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ATO ACTIVITIES reports

GBI 5-a-Day Program – Program Kick Off & Early Progress Evaluation

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Report Highlights:

This report provides an initial evaluation of the 5-a-Day Global Based Initiative (GBI) program co-sponsored by ATO Taipei, the Washington Apple Commission (WAC), and 10 other cooperator partners, and executed by the Formosa Cancer Foundation (FCF). A kickoff press conference was held on 4 April and the program has already reached 3,000 students in 15 schools around Taiwan with GBI-developed material incorporating a particular focus on U.S. fresh fruits and vegetables. The program is based on a coupon booklet distributed to elementary schoolchildren by FCF nutritionists. The coupons ensure interaction between the children, their parents and teachers at schools, resulting over time in increased consumption of fruit and vegetables.

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This reports introduces the major activities involved in the GBI-sponsored 5-a-Day program in Taiwan with attendant results, where available and quantifiable at this point. A brief look forward is also provided.

Purpose of the 5-a-Day GBI

Following Taiwan's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), U.S. agriculture products have faced an increasingly competitive market that has eaten away at the overall U.S. share of Taiwan's fruit and vegetable consumption. Gone are the days prior to 2002 when U.S. producers held a 90% or higher share (of imports) in certain key fruit and vegetable categories such as apples, citrus, broccoli and others.

A maturing economy and population that is now nearly two decades into developing a consumer-based service economy has led, as in western economies, to a diet rich in proteins and fats and increasingly deficient in fresh fruit and vegetables. Taiwanese now on average consume less than 3 servings a day of fruits and vegetables total, more than 2 servings less than the minimum recommended for good health. This represents a second, and just as serious, challenge to U.S. fresh produce exports to the island. Thus, not only is the U.S. share of the "consumption pie" shrinking, the pie itself is not growing and may, in fact, be in contraction.

The ATO-sponsored 5-a-Day GBI was envisioned as a vehicle to address both issues effectively. By tapping into the active nutrition / 5-a-Day promotion program already organized and implemented by the Formosa Cancer Foundation (FCF), U.S. produce associations and the ATO would be in a relatively good position to promote competitive U.S. produce directly through well-established and trusted FCF channels to elementary school students, educators and parents. It is hoped that long-term, successful promotion within the GBI framework will 1) enhance the general image of "U.S. produce" and value of specific U.S. fruit and vegetable items in the eyes of consumers in order to reduce competitive pressures on U.S. fruit/vegetable exports and promote the winning for U.S. suppliers a larger share of the "consumption pie" mentioned above and 2) grow the overall size of the "consumption pie" by raising domestic consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, benefiting all produce producers, suppliers and retailers. The first phase of the program focuses on promoting nutritional information. The ATO and cooperators will try to link the second phase of the program to retail chains that market U.S. products.

Background

Concepts were developed and discussed with cooperators, FCF and several other local potential partners over 2006. A first proposal was coordinated and submitted by the Washington Apple Commission (WAC) in mid-2006. GBI funding was approved at the close of 2006, with the first year of the program designated as 2007. The ATO facilitated contract negotiations between WAC and FCF with contract signing in March 2007. Formal announcement of joint cooperation between FCF, ATO, WAC and other cooperators was made at a press conference, held on International Children's Day (April 4, 2007).

FCF was an enthusiastic participant in the program formulation and proposal process from the early stages. FCF is a non-profit organization focusing on improving the health of Taiwanese. They rely entirely on donations from various sources to fund their programs, including support from the Council of Agriculture, Department of Health and the Ministry of Education. This program is mutually beneficial and has brought the ATO and our partners great praises.

Activities

School Lunch Program Nutrition Research (focus on fruits and vegetables)

A focused, limited time frame research project was organized by the FCF through its existing network of over 1,000 in-school nutritionists to get a snapshot of Taiwan's "average" school meal prepared by school kitchens. The focus of this study was two-pronged, using interviews and questionnaires to collect relevant data.

While lunch in Taiwan represents only one of three meals in the day, the FCF has long found that is the single "window of opportunity" for nutrition policy to have a voice and have an effect on daily nutrition behavior. With breakfasts increasingly being eaten on the run (or not at all) and dinners severely comprised by increased opportunities to eat out or eat easy-to-fix but nutritionally-deficient meals (due to double income parents, single family homes, other commitments, etc.), lunches represent a very important source of good nutrition.

FCF research found that, on average, school lunches provided a 0.5 serving portion of vegetables and 0.5 serving portion of fruit, representing 20% or 1/5th of a 5-a-day program. While this leaves much room for improvement, FCF findings were significantly more critical of a further finding that upwards of 75% of school lunches left significant amounts of uneaten vegetables on the plate. By contrast, fewer than 3% of lunches left their fruit unconsumed – underscoring a strong preference among schoolchildren to eat fresh fruit after meals.

It is this second finding that represents the highlight of FCF research. Food remaining on the tray means that, on average, children are receiving less than half of the 1 fruit-and-vegetable serving average served at school lunch time. It is this behavior that FCF has been working to change and for which the GBI is geared.

Educational Materials Development and Design

FCF staff, cooperators and ATO worked together to develop a coupon program that "tasks" children to take actions geared to increase their and their family's fruit and vegetable consumption. Coupons provide a platform for interaction between FCF/GBI-supported nutritionists and teachers, between teachers and children, and between children and their parents. Coupon activities (e.g., "I will make a creative dish using apples for my parents" and "I reminded my classmates today to finish their vegetables at lunch.") must be countersigned by parents. Teachers collect the coupons, which are then entered into a raffle, where children are eligible to win a variety of prizes. See Appendix 1 for a table of coupon contents.

Education material is designed to work in tandem with specific nutrition messages presented by FCF/GBI-funded nutritionists, who have been given specific training by FCF head nutritionists to understand and introduce the nutritional benefits of all fresh fruit and vegetable products represented by participating U.S. agriculture produce cooperators.

While incorporating the general message that 5 servings of many fruit and vegetables is essential to good health, coupons have been designed to stress nutritional messages for produce represented by U.S. agriculture produce cooperator partners. Furthermore, seven (7) coupon activities (22%) relate directly to U.S. cooperator produce, with the remainder largely encouraging greater fruit and vegetable consumption in general.

Result: 30,000 coupon booklets printed with GBI funds to be distributed through FCF organized nutrition programs delivered in schools throughout Taiwan during calendar year 2007.



5-a-Day Promotion Coupon (top cover)

Kick-Off Media Event

The Formosa Cancer Foundation (FCF), AIT's ATO, and the Washington Apple Commission officially announced their cooperation on April 4, 2007 on the GBI funded program to promote U.S. fruit and vegetables to Taiwanese elementary schoolchildren and their families. FCF organized a press conference to explain the cooperation between ATO and U.S. agricultural cooperators and to detail to the assembled media the results of a GBI-funded research study that scored Taiwan's elementary in-school lunch program against the "5-a-day" ideal.

The press conference was chaired by highly respected cancer researcher Dr. Lai Gi-min, with opening addresses delivered by the Speaker of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan, Wang Jin-pyng, Deputy Director of AIT, Robert Wang, and key Department of Health and Ministry of Education officials involved in guiding school nutrition programs.

Result: The event attracted over 30 representatives from the media, which generated 12 newspaper articles, over 60 reports on Internet news sites, 5 television reports and 5 radio news reports. ATO will send DVD/CDs with media coverage to all U.S. co-sponsors of this event.

Nutritionist Training

FCF prepared new instructions for the GBI-sponsored 2007 5-a-Day program for use by nutritionists (1 set) and teachers (1 set). Materials include: 1) a full-color, 36-page handbook that introduces the nutritional role and character of 27 fresh fruits and vegetables, including all fresh fruit and vegetable items of specific promotion concern to U.S. cooperator participants, five recipes and general guidance regarding the relationship between fruit and vegetable color (blue/purple, green, white, yellow/orange and red) and nutritive value. and 2) a sheet of in-school activity organization instructions geared to make sure that the links between the program – nutritionist – teacher – students – parents are activated and result in students taking an active interest in completing coupon activities, better appreciating the role of fruit and vegetables in good nutrition and participating in the end of program raffle for various prizes.

Result: 300 FCF contracted nutritionists received phone and in-person consultations regarding the new set of instructions for the coupon program and related activities. ATO will provide all co-sponsors of this event with copies of the published materials.

Elementary School Nutrition Education

Recruitment of schools to participate in the GBI-funded 5-a-Day nutrition program did not begin until after the April 4 press conference. FCF reports that they now are booked for schools through May and into June already. Fifteen (15) schools received nutrition education from FCF nutritionists between 4/4 and 4/30. These fifteen visits introduced U.S. fruits and vegetables to just under 3,000 students, all of whom received coupon books and information on how they can help to improve their own and their family's health by consuming five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Based on last year's nutritionist program, the FCF estimates that their nutritionists will hold around 100 nutrition education sessions during May (this month) and another 100 during June (next month).



FCF Nutritionist Booklet (partial)

Result: The program is well on track to implementing the 5-a-Day Coupon program in elementary schools throughout Taiwan. At the current high level of interest in the program from schools and availability of nutritionists, the program may finish distribution of available coupons by late September (first month of the new school year) or early October, about 1 month earlier than initial estimates.

Using its own funds, the FCF printed another 7,000 5-a-Day coupons for distribution at its Fruit and Vegetable Adventureland, located on the campus of National Taiwan University. The inclusion of this worthwhile program, which reaches both kindergarten and elementary school-aged children, in nutrition promotion activities is a bonus for the GBI and cooperators. In organizing GBI sponsorship of FCF activities, funding was specifically not permitted for the Adventureland as funds were being requested for regular maintenance and education activities. As a result, information on fruits and vegetables promoted by U.S. cooperators is being promoted through Adventureland channels at no cost to the GBI program.

Looking Ahead

The program seems to be exceptionally well managed by FCF, an organization that benefits from having run similar programs consistently over the past 10 years and from having an enthusiastic staff focused on expanding a worthwhile program. FCF also has an outstanding reputation in Taiwan for its good works in promoting healthy lifestyles.

Initial indications show that teachers and children are receiving the coupon program with enthusiasm. The entire booklet of coupons should take *at least* one month for children to complete, and children are being given until December 1st to submit completed coupon stubs to FCF in order to participate in the lucky draw program.

The GBI makes no provisions for using GBI funds to provide promotional materials (boxes of fruit, vegetables, coupons, promotional items, etc.) for the lucky draw (to be held on December 17th, 2007 at FCF). While FCF may be able to procure some incentives from Taiwan-based donors, the Foundation is hoping that U.S. cooperators, suppliers and local distributors and retailers will be able at the time to contribute prizes (vouchers for fresh fruit/veg purchases, boxes of fresh fruit/veg, coupons for book/school-related purchases, etc.) to ensure the success of the lucky draw and create a strong platform to build upon into the next year. FCF discussed such a desire with ATO and cooperator representatives during the planning stages, at which time cooperators indicated a strong willingness to contribute when the time came.

FCF is very flexible in terms of further cooperation with the GBI in future years. Based on initial exploratory discussions conducted during 2006, possibilities still on the table include continuing the in-school promotion as well as developing and executing an in-store 5-a-Day promotion in cooperation with Taiwan's largest supermarket chain, Wellcome (earlier approaches to Wellcome made by FCF on the program's behalf were met with positive responses).

The ATO and WAC representatives will approach FCF to discuss development of POS materials that could still be developed this season to promote the 5-a-Day program as seasonal U.S. fruits and vegetables are available in local retail outlets. The ATO will try to encourage retailers to offer discounts to children / parents who show their FCF coupon booklet. More information on this prospect will be provided in the coming weeks.

The ATO will maintain a comprehensive portfolio documenting all aspects of this activity including contracts, printed materials, photos, and press articles / news clippings. Much of this information will be copied and shared with appropriate co-sponsors.

APPENDIX 1

Activity Coupon Handed out to Elementary Schoolchildren as part of the FCF/GBI In-School 5-a-Day Nutrition Promotion Campaign.

| | Activity / Action |
|----|--|
| 1 | I will have a tray of fruit for dessert tomorrow night |
| 2 | Starting tomorrow, I will finish my vegetables before eating my entrée |
| 3 | I promise today to learn more about one kind of fruit or vegetable, including its nutritional value, and to taste its flavor for myself. |
| 4 | Today after class, I will pay attention and discuss with my parents about who ate the most fruits and vegetables at school. |
| 5 | I promise to help mom wash fruits and vegetables at least two times this week. |
| 6 | Today I promise to try a fruit or vegetable that I did not like before. |
| 7 | Tonight after dinner, I promise to start making a habit of eating one serving of fruit as a snack. |
| 8 | I will go this week to the grocery store or market with mom to buy fruits and vegetables. |
| 9 | This week I will make a vegetable and fruit sandwich (or breakfast) for my entire family. |
| 10 | I will finish everything on my school lunch plate this week. |
| 11 | This week, I promise to bring fruit from home to eat on days that my school lunch does not provide a fruit serving. |
| 12 | When we go out to eat today, I will ask my parents to order 1 ~ 2 dishes of vegetables. |
| 13 | This weekend, I will make with my parents one dinner dish using fresh loofah gourd. |
| 14 | Before going to school today, I promise to remind my parents that they need to follow the fruit and vegetable 5-7-9 guidelines. |
| 15 | Tomorrow I will make my favorite fruit juice (e.g., orange juice) all by myself for my entire family. |
| 16 | This week I promise not to drink soft drinks or milk tea. I will drink more water or fresh fruit juice. |
| 17 | From now on, I will eat my grapes with skins on. |
| 18 | Tomorrow I will ask my parents to make a dish using apples for me. |
| 19 | This weekend, I will make with my parents a full course meal using oranges. |
| 20 | This week, I will give up unhealthy snacks and fried foods and only eat fresh fruit when I am hungry between meals. |
| 21 | Tomorrow, I will make a sweet almond drink for my whole family to drink. |
| 22 | This weekend, I will make with my parents a full course meal using potatoes. |
| 23 | This morning, I will order a sandwich for breakfast and ask the chef to please give me several extra pieces of lettuce. |
| 24 | Before the end of this semester, I will go with my parents on a hike (or to a farm) to pick fruit at least twice. |
| 25 | This weekend, I will make with my parents a dish using broccoli. |
| 26 | This week, I promise every day to eat at least one serving of green vegetables (e.g., broccoli, spinach, green pepper). |
| 27 | Today at school, I will remind my classmates to finish everything on their plate and to finish their fruit. |
| 28 | Tomorrow, I will ask my parents to make a fruit salad for me. |
| 29 | When I visit my relatives this week, I promise to talk to them about the importance of following the fruit and vegetable 5-7-9 guidelines. |
| 30 | This weekend, I will make a fresh salad for my family to enjoy. |
| 31 | After finishing this coupon book, I promise to follow my parents' reminders to me about eating 5-a-day everyday. |
| 32 | Blank (to be filled in by student) |
| 33 | Blank (to be filled in by student) |
| 34 | Blank (to be filled in by student) |
| 35 | Blank (to be filled in by student) |
| 36 | Blank (to be filled in by student) |