

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will purchase U.S.-grown table grapes as part of its 2022 Food Purchase and Distribution Program (FPDP).

The USDA recently announced its commitment of \$30 million to purchase U.S.-grown table grapes in 2022 for distribution to food banks and other food programs around the country.

Purchases will be made June through December, a timeframe during which California-grown table grapes dominate U.S. production. The award, which came as a result of a formal request made by the California Table Grape Commission, will mark the third year in a row that table grapes have been included in the federal food purchasing program.

Table grape shippers interested in participating in the FPDP must apply to become a USDA vendor and then, if approved, submit bids in a competitive process. Growers must undergo and pass the USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) audits.

GAP focuses on farm review and field harvesting/packing activities while GHP covers packinghouses, cold storage, and transportation.

The USDA award announcement comes as planning for the 2022 California table grape season gets underway and meetings with retailers are scheduled. Part of planning for the season includes knowing what commitments are already made for the upcoming crop.