

**Produce for Better Health Foundation Comments on the
Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Regarding the
Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010
July 8, 2010 Public Meeting
Washington, DC**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee regarding the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010. I am Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., President & CEO, of the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH), a non-profit consumer education foundation whose purpose is to motivate Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables – fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice -- to improve public health. PBH achieves success through industry and government collaboration, first with the 5 A Day program and now with the Fruits & Veggies-More Matters® health initiative. The largest source of PBH funding is through voluntary contributions from the fruit and vegetable industry.

First, thank you for your leadership throughout the development of the 2010 Advisory Report and for the commitment from the 13 Advisory Committee members. PBH fully supports the findings and recommendations made throughout the report. We believe the Nutrition Evidence Library served the Committee well and commend you for using this systematic review of the literature.

PBH also commends the Committee for providing guidance on how to integrate the recommendations of the report into a “total diet” approach as this type of guidance is critical to helping consumers better understand and adopt healthy dietary practices.

PBH strongly supports the emphasis on plant-based food intake patterns, particularly the emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and beans. We urge USDA & HHS to collaborate to aggressively promote consistent fruit and vegetable messages and to help demonstrate how fruits and vegetables fit into the “total diet” during dissemination of these guidelines. For example, since the 2005 dietary guidelines provided a more complex range of recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables to consume, we moved away from 5 A Day and opted to remind consumers that more matters, with a goal that nearly half of anyone’s daily food intake, or ½ your plate, be

comprised of fruits and vegetables. As you disseminate the new guidelines once they are complete, and if there are plans to change the MyPyramid graphic to support the guidelines, we encourage you to consider the opportunity to *visually* show recommended proportions of food groups to eat. Furthermore, should there be any new graphic development, we hope that it continues to be a collaborative effort between both USDA & HHS, including agencies like CDC, similar to the successful Dietary Guidelines process.

PBH applauds the Committee for recognizing and highlighting the critical role that environment plays on food choices. PBH has long been an advocate of the need for an integrated and multi-sectoral framework of policy, marketing and communication strategies, much like that outlined in the Report.

To that end, I'd like to highlight two areas identified by the Committee that would impact food choices: first, the need to improve food and beverage offerings in schools; and second: the need to increase comprehensive nutrition education programs that promote nutrition literacy and cooking skills. I call these areas out because Congress has an opportunity this summer to update school-based nutrition standards and provide for a comprehensive nutrition education and promotion initiative through reauthorization of the Child Nutrition programs. I urge you, as policy leaders at HHS and USDA, to urge lawmakers to act now to update these programs and do *their* part in implementing some of the key report recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts. Further details will be in our written comments. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Pivonka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Pivonka, PhD, RD
President & CEO