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Ag. Sec. Vilsack On Deck for United Fresh Washington Public Policy Conference

From: *Progressive Grocer*

By null

July 26, 2009 - Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack will deliver the keynote address at the United Fresh Produce Association's (United Fresh) Washington Public Policy Conference in September. "Secretary Vilsack is a staunch supporter of fruits and vegetables, and we couldn't be happier to introduce him personally to our members at this fall's conference," said United Fresh president and CEO Tom Stenzel.

"Secretary Vilsack is in a unique position of helping guide the Obama administration's efforts to increase consumption of fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables. From the first lady's personal encouragement to eat more fresh produce to the many new programs such as WIC fruit and vegetable vouchers and the school snack program that USDA is currently implementing, this administration is positioned as never before to truly drive increased consumption."

A longtime supporter of fresh fruits and vegetables, Vilsack earlier weighed in as Iowa's governor in support of expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program for schools around the country. During his announcement of the People's Garden on the grounds of the USDA headquarters in Washington, Vilsack said, "If we can get people to focus on fruits and vegetables and more healthy foods, we'll be better in terms of our health care situation."

The secretary's keynote address adds to an already busy schedule of events at this year's Washington Public Policy Conference, including the annual Fresh Festival on Capitol Hill with honorary co-hosts Sens. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa),

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Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.) and Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), and Reps. Colin Peterson (D-Minn.), John Lucas (R-Okla.), Dennis Cardoza (D-Calif.) and Adam Putnam (R-Fla.), as well as a luncheon general session featuring CNN analyst and pundit Paul Begala.

The annual conference, which will be held this year from Sept. 9 to Sept. 11 at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel, will provide attendees the opportunity to engage in a wide range of policy-oriented activities, including visits to more than 140 congressional offices and a private town hall meeting with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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