



**Testimony**  
**2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Listening Sessions**  
**USDA/FNS**  
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Good Morning. I am Mark Munger, Vice President of Marketing for Andrew Williamson Fresh Produce. My company is a vertically integrated grower shipper of tomatoes, cucumbers and strawberries in both Mexico and the United States. I am also the Chairman of the Produce for Better Health Foundation, which manages and promotes the Fruits and Veggies – More Matters health initiative.

There is no secret that we have a childhood obesity epidemic in America. The 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act provides a significant and vital opportunity to improve children's eating habits by; (1) including more fruits and vegetables in school meals, (2) increasing the reimbursement rate to cover this cost, and (3) a nutritional education component to compliment and reinforce the importance of fruits and vegetables in a healthy diet.

By law, school lunches and breakfasts must be consistent with the latest Dietary Guidelines. Yet, today's school meals fall well short of the minimum recommendations for fruits and vegetables. To meet the 2005 Dietary Guidelines schools should serve a minimum of two servings of fruit and/or vegetable at breakfast and three servings of fruit and/or vegetable at lunch. Most of America's children eat less than half of the daily amount of fruits and vegetable recommended for good health.

We have a tremendous opportunity to serve more fruits and vegetables to children through the school meals program. Programs like the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program have proven that students like fruits and vegetables and increase their consumption when high quality, great tasting fruits and vegetables are made available to them in school. Just bringing the school meals program up to the recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines will have a significant impact on increasing children's consumption, improving their health and reducing the risk for obesity.

On behalf of the Produce for Better Health Foundation, I would like to recommend the following priorities for 2009 Nutrition Reauthorization:

1. Increase the reimbursement rate for school meals, tied specifically to serving more fruits and vegetable in school lunch/breakfast programs consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. While we believe that fresh is vital, the nutrient value of eating more fruits and vegetables can be secured through all forms: fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice. Priority should be given to schools with the highest proportion of low-income students!

2. Establish a national policy goal that every school has a salad bar in their cafeteria. Schools with salad bars have demonstrated that students eat more fruits and vegetables when they have a salad bar offering a wide variety of high quality fruits and vegetables.
3. Additionally, provide funding for non-food assistance grants to help schools purchase equipment, such as refrigeration and salad bars, to help schools realistically be able to serve more fruits and vegetables.
4. Require USDA to dramatically increase commodity purchases of fruits and vegetables for schools, especially purchasing more fresh and fresh cut fruits and vegetables.
5. Increase funding for the DOD Fresh Program, or a comparable USDA or private sector fresh produce delivery program to schools. DOD Fresh has demonstrated that it can be easy for schools to purchase a wide variety of fruits and vegetables at the lowest cost, delivered directly to the schools.
6. Increase funding to expand nutrition education in the classroom. Increasing the servings of fruits and vegetables to children is essential, however, a multi-pronged approach is required if we are to have children develop early healthy habits that last a life-time. Nutrition education combined with access to fruits and vegetables is critical.

There can be no higher or important priority than improving the healthfulness of school meals and the nourishment of our nations children. Making more fruits and vegetable and salad bars available to students, providing schools with the financial resources to handle and serve fresh fruits and vegetables, and offering nutrition education to help build long term healthy eating habits will make a real difference!

Thank you!

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