



Navy Food Service

Cmdr. Thomas Michael Dailey, director,
Navy Food Service, Naval Supply Systems
Command Headquarters

Government Food Service: A year ago, you explained challenges to procuring fresh fruits and vegetables related to the Berry Amendment's mandating the Department of Defense give preference to domestic sources. A waiver was granted by the Secretary of Defense; how has this worked out?

Cmdr. Dailey: This waiver has worked out well. Our first preference is always fruits and vegetables raised by our American farmers and their families; during those rare occasions where America's fruit and vegetable cupboard is bare, we accept non-domestic substitutes. Canning and freezing was one of America's early solutions to prolong the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables year-round; let's hope innovation in scalable greenhouse gardening and maybe storage innovations will allow us to source domestically year-round.

Government Food Service: The Navy Standard Core Menu (NSCM) undergoes regular, almost annual, updating. Are any changes being made for 2011? If so, tell us about them.

Dailey: The NSCM will always provide for change. Fleet desires, product worldwide availability and cost consciousness contribute to those menu changes. Menu revisions for 2011 are grounded in the fleet's request for new menu and inventory items. As we head toward summer, Subsistence Prime Vendors (SPVs) will be deleting inventory items that no longer sup-



port our menus. Increasing highly acceptable vegetarian items, while providing old favorites that still have flavor while reducing sodium is part of our focus ahead. Our first step in beverage standardization will be identifying beverage categories and flavors across 300-plus operations this year.

Government Food Service: Also, do aircraft carriers continue to follow a 14-day menu while the NSCM remains at 21 days?

Dailey: The Navy's aircraft carrier fleet continues to provide great meals under a 14-day cycle; the number of days their cycle runs is a business model that works for their 24-hour-a-day serving operations. This NSCM is centered on an offering of eight entrees per meal; that tremendous variety is continually well received.

Government Food Service: Has anything been learned during the Navy's semi-annual menu-planning meetings with the fleet? Any feedback received through menu-review boards?

Dailey: Menu meetings with the fleet have revealed that the surface and submarine communities need to have the ability to prepare many items from scratch to support extended operations at sea without re-supply. Generally, pre-prepared and frozen entrees require additional frozen or refrigerated storage space. We are currently updating and reviewing recipe cards for sauces, desserts, soups and entrees



to provide both methods.

Education is continual at menu development conferences; we learn more about the likes and dislikes of sailors and the daily challenges our Culinary Specialists face with feeding their crews. These face-to-face meetings also give us the opportunity to help local afloat and ashore general messes' operators understand the need for global supportability of menu items. We also present the challenges Navy, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and regional SPVs may face.

Government Food Service: *Is anything being done in the area of training in order to more quickly transition from preparing one set of items to another?*

Dailey: We can never stop looking at how we deliver culinary training to the fleet. Great food is a quality-of-life issue; it is a time during the day where sailors have the opportunity to sit down and socialize with their shipmates. It is important for the CSs preparing those meals to have excellent fundamental skills that contribute to menu success. Now that CS "A" School has moved to Fort Lee, Va., at the Joint Center of Culinary Education, our attention to the curriculum and content of the training will continue. As we participate in and review curriculum delivery we'll make the recommendations we feel necessary to increase the quality of instruction through the Navy's Center of Service Support.

Government Food Service: *Will the Navy attend any other foodservice trade shows or training event in 2011?*

Dailey: Several staff from NAVSUP foodservice will attend the DLA conference; in addition we'll have a presence at the National Restaurant Assoc., a few events with the American Culinary Federation, SPV regional food shows and other food show/educational events. We believe it is important to consider new technology, seek current food trends and menu items that broaden the range of products to satisfy

our sailors. We will continue to look for great vegetarian options and healthy alternatives to some of the traditional menu items we now prepare. A few of the items we are currently looking at include a vegetarian breakfast sandwich or the components that could be cross-utilized in other recipes, a valued-added (oven bake-able) breaded shrimp for a Buffalo shrimp po'boy, and a brown rice bowl concept.

Government Food Service: *What is on the horizon for Navy food service? Are there any initiatives you worked on that were implemented in 2010? If so, explain. Are there any you are working on for 2011?*

Dailey: We are working on a different approach to menu development, validating and increasing our range of recipes while also benchmarking against the other services. If the Army or the Air Force has a great recipe or process, we want to leverage their efforts. We will be sharpening our pencil as we review the cost of boutique beverages and products with little no nutritional value; those costs compete with the bottom line on center-of-the-plate items. Eliminating or reducing the number of beverages served will be a big nut to crack, but our first steps in category and flavor standardization will go a long way to where we can reduce the number of beverages, yet satisfy our fleet.

Government Food Service: *Last year, you mentioned that in 2009, the Navy and DLA developed a 14-point action plan to improve subsistence demand planning and were working to complete it. Did this come about?*

Dailey: Yes, it was a productive partnership working with DLA in developing an automated tool to improve demand-forecasting accuracy. Navy ships are subject to short notice deployments anywhere in the world. Demand planning for some of our SPVs seems to be very challenging. The demand tool uses historical ship subsistence demand, current catalog



menu offerings and manning levels on various ships, along with other factors, to help forecast future requirements for both the Navy operational planners and the SPV. The tool will be used by DLA and their prime vendors to improve food item fill-rate performance in support of Navy's unique afloat mission. Currently, it is being test piloted and is scheduled for implementation in the first calendar quarter of 2011.

The Navy/DLA partnership also produced streamlined prime vendor catalogs supporting Navy afloat customers. The Navy refined its MLL to better represent fleet requirements and reduced the total number of items needed to prepare the NSCM. The Navy and DLA partnered and worked with prime vendors to match catalogs offerings with the MLL. This improvement will allow the prime vendor to focus on a smaller but more predictable list of food items, and the fleet will benefit from increased global product supportability.

Government Food Service: *In 2010, Navy Food Service planned to host a foodservice equipment planning conference. How did it go? Is another planned?*

Dailey: Team members from our office facilitated a fleet-wide equipment planning session back in August in Norfolk, Va. The goal of the meeting was to draft long-term (four to five-year) galley configuration plans to support new construction ships, and to identify galley equipment functionality required to support future developments with the NSCM. Stakeholders mapped initial future galley space design plans for CVNs, LPDs, DDGs, and submarines, which focused on work flow, equipment functionality requirements,

and space configurations, all to minimize time and motion to prepare and present the NSCM. The team identified long-term NSCM trends, to include continued research and development in advanced foods; greater pre-cooked/package products; higher shelf-life stability; improved safety and sanitation; and increased nutritional content. These trends were aligned with manning constraints afloat and the overarching emphasis on reducing total ownership costs to procure, operate, maintain and conduct training to support equipment sets in the future. Attendees produced drafts of long-range galley space designs and developed an equipment candidate list to refine and improve content in the Navy Food Equipment Catalog. Follow-on session with all stakeholders will continue refining long-term plans with the goal of reducing ad hoc actions resulting in equipment sets that are unreliable, unsupportable and result in costly maintenance arrangements. The next annual meeting will be scheduled for this summer.

Government Food Service: *Last year, you mentioned that an anticipated rise in food costs did not come about, resulting in no increase in sale or meal rates or basic allowance for subsistence. How did 2010 turn out?*

Dailey: I think many of us had expected that food cost would have risen at least slightly, but once again it looks like we will not see an increase in sale or meal rates or basic allowance for subsistence. I won't assume that will hold true with the price of a gallon gas at \$3.09 today.

Government Food Service: *Foodservice operations undergo regular review. What is being looked at for 2011?*

Dailey: Current prime vendor Navy subsistence contract language does not fully support Navy's requirements. In 2011, the Navy, in partnership with DLA, will develop and deploy a refined and standardized prime vendor contract that addresses all Navy subsistence requirements uniformly across the globe. Key requirements will include a global standard for vendor fill-rate performance, identified food order lead times and delivery requirements, and for the first time, we expect the contracting officers to be incorporating performance incentives in an effort to improve support. Standardizing contract language focused on fleet requirements will reduce the administrative burden of monitoring vendor compliance with contractual requirements, and will improve all aspects of subsistence support to the war fighter.

—GFS