

# Fruits & Veggies Matter

A new national health initiative from the Produce for Better Health Foundation is focused on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption across the United States, and the seed industry can play a significant role.

By Christa Mariash

THE PRODUCE FOR BETTER HEALTH FOUNDATION realizes that more and more American families are pulling up to the drive-thru window, turning to processed fruit snack substitutes and heating up ready-made veggie packages. March 2007 marked the launch of Fruits & Veggies – More Matters from PBH – the only national health campaign in the U.S. aimed at increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables for everyone in the country.

Designed to be a call to action for a healthier America that is attainable and easy for people to understand, the program brands all fruits and vegetables. “It’s a way of branding the entire category. If we gently remind consumers to eat more fruits and veggies, they’re more inclined to do so,” says Elizabeth Pivonka, President and CEO of PBH. “They know fruits and veggies are good for them, so if we can get our logo in front of a customer at the point-of-purchase in supermarkets, it’s a constant reminder for Americans to do more of what they know they should be doing.”

For this initiative to be successful, all levels of the food chain need to be involved and the seed industry is no exception. Since all fruits and vegetables start with seed, the industry could play a critical role in the new Fruits and Veggies – More Matters campaign. “As fruit and vegetable consumption goes up, that could bode well for the seed industry. Seed companies need to understand what the consumer wants and I think taste is the motivator. Making sure the taste profile is solid and appealing to consumers is an important role the seed industry can play,” says Pivonka.

Fruits & Veggies – More Matters is the next generation of the 15-year-old, 5 A Day for Better Health program. In 2005, the U.S. dietary guidelines changed and the 5 A Day message was no longer accurate for the majority of the population. The new program was developed to be consistent with the latest *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which recommends various numbers of servings of fruits and vegetables depending on an individual’s calorie needs – ranging from 4 to 13 servings.

Fruits & Veggies – More Matters is off to a great start

but needs the continued support of the seed industry, grocery chains, restaurants, food producers, schools and the government to help promote the new brand and the overall goal: to increase every individual’s consumption of fruits and vegetables across the U.S. **SW**

## Get Involved

Pivonka believes there are several key areas where the seed industry can contribute to Fruits & Veggies – More Matters and invest in the health of families, employees, consumers and future generations. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Sponsor video blocks to educate consumers, not only about particular commodities, but also about specific varieties.
- PBH’s Campaign for Children’s Health is an opportunity to raise funds for programs to provide know-how, resources and motivation to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Garner visibility within PBH’s membership by sponsoring the bi-monthly electronic newsletter or the annual report.
- Serve in a leadership capacity on the PBH’s Board of Trustees to gain a voice in setting the direction of activities.