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Editorial

Working together for fruit and vegetable promotion

Each year, 2.7 million lives could potentially be saved if fruit and vegetable (F&V) consumption was sufficiently increased. WHO and FAO are working together to actively promote F&V consumption over the world. A Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation recommended a minimum intake of 400g of F&V per day for the prevention of chronic diseases and for the prevention of several micronutrient deficiencies. Current data shows that for most countries, this goal is far from being met.

As part of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, WHO and FAO launched a F&V Promotion Initiative and as a result a Framework for the Promotion of F&V at the National Level was produced. Subsequently, WHO and FAO organized training workshops that bring together experts from agriculture, health, education and other areas to discuss the implementation of F&V promotion programs at the national level.

Because it's a combined WHO/ FAO effort, this Initiative emphasizes the need to have cooperative work of various stakeholders towards the effective and sustained increase of F&V consumption. It is important that all stakeholders in different sectors (health, agriculture, education, development, food and beverage producers, catering, retailers, etc.) see F&V promotion as a "win-win" situation. All actors involved - from production to consumption - will benefit from the prevention of chronic diseases and micronutrient deficiencies that can be tackled through the increase in F&V consumption.

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Development of the Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™ brand: the next stage of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption

— Elizabeth Pivonka and Kathy Hoy —
Produce for Better Health Foundation, USA



Why a new brand?

Recommendations for intake of fruits and vegetables in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans have increased for most individuals such that most moderately active adults require up to 13 servings per day - more than the former recommendation of 5 servings per day⁽¹⁾. However, U.S. consumption data indicates that in 2001-02, average servings per day were 4.5 for females and 5.2 for males⁽²⁾. In light of new recommendations, Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) and its government and industry partners sought to develop a more relevant “rallying cry” that would promote consumption of fruits and vegetables. The objective was to re-brand 5 A Day to be sustainable, adaptable, and compelling, while leveraging existing program equity.

Insights from consumer research

PBH initiated a comprehensive formative research process that included 75 consumers (parents and children) in ethnographies and qualitative focus groups. The research showed that, as the role model, meal planner, shopper and cook, mom is the family’s primary influencer of healthy eating and sees taking care of her family as her primary responsibility. However, hectic lifestyles, availability of “junk” food, and complex and competing messages from a variety of sources make her role increasingly challenging. Although attitudes towards and usage of fruits and vegetables vary greatly, it is commonly agreed that they are healthy and nutritious, and the foundation for a healthy life.

Fruits generally have a more positive image than vegetables. They are viewed as easier to prepare, preferred by kids, and are consumed more as snacks. Vegetables, on the other hand are seen as less tasty, in need of “doctoring” or modifying, and are less appealing to kids. Consumers feel that their knowledge of how to cook vegetables is missing, thus vegetables are viewed as harder to prepare.

Overall, consumers believe they are getting enough fruits and vegetables over time and know that they could eat more but need to be convinced why; the most compelling motivation to consume more is “it all adds up”. The most effective messages are those that appeal to mom’s emotional need to be

responsible, while leveraging functional/intrinsic values of fruits and vegetables - healthfulness, variety, great taste, and natural, for example. Messages are best received when the tone is positive and supportive with a focus on small steps, without trying to quantify “enough”. Use of numbers (5-9-13 servings) was shocking, thus not motivating, and even alienating to some.

This consumer research informed the new brand positioning: Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™.

Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™ – strong, simple, forceful and positive

The success of the 5 to 9 A Day Program lies in the substantial increases it created in awareness of intake recommendations. Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™, on the other hand, is motivational, providing actionable steps to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, and inspiring moms to do so because every step they take towards consuming more matters for themselves and their families. Emotionally-based messages that focus on moms’ feelings of responsibility for taking care of her family are likely to influence moms to include more fruits and vegetables in her family’s meals and snacks.

Moms also recognize the importance of fruits and veggies in the diet, believe they are a good source of sustainable energy, value cultural associations, and are surprised by the large variety that are available, including that all forms count. They are on the verge of “taking action” and say that they need tips, ideas and suggestions about how to fit them into their busy lives. The new website, fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org does just that.

While mom is the “sweet spot”, there was no difference in message appeal when tested with other segments of the population. In fact, 2/3 said the message increased their interest in eating more fruits and veggies either extremely or very well.

The new Fruits & Veggies – More Matters™ brand is a guilt-free “rallying cry”, and provides a universal, focused message – everyone benefits from eating more.



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1. DHHS and USDA, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005

2. USDA, What We Eat In America, NHANES 2001-2002, September, 2005

The Norwegian MORE /MER Campaign

— Guttorm Rebnes —

Managing Director, Norwegian Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Board, Norway

Aim

The Norwegian "MER", "More" in English moves away from recommending eating a specific amount of fruits and vegetables, but emphasizes eating more. "MER" is more than a traditional campaign; it is a campaign aimed at increasing the availability of fruit and vegetables at all meals in daycare, at all concession stands at sports events for kids and in all company canteens. The MER Campaign influences people to incorporate more fruits and vegetables in meal occasions. The key goal is increased consumption through increased availability for kids, teens and their parents.

Daycare

75% of all kids up to six years old spend most of their daytime in daycare. The total population in Norway is 4.5 million; the total number of kindergartens is 6 000 with about 250 000 kids. Thus, kindergartens are a very important arena for preventive health initiatives. Eating habits are created early in a person's life; thus, it is very important that kids are introduced to healthy eating habits they can keep for life. Research conducted by the Directorate for Health and Social Affairs in 2005 shows that many daycares serve healthy food. However, there is much potential for further improvements.

The MER campaign for daycare inspires and motivates the employees to serve more fruit and vegetables, but also inspires the kids to taste, re-taste and eventually establish a preference for different fruits and vegetables. This is all in line with the government guidelines for health and physical activity.

MER certified daycare

Daycare centers sign a contract that they will meet the following criteria:

- 1) Ready to eat, cut to serve fruit and vegetables are served as part of daily meals
- 2) Fruit is served when celebrating children's birthdays (www.frukt.no/fruktfest)

3) Employees complete an e-learning course (www.frukt.no/barnehage)

4) Healthy eating is presented as a theme at parent meetings, and parents are about the MER initiative

Daycare centers that meet these criteria receive MER certification.

Sports events - a new market for sale of fruits and vegetables

Norway's Athletic Association has 2 million members, and 1 million of these members are under 24 years of age. Members spend a large portion of their free time at sports clubs. This makes it important to make healthier choices available at sports clubs, tournaments and other events. Surveys have shown that it is often junk food that is sold at clubs and tournaments, and fruit and vegetables are not readily available. MER provides a concept, tips, practical advice and PR kits for clubs that want to serve more fruit and vegetables at their facilities. Statistics from 2006 showed that over a half million cups with ready to eat, cut to serve fruit and vegetables were sold at clubs and sporting events and over 500 clubs have reported success with serving fruit and vegetables!

Canteens

Over one million people eat at least one meal every day at canteens in Norway. It is important that fruit and vegetables are made the easy choice. Research shows that there is a need to provide canteen personnel with education and inspiration.

An e-learning course for canteen personnel has been developed and focuses on incorporating more fruit and vegetables in meal preparation. Information and educational materials place emphasis on customer satisfaction, fewer sick days and reduced production costs. Over 100 canteens have used materials and are serving more fruits and vegetables.

The MER campaign is successful in encouraging Norwegians to eat, MORE fruits and vegetables, and at the same time provides meal occasions to do just this.





The new French campaign: "Half of our plate"

— Laurent Damiens —
Chairman of Aprifel, France



"To reverse the strong tendencies in falling fresh fruit and vegetable consumption" is an approach which the fruit and vegetable sector in France have been engaged in since 1981, with the creation of an agency, APRIFEL designed to fulfil this aim.

Since the late 1960s, French citizens have reduced their consumption of fruit and vegetables. This can be explained by four main causes:

1. the increase of processed foods, easier to prepare and symbols of modernity, which are increasingly substituting fresh produce ;
2. the advent of advertisements on televisions in 1969, previously forbidden, which the food industry used as a lever for influencing changes in dietary behaviour ;
3. the development of the new form of retail with the creation and growth of super and hypermarkets across the country, also contributing to changes in dietary patterns ;
4. and finally the women's liberation movement and women's desire for freedom which has changed daily food preparation into an additional chore.

These four main causes have converged to influence increasingly low consumption of fruit and vegetables over the past 40 years.

In 1982, Aprifel began leading awareness campaigns for opinion leaders – most notably journalists- and actions directly targeted to schoolchildren : the message « mangez frais, mangez vrai », which is directly translated as "eat fresh, eat real" ; however these actions have never had sufficient coverage to substantially contribute to reversing the trend of poor fruit and vegetable consumption. A lack of funds limited the necessary scope of action.

Ten years on, in 1992, INTERFEL (Inter-professional Association of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable industry) became actively aware of the power of the media and advertisements, and understood that it is necessary to communicate through advertisement in order to reach consumers and help change their habits.

Thus a television advertisement campaign was launched in 1993, mainly targeting children and their mothers, and aiming to change their perception of fruit and vegetables.

Three years later, with the image of fruit and vegetables having been improved, Interfel reoriented their focus in order to modify ATTITUDES of French citizens vis-à-vis fruit and vegetables. Thus a new advertisement campaign aimed to reduce the perception of consumers regarding the 'complicated' aspects of fruit and vegetables such as "length of preparation" and "not practical" via daily prime-time advertisements over a period of three years.

By 1999, the image of fruit and vegetables has developed positively, as had the attitudes of the French population regarding fruit and vegetable consumption. It thus became possible to work on the aspect of BEHAVIOUR.

In December 1999 Interfel thus launched the slogan "10 fruit and vegetables a day". This slogan had two main objectives:

1. to create a point of reference of optimal consumption for each individual;
2. to shock by the figure "10", which could appear excessive, and potentially be the vector of a polemic.

The second objective was rapidly attained, due to the food industry which complained via the media of the exaggerated "10 a day" message. Controversy did indeed set in and the notoriety of the "10 a day" was very rapid. The first objective was also attained but the Ministry of Health found that "10" was too high a target for "poor consumers" because they might consider 10 the minimum recommended intake of fruit and

vegetable portions though the minimum was 5, and 10 was meant as an objective of consumption. Thus two years later the slogan was revised in order for it to be in line with that of the Ministry of Health: « from 5 to 10 fruit and vegetables a day».

To create norms for fruit and vegetable consumption in the view of increasing individual consumption is essential to change behaviours. One year ago, a Sofres study suggested that nearly 2/3 of the French population were aware of consumption targets: between 5 and 10 fruit and vegetables a day.

Nevertheless awareness of norms and standards is not sufficient to change behaviours. One must then explain how to change to attain the optimal daily intake.

There is currently an assessment of culinary practices via ethno-anthropological marketing studies which we are conducting at our on-site Fraich'attitude kitchen with the assistance of the anthropologist-sociologist Professor Dominique Desjeux.

These observations will allow us to understand how to modify the culinary behaviours of the French population. It is in the development of domestic culinary practices, through the integration of increasing fruit and vegetable use, that we will manage to considerably modify dietary behaviours.

The first results have already allowed us to develop our communication strategy toward the concept of the "half". It is a visual concept that allows without thinking to visually put into practice a "higher consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables". It follows these points of reference:

- first: half of food purchases are fresh fruit and vegetables!
- then: half the content of the fridge are fresh fruit and vegetables!
- also: half of what we eat is fresh fruit and vegetables!
- And finally: half of our plate is composed of fresh fruit and vegetables!

In order for half one's plate to be composed of fresh fruit and vegetables, one must first purchase half of one's food as fruit and vegetables and thus be able to eat half one's diet through fruit and vegetables, with the aide of the visual proportion of "half". With the help of our dieticians, we have been able to verify the veracity of the concept: half the diet in fruit and vegetables is equivalent to the consumption of an average of 800g of fruit and vegetables a day.

Simple, concrete, comprehensive and easily applicable messages for all consumers, is the new approach to change the dietary habits of the French population.

With the message "half in fruit and vegetables", whether it be half of what one eats, half of one's plate, or half of one's purchases, this converges towards a necessary modification of food shopping behaviours, culinary practices and dietary habits: the entire system needs to be modified, from purchases to consumption, via what is stocked in the fridge!

The strategy of numbers (5aday, 6aday, 5 to 7, 10/day, 5 to 10, 3x3, 9aday...) has allowed the creation of norms and standards for fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in most countries which have launched fruit and vegetable communication campaigns to change dietary behaviours of their respective population. If this sort of slogan has led to an awareness of the need to increase fruit and vegetables, it has nevertheless not been operational in leading to action: the "half in fruit and vegetables" message provides a practical visual tool to make consumption of fruit and vegetables that much easier to do.

