



United Fresh supports new legislation to promote salad bars in every school

By Agri-Pulse Staff

© Copyright Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

Washington, Dec. 16 – The United Fresh Produce Association congratulated Reps. Sam Farr (D-CA) and Adam Putnam (R-FL) Wednesday on their introduction of the Children’s Fruit and Vegetable Act of 2009 on Capitol Hill. United Fresh President and CEO Tom Stenzel thanked the congressmen for their leadership on the bill, which now becomes a priority component of overall Child Nutrition legislation in 2010 reauthorizing the school lunch and breakfast programs.

“The introduction of this legislation is an important step calling attention to the simple, but powerful role fruit and vegetable bars in schools can have in improving kids’ health,” Stenzel said. “Research has shown that schoolchildren significantly increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables when given a variety of choices in a school salad bar. When offered multiple fresh fruit and vegetable choices, children respond by trying new items, incorporating greater variety into their diets, and increasing their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables.”

The Children’s Fruit and Vegetable Act is the latest chapter in a partnership between Congressman Farr and United Fresh, who teamed up last fall to showcase a school salad bar to lawmakers during United’s Fresh Festival on Capitol Hill, then donate the salad bar to a Washington-area elementary school. Now, together with Rep. Putnam and 14 other original co-sponsors, Rep. Farr is working to make salad bars a reality for schoolchildren across the country. Original co-sponsors on the bill include Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Laura Richardson (D-CA), Steve Kagen (D-WI), Michael Michaud (D-ME), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Doris Matsui (D-CA), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), James Moran (D-VA), Jim Costa (D-CA), José Serrano (D-NY), Joe Courtney (D-CT), Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Lois Capps (D-CA).

The new legislation is intended to provide policy direction to USDA to work with schools to promote the adoption of fruit and vegetable salad bars and other strategies to increase access to fruits and vegetables in school meals. Additional funding for school lunch programs will be considered in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

The Institute of Medicine’s October report, *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*, recommends doubling the amount of fruit served at school breakfast and

doubling the amount of fruits and vegetables served in school lunch. America's children eat less than half of the daily amount of fruits and vegetables recommended for good health by the 2005 Dietary Guidelines today. The report also recommends funding for cafeteria equipment, training and increasing the federal reimbursement rate for school meals so that schools can serve more fruits, vegetables and whole grains. The bill brings attention to many of the IOM's recommendations and provides an opportunity to build congressional support for including these priorities in the 2010 Child Nutrition Act.

“The benefits of fruit and vegetable salad bars also extend beyond just the produce consumed during the breakfast or lunch hour at school,” said Dr. Lorelei DiSogra, United Fresh vice president for nutrition and health. “Increased daily access to a variety of fresh produce items provides a personal experience about choices that can shape behavior far beyond the school lunch line. Children learn to make decisions that carry over outside of school, providing a platform for a lifetime of healthy snack and meal choices.”

More information on United's work on child nutrition and the 2010 reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act is available at www.unitedfresh.org

For other *Agri-Pulse* news stories, go to: www.agri-pulse.com.

#30