

Testimony
2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Listening Sessions
USDA/FNS
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Good morning. I am Dr. Lorelei DiSogra, Vice President for Nutrition and Health, at United Fresh Produce Association. United Fresh is a national trade organization representing the total fresh produce industry, including growers, fresh-cut processors, wholesale/distributors, and supermarkets and restaurants.

The 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act provides a significant opportunity to improve children's eating habits by:

- (1) Including more fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals, and
- (2) Increasing the reimbursement rate to cover this cost.

By law, school meals must be consistent with the latest Dietary Guidelines. However, school meals currently include fewer fruits and vegetables than recommended. To meet the 2005 Dietary Guidelines:

- School Breakfast should include at least 2 servings of fruit and/or vegetable
- School Lunch should include at least 3 servings of fruit and/or vegetable

On average, America's children eat less than half of the daily amount of fruits and vegetables recommended for good health. Serving more fresh fruits and vegetables, and a wider variety, in school meals is an effective strategy for increasing children's consumption, improving their health and reducing their risk for obesity. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program clearly demonstrates that students like fresh fruits and vegetables and will

eat more when high quality, great tasting fruits and vegetables are provided to them in schools.

United Fresh Produce Association recommends the following priorities for 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization:

1. Increase the reimbursement rate for school meals and tie this increase specifically to serving more fruits and vegetables consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. Priority should be given to schools with the highest proportion of low-income students.
2. Enact a national policy goal that every school has a salad bar in their cafeteria. Students eat more fruits and vegetables when they have a salad bar offering a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. With this national goal in place, USDA should provide incentives and training to schools to implement salad bars.
3. Provide funding for non-food assistance grants to enable schools to purchase equipment, such as refrigeration and salad bars, necessary for schools to serve more fresh fruits and vegetables consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines.
4. Require USDA to significantly expand its commodity purchases of high quality fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables for schools. Last year, only 3% of all USDA fruit and vegetable purchases were fresh. In order for children to eat and enjoy fruits and vegetables at school, the lunch program must offer high quality and great tasting fresh produce.
5. Increase funding for the DoD Fresh Program, or a comparable USDA or private sector fresh produce delivery program to schools. DoD Fresh has made it easy for schools to purchase a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables at the lowest cost, delivered directly to the school.

Improving the healthfulness of school meals must be a goal of the 2009 CNR. Making more fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables and salad bars available to students and providing schools with the necessary financial resources will help accomplishing that goal.

Thank you

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