

Connecticut Team Healthy Snack Pilot Program Endorsement



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



December 20, 2004

Mr. Antoine Mowad
Dr. Marc Raad
Fruiticana LLC
464 Wolcott Road
Wolcott, CT 06716

Dear Mr. Mowad and Dr. Raad:

Commissioner Betty J. Sternberg asked that I contact you regarding your September 23, 2004 letter to Governor M. Jodi Reil regarding Fruiticana Cream-Less Ice Creme. I am pleased that your company is among many others that are working to make healthy snack choices available for our children.

The Connecticut Team Nutrition Healthy Snack Pilot is being conducted through a Team Nutrition grant funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to the Connecticut State Department of Education for the period of September 30, 2003 through September 30, 2005. Connecticut Team Nutrition is a partnership of the Connecticut State Department of Education, and the University of Connecticut, with The Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders and the State Department of Public Health.

The Healthy Snack Pilot focuses on developing a state model for providing healthy snack choices without negatively impacting school finances. During this school year, all snacks and beverages sold in the five pilot schools – both a la carte in the cafeteria and in vending machines – meet newly developed nutrition standards that reflect current nutrition science and guidelines, and have been endorsed by many state health organizations and associations. The nutrition standards for Connecticut Team Nutrition pilot schools focus on fat, sugar and moderate single-serve portion sizes. Milk, water (including flavored waters without added sugar, artificial sweeteners or caffeine) and 100% fruit or vegetable juice are the only beverages allowed.

During the past year, Connecticut Team Nutrition has been working with manufacturers, distributors and local vendors to identify snack products that meet Connecticut's nutrition standards. A list of allowable snack foods and beverages has been developed, to assist the pilot schools in determining which products may be sold. As you know, Fruiticana meets the Connecticut standards, and is already included on this list. Connecticut Team Nutrition has facilitated student taste tests and samplings for many of the snack products, including Fruiticana. It must be noted, however, that each pilot school and not the state agency determines which of the acceptable products to purchase, based on local needs, student acceptability and cost.

The pilot includes a research component to assess what happens before and during the project. During the 2003-2004 school year baseline data was collected from the pilot schools regarding the types of snack and beverage products sold, product costs and profit margins, sales volume, monthly income and expenditures, meal participation, and student food preferences/attitudes about nutrition. The same data is being collected during the 2004-2005 school year to evaluate the impact of these changes.

Upon completion of the pilot project in June 2005, a Healthy Snack Action Guide will be developed to assist all Connecticut schools with implementing healthy snack food choices. It is expected that the healthy snack pilots will serve as a model to help other schools make positive changes. For additional information regarding the Healthy Snack Pilot, please contact Susan Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, at (860) 807-2075.

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Dr. Marc Raad
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We encourage all food companies to continue their efforts to partner with schools as appropriate. For example, Stonyfield Farm is subsidizing healthy vending machines in three of the five pilot schools. We also applaud and support continued efforts to manufacture healthier products that are cost effective for use in schools and also available to families. Together, we can make a difference in the health and achievement of Connecticut's children.

Sincerely,



Charlene Russell-Tucker, MSM, RD
Bureau Chief
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and
Child/Family/School Partnerships

CRTd

cc: Dr. Betty J. Sternberg
George A. Coleman