

**Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**  
**Priorities for the 2012 Farm Bill**  
**Promoting Healthy People, Healthy Food Systems, and a Strong Economy**

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) is committed to improving the health of Americans by assuring access to a healthy, safe and adequate food supply. The Academy is also committed to ensuring that consumers have access to nutrition services and education to help make healthy food choices. We offer the following recommendations to strengthen and build upon existing farm bill programs to increase access to affordable, nutritious food, and to improve the demand and marketplace for a diversity of foods that contribute to health and food security.

**Empower Consumers**

- Maintain current funding for SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP Ed), an effective program that empowers participants to change behaviors for healthy eating using knowledge tailored to their lifestyle.

**Provide Access to Healthy and Safe Foods**

- Protect and strengthen the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), key programs in our nation's nutrition safety net.
  - a. Streamline administrative requirements to provide cost savings and to improve program efficiency and effectiveness.
  - b. Maintain SNAP eligibility rules and benefit levels to make resources available to families to prevent hunger and make healthy food choices through full utilization of food assistance programs in place.
  - c. Strengthen national standards for SNAP vendors to increase the availability of healthy foods and to allow for retail promotion and competitive pricing.
  - d. Help increase access by SNAP participants to fresh, healthy foods from small business food retailers and farmers who direct market their products by making it possible for these businesses to provide the benefits through electronic means. Direct marketing includes farmers markets, farm stands, green carts and community-supported agriculture.
  - e. Reauthorize CSFP to ensure that low-income seniors and pregnant women not receiving WIC benefits have access to nutritious monthly food packages. The benefits of

the CSFP are two-fold: they help decrease hunger and provide an outlet for the food commodities produced by farmers.

g. Maintain current funding for TEFAP to ensure a steady flow of nutritious commodities through the emergency food system of charitable providers. Healthy food commodities provided through TEFAP are an essential resource for the continued success of food banks.

- Maintain current funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and protect the integrity of the program. This school-based program is proven to increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables.

#### **Assure a Healthy and Safe Food System**

- Ensure funding for a variety of community-based and regional agriculture initiatives that expand the availability of regionally-grown food, create jobs, and promote economic development.

Examples of these innovative “food hub” initiatives include the Farmers’ Market Promotion Program, Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, school and community gardens, urban agriculture projects and Farm-to-fork networks that connect small and medium-sized farmers with institutional buyers such as hospitals and health centers, neighborhood stores, restaurants and worksites.

- Support farm practices and policies that conserve soil, water, air, habitat and biodiversity, as these are essential to our survival, and help to assure that a next generation of farmers has access to land and the skills and incentives to grow healthy foods.

#### **Assure Sound Science for Future Evidenced-Based Decision Making**

- Maintain funding for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the Agricultural Research Service that includes Human Nutrition Research Centers for vital research to drive better nutrition, eliminate hunger, increase food security and healthy food systems and eliminate diet-related health disparities, including obesity and assure the availability of nutrition monitoring, food composition and related data.
- Maintain funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grants in order to support food safety and nutrition research and a diversity of fruits, vegetables and nuts available to help people achieve the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Through these efforts to ensure access to adequate, safe and nutritious food we believe will follow benefits to public health, agriculture, economic growth and national security.