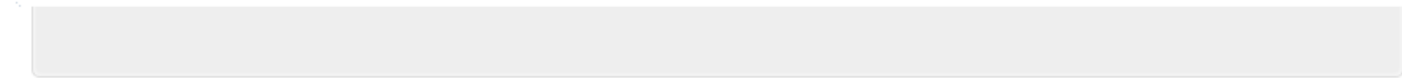


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[A Salad Bar in Every School](#)

Posted on June 17, 2009 by Sterling



The [United Fresh Produce Association](#) released an [article](#) today discussing their efforts to make sure there is a salad bar in every school cafeteria in the United States. This article caught my eye because I believe school nutrition is an issue that needs to be addressed. I mean, I remember what I used to eat from the cafeteria and it was not good.

It's refreshing to see United Fresh taking a stand on school nutrition. Later in the article it mentioned past efforts they have been successful with including a nationwide expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and the inclusion of produce in the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC). The more people that can get access to fresh fruits and vegetables, the happier I am.

I did some additional reading and came across this [USDA website](#) that had a lot of statistics, here are some of the ones I found the most interesting:

- 21% of schools offer a salad bar atleast one time per week.
- Salad bars are most common in high schools and least common in elementary schools.
- On a typical school day, 20% of public school children have access to a salad bar, if they are enrolled at a school with one. However, 'affluent' schools with paid students are more likely to have a salad bar than other schools with higher percentages of free and reduced price students.
- The presence of a salad bar is related to school characteristics and schools offering a salad bar atleast one time per week have a lower percentage of students who are free and reduced price than schools without salad bars.

I actually got a little offended by these statistics. I truly think that elementary schools should have and need salad bars more than high schools. The younger children need the nutrition and also need to learn about eating healthy vegetables and fruits while they are young. Instilling healthy habits early will help continue those habits later in life. I am not saying that middle and high schools should not have salad bars, it is just as important for them too. As for the most 'affluent' schools having salad bars, that makes sense, however, it is not really fair, it should be an option every day for all school children.

So when I read this article, I was really excited that United Fresh is taking this on. I want to see every school offer salad bar options to students, no matter status or age. I support United Fresh in this and I hope you will too.

photo from [flickr](#)



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5 Responses

1. **terrie**, on [June 17th, 2009 at 9:54 pm](#) Said:

You are so right about the healthy eating in elementary school. Parents work very hard to instill healthy eating habits in children only to have their efforts blind sided by school lunches that most adults would not eat. Way to go United Fresh.

[Reply](#)

2. **Chris**, on [June 18th, 2009 at 9:32 am](#) Said:

Let's not forget that home is where eating habits are begun and reinforced. As much as I love to blame government, parents should bear the bulk of the responsibility for feeding children correctly. Nutritional requirements in schools are mandated by federal standards and must be adhered to in order to receive federal funding. Financial constraints often dictate menus and fitting in the nutritional elements falls to the least expensive method of delivering the goods. More kids on free and reduced lunch = fewer options at the table.

One cool thing is that there are new programs in place to get local farmers and school districts together to bring locally grown foods to the schools. Bringing local small farms, local school nutrition and local sustainable economic productivity to concieveably every area of the US – what a concept! Common sense ideas that worked in the past making someone look like a genius for bringing it back. (I'm

pretty sure this is how it was done every year prior to the late sixties). Prior to that, Mom packed your lunch. Try finding a Six Million Dollar Man lunch box on school grounds today.

[Reply](#)

- **Chris**, on [June 18th, 2009 at 9:39 am](#) Said:

Farm to School is the national program being referred.

[Reply](#)

- **Sterling**, on [June 18th, 2009 at 3:36 pm](#) Said:

I totally agree that it begins at home as well, however, I think schools should also offer better options. I used to bring my lunch too, it was a lot healthier than the school cafeteria options.

I do like the new movement for schools to work with their local farmers to provide local produce in their schools and I'm glad to see it's started here.

[Reply](#)

3. **Nicole**, on [June 18th, 2009 at 12:08 pm](#) Said:

The salad bar was always my favorite for school lunches. However I piled my plate with cheese and heavy dressings, things I know better about now. I try to stick to tomatoes, different types of lettuce, cucumbers, broccoli and other healthy options that are better for you.

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