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*Leading THE WAY TO healthy eating*

## **Key Recommendations for the 2007 Farm Bill**

### **1. Establish a new fruit and vegetable marketing program to enhance competitiveness and provide consumers with information about the many benefits of fruits and vegetables.**

This federal matching program - patterned after the Market Access Program for export promotion, would be a matching funds program, administered directly by USDA, in which produce industry marketing boards, commissions, not-for-profit organizations and grower cooperatives could develop domestic marketing programs and apply for matching funds from government based on their own direct and indirect expenditures. This would be tailored to the domestic fruit and vegetable industry due to its diversity of crops, and would enhance the ability of domestic growers to promote their products and increase consumption.

### **2. Expand the USDA school Fruit and Vegetable Program to 100 schools in every state.**

This effective program, currently in 8 states and 3 Indian Tribal Organizations, has proven without a doubt that when provided easy access to a variety of healthy fruits and vegetables, kids will make the right choice and even forego the candy and sodas! We need to expand this popular program to assure that all kids have access to more fruits and vegetables to establish life-long healthy habits.

### **3. Develop more effective efforts - through the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program and direct food stamp benefits - to encourage increased consumption of fruits and vegetables among food stamp participants and those eligible for food stamps.**

Nearly 24 million Americans - half of which are children -- receive food stamp benefits at a cost of about \$27 billion each year. This cornerstone program should be enhanced to continue to serve those most in need - while at the same time, provide incentives through education and innovative strategies, that encourage participants to eat more fruits and vegetables.

### **4. Provide increased funding for effective and efficient fruit and vegetable commodity purchases, including increased funding for the popular DoD Fresh Program.**

Commodity purchases are an important component to a number of USDA nutrition assistance programs. Enhanced efforts are needed to assure that more fruits and vegetables are





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purchased. Expansion in particular of the DoD Fresh program will assure that school children have access to a wider variety and quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables.

**5. Develop a Research Agenda that goes beyond the very specific nutrient-focused research and includes more on the health benefits of fruits and vegetables as well as consumer behavior research that assesses barriers to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.** This will greatly assist us in our efforts to drive healthier eating patterns.

