

# Utah eWIC Alert

Issue 3

February 2020

## International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) Price Look-up (PLC) Codes

Utah WIC is happy to announce WIC participants will continue to have healthy choices as it converts its food delivery system from paper checks to smart card WIC EBT (eWIC) in 2020. All electronic cash register and point of sale (ECR/POS) systems certified to accept the Utah eWIC card must be capable of recognizing WIC allowable fresh fruits and vegetables by their International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS) assigned PLU codes or PLUs.

### eWIC Food Sales Terminology

**Authorized Product List (APL) “Mapping”.** For Utah eWIC, “mapping” refers to matching unique food identifiers for pre-packaged fresh fruit and vegetable food products in a store to corresponding unique food identifiers (PLUs) for WIC authorized fruit and vegetable food products in the WIC State Agency’s APL, so foods are identified as WIC authorized by the store’s ECR/POS system and, if sufficient CVB value is currently available, redeemable by the WIC Cardholder.

**Cash Value Benefit (CVB) Food Items.** In Utah, Cash Value Benefit (CVB) food items are fresh fruit and vegetable food items meeting WIC nutritional guidelines and not specifically excluded by the FNS. The Utah Authorized Product List (APL) identifies CVB fresh fruit and vegetables by unique, IFPS

**Price Look-up (PLU) Codes or PLUs.** International Federation for Produce Standards (IFPS). The coalition of international fruit and vegetable associations around the globe formed in 2001 to introduce PLU numbers globally to improve the supply chain efficiency of the fresh produce industry through developing, implementing and managing international standards.

**Price Look-up (PLU) Code.** A 4- or 5-digit code defined by the IFPS used by an eWIC certified ECR/POS system to identify fruits, vegetables or other produce often sold in bulk increments, of variable weights.

**Universal Product Code (UPC).** The UPC-A barcode and unique 12- digits assigned to each packaged trade item in stores. The UPC data structures follow the global GS1 business communications specification for barcodes, which is based on international standards so that products can be scanned and recognized electronically.

### Questions?

Email questions: [wicvendors@utah.gov](mailto:wicvendors@utah.gov)

Call and leave a question or message: 1-877-WIC-KIDS or 1-877-942-5437. Remember to give your name and either the area code and number for 1) a direct line, OR 2) a main line, including office extension #.

## WIC Allowable IFPS PLU Codes

Utah WIC's Authorized Product List (APL) adheres to the following FNS rules[1] for the listing Cash Value Benefit food items:

- The CVB authorized food items in the APL includes the IFPS assigned PLUs for fresh fruit and vegetables eligible for CVB redemption.
- Utah WIC may, in the future, add IFPS herb PLUs as state specified CVB authorized food items on their APL per FNS regulations. [2]
- Utah WIC may, in the future, authorize canned and/or frozen and dried fruits and vegetables for purchase by WIC Cardholders.

[1] "WIC EBT Operating Rules", Section 11.3, page 40, FNS/USDA (September 2014).

[2] Utah WIC does plan to consider authorizing herb PLUs and possibly frozen, canned and/or dried fruits and vegetables, but not until after statewide conversion to eWIC. At such a time, Utah WIC will add the IFPS PLUs for herbs to its APL and will require Utah WIC authorized vendors to "map" all UPCs for approved frozen, canned and/or dried fruits and vegetables to corresponding IFPS PLUs for fresh fruit and vegetable food items. [EX: The UPC for frozen pineapple would be mapped to the IFPS PLU for fresh pineapple.]

## The "Steps" Mapping a UPC to PLU for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

If your store sells pre-packaged fresh fruits and vegetables identified by the grower or distributor with a UPC, here are some examples of what you can do to ensure each can be purchased with WIC:

- Map the UPC for a single fruit or vegetable to a corresponding IFPS PLU. [EX: A bag of carrots, UPC #033383902012, can be mapped to PLU#4094, Carrot Bunch, and the UPC #715756200023 for 1lb of Driscoll's strawberries to PLU#3355, strawberries.]
- Map the UPC for a mixture/medley of fresh vegetables or fruits to the corresponding IFPS PLU for the first or the predominant vegetable or fruit item. [EX: DOLE 12oz American Blend Salad, UPC# 0071430009330, to PLU#3097, Lettuce-Romaine.]

**REMEMBER: If a fresh fruit or vegetable is not identified by an IFPS PLU and is not "mapped" to an IFPS PLU, a WIC participant will not be able to purchase the fruit or vegetable with WIC.**

## WIC Vendor APL Mapping Requirements

Utah WIC requirements for APL Mapping are:

- Mapping is allowed only for fresh fruits and vegetables identified as WIC food items eligible for 'cash value benefit (CVB)' redemption in the WIC State Agency APL;
- WIC vendors must 'map' UPCs, GTINs and other unique product identifiers, including "store-specific identifiers", for WIC authorized fresh fruit and vegetable foods to IFPS PLUs for WIC authorized CVB fruit and vegetable food items in the WIC State Agency's APL file;
- Utah WIC requires 'full mapping' of UPCs for pre-packaged, WIC authorized fresh fruits, vegetables and other produce, on a one-to-one (1:1) basis, to IFPS PLUs on the Utah WIC APL; and
- Utah WIC Vendors will not use the FNS-designated CVB PLU 4469.

In Utah the "mapped" PLUs will be used for WIC purchase approval, benefit redemption and store WIC food sales reporting.

## Other WIC Vendor APL Requirements

Other rules that apply to the use of the Utah WIC State Agency APL by Utah WIC Vendors are:

- A WIC Vendor may remove food items not sold by the WIC Vendor from the Utah WIC APL maintained in the WIC Vendor ECR/POS system; and
- A Utah WIC Vendor, or its agent, must be able to create and access a subset of the Utah WIC APL file and produce a list of Utah WIC authorized food items available in the store by product name and UPC/PLU.