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FAMILY SUPPORT DIVISION

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December 14, 2009

Ms. Darlene Barnes
Regional Administrator
USDA – Food and Nutrition Service
Mountain Plains Region
1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, Colorado 80204-3585

Dear Ms. Barnes:

I am writing to notify you of a reporting discrepancy that our research concludes has been occurring since September 2002. This discrepancy was identified last week, and the faulty program which caused the error is being corrected.

In responding to recent data requests, an error was discovered in the program utilized to compile participant counts for recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Missouri.

This error only impacts participant counts for reporting purposes. Our research has confirmed that the value of food benefits and household count reported to FNS is correct. Also, this error does not result in unqualified persons receiving benefits.

The programming error impacts the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) reports FNS 388 and FNS 388A. The error results in persons **who are no longer receiving benefits** to continue to be counted as though they are.

For example:

Household count = 1

Participant count = 4 (Mother, Father, 2 children)

Reported on FNS388 and FNS388A as household count of 1, participant count of 4

Then one of the children leaves the home and no longer receives SNAP benefits. The program should report household count of 1 and participant count of 3; however, the program actually reports household count of 1 and participant count of 4.

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FOR HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED

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Ms. Darlene Barnes
December 14, 2009
Page 2

The discrepancy in count from month to month is relatively small. However, because this error has persisted over the last seven years, the error results in an over-counting of the number of Missourians receiving SNAP benefits. In September of 2009, we reported participants of 1,119,067. A preliminary recalculation after discovering the error indicates the count of participants should have been reported as 855,408.

I would like to discuss this issue with you or your designee in more detail at your earliest convenience. I will be in contact with you to arrange a time for discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alyson Campbell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Alyson Campbell
Division Director

AC:dk

cc: Jody Cornwell