

## A changing food supply and growing data needs

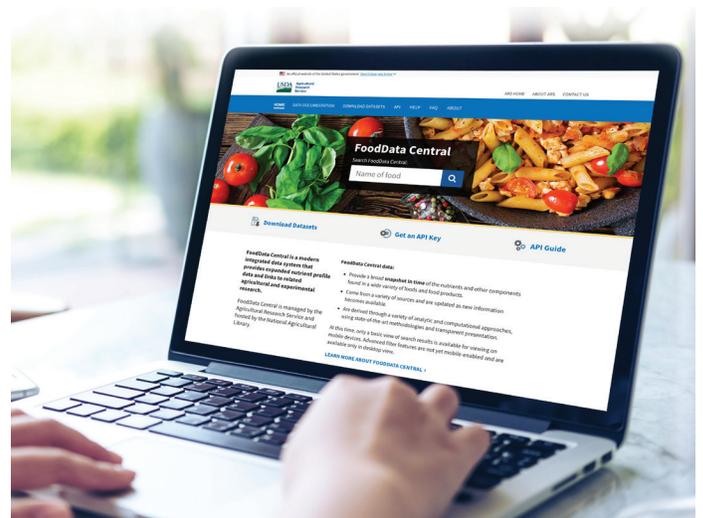
The food supply is constantly changing and evolving. Scientific knowledge about the role of diet in health and wellness also is evolving. These trends have implications for research, food policy, dietary guidance, and product development. As a result, the uses for data about food are expanding, which is creating a demand for transparent and easily accessible information about the nutrients and other components in foods and food products.

## FoodData Central is the solution

USDA's Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center (BHNRC) has established FoodData Central, an integrated, research-focused data system that includes five distinct types of data, each with a unique purpose. These data types provide values for the nutrients and other components found in a wide variety of foods and food products. For an expanding number of new foods, FoodData Central also provides extensive underlying

information that supports the values. In addition, FoodData Central provides links to relevant agricultural research data and other data sources, such as dietary supplement data.

By including diverse types of data in one system, FoodData Central can help align nutrient information with other key data systems. This alignment strengthens the ability of researchers, policy makers, and others to address vital food, nutrition, and health issues.





## Key features of FoodData Central

- FoodData Central has the well-established data types that are familiar to many users: Standard Reference Legacy, the Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies, and the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database.
  - The USDA Food Composition Databases website, which housed Standard Reference Legacy and the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database, was discontinued on September 30, 2019.
  - Older versions of Standard Reference and other historical food and nutrient data previously available on the USDA Food Composition Databases website are now available at BHNRC's new Methods and Application of Food Composition Laboratory (MAFCL) website: [ars.usda.gov/nea/bhnrc/mafcl](https://ars.usda.gov/nea/bhnrc/mafcl).
- FoodData Central also includes two new data types.
  - **Foundation Foods** provides nutrient and other component values for food and food products, as well as extensive underlying metadata. The enhanced depth and transparency of Foundation Foods data provide valuable insights into the many factors that influence variability in nutrient and food component profiles.
  - **Experimental Foods** offers relevant agricultural experimental data from multiple sources, including data on foods that are not available in the commercial marketplace. These data provide information about factors, such as geography, agricultural practices, processing procedures, or food varieties, that may affect the nutritional composition of foods.
- FoodData Central values are derived through state-of-the-art chemical analyses, computations, and other approaches.

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