**2016-2017 USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: May 9-10, 2017**
Detailed Recommendations and Statements

**PRODUCE CONSUMPTION**

1. Overview:
The USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee recognizes the well-documented high rates of diet-related disease among Americans. Increased fruit and vegetable consumption can combat these public health problems, and healthy habits formed in childhood can last a lifetime. There is a growing body of evidence that Farm to School programs increase participant consumption, willingness to try, and access to fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, USDA child nutrition programs increase ability and interest in incorporating healthier foods into family diets, increase success of school meal programs, and reduce food waste.

In addition to public health benefits, increased produce consumption is beneficial to specialty crop producers and other supporting businesses in our industry.

**Recommendation**:

1. The USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee emphasizes our support for USDA programs that increase fruit and vegetable consumption while directly supporting our industry. These programs include:
* Agricultural Marketing Service’s Commodity Procurement Program, the Unprocessed Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program, and the Department of Defense Fresh Produce Program
* Food and Nutrition Service’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and Farm to School Program
1. The committee strongly recommends that USDA continue to offer these programs and consider increased funding to the programs to meet demand as is possible.

II. Overview:

The USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee recognizes the value of the Food and Nutrition Service’s Team Nutrition Program, which supports the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance. Team Nutrition provides high quality, evidence-based nutrition education resources for free to eligible schools. However, due to a lack of awareness of the program across the country, only approximately 50% of eligible schools participate.

**Recommendation**:

The USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee recommends that the Food and Nutrition Service partner with the Agricultural Marketing Service to increase awareness about Team Nutrition resources across the country.