

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Franklin Farms urges USDA to expand WIC-eligible plant-based food choices***

PARSIPPANY, NJ, March 7, 2023 — Franklin Farms®, a leading national brand and manufacturer of plant-based protein food products, announces its efforts to help provide WIC participants greater access to plant-based foods. The current WIC Federal Food Package and Guidance policy provides only unseasoned tofu defined as a cheese substitute. No other plant-based protein of any product category is currently WIC-eligible. Popular plant-based protein food product categories such as tempeh, seitan, burger patties, meatless meatballs, nuggets and breakfast links, all remain ineligible. During a review process underway, Franklin Farms has urged the USDA to expand WIC-eligible plant-based food options and encourages manufacturer and grocery industry associations, as well as the WIC, dietician and vegan communities to support their effort.

Together with its House Foods subsidiary partners, the Franklin Farms brand offers the widest choice of plant-based protein food products in the U.S. There are over 6.2 million WIC participants, with an annual food budget of \$3.5 billion (2022 est.). House Foods is the leading brand and manufacturer of WIC-eligible plant-based protein products. “As a leader in the industry, we represent the voice of our loyal consumers as well as our loyal retail partners,” said Kenny Sung, CEO of Franklin Farms. “This is a pivotal moment for the plant-based food industry to promote a sustainable and healthy diet for all Americans.”

Federal law requires the USDA to conduct a scientific review of the foods available through WIC at least once every 10 years and amend the foods available, as necessary, to reflect nutrition science, public health concerns and cultural eating patterns. Since the previous USDA review was conducted in 2013, Millennial and Gen-Z women have led the plant-based food culture while encouraging family members to follow their lead, including their children. Minority communities have been slower to adopt these dietary changes, where its associated wellness benefits, lowering risks for diabetes, heart disease and cancers, could reduce minority community healthcare impacts in the future. Maximizing the availability of plant-based food options, with these associated benefits, promotes the trial of a wider range of healthy options at a young age. This is a critical step toward improving future health outcomes among the most nutritionally at-risk populations. Inflation has greatly impacted food choices, particularly among the most economically disadvantaged, risking a potential setback in the decade of progress made toward a healthier American diet.

“Franklin Farms began more than 40 years ago as a plant-based protein food producer. We trace our roots back to Benjamin Franklin. In his autobiography, Mr. Franklin reflected on his commitment to a plant-based diet starting at age sixteen as the source of his lifelong vitality. Now more than two centuries later, we believe the evermore diverse WIC community deserves greater access to diverse and convenient plant-based proteins, and we believe these additions align with the USDA goals,” said Kenny Sung.

The USDA is responsible for providing a safety net for millions of Americans who are food insecure and for developing and promoting dietary guidance based on scientific evidence. The USDA works to increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet and nutrition education in a way that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence. The USDA provides critical nutrition assistance through [Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\)](#) programs. [The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children](#), commonly known as WIC, promotes healthy birth outcomes and early child development by providing food packages, health screenings and referrals, breastfeeding promotion and support, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to 5 years of age who are found to be at nutritional risk.

To help Franklin Farms support this important initiative, please contact your USDA Regional Office: [FNS Regional Offices | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

To learn more about Franklin Farms and its plant-based product offerings, please visit [www.franklinfarms.com](http://www.franklinfarms.com) or [email](#) for more information.

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#### **About Franklin Farms**

A subsidiary of House Foods Group (TYO:2810), Franklin Farms began over 40 years ago as a simple mushroom farm in Franklin, Connecticut. Since then, they have been creating exciting yet good-for-you meatless meals from field to table. Great ingredients make great foods which is why Franklin Farms starts with flavor-forward, high-quality plant proteins. They offer a range of health-conscious plant-based protein products that span day parts, meal types and taste profiles. From end to end, Franklin Farms makes it easy and delicious for consumers to cook with and eat great-tasting plant-based proteins. From our farms to a store near you, find the nearest retail location at: <https://www.franklinfarms.com/where-to-buy>.