

# Navy Food Service

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



**Government Food Service:** *What changes to the Navy's foodservice operations have you noticed or helped bring about since last year's Commander's Update?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** We are working extensively on the logistics aspect of supporting the Navy's master load list for each of the menus within our classes of ships and shore stations worldwide. Through working with the fleet, Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP) and Subsistence Prime Vendor (SPV) business partners, we have tweaked our business model to capitalize best on each of our strengths while identifying strategies that will overcome weak areas, such as those presented through systematic constraints. This collaborative effect will pay us dividends as we sail into 2010, and I anticipate we will experience our best support since the rollout of our standardized menus.



**Government Food Service:** *A year ago, Jim O'Connor, your deputy director, in NAVSUP's Food Service Division, mentioned an initiative that enhanced the Navy's capability to source fresh fruits and vegetables. When did that begin, how does it work, why was it undertaken and how is it working?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** The initiative Jim O'Connor mentioned was actually a collaborative effort between our sister services and our business partners at DSCP. We have rules that are required to be followed pertaining to the procurement of fresh fruits and vegetables (FF&V). Specifically, we are bound by what is known in the contracting world as the Berry Amendment. The Berry Amendment is a United States Code that mandates the Department of Defense gives preference — among other commodities — for procurement of home grown products to domestic sources.

Because of the seasonality and diminishing resources of FF&V, we were in a challenging position last year of getting those needed commodities to our sailors. Our business partners at DSCP petitioned the Secretary of Defense for a waiver, which was approved this past year. That waiver enables us to provide our Sailors an uninterrupted supply of FF&V year round.



**Government Food Service:** *Version 4.0 of the Navy Standard Core Menu (NSCM) was released going into 2009,*



*and returned more traditional favorites to the lineup. Is the menu undergoing any modest or extensive revision this year?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** Menus are now referred to by date of implementation as menu versions have become confusing — a practice that you would not see in a commercial establishment. Reference to dates of implementation keeps it consistent within the Fleet, DSCP and for the SPVs.

The current (October 2009) and future menus are the "Fleet's Menu." NAVSUP's role in menu management is to facilitate the menu-writing process. We enlist the technical knowledge of the Type Commanders (TYCOMs) and waterfront Culinary Specialists (CSs) to generate a platform-specific menu. These menu-writing events result in a list of ingredients that populates the Master Load List (MLL). The MLL is the source document and communication tool to advise SPVs of the platform specific ingredient requirements. At that point NAVSUP's role changes to managing the

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MLL, working with DSCP to measure SPV compliance against the MLL.

NAVSUP will facilitate two menu-writing sessions each year, typically eight to nine months ahead of menu implementation, allowing us sufficient time to generate the required supporting documents for fleet and DSCP. This ensures our ability to support the SPV business model adopted for worldwide commodity support.



**Government Food Service:** *Also, the 21-day NSCM was rolled out, but aircraft carriers continued to utilize a 14-day menu. Is that still the case for carriers?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** Yes, aircraft carriers still utilize a 14-day menu versus a 21-day cycle menu for the rest of the fleet. We don't see that business model changing unless a demand signal from the fleet indicates the necessity to do so. The number of production galleys available on an aircraft carrier ensures a vast variety of food service options.



**Government Food Service:** *Also, what has been learned from the 21-day menu? Will any changes be made or have results been as expected? Has there been feedback from sailors or administration?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** We know the core menu concept is sound. It continues to support the original directives — distance support, reduced manning, healthy variety and standardization. We will not change the core requirements listed, but we do continue to learn and grow with our challenges and successes. What we continue to develop is a smart approach to menu development and standardization: breaking out the MLL by platform specific ingredients, menu flexibility to include special events, ingredients cross utilization and MLL standardization. We review all ingredients for increased opportunity to utilize across platforms. Some ingredients will be platform specific, but as we continue to review, we look to increase their utilization.

One of the very positive things we have learned during our semi-annual menu-planning meetings with the fleet: by and large, they are happy with the menu. We will continually strive to meet the discriminating palates of each of our customers. Each menu-planning meeting offers the customer an opportunity to do so. We open the opportunity for suggestions for menu improvement through menu-review boards, TYCOM consolidated comments and at each of the semi-annual planning events.



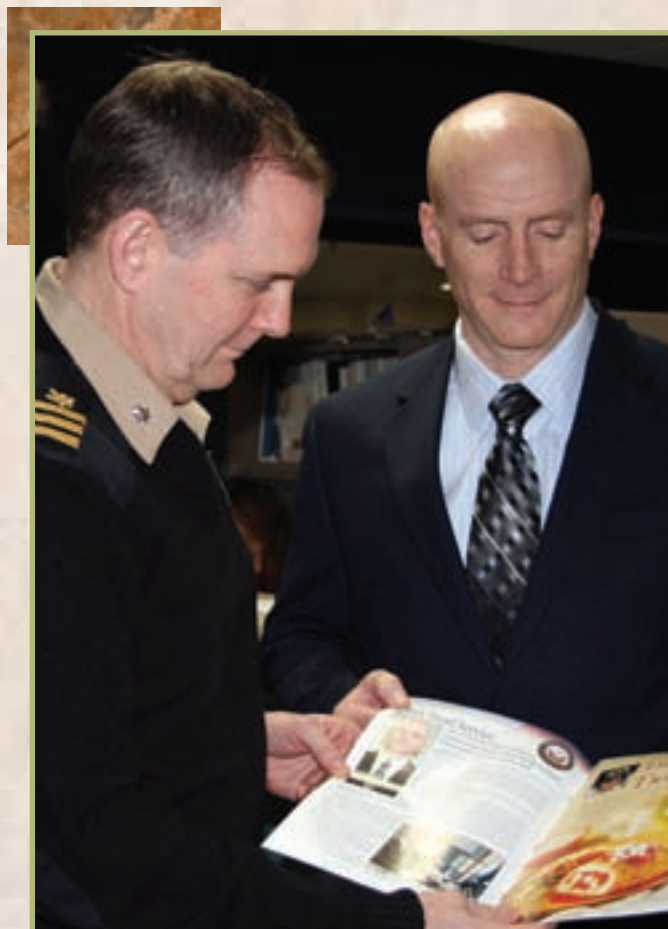
**Government Food Service:** *O'Connor mentioned "the future promises to be even more responsive to the fleet's request for more frequent changes. Explain the "fleet's request" and "more frequent changes." Are plans still for menu changes of at least two times a year with the ability to flex to three or more as requested by TYCOMs?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** We think we have found a business model that will answer the fleet request to change the menu as many times as they desire. However, what we have learned from the TYCOMs is too many changes to the menu can be detrimental to the overall quality of the product delivered to the customer. Specifically, there is always a level of training required to properly prepare new items to a refreshed menu. Instituting changes too frequently does not allow the CSs the opportunity to master preparation techniques, and assess and make appropriate adjustments for things like product holding times on a serving line — all affecting the overall quality of the delivered product. Changing the menu two times per year seems to strike a good balance between the required training for the CSs and the sought-after variety for the customer.



**Government Food Service:** *Will the Navy attend any other food service trade shows or training events in 2010? If so, which and why?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** Navy Food Service will continue to attend and participate in the key trade shows, including National Restaurant Association (NRA) and International Food Services Executives Association (IFSEA), as well as Fleet concentration area SPV trade shows, the ACF national event, RD&A and a new addition this year, the Mid-Atlantic Seafood Value-Added Workshop.





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We will give a presentation at the IFSEA Conference on "Doing Business with the U.S. Navy and the Navy Standard Core Menu" that will bring Fleet, SPVs, brokers and manufacturers together to help them understand our current business processes.



**Government Food Service:** Development was underway on the next-generation information technology solution to replace the outdated foodservice management program. Where is that process? Describe the shortcomings and ad-

*vantages with the current system?*

**Cmdr. Dailey:** The Navy's foodservice management system (FSM) has satisfied our need over the years, but ask any records keeper or Food Service Officer and I'm confident you will get an earful about a DOS-based system when our young men and women have grown up in a WINDOWS environment.

The challenge we are facing in bringing that system to fruition is the added complexity of coming into alignment with guidance that the next generation IT system is to be a standardized system to satisfy the needs — not just for Navy — but for each of our sister service components as well: Army, Air Force, Marines and the Military Sealift.

The Common Food Management System (CFMS) was tested, and we found that while there is tremendous value in the updated capabilities that CFMS provides, it was not yet ready to meet each of the service-unique requirements necessary for unilateral rollout as a Department of Defense (DOD) solution. Subsequently, CFMS is still under extensive review as a possible DOD solution; however, the senior leadership across each service are collectively exploring all possibilities to satisfy this need.



**Government Food Service:** What's on the horizon for Navy food service?

**Cmdr. Dailey:** In fiscal year 2009, Navy and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) developed a 14-point action plan to improve subsistence demand planning, improve Subsistence Prime Vendor support for the Navy Standard Core Menu, and improve support in the AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM areas of responsibility. We are working with DSCP to complete the plan. This is Navy Food Service's primary initiative for 2010.

In 2010, Navy Food Service will be hosting a food service equipment planning conference with its customers and key stakeholders to refine and improve the Navy's afloat foodservice equipment catalog. A main goal of the conference will be to improve the catalog by identifying equipment candidates better suited to meet

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current and future NSCM requirements. Catalog refinement will provide standard sets of equipment by class of ship. Increased standardization will reduce maintenance and training costs by providing standard parts lists and common equipment training in place of unique and costly support constructs for uncommon sets of equipment.

The effort this year will be on reducing total ownership costs, namely high maintenance and training expenses. A standard equipment catalog that fully supports the NSCM and meets the specific needs of

different classes of ships provides our customers value by delivering a one-stop source for afloat galley equipment.



**Government Food Service:** Last year, O'Connor mentioned the challenge presented by food costs having an influence on future menu development and procurement practices. Please explain.

**Cmdr. Dailey:** Interestingly, we did not come to realize an appreciable gain in the cost of food as we were anticipating. In fact, there was a negative inflation in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food-cost index and subsequently no increase in sale or meal rates or basic allowance for subsistence.

To that extent, we were able to stick with our business model and not impose any restrictions on the customer while building the menu as it relates to the cost of food.



**Government Food Service:** O'Connor spoke about the introduction of new platforms' challenging the way we look at food service operations. Please explain how these new platforms will change food service operations.

**Cmdr. Dailey:** The introduction of the Navy's newest ship, the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), has certainly challenged our current business models. Although distance support has been a buzz phrase for some time within the services, we are now starting to truly appreciate how important that model is in supporting a minimally manned crew such as the LCS.

From the foodservice perspective, distance support creates a reduction in the overall number of CSs needed on-board, as well as a near elimination of traditional administration burdens — to include ordering food. This allows the CSs to focus exclusively on either performing the necessary traditional functions associated with their rating or performing other critical ship's function necessary to overall mission support.

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**Dan Barzanti, USAF Ret** Business Development Mgr - Military Food Service  
dbarzanti@RalcorpFrozen.com

**Brian Lewis - GPS Marketing**      brianlewisgps@aol.com





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