

First Lady Michelle Obama helps announce collaboration between Sesame Workshop and PMA

Joint mission promotes fresh fruits and vegetables to children

Washington, DC — During a White House event today with First Lady Michelle Obama, Sesame Workshop and Produce Marketing Association (PMA) announced that they're forming a unique and powerful collaboration committed to increasing children's consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. The collaboration is part of a commitment to the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), which works with the private sector and PHA Honorary Chair First Lady Michelle Obama to broker commitments to help end the childhood obesity epidemic. Under the two-year commitment, the agreement allows PMA's community of suppliers and retailers to take advantage of the strength and influence of the *Sesame Street* brand and characters like Big Bird, Elmo, Cookie Monster, and Abby Cadabby to help deliver messages about fresh fruits and vegetables. PMA will provide technical assistance and promotions support to its members. *Sesame Street* characters may be on produce in stores as early as mid-2014.

"Just imagine what will happen when we take our kids to the grocery store, and they see Elmo and Rosita and the other Sesame Street Muppets they love up and down the produce aisle," said First Lady Michelle Obama today. "Imagine what it will be like to have our kids begging us to buy them fruits and vegetables instead of cookies, candy and chips. That's what this new collaboration between Sesame Workshop and the Produce Marketing Association is all about – showing our kids that healthy food can be fun and that fruits and vegetables don't just make us feel good, they taste good too."

Jan DeLyser, vice president of marketing for the California Avocado Commission and immediate past chairman of PMA's board of directors shared the podium with the First Lady during the White House announcement today. "One of the key challenges we face is competing for share of mind and share of plate. Other food marketers – companies who have seemingly endless budgets enabling them to position and sell their products, especially to kids – are steep competition." She added, "As a parent whose kids grew up with the *Sesame Street* characters, I'm thrilled to be a part of a program that will give the produce industry additional marketing opportunities for our naturally healthful products. The power of the *Sesame Street* brand is undeniable, especially given the trust parents have in it."

"PMA seeks nothing less than to inspire a fresh food revolution," said Bryan Silbermann, PMA president and CEO. "We're delighted to be part of this new partnership that brings together the White House and two non-profit organizations (PMA and Sesame Workshop) with one very critical mission – helping kids develop healthier eating habits early in life by choosing fresh fruits and veggies. These are goals for both organizations: for Sesame Workshop, utilizing its engaging characters to help families make healthier choices; for PMA, focusing more resources directly on our newly unveiled strategic plan with its emphasis on driving produce consumption."

Silbermann added: "PMA is a global produce community with some of the best marketing minds that are so incredibly passionate about what they do. Working with Sesame Workshop, we are

going to build a new paradigm of produce consumption targeting young children. A small task force of members will work with PMA staff and Sesame over the next few months to develop the licensing agreement and a toolkit for industry guidance. Picture this as a lesson from a *Sesame Street* episode: B + C = D -- We're combining the power of the Sesame Brand with the strength of the PMA Community to make a world of Difference."

"Sesame Workshop has long been committed to the health and well-being of children through our longstanding Healthy Habits for Life initiative--since 2004, we have been integrating messages about healthy food choices and exercise into *Sesame Street*, the television program, in our community outreach, and on our other off-air activities," said [H. Melvin Ming](#), President and CEO, Sesame Workshop. "We are proud to work with the Produce Marketing Association and Partnership for a Healthier America to continue this important work."

During her comments, DeLyser also recognized the efforts of Dunn for his key role as a connector of leaders and influencers who are passionate about fresh fruits and vegetables and building healthy consumers. "Without this great group of people, this idea wouldn't have come this far. It's our hope that the power of the Sesame Street brand, combined with the power of savvy marketers in the fresh produce industry, will change the image of fresh fruits and vegetables from a "sometimes" food to an "anytime" food – enjoyed by kids and their parents with every tasty bite," said DeLyser.

Editor's note: Members of the media are invited to interview Bryan Silbermann on Thursday, Oct. 31, by contacting Meg Miller, PMA's Director of Public Relations at mmiller@pma.com or 302-607-2131.

About Produce Marketing Association (PMA)

Produce Marketing Association is the leading trade association representing companies from every segment of the global produce and floral supply chain. PMA helps members grow by providing connections that expand business opportunities and increase sales and consumption. For more information, visit www.pma.com.