



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **United Fresh Recommends Increasing Fruits and Vegetables in WIC**

*National Academy of Sciences Conducts 10 Year Review of WIC Food Packages*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 1, 2016) – Today, United Fresh Produce Association's Vice President, Nutrition and Health, Dr. Lorelei DiSogra, provided recommendations to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) WIC Food Package Review Committee that would increase fruits and vegetable for WIC participants. The Committee met March 31 and April 1, 2016 at the NAS Campus in Irvine, California, to gather data to inform their recommendations as part of a 10-year scientific review of WIC Food Packages. The NAS Committee's final report, expected in January 2017, will make recommendations for updating WIC Food Packages to ensure WIC remains aligned with the goals of the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

United Fresh made the following recommendations:

- For breastfeeding mothers, increase the value of the fruit/vegetable cash value voucher (CVV) to \$12/month to incentivize breastfeeding, improve support for breastfeeding mothers, and to provide additional access healthy food choices.
- For infants 9-11 months, allow States the option to replace all jarred infant fruits and vegetables with a CVV for fruits/vegetables. Across ethnic groups, 80% of WIC mothers with infants 9-11 months preferred CVV for fruits and vegetables over jarred baby food. A full CVV option for infants 9-11 months would also reinforce WIC nutrition education and add texture and flavors for older infants.
- For mothers and children, allow States the option to fully or partially replace the juice benefit with a CVV for fruits/vegetables. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends that the majority of fruit servings come from whole fruits which provide more fiber and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that fruit juice be limited to only 4-6 ounces a day for children 1-6 years of age.
- For children, increase the value of the fruit/vegetable CVV to at least \$10/month to better meet children's dietary needs and to better align the children's WIC food package with the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Allow States the option to continue to use the fruit/vegetable CVV for only fresh produce. The flexibility already exists for WIC state agencies to allow CVV's to be used for canned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables if necessary. Policies should not undermine the State option to continue to use the CVV only for fresh produce.

- Allow WIC participants to benefit from fruit and vegetable incentives, like Double Up Food Bucks, Fre\$h Savings.

More than a decade ago, United Fresh and the National WIC Association collaborated to ensure that the NAS 2005 recommendations to include fruits and vegetables in WIC resulted in policy change. Today, more than 8.2 million WIC mothers and children benefit from receiving \$11/month and \$8/month, respectively, for fruits and vegetables. Studies show that WIC participants have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables and that the CVV are well utilized. However, WIC participants still eat less fruits and vegetables than recommended for good health. These dietary inadequacies could be addressed by increasing the value of the fruit/vegetable CVV for WIC participants.

The NAS scientific review provides an opportunity to once again update WIC Food Packages to increase fruits and vegetables and ensure that WIC continues its transformative role in improving healthy eating choices for our nation's most at-risk infants, children and their families.

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#### **About United Fresh Produce Association**

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption.