

**United Fresh Produce Association
2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Policy Priorities**

Approved by the Board of Directors

January 25, 2009

Increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables in school meals is a top public policy priority for United Fresh Produce Association. The 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) provides an opportunity to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in school meals, improve children's eating habits and promote good health.

By law, the School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program must be consistent with the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans. However, school meals currently contain fewer fruits and vegetables than recommended. To meet 2005 Dietary Guidelines:

- School Breakfast should include at least 2 servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day. **This means adding 1 more serving.**
- School Lunch should include at least 3 servings of fruits and/or vegetables per day. **This means adding 1-2 more servings.**

In addition to including more servings of fruits and vegetables in school meals, it is also important that schools serve fruits and vegetables in ways that result in kids actually eating more, i.e., fresh, fresh-cut and salad bars.

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

- 1. Enact a national "Salad Bar in Every School" policy.** One of the simplest and most direct ways to increase kids' produce consumption in school lunch is to offer a salad bar, containing a wide selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. With a national goal in place, the USDA Secretary should encourage and promote school salad bars and provide incentives and training to schools to implement salad bars.
- 2. Increase the current reimbursement rate** for all school meals to reflect rising food, labor and transportation costs, and thus helping schools to meet nutrition standards and the Dietary Guidelines.
- 3. Provide \$10 million funding per year for non-food assistance grants** to purchase needed equipment, such as refrigeration and salad bars, to support schools in meeting the Dietary Guidelines. Many schools wish to serve more fresh fruits and vegetables, but lack the resources to purchase refrigerators or salad bar equipment. This funding, targeted to low-income schools, would enable 1,000 schools to purchase walk-in refrigerators and 2,500 schools to purchase salad bars.

4. Require USDA/AMS to significantly expand its purchases of *fresh and fresh-cut* fruits and vegetables for schools. Schools are asking for more fresh and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. Last year, only 3% of all fruit and vegetable commodity purchases were fresh, resulting in a huge gap between what schools are asking for and what AMS is purchasing. AMS is commended for implementing a pilot fresh-cut sliced apple program for schools and urged to: (1) expand the fresh-cut apple program nationally; and (2) expand to other fresh-cut fruits and vegetables readily available in the market place.

5. Increase funding for the DOD Fresh Program to \$100 million per year. The DoD Fresh Program makes it easy for schools to purchase a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables at the lowest cost and delivered directly to the school.

6. Mandate time requirements for USDA to publish rules updating nutrition standards for the school meals programs, following publication of the Institute of Medicine's report on school meals.