



September 28, 2010

Dr Mehmet Oz
The Doctor Oz Show
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

Dr. Oz:

The undersigned associations represent many of the farmers and marketers of conventional and organic fruits and vegetables from across the country. Our members take great pride in providing America and the world with the safest, highest quality produce every day.

We've seen the headlines recently: "CDC report states that consumption of fruits and vegetables is declining." This is occurring while obesity rates continue to climb. While there are many reasons for the degradation of America's eating habits, fear among consumers should not be one of them. Your recent show about the "dirtiest produce items" did just that – placed fear into viewers about healthy, wholesome fruits and vegetables.

You stated that consuming fruits or vegetables with pesticide residues would cause a person's heart to race, eyes to dilate and asthma-like symptoms. Those statements are medically and scientifically invalid. The three federal government agencies that regulate the use of pesticides (EPA, USDA and FDA) are clear that 98 percent of the produce tested have either no detectable residues or the residues found were well below the legal levels set by the government. And, our government's standards governing the use of pesticides are the most stringent in the world – yes, even more stringent than the European system.

Further, we have had a toxicologist analyze the pesticide residues found on fruits and vegetables by the USDA Pesticide Data Program. The findings which are based on the highest levels found (e.g. worst case scenario) and calculated for a "no effect level" on a child were as follows: For strawberries a child would have to consume 1,508 servings and still not reach the "no effect level" for pesticide residues. For spinach, a child would have to consume 2,564 servings. For apples a child would have to eat 154 servings. And for peaches, a child would have to eat 2,227 servings. The serving numbers for adults and teens is much higher.

In addition, the "list" that is commonly referred to by the Consumers Union and the Environmental Working Group (EWG) that you used as a basis for your show was also examined by a team of scientists from across the nation. The panel was comprised of toxicologists, risk assessors and nutritionists. That expert panel found that these lists are misleading to consumers, are a detriment to public health because they discourage consumption, and lack scientific evidence that the pesticide levels found pose any risk. You can review the full report at www.safefruitsandveggies.com. You may be interested to know that these "lists" and corresponding

reports have never been submitted by the Consumers Union or EWG for peer review. And, EWG readily admits that this list is not “risk based.” (The expert panel report which analyzed these “lists” has been submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal.)

Finally, it is concerning that there would be allegations that the farmers who work so hard to bring consumers an abundance of fruits and vegetables would use practices that actually harm their customers. It is also important to consider that the first people to eat what a farmer produces are his or her own family. And, believes that these fruits and vegetables are coming from “industrialized, corporate” agriculture is simply untrue. The vast majority of the fruits and vegetables Americans consume are produced by family owned and operated farms.

We look forward to hearing back from you and engaging in further dialogue with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Dolan, Executive Director
Alliance for Food and Farming



Bryan Silbermann, President and CEO
Produce Marketing Association



Tom Stenzel, President
United Fresh Produce Association



Tom Nassif, President
Western Growers

Cc: Tim Sullivan, Communications, Dr. Oz Show