

**National Council of Fruit & Vegetable Nutrition Coordinators
Advocacy Work Group's
What You Absolutely Need to Know about the 2007 Farm Bill**

Brief Overview of the 2007 Farm Bill

- We are focusing on fruit and vegetable-related issues; however the Nutrition Title of the Farm Bill also includes the Food Stamp Program, Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Community Food Projects Competitive Grants, and School Food Programs. For more information on these other programs, please refer to ASTPHND's recommendations available at www.astphnd.org.

Overview of the Legislative Process for the 2007 Farm Bill

- Hearing sessions were held in 2005 to gather comments about the 2007 Farm Bill components
- Several marker bills have passed in the House and Senate to date. A marker bill is meant to influence the real or final bill.
- In March, the Budgetary Committee met to decide the total amount of funding to be allocated for the 2007 Farm Bill
- Through June or July, the House and Senate will be drafting their own versions of the Farm Bill
- By August, it is expected that each of those versions will be sent to the House and Senate floors respectively
- If the House and Senate Farm Bill versions are both passed, but not identical, then each version will be reviewed at a Conference Committee
- The Conference Committee then reviews both versions and determines the final version. Once passed through Conference Committee, the President signs the bill into law

Fruit & Vegetable Implications

- The following fruit and vegetable related components are being discussed for the 2007 Farm Bill and were recommendations from the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, the United Fresh Produce Association, and the California Department of Health Services
 - **Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Snack Program**- Increase funding to \$300,000,000; national expansion of program to include 100 schools in every state with additional funds for states with larger populations
 - **Section 32 Purchases/Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Program**- Increase Section 32 funding for purchases of fruits and vegetables from \$200 million to \$400 million per year. Increase the total allocation to the DOD Fresh Program incrementally to \$150 million to allow schools to purchase a wide variety of high quality produce for school lunch programs.
 - **Food Stamp Fruit and Vegetable Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Pilot Program**: Provide \$10 million per year for states to develop and pilot test innovative programs that encourage food stamp recipients to

increase their purchases of fruits and vegetables by providing financial incentives directly to their EBT card.

- **WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Programs:** Provide start up grants to establish WIC and Senior Farmers' Market programs in all states not currently benefiting from Farmers' Market programs. Enable states to expand coverage to additional counties and continue to offer WIC Farmers' Market programs as an enhancement for participants when the new WIC Food package is implemented. Through information collected by the National Association for Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, it has been estimated that \$35 million is needed to serve Senior Farmers' Market Program recipients through 2011. This is an increase of \$20 million to the current funding of \$15 million.
- **Food Stamp Nutrition Education:** Modernize and strengthen Food Stamp Nutrition Education to ensure that state and local programs can utilize effective public health interventions to improve dietary and health outcomes for low-income Americans. Comprehensive public health approaches include, but are not limited to, use of social marketing, mass media, public-private partnerships, policy, systems and environmental changes, and evaluation. Current USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education guidance and reporting narrowly define allowable activities to focus on one-on-one direct education.

Marker Bills for the 2007 Farm Bill

- A marker bill is meant to influence the real or final bill. There have been several marker bills written to date regarding the 2007 Farm Bill, including the following:

EAT Healthy America Act (HR 6193)

- National expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program in schools
- Increasing funding for the DoD Fresh Program
- Increasing Section 32 fruit and vegetable purchases
- Conducting a pilot program to provide incentives for Food Stamp Recipients to buy fruits and vegetables.
- Requiring scientific review and Update of WIC Food Packages every 10 years
- Broadening the definition of nutrition education in the Food Stamp Nutrition Education
- Program to include comprehensive public health approaches.

EAT Healthy America Act (HR 1600)

- Modernization of food stamp nutrition education to include comprehensive public health approaches
- Expansion the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to 100 elementary or secondary schools in each state, with additional schools in states with larger populations; \$300,000,000

- Increase funding for Section 32 Specialty Crop Purchases to a minimum of \$400,000,000 for purchases of commodities such as fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops
- Expansion of DOD Fresh Program funding incrementally by 2012 for the purchase of fruits and vegetables and the distribution to schools and service institutions; \$50,000,000 in 2008, \$75,000,000 in 2009 and 2010, \$100,000,000 in 2011 and \$125,000,000 in 2012.

What to Do if You Want to Take Action:

- State and local governments may have restrictions on employees regarding advocacy. Become familiar with your workplace rules and guidelines by checking with your State Attorney General's Office or agency counsel.
- If allowed, identify key U.S. Congressmen and Congresswomen from your state who will be involved in writing either the House or Senate version of the 2007 Farm Bill
- If allowed, contact grassroots organizations or advocacy groups in your state and educate and inform them of the potential fruit and vegetable-related components of the Farm Bill
- You can take action as a private citizen by using personal time and personal resources (thus, you would **not be** representing your organization).

Six Rules for Effective Advocacy:

- Rule #1: Make a plan and know the "Who, What, When, Where, & How"
 - Advocacy efforts are most effective when they are targeted and specific
- Rule #2: Determine "Who" the target audience are and "Who" will help
 - Know who the key decision makers, key players, and influencers are
- Rule #3: Know "What" you are after
 - Know specifically what you are hoping to change and what your outcomes should be
- Rule #4: Know "When" to advocate for change
 - Determine the golden opportunities to advocate
- Rule #5: Know "Where" to advocate for change
 - Depends on the issue and should include different locations
- Rule #6: Know "How" to advocate for change
 - Develop some effective tools to promote messages

Reference Cited:

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Additional 2007 Farm Bill Resources:

- **United Fresh Produce Association**
<http://www.unitedfresh.org/>
 - **United Fresh Produce Association—Grassroots Action Network**

- Step 1 - Go to our website www.unitedfresh.org
The Grassroots Advocacy Resource Center is located on the bottom left hand side of the homepage.
Click on the American flag icon.
Step 2 – Type in your zip code
Step 3 – Select issue: National Expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program
Step 4 – Send sample House/Senate letters as written or revise/personalize with information about child nutrition data/issues for your state.

- **United States Department of Agriculture**
[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?navid=FARM BILL FORUMS](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7.0.A/7.0.1OB?navid=FARM_BILL_FORUMS)