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Submitted electronically via White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health “Share Your Ideas and Stories” portal on health.gov

July 14, 2022

White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health Organizers
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Re: White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health – Share Your Ideas and Stories

Dear White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health Organizers:

The National Chicken Council (NCC) appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments to help inform the final report of policy recommendations that will be presented in September at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. NCC represents the vertically integrated broiler chicken production and processing companies that provide more than 95 percent of the chicken marketed in the United States. The broiler chicken industry is geographically diverse, highly competitive, and the proud provider of the nation’s favorite wholesome and affordable animal protein.

Chicken is environmentally sustainable and provides high-quality, bioavailable nutrients that may be under-consumed in nutrition insecure and vulnerable populations.¹ Chicken is protein-dense and provides essential vitamins and minerals like iron, zinc, and vitamin B12.² The chicken industry itself has developed into a highly efficient sector that combines the benefits of localized agriculture with modern production efficiency, resulting in low prices and an abundant supply of chicken for consumers and a globally competitive export sector of American agriculture. The price consumers pay for chicken has decreased dramatically over the years: compared to 1935, consumers today pay 62 percent less for chicken on an inflation-adjusted basis.

This combination of environmental sustainability, affordability, safety, nutritional value, and popularity makes chicken an essential high-quality protein for ending hunger in the United States. The meat and poultry category is one of the most purchased and consumed food items by Supplemental

¹ Cowan AE, Jun S, Tooze JA, et al. Total usual micronutrient intakes compared to the dietary reference intakes among U.S. adults by food security status. *Nutrients*. 2019;12(1):38.

² Nutritional Values for Chicken. National Chicken Council website. <https://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/statistic/10-essential-nutrients/>. Accessed July 14, 2022.

Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] households,³ and meats like chicken are one of the top three most requested items at food banks.⁴

Lean meats like chicken can help close the protein gap among Americans who struggle with food and nutrient insecurity, which particularly impacts women, children, and older adults who have greater need for nutrient-dense animal-sourced foods to support healthy diets.⁵

Chicken is already playing a major role in the fight against hunger -- it has been factored in as a component of the updated Thrifty Food Plan,⁶ which can help people follow optimized, affordable, and nutrient-dense eating plans that satisfy taste and fit into cultural foodways. Chicken is also part of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program⁷ and is listed under the budget friendly protein foods on the MyPlate Shop Simple app⁸ with many SNAP-appropriate recipes in the MyPlate Kitchen resource (55 to be exact).⁹ Additionally, chicken is a key player in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), providing low-cost or free lunches to children with essential nutrients for growth, development, and energy; it is also one of the most consumed meats in the NSLP.¹⁰ It seems to be the case that no matter what the federal nutrition assistance program is, chicken has a place on the plate.

Additionally, we have compiled a snapshot of NCC member recent community donations. This does not represent every commitment by every member but provides a rough estimate of meals – and hope – delivered in a challenging year. Over 2,540,000 pounds of protein, and over 22,000,000 meals were provided by NCC members in 2020 to their local communities by making donations to food banks, soup kitchens, local health care facilities, and beyond.¹¹

Put simply, our industry is producing more and using less. And that is vital for getting nutrient-dense protein on the plates of those who need it most. When it comes to environmentally sustainable food solutions for the future that can help feed Americans in need – chicken’s naturally lower resource consumption, coupled with innovative breeding efficiencies, means fewer resources are required to produce an increasing volume of high-quality chicken meat. In fact, a 2020 lifecycle assessment commissioned by NCC shows that, from a cumulative standpoint, carbon footprint (greenhouse gas emissions) went down by 0.8% and fossil resource use went down 5.7%.¹² These key sustainability measures decreased despite the 21% increase in broiler production between 2010 and 2020.¹²

³ Garasky S, Mbwana K, Romualdo A, Tenaglio A, Roy M. Foods typically purchased by SNAP households. Prepared by IMPAQ International, LLC for USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, November 2016.

⁴ Vincenti M. Three items most requested at food banks. Feeding America website. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-blog/three-items-hungry-families-need>. Published June 22, 2018. Accessed July 14, 2022.

⁵ Sharpe PA, Whitaker K, Alia KA, Wilcox S, Hutto B. Dietary Intake, behaviors and psychosocial factors among women from food-secure and food-insecure households in the United States. *Ethn Dis*. 2016;26(2):139-146.

⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thrifty Food Plan, 2021. August 2021. FNS-916. Available at <https://FNS.usda.gov/TFP>.

⁷ USDA foods available list for CSFP. Food and Nutrition Service website. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/csfp-foods-available>. Published October 15, 2021. Accessed July 14, 2022.

⁸ Shop Simple with MyPlate. United States Department of Agriculture website. <https://www.myplate.gov/app/shopsimple>. Accessed July 14, 2022.

⁹ MyPlate Kitchen Recipes. United States Department of Agriculture website. [https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes?search=chicken&items_per_page=20&sort_bef_combine=title_ASC&f\[0\]=program%3A128](https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes?search=chicken&items_per_page=20&sort_bef_combine=title_ASC&f[0]=program%3A128). Accessed July 14, 2022.

¹⁰ Gleason S, Hansen D, Kline N, et al. Indicators of diet quality, nutrition, and health for Americans by program participation status, 2011–2016: NSLP final report, 2022. Prepared by Insight Policy Research. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support. www.fns.usda.gov/research-and-analysis.

¹¹ Reference page 49 of the report, “2020 U.S. Broiler Chicken Industry Sustainability Report; Issued by the National Chicken Council in September 2021,” https://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NCC_2020_Broiler-Chicken-Industry-Sustainability-Report.pdf.

¹² Reference page 14 of the report, “2020 U.S. Broiler Chicken Industry Sustainability Report; Issued by the National Chicken Council in September 2021,” https://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NCC_2020_Broiler-Chicken-Industry-Sustainability-Report.pdf.

Still, to achieve the current administration’s goal of ending hunger and reducing diet-related diseases in the United States, more needs to be done. At NCC, we believe that every American deserves increased access to safe, wholesome, planet-friendly, and nutritious foods like chicken.

To that end, we recommend the following opportunities to expand access to and ensure availability of chicken as a nutrient-dense, high-quality protein source:

Renew the Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

The Farmers to Families Food Box Program was responsible for helping many American families keep food on the table through the pandemic while also supporting local agriculture. USDA was able to leverage excess capacity in the chicken industry to provide chicken to people in need, which in turn helped support demand, which translates into more shifts for local workers and more flocks for local farmers. NCC encourages USDA to renew this or a similar program.

Expand Section 32 purchases.

Section 32 purchases provide another way for USDA to procure affordable, nutritious protein for those who need it. NCC encourages USDA to identify ways to expand Section 32 purchases, both in terms of the volume and type of chicken procured through the program. NCC also encourages USDA to evaluate program requirements and purchase specifications to make it easier to participate in the program.

Expand cold storage capacity and the nation’s long-haul trucking fleet.

Cold storage facilities and overland trucking are important sectors that support numerous industries. They also have relatively modest overhead and lower barriers to entry. Investing in these important supporting sectors would benefit a significant number of industries, amplifying the effect of any federal dollars invested. Most food banks and charities also have limited cold storage, and only six in the country have the USDA-inspected “cold clean rooms” that would be required to receive and package meat donations.

Increase safe storage, packing, and distribution infrastructure.

This will enable food charities to provide more poultry to families in need.

For more information that may be useful to inform the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, we invite you to read our U.S. Broiler Chicken Industry Sustainability Report, linked below for your convenience:

https://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NCC_2020_Broiler-Chicken-Industry-Sustainability-Report.pdf

We call your attention in particular to the following report sections and page numbers:

- *Air, Land and Water* – New Life Cycle Assessment Shows Substantial Progress Across All Key Impact Categories; Page 13-14
- *Food and Consumer Safety* – The Prevalence of Salmonella In Raw Chicken Is at All-Time Lows; Page 36
- *Community Support* – Page 49-52
- *Food Security* – Providing Americans and People Around the World with Affordable, Nutritious Protein; Page 56

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Thank you again for the opportunity to present the above thoughts and ideas. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to reviewing the national strategy that will be released at the Conference in September.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Brown", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Brown
President
National Chicken Council