Ensuring Access to Fresh Produce for Children and Young Families

School meals, including breakfast and lunch, afterschool snacks and supper, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program serve tens of millions of students daily. These programs, along with the Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC), are legislated through Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) every five years.

Prior to COVID-19, United Fresh was sharply focused on seeking passage of a CNR bill in 2020. However, as the country’s priorities shifted overnight due to COVID-19, the focus became ensuring schools, and the students they serve, continued to have access to meals, including a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. United Fresh has advocated for the following:

- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)**
  - Allow FFVP snack to be served via curbside and delivery meals (USDA approved beginning April 9th)
  - Makes FFVP an essential program during COVID-19 emergency declaration (H.R. 6564; included in HEROES Act; USDA began approving state requests May 22nd)

- **USDA DoD Fresh**
  - Allow states to transfer additional USDA Foods entitlement money into schools’ DoD Fresh accounts (USDA announced March 27th)
  - Provide temporary increase in DoD Fresh funding to schools still operating during COVID-19

- **School Kitchen Equipment**
  - Provide $200 million in emergency USDA School Kitchen Equipment Grants to allow schools to procure necessary equipment for alternative serving methods (mobile serving carts, mobile coolers, etc.)

- **School Nutrition Program Solvency**
  - Provide $2.6 billion in emergency funding to address schools’ dramatically increased costs nationwide to ensure that meals can be served and that food quality, including a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, is not sacrificed in new school year. (April 27th letter; Included in HEROES Act)

- **WIC**
  - Temporarily increase the monthly cash value voucher/benefit for fruits and vegetables to $35 per month for both children and women. The benefit currently is $9 for children and $11 for women. (H.R. 6726; included in HEROES Act)

As schools look to planning for the 2020-2021 school year, meal programs will likely look different as schools implement social distancing measures for both students and staff, which will result in more pre-plated and individually wrapped items. For example, current CDC recommendations ask schools to consider serving meals in the classroom or having students bring lunch from home. The School Nutrition Association (SNA) recently published additional guidance.

United Fresh Produce Association will be working with members, Congress, and the Administration to identify ways in which we can ensure schools and students continue to have access to fresh produce.