

 **regular page****Breaking News****NSLP to offer choice on some products: LFTB, or no LFTB****By Lisa M. Keefe on 3/15/2012**

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is expected to announce today — perhaps as early as 1 p.m. EST — that it will begin identifying products offered through the National School Lunch Program that contain lean finely textured beef and, where possible, offer variations that do not include LFTB, sources told **Meatingplace**.

For example, schools will be able to choose between ordering bulk ground beef without LFTB or formed patties that include the product.

The decision has not been officially announced, but was leaked to *The Associated Press* and widely reported earlier today. Rich Jochum, spokesman for North Sioux City, S.D.-based Beef Products Inc., which supplies LFTB to the school lunch program, told **Meatingplace** that the company will have an official response when the USDA's announcement is made official later today.

How AMS's decision will be implemented through the NSLP system is as yet unclear. The program is a complicated tangle of individual arrangements with each school district, implemented through a series of suppliers and distributors, and purchases typically are locked in months in advance. However, schools are under pressure from parents and others to ensure that LFTB is not part of students' lunches, and are in turn pressuring AMS.