

FarmBill

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tmp.htm (3 KB)



Jim Allen FB
testimony Sept2005.doc



Mark Munger
Testimony 10-6-05.doc

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Angela Bezon

United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association

1901 Pennsylvania Ave. Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20006

202-303-3400 x416

202-303-3433 (fax)

abezon@uffva.org

Come to Washington - Make A Difference!

FARM BILL NUTRITIONAL LISTENING SESSION

HOSTED BY:

ERIC BOST
USDA UNDER SECRETARY
FOR FOOD, NUTRITION AND CONSUMER SERVICES

SEPTEMBER 29, 2005 - 9:00AM TO 12:00 NOON

ALEXANDER HAMILTON U.S. CUSTOM HOUSE AUDITORIUM
1 BOWLING GREEN
NEW YORK CITY, NY 10004

TESTIMONY OF JAMES S. ALLEN
PRESIDENT, NEW YORK APPLE ASSOCIATION, INC.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to visit with you today about Nutritional Policy in the 2007 Farm Bill and I would like to thank you Under Secretary Bost for your leadership and support of federal nutritional programs

My name is James Allen and as president of the New York Apple Association, I have the honor of representing over 700 New York State apple growers. The New York Apple Association is a not-for-profit agricultural trade association representing commercial apple growers across the state. We support **profitable** growing and marketing of New York apples, through increasing the demand for apples and apple products. The Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program helps accomplish those goals by providing markets for NY apples. Last year in New York, DoD purchased \$3.2 million dollars worth of fruits and vegetables for New York City and upstate schools. For our apple industry, over **\$1.5 million dollars** was spent on NY apples and apple products. As an example, fresh sliced apple were served to over three million school children last year as a result of this program. In addition, over two million children received fresh whole apples as

well as grapes, sliced pineapple, pears and oranges. This program provides valuable markets for New York apples, helps local producers, provides jobs and stimulates rural economies throughout New York. We would like to see the funding for the DoD Fresh Program doubled in the 2007 Farm Bill

I would also like to take this opportunity to endorse the current procurement practices for the DoD Fresh Program. In New York, we have seen a cost effective and efficient mechanism used by DoD to purchase high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables to meet the needs of our schools. DoD buyers work closely with state agencies and state departments of agriculture to benefit family farms and to provide fresh, high-quality produce to our students. In many cases, they also work with the schools to help promote the programs. In addition to the DoD purchases, these produce buys have spurred food service directors to seek **additional produce** from local sources. This is a unique business plan that utilizes the Defense Supply Purchasing Center's talents, combined with the DoD highly trained and experienced procurement team, while focusing on locally grown produce and smaller suppliers. In our eyes, this is a program that works well and as they say, "*If it ain't broke, don't fix it!*"

My remarks so far have been focused on the benefits to our New York apple growers, to New York agriculture and to our local economies. But that is only half of the story. As I stated earlier, my job is to increase markets and the profitability for apple growers, but perhaps we all have a much larger responsibility, and that is to be providing healthy and nutritious foods to our children.

The USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program increases children's consumption of healthy foods and offer nutritious choices and alternatives to high sugar snacks. As you know, the program started as a pilot in the 2002 Farm Bill and because of its success was later made permanent. I am here to ask that this program now be expanded to include New York and the rest of the country.

We know that the 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend that all Americans eat 5-13 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. We also realize that millions of children and adults fall considerably short of this goal. All we have to do is look at today's alarming stats on childhood obesity and childhood diabetes to unfortunately qualify our concerns. I grew up during the early years of the fifteen cent hamburger and the sugar laden soft

drinks, , and although childhood obesity was not a problem, my generation certainly is carrying our own weight, and too much of it! My point is that we have an opportunity and a responsibility to improve our children's health and eating habits **NOW**. Our investment today is not only the right choice, it is a smart choice. Molding a young child's eating habit is much easier and less expensive than trying to change or correct poor eating habits in older children or adults.

According to the final report of the School Nutrition Association's *2004 School Fruit and Vegetable Procurement Study*, a majority of school foodservice directors want to provide more fresh fruits and vegetables to their students, but are hampered by budgetary constraints.

Expansion of the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and the DoD Fresh Program would go a long way toward increasing the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in our school nutrition programs.

In conclusion, I characterize the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and the DOD Fresh Program as **Win-Win-Win**. They are a **win** for the future of our farming community, a **win** for the health of our children and a **win** for our government by increasing the success of our federal nutrition programs.

Thank you.

Testimony:

Good Morning. My name is Mark Munger, and I am the VP Marketing for Andrew Williamson Fresh Produce headquartered in San Diego, CA. I am also an Executive Committee Member and Board of Trustee for the Produce For Better Health Foundation, and active in other Produce Industry Associations.

I am here to today to testify on behalf of the "silent industry", the fresh produce industry. Historically, the fresh fruit and vegetable industry has been largely absent from previous Farm Bills. As an industry, we are proud to be largely free from subsidies and Government programs.

But, today I come before you, because our nation has a problem, and it is vital that the US Government and the fresh produce industry work together to address this problem. I am talking about Obesity. Adults, and more disturbing, our children are getting fatter. Childhood obesity is increasing at an alarming rate in the US. Children's poor eating habits, including an inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables, is rapidly contributing to rising obesity rates and the chronic diseases that result, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Diseases, that until recently were rarely seen in children.

The 2007 Farm Bill provides a unique opportunity to address important agricultural and nutrition issues and to bring agricultural policy in line with Federal health and nutrition recommendations.

The recently released 2005 Dietary Guidelines, issued jointly by USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services, recommends that all Americans eat 5 to 13 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. I think it is important to point out that Fruits and Vegetables are the only foods in the new Guidelines that the Government recommends eating more of, to improve health. This is probably the strongest statement ever made about the need to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables!

We need to work together to make fruits and vegetables more accessible and more readily available to children. When children have access to fresh produce, they will eat it! As you begin to draft key components of the Farm Bill, I urge you to consider key elements that will truly make a difference in our efforts to improve child nutrition. I am recommending two key priorities. The first is to expand the fresh fruit and vegetable snack program to all 50 states. The second is to double funding for the Department of Defense Fresh program for schools.

I urge you to expand the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to all 50 States! This positive and impactful program was started in the 2002 Farm Bill. The program funds schools to provide a fruit or vegetable snack free to each student every day during the school year. Schools receive \$60 per student per year to provide the snack. Funding comes via USDA's Child Nutrition Program. The program is currently in 25 schools in each of 8 states and 3 Indian Tribal organizations. And, the program works! During the pilot program, conducted during the 2002-2003 school year, students ate

more fruits and vegetables and consumed less soda, chips and candy. Better yet, students who currently participate in the program ask their parents to buy more fruits and vegetables. This program has resulted in documented behavioral change. Most students start eating more fruits and vegetables in the first week this program is implemented in their school. The Fruit and Vegetable Program works and we need to expand it to all 50 states!

Next, I urge you to double the Funding for the Department of Defense Program for Schools. The DoD Fresh Program is a cost effective and efficient mechanism to get high quality fresh fruits and vegetables to schools to use in their school lunch programs. Under this program, schools utilize the Defense Supply purchasing network to receive fresh fruits and vegetables in quantities that meet the needs of school foodservice. Under the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2005, schools are required to increase servings of fresh fruits and vegetables, and this program provides a viable mechanism to help schools meet this critical requirement. Schools have responded positively to the program, and more schools would participate in the program if funding were made available. Increasing the funding for the DoD Fresh Program would ensure that more schools in more states could easily purchase fresh fruits and vegetables to serve in their school lunch programs.

Historically, the Farm Bill has benefited a small but crucial group, farmers. However, by supporting expansion of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and the DOD Fresh Program, we have the unique opportunity to use the 2007 Farm Bill to directly and positively impact the health of our children and begin to reverse a dangerous trend toward obesity. The 2007 Farm Bill is vital opportunity to ensure that agricultural policy is brought in line with Federal Health and nutrition recommendations.

When it comes to fresh fruits and vegetables, getting our children to eat More really does Matter!

Thank you.