



The CAC Marketing Team from L to R: David Cruz, Angela Fraser, Jan DeLyser and Zachary Benedict, at the April 2014 Fresh Produce and Floral Council Luncheon, where details regarding the eat brighter! campaign were shared.

Commission Inspires Healthy Choices with eat brighter!TM Campaign

The California Avocado Commission recently became the first commodity board to sign up for participation in the new produce industry eat brighter! campaign. The eat brighter! campaign is a result of the Sesame Workshop-Produce Marketing Association (PMA) initiative designed to give the produce industry the tools to rise above the large budget “junk food” spend with appealing messaging and artwork to increase awareness and consumption of fresh produce.

The initiative initially began as a conversation about the irony that diet is the number one cause of mortality and obesity issues in the United States, while per capita consumption of fresh produce is low. Wouldn't it be better if young children wanted to include fresh fruits and vegetables in their diets instead of empty calories? How could the produce industry help make that happen?

As Sesame Workshop and PMA worked toward building an initiative to address these questions, the organizations joined with Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), and in October 2013 at a White House press conference First Lady Michelle Obama announced a two-year agreement to help promote fresh fruit and vegetable consumption to children and their parents. The agreement allows PMA's

community of growers, suppliers, retailers and commodity boards to utilize the appeal of Sesame Street characters without a licensing fee.

PMA then developed a marketing toolkit with turnkey resources for the use of Sesame Street characters in media placements, in-store signage and packaging. A campaign tagline, “eat brighter!” was developed to unify the voices of all of the program participants. It is designed to draw parallels between the characters of the Sesame Street brand and fresh produce, using adjectives like “healthy,” “brilliant” and “alive.” Since the opportunity to choose naturally colorful food – to eat brighter – is only found in the produce department, the tagline is a clear call to action to consume more fruits and vegetables.

The campaign toolkit outlines seasonal promotions with turnkey programs and is customizable so that companies can maintain their brand differentiation. To date more than 50 retailers across the nation have signed up for the program, indicating that they would welcome participating eat brighter! products and signage. Some of these retailers also have signed licensing agreements indicating that they will use the signage in their stores at a higher level as well. Licensed participants include suppliers such as Bolthouse Farms, Giumarra, Naturipe Farms and Sunkist as well as commodity boards including CAC, the Mushroom Council and the Pear Bureau Northwest.



PMA President Cathy Burns, Former White House Nutrition Advisor and Chef Sam Kass, CAC Vice President of Marketing Jan DeLyser and Todd Putnam, chief marketing officer at Bolthouse Farms, at the 2014 PMA Fresh Summit.



The eat brighter! campaign offers many colorful and appealing ways to promote fresh produce utilizing recognizable characters from Sesame Street.

Sesame Street characters such as Big Bird, Elmo and Abby Cadabby are already beginning to appear on produce packaging. These characters have a strong appeal to children and — perhaps even more importantly — are trusted by moms. A Sesame Workshop survey showed that 83 percent of moms have high trust in the Sesame Street brand, and other studies have found that Sesame Street’s characters are successful at influencing children’s eating decisions.

It makes sense for California avocados to participate in the eat brighter! campaign because a cohort study conducted by the Hass Avocado Board (HAB) in 2009 showed that people consume more avocados as they age. This suggests that the earlier they become fans of California avocados the more valuable they may be to the industry over time.

CAC will take advantage of this royalty-free program by including the Sesame Street characters in online and social media communication including the website, e-mail outreach and social media. All of the activity will encourage purchases of California avocados by parents for their children — and themselves. 🥑