

2007 Farm Bill

National Expansion Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Snack Program

Goal: National expansion of USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program with mandatory funding of \$300 million/year.

2007 Farm Bill an Unprecedented Opportunity

The 2007 Farm Bill provides an unprecedented opportunity to expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) nationwide thru mandatory funding of \$300 million/year. This funding level will enable 100 schools in each state to participate in the FFVP (\$200m) with additional funds (\$100 m) allocated to states based on their total student population. Mandatory funding at \$300 million/year would allow a total of 7,500 schools nationwide – approximately 10% of our nation’s schools – and approximately 3 million students to participate in the FFVP each day.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is one of USDA’s most effective strategies for preventing and reducing childhood obesity. USDA’s Interim Reports to Congress highlight the FFVP’s positive results, emphasizing that it is a catalyst for improving the eating habits of children and for creating healthier school food environments. The FFVP is very popular among students, parents, school and food service staff. Additionally, parents see a carryover at home of this healthier trend as children request fresh fruits and vegetables for their home meals.

National expansion of the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, an important strategy for preventing childhood obesity, is a top priority of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance and is incorporated in **S.1160** the “Specialty Crops Competition Act of 2007.” It is also a key nutrition policy provision in **S.919** “Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act of 2007,” **S.1432** “Food Outreach and Opportunity Development for a Healthy America Act of 2007,” and **S.1424** “Farm, Nutrition and Community Investment Act of 2007.” National expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program is also supported by over 70 national, regional and state public health, nutrition and healthy schools organizations.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program – Immediate Behavior Change

The goal of the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is to increase children’s consumption of fruits and vegetables as a strategy to prevent/reduce childhood obesity and improve overall health. Today, it is widely recognized that the rate of obesity in our nation’s children is drastically rising. Over the last two decades, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents. On average, children eat less than half of the daily amount of fruits and vegetables recommended by the 2005 U.S. Dietary Guidelines. Eating habits are developed in childhood. If children develop healthy eating habits, including adequate consumption of fruits and vegetables, they will carry these healthy habits with them into adulthood. It is well documented that healthy eating can significantly reduce the

risk for many chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes and many types of cancer. It is also imperative that our schools act as stewards for healthier living and be given the necessary resources to encourage children to develop healthier eating habits that promote good health and prevent diseases in the future.

The FFVP results in immediate behavior change. Over the last five years the FFVP has proven to be a model for increasing children's consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables, decreasing their purchase of soda, chips and candy, and a cornerstone in a school's efforts to create a healthier food school environment. Children start to eat more fruits and vegetables, experience the great taste of a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, and begin to positively influence their family's eating habits. Furthermore, schools report that children eating more fruits and vegetables have improved cognition, longer attention spans, are less hungry throughout the day, visit the nurse less and have fewer behavioral problems. The small investment in the FFVP reaps tremendous benefits to children, their families, and schools.

Current Participation

Today, the FFVP operates in 14 states (Utah, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Texas, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, Washington, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania) and on 3 Indian Tribal Organizations (Pine Ridge in South Dakota, Zuni in New Mexico and the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona). A total of 375 schools currently participate.

Background

The FFVP was first initiated as a four-state pilot program in the 2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act. USDA conducted an evaluation of the pilot program; its very positive Report to Congress was submitted in May 2003. Encouraged by the success of the pilot program, Congress, in Section 120 of Public Law 108-265, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, converted the pilot into a fully authorized program, expanding it include 8 states and 3 ITOs and authorizing such appropriations as might be available and necessary to enable additional states to participate. The FY'06 Agriculture Appropriations Act (Sec. 779) further expanded the program by adding funding for six new states. Both the House and Senate FY'07 AG Appropriations bills recommended expansion of the FFVP, however, Congress failed to pass the FY'07 AG Appropriations bill thus the opportunity to expand the FFVP was not realized.

The 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act requires that the majority of schools funded in each state have at least 50% of their students eligible for free and reduce-price school lunch. Also, current authorization allows only 25 schools in each state to participate. Once a state is funded, all schools are eligible to apply for funding. Schools are selected to participate based on their applications. The program is administered by the Child Nutrition Division of State's Department of Education (except in Texas where the state Department of Agriculture administers child nutrition programs).

The FFVP enjoys bipartisan support in Congress

USDA Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program Funding 2002-2007

<u>Appropriations Bill:</u>	<u>Program Title/Acct.:</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Amount</u>
FY'06 Agriculture		<u>Requested:</u>	<u>Received:</u>
Appropriations		\$6 million	\$6 million
2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act	Section 120 of Public Law 108-265 provided \$9 million in permanent funding for 8 states (Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, Washington, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania) and 3 Indian Tribal Org.	\$9 million	\$9 million
2002 Farm Security and Rural Investment Act	\$ 6 million for four-state pilot program in Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana and Zuni ITO.	\$6 million	\$6 million