



VEGETARIAN MEALS IN THE MEAL, READY-TO-EAT™ (MRE™)

According to national surveys, approximately 3-5% of adults in the United States follow vegetarian diets. In addition, more and more Warfighters are becoming health conscious and/or prefer an occasional meatless meal to add variety to the 24 Meal, Ready-to-Eat™ (MRE™) menu entrées.

WHY ARE THEY NEEDED?

Annual surveys dating back to Operation Desert Storm indicate that Warfighter food preferences closely resemble those of the general non-military population, and include vegetarian options. The development of vegetarian meals is included in the Fielded Individual Ration Improvement Project (FIRIP) which was initiated in 1993 to provide continuous product improvement for the MRE™ and other individual combat rations.

KEY FEATURES / BENEFITS

There are 4 vegetarian menus available, two in each MRE™ case (A and B). MRE™ XXXV vegetarian menus contain Vegetarian Taco Pasta and Spicy Penne Pasta in Case A, and Cheese Tortellini, and Ratatouille in Case B. These wholesome vegetarian meals include an entrée and other complementary meal items, such as crackers, spreads, nuts, baked items/snack, wet pack fruits and beverages to make up the meal. The vegetarian meals must comply with the applicable shelf life and size requirements specified for the MRE™. The ingredients and component products of a vegetarian meal must also comply with established vegetarian lacto-ovo guidelines which includes dairy and egg products, but prohibits animal products such as beef, pork, poultry, or animal by-products. In addition, ingredients containing alcohol, such as certain flavorings, are prohibited in the vegetarian meals. Non-prohibited ingredients include, but are not limited to: cereal, grains, breads, pasta, legumes, vegetables, fruits, and nuts.



COMMENTS:

The DoD Combat Feeding Program works closely with the Office of the Surgeon General to ensure that food safety and nutritional standards for all meals, including vegetarian meals are met. As part of the FIRIP, new and improved vegetarian meals will continue to be included in future MRE™ menus based on Warfighter testing and feedback.



