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FoodData Central Experimental Foods Documentation

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Preface - FoodData Central is USDA's comprehensive source of food composition data with multiple distinct data types.

The food supply is increasing at an incredible rate as are the changes in the composition of agricultural commodities and processed foods. In addition, the scientific understanding of relationships between dietary intakes and health have accelerated placing new demands on the levels of knowledge required of foods and their

components. These demands have increased the need for transparent and easily accessible information about nutrients and other food components.

USDA's food composition data resources are evolving to meet the compositional demands and the needs of an increasingly diverse user base, including researchers, policy makers, nutrition and health professionals, and product developers. This necessitated the development and release of FoodData Central in 2019. FoodData Central provides a web-based data system that is composed of five distinct types of food and nutrient composition data, each with a unique purpose and acquired with different approaches.

- **Foundation Foods** includes values for nutrients and other food components for a diverse range of basic foods (unprocessed or lightly processed foods) and provides extensive underlying metadata, including the number of samples, sampling location, date of collection, analytical approaches used, and if appropriate, agricultural information such as genotype and production practices. The enhanced depth and transparency of Foundation Foods data can provide valuable insights into the many factors that influence variability in food component profiles. Over time, the number of foods in Foundation Foods will expand. Foundation Foods will be a primary focus of efforts in coming years.
- **SR Legacy** was the primary food composition database in the United States for decades. It provides a comprehensive list of values for food components derived from analyses, imputations, and the published literature. These data have provided the values for most other public and private food composition databases and has supported a wide range of public policy initiatives, research studies, and diet planning and educational activities. SR Legacy, released in April 2018, is the final release of this data type and will not be updated. More recent analytical data are available in Foundation Foods and more recent branded label data are available in Branded Foods.
- **Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies 2019-2020 (FNDDS 2019-2020)** provides nutrient and food component values for the foods and beverages reported in What We Eat in America, the dietary intake component of the [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey \(NHANES\)](#). FNDDS data releases correspond to the NHANES two-year data cycles. FNDDS data facilitate analyses of dietary intakes reported in NHANES as well as many other dietary research studies. These data are derived from the Foundation Food and SR Legacy databases.

- **Experimental Foods** contains data on foods published in peer-reviewed journals, supported by or in collaboration with USDA. The foods may be produced, acquired or studied under unique conditions, such as alternative management systems, experimental genotypes, or research/analytical protocols. Use of these data should be considered in the context under which the data were collected. These data will allow users to examine a range of factors that may affect the nutritional/bioactive profiles of foods and resulting dietary intakes as well as the sustainability of agricultural and dietary food systems.
- The **USDA Global Branded Food Products Database (Branded Foods)** contains data from a public-private partnership whose goal is to enhance the open sharing of nutrient data that appear on branded and private label foods and are provided by the food industry. Members of this partnership are:
 - Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA
 - Institute for the Advancement of Food and Nutrition Sciences (IAFNS)
 - GS1 US
 - 1WorldSync
 - University of Maryland, Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

Information in Branded Foods is received from food industry data providers. USDA supports this data type by standardizing the presentation of the data. Branded Foods data are used in a variety of ways, including research studies, food label regulatory efforts, and product development. Data in Branded Foods are updated monthly and made available through the API. In addition, downloads for Branded Foods are generated every six months, and reflect the most up-to-date version of each product at the time the download is generated.

About Experimental Foods Found in FoodData Central

Experimental foods are a food data type in FoodData Central that allow users to focus on the research aspects and gain a deeper understanding of factors related to food composition. Generally, data presented are those that

1) exist within the context of an experimental design; 2) are derived from new analytical methodology and/or 3) are based on innovative sampling procedures. In some cases, data presented may expand information about a specific food that appears in other data types. Experimental Foods data will be displayed in FoodData Central and some may also be available through links to relevant agricultural research data sources, such as the AgCROS, or in scientific publications. Often, data in Experimental Foods will

include (or link to) variables such as genetics, environmental inputs and outputs, supply chains, economic considerations, and nutrition research.

Foods in the Experimental Foods data type include, but are not limited to those produced, acquired, or studied under unique conditions, such as alternative management systems, experimental genotypes, or research/analytical protocols. The foods in this data type may or may not be commercially available to the public. Experimental Foods presently focuses on data published in peer-reviewed journals and generated through support by USDA or in collaboration with USDA.

Data for Experimental Foods are for research purposes and may not be appropriate as a reference for the consumer, diet planning, or dietary guidance.

Many data in Experimental Foods are the result of scientific research projects. Where appropriate, the data for Experimental Foods includes general information about the featured experiment and the investigators involved and links to the publication and/or links to available data.