

Testimony
Lorelei DiSogra Ed.D., R.D.
Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Meeting
Washington, D.C.
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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, wholesaler/distributors, supermarkets and restaurants; we are funded by membership dues.

I've been engaged in national initiatives to increase fruit and vegetable consumption for the last 20 years and my previous position was Director of the National 5 A Day Program at the National Cancer Institute.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines provides a unique opportunity to strengthen our nation's dietary recommendations to increase fruit and vegetable consumption as recommended by all national health authorities.

I strongly encourage the Dietary Guidelines Committee to:

(1) Provide Clear, Strong Advice to Motivate Behavior Change – We support the specific fruit and vegetable recommendations from the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, however we believe that terms like “make wiser food choices,” and “foods to encourage” are just too vague to motivate behavior change. If you conclude that Americans need to eat more fruits and vegetables for good health, then be bold and aggressive---and provide clear, understandable and strong recommendations that are more likely to motivate behavior change. Consumers are bombarded with confusing messages about what to eat – the Dietary Guidelines should be a place where consumers know they can learn more about how and what to eat, not a place that contributes to ambiguity and further confusion. Eating more fruits and vegetables is critical to better health and maintaining ideal body weight. We encourage the Committee to make clear, understandable, and strong recommendations.

2. Consider an Overarching Recommendation such as “Half Your Plate” Should be Fruits and Vegetables! – In preparation for the release of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, a team at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) worked for several months on how to best translate, clarify and communicate to the public the essence of Table A-2 with regard to fruit and vegetable recommendations. Understanding that the science dictates a different # of servings of fruits and vegetables for men and women at different ages and calorie levels, the NCI concluded that an overarching behavioral directive such as “Half Your Plate” could effectively communicate and potentially motivate behavior change. I

encourage the Committee to consider an overarching, easy to understand recommendation for fruits and vegetables.

(3) Consider Policy Implications and the Role of Prevention in Health Reform -

Translating the Dietary Guidelines into national policy often takes a very long time; too long. WIC participants finally received vouchers for fruits and vegetables – after more than 35 years! And, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program was recently expanded nationally; reaching one million children this school year and 3 million kids by 2011. However, school meals lag way behind the Dietary Guidelines and best case scenario is it will take another 4 to 5 years before school meals are consistent with the recommendations. Prevention and the role of healthy diets is now part of the discussion about national health reform. Shortening this time lag between dietary recommendations and policy requires building broad bi-partisan political support. Building this political support is easier if your Committee makes clear, strong guidelines with an eye to policy – making it easier for Congress, the Obama Administration, and nutrition and public health advocates to turn your hard work into real action to improve the health of our nation.

Thank you.

Respectively Submitted:

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