

Appendix B

Survey of Food Prices and Item Availability

This appendix summarizes the sampling for the Survey of Food Prices and Item Availability and presents information on response rates, sampling weights, files structure, and the average number of prices collected per store.

The Survey of Food Prices collected price data for a standard list of food items that meet the federal WIC nutrition requirements. In stores with scanners, prices for national brand items were collected by scanning a set of UPC cards and collecting the register receipt; prices for store-brand and private-label items were collected by searching the store aisles for items listed on an instrument. The latter procedure was used for all items in stores without scanners.

Sampling

Two sample frames were constructed for this survey: a sample frame of WIC vendors, and a sample frame of non-WIC retailers authorized for the Food Stamp Program (FSP).¹ WIC vendors were selected in each State; non-WIC FSP retailers were selected in four States with WIC cost-containment vendor restrictions.²

The sample frames for the Survey of Food Prices contained stores located within the three survey areas selected for the Survey of WIC Participants. Thus the first stage sampling weights were identical to the first stage sampling weights for the Survey of WIC Participants. In contrast to the Survey of WIC Participants, the sample frame for the store survey was not stratified by location and the urban area did not undergo a second stage of sampling. WIC vendors in the three survey areas were pooled in a single sample frame; likewise, for four States, non-WIC vendors within the survey areas were pooled in a single sample frame.

Two types of WIC vendors were excluded from the sample frame: pharmacies and WIC-only stores. Redemption at pharmacies is primarily limited to infant formula purchases because pharmacies do not stock a full range of WIC food items. WIC-only stores were excluded from the sample because they stock only items approved for WIC purchase in their State, and as a result, they would not provide observation of unapproved items for price comparison. The sample frame of non-WIC FSP retailers was limited to supermarkets and grocery stores (as identified in the master list of FSP retailers obtained from USDA/FNS).

The target number of stores for selection was 18 WIC vendors in each of the six States and 12 non-WIC retailers in four States. Stores were selected with probability proportional to size (the measure of size for WIC vendors is average monthly WIC redemption reported in November 2000; the measure of size for non-WIC stores is average monthly FSP redemption reported in August 2000). Connecticut and Ohio did not have sufficient numbers of non-WIC stores in the sample frame to

¹ Non-WIC stores were identified by matching FSP data, provided by USDA/FNS, to State lists of WIC vendors.

² Data on non-WIC stores were collected in California, Connecticut, Ohio, and Texas.

sample the target number of 12 stores. Altogether, the original sample included 108 WIC vendors and 43 non-WIC stores for a total of 151 retailers.

Response Rates

The sample of stores is shown in table B-1. The total number of stores surveyed is 150. Four stores were replaced in the sample during the survey period: 2 stores closed and 2 stores refused to participate.³ After the survey period one WIC vendor in Texas was identified as a WIC-only store and was dropped from the sample; sampling weights for Texas stores were adjusted accordingly. Similarly, one WIC vendor in Connecticut was determined to carry very few WIC items and was dropped; sampling weights were adjusted.

Table B-1—Survey of Food Prices and Item Availability

State	Stores	Item prices	Average	Stores with scanned data
			prices per store	
			<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
WIC vendors				
California	18	3,018	167.7	14 77.8
Connecticut	18	2,178	121.0	8 44.4
North Carolina	18	2,969	164.9	17 94.4
Ohio	18	2,503	139.1	12 66.7
Oklahoma	18	3,278	182.1	13 72.2
Texas ^a	17	3,004	176.7	17 100.0
All WIC vendors	107	16,950	158.4	81 75.7
Non-WIC vendors ^b				
California	12	471	39.3	2 16.7
Connecticut	8	407	50.9	3 37.5
Ohio	11	495	45.0	2 18.2
Texas	12	338	28.2	1 8.3
All non-WIC vendors	43	1,711	39.8	8 18.6

a One WIC-only vendor in Texas was sampled in error and subsequently dropped from the sample.

b Non-WIC vendors were surveyed in States with vendor restrictions.

Table B-1 also provides an indication of “item response.” The data collection instrument contained 412 items (in stores with scanners, 202 item UPCs were scanned and data collectors searched the aisles for 208 items).⁴ Scanners were used to collect price data in 75.7 percent of WIC stores and 18.6 percent of non-WIC stores. On average, data collectors obtained 158 item prices in WIC stores and 40 in non-WIC stores.

³ The refusals were a non-WIC store in Ohio and a WIC vendor in Texas; the closures were a WIC vendor in Oklahoma and a non-WIC store in Texas.

⁴ Aside from national brand items, the count of items is generic in the sense that “private-label corn flakes” were counted as one item, even though the exact identity of that item varies across stores.

Sampling Weights

Two sets of sampling weights were derived: WIC weights and FSP weights. WIC weights apply to all WIC vendors in a State; FSP weights apply to the full sample of WIC and non-WIC vendors in the four States with vendor restrictions.⁵

For each store in the survey, the base sampling weight equaled the reciprocal of the probability of selection, taking into account the two stages of sampling. First-stage weights are identical to the first-stage weights for the Survey of WIC Participants (these weights were derived by the probability of selecting each of the three geographic survey areas, with the measure of size for selection equal to WIC families). Second-stage WIC weights are equal to the probability of selection within the survey area—that is, the ratio of the store's average monthly WIC redemption to the total average monthly WIC redemption within the survey areas. Second-stage FSP weights were constructed for all FSP stores (WIC and non-WIC), and are equal to the ratio of the store's average monthly FSP redemption to the total average monthly FSP redemption at grocery stores and supermarkets within the survey areas.

For both sets of weights, the weights from each stage of sampling were derived with different data: participant data at stage one and store data at stage two. As a result, the base sampling weights did not sum to total redemption. A further adjustment brought the sum of the base WIC weights into agreement with total monthly WIC redemption in each State, and the sum of the FSP weights into agreement with total monthly FSP redemption (at grocery stores and supermarkets) in each State.

Survey Instrument

Two data collection instruments were used—one each for stores with and without scanning systems. A copy of the instrument used in stores without scanners is attached. The other instrument was nearly identical; blocks for food items whose UPC codes were being scanned were crossed out to remind data collectors that these data were being collected elsewhere.

⁵ The two sets of weights were to be used independently for different analyses. The marginal impact of food-item restrictions on food package costs was analyzed using price data from WIC vendors. The marginal impact of vendor restrictions on food package costs was going to be analyzed using the pooled sample of WIC and non-WIC stores, but discovery that State policies had not excluded any stores removed the need for the analysis.

Survey of Food Prices and Item Availability

(White version for use without scan cards.)

Store name: _____

Address: _____

Date and time of data collection:

Date: _____ Time at start: _____ am pm Time at end: _____ am pm

Interviewer Instructions

This survey collects price and availability data for seven categories of foods that satisfy the federal regulations for the WIC Program. The data collection instrument is organized by food category so that most items on a page will be found within close proximity within a supermarket or grocery store. Information will be collected about three types of food products:

- **National brand products.** These products are identified by manufacturer and product name.
- **Store brand products.** These products bear the name of the supermarket or grocery store. For example, if you are in a Star Market, the store label products say “Star Market” on the package; in an IGA store, the store label will say “IGA.”
Wherever “store label” appears on the instrument, enter the name of the store and look for products with the store label. Package sizes must be entered because they will vary by store.
- **Private label products.** Private label products are typically regional brands that appear in many different stores. Examples include “President’s Choice,” “Red & White,” and “Thrifty Maid.”
Wherever “private label:” appears on the instrument, enter the private label brand carried by the store. Package sizes must be entered because they will vary by brand.

Procedure

For each item on the instrument,

1. Locate item and record package size if store label or private label item.
2. Record the current price for each item. If item is on sale, record sale price.
3. Record the price even if the item is not on the shelf. Check shelf tags when space on the shelf indicates that an item is currently out of stock.
4. Mark “X” in price field if item is not in store.

Note: Some stores may have shelf markers identifying WIC foods. The shelf markers may help you find some of the items on the instrument. But remember that data must be collected for all items on the instrument, even if there is no WIC shelf marker for the item.

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Milk, Eggs, and Refrigerated Orange Juice

Instructions: Enter brand names in space provided.

Fluid Dairy Milk			
Store brand:	Quart Price	Half Gallon Price	Gallon Price
Whole milk			
1% Lowfat			
2% Reduced fat			
Skim or Nonfat			
Private label #1:	Quart Price	Half Gallon Price	Gallon Price
Whole milk			
1% Lowfat			
2% Reduced fat			
Skim or Nonfat			
Private label #2:	Quart Price	Half Gallon Price	Gallon Price
Whole milk			
1% Lowfat			
2% Reduced fat			
Skim or Nonfat			

Specialty Milks	Quart Price	Half Gallon Price
Acidophilus		
Buttermilk		
Goat's Milk		
Lactose Reduced		
Lactaid 70 (any variety)		
Lactaid 100 (any variety)		
Dairy Ease 100		
Store brand		
Other:		

Dozen Eggs	White Price	Brown Price
Medium		
Large		
Extra large		

Refrigerated Orange Juice (carton)		
	64 oz Price	128 oz Price
Store brand		

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Cheese

Slices, Individually-wrapped		
American	12-oz	16-oz
	Price	Price
Borden singles		
Kraft singles		
Land O Lakes singles		
Store brand:		
Private label:		

Slices, NOT Individually-wrapped		
American	8-oz	12-oz
	Price	Price
Borden singles		
Kraft Deli Deluxe singles		
Land O Lakes singles		
Store brand:		
Private label:		

Prepackage blocks (8 oz or 10 oz size)		
Helluva Good	Size	Price
Cheddar		
Colby		
Monterey Jack		
Mozzarella		
Muenster		
Kraft	Size	Price
Cheddar		
Colby		
Monterey Jack		
Mozzarella		
Muenster		
Store brand	Size	Price
Store label:		
Cheddar		
Colby		
Monterey Jack		
Muenster		
Mozzarella cheese in blocks or balls	Size	Price
Cacique		
Frigo		
Messana		
Precious		
Polly-O		
Store brand:		
Other brand*:		

Land O Lakes	Size	Price
Cheddar		
Colby		
Monterey Jack		
Mozzarella		
Muenster		
Lake to Lake	Size	Price
Cheddar		
Colby		
Monterey Jack		
Mozzarella		
Muenster		
Fill this section only if no specified national brands are found.		
Other brand	Size	Price
Private label:		
Cheddar		
Colby		
Monterey Jack		
Muenster		

Deli cheese		Go to deli counter for these prices
Record lowest price for each type of cheese		
	Price / lb.	
American		
Muenster		
Provolone		
Swiss		

* Fill in other brand only if no listed brands on shelf.

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Infant Cereal, *without fruit*

Beechnut	8 oz	16 oz
	Price	
Barley		Not Available
Oats		
Rice		
Mixed		

Infant Juice

Beechnut	32 oz or 1 liter
	Price
Apple	
Pear	
White Grape	
Mixed Fruit	

Gerber	8 oz	16 oz
	Price	Price
Barley		
Oats		
Rice		
Mixed		

Gerber	32 oz or 1 liter
	Price
Apple	
Pear	
White Grape	
Mixed Fruit	

Heinz	8 oz	16 oz
	Price	Price
Barley		
Oats		
Rice		
Mixed		

Heinz	32 oz or 1 liter
	Price
Apple	
Pear	
White Grape	
Mixed Fruit	

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Grocery Items

Peanut Butter - 18 oz jar, regular creamy or crunchy

Peanut butter	Price
Jif	
Peter Pan	
Reese's	
Skippy	
Store label:	

Dry Beans/Peas [Check bean aisle and imported foods aisle]

Goya		1-lb bag Price	Store-brand or private label		1-lb bag Price
			Label name		
Black beans			Black beans		
Black-eyed peas			Black-eyed peas		
Lentils			Lentils		
Mayacoba beans			Mayacoba beans		
Pinto beans			Pinto beans		
Red kidney beans			Red kidney beans		
Small red beans			Small red beans		

Milk in the grocery aisle [Check the baking aisle]

Evaporated Milk* (12 oz can)		Price	Dry, powdered milk (box)		Price
			Size (ounces)		
Carnation			Carnation nonfat dry milk		
PET			PET nonfat dry milk		
Store label:			Store label:		
Private label:			Private label:		

* Be sure to get evaporated milk, not sweetened condensed milk.

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

100% Juice - National Brands

National Brands	46 oz can Price	46 oz plastic bottle Price	64 oz plastic bottle Price	11.5 or 12 oz can of concentrate Price
Campbell's Tomato				Not available
Campbell's V-8				
Del Monte Pineapple				
Dole Pineapple				
Hansen's Apple				
Juicy Juice (any variety)				Not available
Langer's Apple				
Langer's Orange				
Mott's Apple				
Northland Cranberry				
Seneca Apple				
Tree Sweet Orange				
Tree Top Apple				
Tropicana Orange (64 oz bottle)	Not available			
Welch's Grape (purple or white)				
Welch's Juicemaker (any flavor)	Not available			
White House Apple				

100% Juice - Store brand

	46 oz can Price	46 oz plastic bottle Price	64 oz plastic bottle Price
Apple			
Grape (purple or white)			
Grapefruit			
Orange			
Pineapple			
Tomato			
Vegetable			

100% Juice - Private label

Private label	46 oz can Price	46 oz plastic bottle Price	64 oz plastic bottle Price
Apple			
Grape			
Grapefruit			
Orange			
Pineapple			
Tomato			
Vegetable			

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

100% Juice - Frozen Concentrate - 11.5 or 12 oz can

National Brands	Price
Dole Pineapple	
Dole Orange-Strawberry-Banana	
Minute Maid Apple	
Minute Maid Grapefruit	
Minute Maid Orange (original)	
Minute Maid Orange Pulp-free	
Old Orchard Apple	
Old Orchard Orange	
Seneca Apple	
Seneca Grape	
Tree Top Apple	
Tropicana Orange (original)	
Tropicana Season's Best Orange	
Welch's Grape (purple or white) - yellow strip	
Welch's White Grape-Raspberry	

Store brand	Price
Apple	
Grape (purple or white)	
Grapefruit	
Orange	
Pineapple	

Private label	Private label	Price
Apple		
Grape (purple or white)		
Grapefruit		
Orange		
Pineapple		

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Hot Breakfast Cereal - National Brands

Quaker	Size	Price
Instant Grits, regular/original	12 oz	
	24 oz	
Sun Country Quick Oats	16 oz	
Quaker Oatmeal		
Old Fashioned	18 oz	
Quick	18 oz	
Quaker Oat Bran Hot	16 oz	
Little Crow Foods		Price
CoCo Wheats		

Nabisco	Size	Price
Cream of Wheat, Regular	28 oz	
Cream of Wheat, Quick	14 oz	
	28 oz	
Cream of Wheat, Instant	28 oz	
Malt-O-Meal		Price
Quick	14 oz	
	28 oz	
Chocolate	28 oz	

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Cold Breakfast Cereal - National Brands

General Mills	Size (oz)	Price
Cheerios	10	
	15	
	20	
	35	
Cheerios, Multi-grain	11.5	
	16	
Chex, Corn	12	
	17.5	
Chex, Rice	12	
	17.5	
Chex, Multibran	16	
Chex, Wheat	16	
Fill in size larger than 16, if available →		
Country Corn Flakes	12	
Kix, regular	9	
	13	
	36	
Total, Corn Flakes	10	
Total, Whole Grain	12	
	18	
Wheaties, regular	12	
	18	
Para Su Familia:		
Cinammon Corn Stars	15.5	
Raisin Bran	18	
Quaker	Size	Price
Crunchy Corn Bran	12	
King Vitaman	12	
Life, plain	15	
	21	
Oat Bran (red)	15.5	
Oatmeal Squares (blue)	16	
Toasted Oats	10	
Toasted Oatmeal (red)	16	

Kellogg's	Size (oz)	Price
Complete Oat Bran Flakes	14.8	
Complete Wheat Bran Flakes	17.3	
Corn Flakes	12	
	18	
	24	
Frosted Mini Wheats, Regular	16	
	20.4	
Frosted Mini Wheats, Bite Size	19	
	24.3	
Mini Wheats, Raisin	16.5	
Mini Wheats, Strawberry	16.5	
Product 19	12	
Special K	12	
	18	

Malt-O-Meal	Size (fill in)	Price
Puffed Rice		
Toasty-O's		

Post	Size	Price
100% Bran (blue)	17	
Banana Nut Crunch	15.5	
Bran Flakes (red)	16	
Grape Nut Flakes	14	
Grape Nuts	16	
	24	
Honey Bunches of Oats	16	
Almonds		
Graham	16	

* Color of box appears in parentheses for lesser known brands.

INSTRUCTIONS: Enter price in space provided. Enter "X" if item is not available in store.

Private Label and Store Brand Breakfast Cereal

Enter store and private labels atop columns.
 Enter size and price for each item. If multiple sizes available, choose size closest to 15 oz.

Cold Cereals

Store label:			Private label:		
	Size (oz)	Price		Size (oz)	Price
Bran Flakes			Bran Flakes		
Corn Flakes			Corn Flakes		
Circle one:			Circle one:		
Corn Puffs			Corn Puffs		
Crispy Corn Puffs			Crispy Corn Puffs		
Corn Crisps			Corn Crisps		
Silly Spheres			Silly Spheres		
Crispy Flakes			Crispy Flakes		
Crispy Hexagons			Crispy Hexagons		
Crispy Rice/ Crisp Rice			Crispy Rice/ Crisp Rice		
Circle one:			Circle one:		
Crunchy Corn			Crunchy Corn		
Toasted Corn			Toasted Corn		
Square-Shaped Corn			Square-Shaped Corn		
Corn Biscuits			Corn Biscuits		
Circle one:			Circle one:		
Crunchy Rice			Crunchy Rice		
Toasted Rice			Toasted Rice		
Square-Shaped Rice			Square-Shaped Rice		
Rice Biscuits			Rice Biscuits		
Rice Weaves			Rice Weaves		
Frosted Shredded Wheat (Reg)			Frosted Shredded Wheat (Reg)		
Frosted Shredded Wheat (Bite-Size)			Frosted Shredded Wheat (Bite-Size)		
Circle one:			Circle one:		
Nutty Nuggets			Nutty Nuggets		
Crunchy Nuggets			Crunchy Nuggets		
Krunchy Nutties			Krunchy Nutties		
Circle one:			Circle one:		
Tasteos			Tasteos		
Toasted Oats			Toasted Oats		
Toasty O's			Toasty O's		