the system. This is our primary means of communication with Food Distribution Program sponsors, and should be checked weekly for new messages.

The Message Board shows a brief portion of each message. You can access the complete message by clicking on *Read More* and the complete message will appear. To go back to the full list of messages, click on *Return to Portal Page* at the bottom of the message.

Checking the Message Board on a regular basis will keep you better informed and provide you with a useful tool to assist you in managing your commodities. You may want to print each message and make a handbook for easy reference. Message topics range anywhere from food alerts, to new products being offered, to important dates, and everything in between. There is an *Update Date* next to the message title to let you know if you have the most recent version.

If you would like to make a suggestion for a message topic, please forward it to Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) Food Distribution Program staff. On the right-hand side of the screen, under *Additional Links*, click *Contact Food Distribution Staff* and the system will create a blank email you can complete and send directly to our staff. We welcome any suggestions you may have.

Placing Annual Orders

Annual orders are placed on the ICS in December/January pre-ceding the new school year. Instructions for ordering are found on a link on the Food Distribution Program website (www.isbe.net/business.htm).

Once the cut-off date to place your annual order is past, changes can be made to the Annual Order Form (AOF) if necessary. (If your school participates in processing, no processing changes can be made after the annual order cut-off date to the Diversion to Processor Form.) The AOF changes are made in the same way the original order was placed. All changes must be made prior to ISBE completing that month's allocation for your updates to take effect. For example, for a change to be effective for January, all changes need to be done by December 5.

Warehouse Delivery Schedule

In Illinois, a contracted transportation company receives, stores, and delivers the commodities. Currently this contract is with Lanter Distributing, Division of Ozburn-Hessey Logistics. You can view their delivery schedule on the Illinois Commodity System website. Go to the right side of the screen under *Additional Links* and you will see *Delivery Schedule*. Click on this link, and locate your county and then your school. This schedule will list the FRIDAY OF THE WEEK you can expect your delivery. Any questions regarding your schedule should be directed to Lanter at 618/452-2800.

Monitoring Monthly Allocations

Your monthly allocations are available to be viewed and/or modified the month prior to the actual delivery. The resources available to help you monitor your monthly allocations are listed below. It is important to note that once commodities have been allocated to your school (they have been listed on the Monthly Commodity Bulletin), they belong to your school. Schools can then control when the product will be delivered via the Delivery Request.

Monthly Commodity Bulletin

You can view and/or print a Monthly Commodity Bulletin for each delivery month. (Bulletins are not generated until the month prior to the delivery.) They are listed under *Reports*, then *Bulletin Report*. The Monthly Commodity Bulletin is a list of all products available to be delivered to you for that given month—AT THE RECIPIENT AGENCY LEVEL, as well as a contract summary section that gives you year-to-date commodity values. If your district has multiple sites, all commodities for all sites will be combined on the bulletin; it will not be broke down by delivery site. Should you make any delivery request modifications for that given delivery month, the modifications will not be reflected on the bulletin either. You can run a Delivery Report to see what you actually requested to be delivered, as well as a break down by site (see below).

To print a copy of the bulletin, use the *Print* button at the top of the bulletin.

The Monthly Commodity Bulletin is divided into three sections.

- The first section is the *Messages* section. This section contains brief messages and may direct you to more detailed information. This is not to be confused with the Message Board on the ICS.
- The second section is the *Contract Summary* for the school year. This section contains year to date account information.
 - *Beginning PAL*—dollar value (of commodities) your school is entitled to based on your meals claimed in the National School Lunch Program multiplied by the federal assistance rate determined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This rate varies each year.
 - *YTD PAL Allocated*—value of all PAL commodities that have been allocated to you so far this school year.
 - *PAL Processing Deductions*—value of all raw commodities diverted to a processor.
 - *DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*—PAL value you are entitled to for fresh fruits and vegetables. (This will only display for eligible schools.)
 - *Total PAL Deductions*—sum of all PAL commodities deducted year-to-date.
 - *Remaining PAL*—amount you still have available as of this allocation in PAL dollars.
 - *Remaining PAL Requested*—value of PAL commodities that you have requested, but have not yet been allocated to you.

- *YTD Bonus Commodities Allocated*—value of Bonus commodities that have been allocated to you so far this school year
- *Bonus Processing*—value of bonus commodities diverted to a processor.
- *PAL Allocated for Current Month only*—value of all PAL commodities that have been allocated to you for this month only.
- *Bonus Allocated for Current Month only* —value of all bonus commodities that have been allocated to you for this month only.
- *Total PAL Deductions + Bonus Deductions*—value of ALL commodities allocated to you year-to-date for this school year.
- The third section is the *Commodities Available for Delivery* section. This section is a complete summary of ALL commodities available for that delivery month. This would include any new allocations for that month as well as any commodities that have been held. All commodities, or a portion of, listed in bold, red print are in private storage or will be if they are not accepted the first month they are listed as private storage. Commodities will be listed as private storage if they have been held at least two months. The first time you see a commodity listed in private storage, as long as you accept it that month, there would be no private storage charges.

Delivery Requests

Each month between the 13th and 20th, you can make changes to deliveries for the following month. Commodity deliveries take place from August through April, so Delivery Requests are made from July through March. The system is very time sensitive, so we cannot make changes outside of these dates. There are three options you can choose from. You can hold your complete allocation until the next month, you can hold a portion of your allocation until the next month, or you can move product between your sites for the month.

If you DO NOT RESPOND to your allocation online between the 13th and 20th, everything will be delivered as shown. If you have more than one delivery site, the allocation will be divided among your delivery sites based on the percentages established by your district under *Participating Delivery Sites*. If you refuse any undamaged items at the time of delivery, you will be charged a backhaul fee by Lanter/OHL Distributing.

If you DO NOT want a delivery, you must indicate this online between the 13th and 20th of the month prior to the delivery. Go to *Monthly Process, Delivery Request, Place Request, Do Not Deliver, then Next*. (It is crucial that you click *Next*, otherwise the request has not been saved.) That is all you need to do at this time. The product listed on your current Delivery Requests will be with your next allocation.

If you want the current delivery but want to view and/or make modifications to it, you must go online between the 13th and 20th of the month prior. Go to *Monthly Process, Delivery Request, Place Request, Deliver, then Next*. You will be able to accept your delivery as listed, which if you have multiple delivery sites, is based on the percentages you indicated when you filled out your Annual Order online. You can also modify or delay the quantities you were allocated, or if you have multiple delivery sites, you can move your commodities from site to site. Click on *Select* next to the commodity you would like to modify; then in the *Site Detail* below, indicate the quantity you want delivered for that month; then click *Save*. Any quantity you do not accept this month will be on your next *Monthly Commodity Bulletin*.

If you modified your delivery request and saved it, you are finished. You can log off the system at any time or print a Delivery Report (see below). To log off the system, click on *Home* in the menu bar above, and then select *Logout*.

Delivery Report

You can view and/or print a Delivery Report for each month after the 20th or after you have completed a Delivery Request during the 13th & 20th. (If you are trying to print the most current report, this report cannot be generated until you have reacted to your allocation. See *Delivery Requests*.) The Delivery Report indicates the quantities to be delivered for that given delivery month, and if you have multiple delivery sites, it will break it down by site as well.

If you have completed a Delivery Request, just click on *Report* on the bottom of that page and the report will appear. If you come into the system at a later date, go to *Monthly Process, Delivery Request* and click on *Report* next to the month you want to see. This report would be very helpful for staff at each site so they know what products will be on that month's delivery. You can print these reports by clicking the *Printer* icon located at the top of the screen.

Processing Commodities

If the school chooses, commodities may be sent to a processor and converted into end products the school deems more acceptable.

Schools wishing to have commodities diverted for further processing need to indicate the pounds of commodity to divert and the name of the processor(s) on the Annual Order Form, Diversion to Processor. The value of PAL commodities diverted for processing is deducted from the school's PAL. If the commodity being diverted is a Bonus commodity, the value is not deducted from PAL. These instructions are all included in the instructions for the Annual Order Form (AOF). Once the annual ordering period is closed, no changes can be made to processing diversions.

Excess Inventory at Processors

United States Department of Agriculture regulations require commodity inventories held at further processors be monitored. The regulations require no more than a six-month inventory level be maintained based on the processor's average monthly usage. To ensure this requirement is met, the inventory level procedures below were implemented.

For any given school year:

- Any processor inventory balance rolled over from the previous school year by a school must be used by December 31.
- On January 15-Any prior year inventory not used by December 31 will be removed from the school's account and transferred to a State of Illinois account.
- Schools can access the ICS to claim the inventory balance(s) transferred to the State of Illinois account.
- On a monthly basis, ISBE will provide to the processors a list of inventories claimed by schools.

- No credit will be given to the school forfeiting the inventory and nothing will be charged to the school claiming the inventory.

To claim pounds from the excess inventory listing:

The excess inventory module is located under the *Annual Order Forms* main menu option on the ICS and is called *Excess Processing*.

Any excess inventory listed by a processor can be claimed by any school that does not have excess inventory at processors. The inventory will be offered on a first come first served basis. Those schools claiming pounds should be familiar with commodity processing procedures and end product distribution. Do not claim excess inventory pounds until you know you the method of distribution that can deliver the end products to your school.

Excess inventory from processors could come at any time so we advise checking the list on a weekly, if not daily, basis as we anticipate any inventory that comes along will be claimed quickly.

Preparations for School Auditors

All schools are audited each year by their own independent auditors. Part of this audit includes the value of USDA commodities received by the school. Most of these audits are conducted during the summer or early fall of each year. It is the responsibility of each school to provide all needed information for the auditors, including the information regarding USDA commodities. On the Food Distribution Program website, we will post a report with all the values for all schools. It will be available by August 1.