Subject of Action Item:

USDA Support Child Nutrition Program Administration in State Departments of Agriculture

Submitted By:

Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA)

Text of Action Item:

Request that NASDA urge USDA to cooperate with State Departments of Agriculture seeking to accept the state administered portions of the federal Child Nutrition Program.

Background & Rationale:

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1760) requires that state “educational agencies” have an agreement with USDA to affirm the administrative responsibilities for National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Milk Program, and the Summer Food Service Program. The USDA can waive the requirement that this agreement be with the state educational agency when, for instance, a state legislature transfers a program to a state department of agriculture. USDA should at a minimum not prefer an educational agency over an agricultural one for the management and administration of programs so closely connected to (1) the production of food; (2) the marketing of food and in particular the marketing and promotion of fruits and vegetables; (3) food safety; (4) advocacy for the consumption of local commodities in our schools; and (5) national nutrition and nutrition funding policy. In fact, if USDA expresses any preference for one agency over the other, it should side with agriculture.