



April 10, 2020

Commissioner Thom Petersen
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Commissioner Petersen:

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, as implemented by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), has excluded canned fruits and vegetables from eligibility for the past several years. In this time of public health crisis when shelf-stable foods have become highly favored by consumers, we are asking for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's support in seeking to restore these foods to eligibility in the WIC program.

Federal law mandates that states must offer fresh fruits and vegetables to WIC participants, but each state has its own discretion whether to offer canned or frozen fruits and vegetables, canned beans, or canned juice and fish. At a time when Americans need nutritious, convenient, and affordable food options, the Midwest Food Products Association (MWFPA) believes those participating in WIC deserve equal access to canned food.

This is particularly true as many of these vegetables are grown by Minnesota farmers and canned by Minnesota food processors with cans also manufactured in Minnesota.

MDH administers the state WIC program and is considering adjustments to the eligible products in the current offerings. We ask that you please encourage MDH to immediately consider returning canned fruits and vegetables as eligible items under the Federal program.

Thank you for your consideration of this timely request.

Sincerely,



Executive Director
Minnesota AgriGrowth



President
Can Manufacturers
Institute



President
Midwest Food Products
Association