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Dear Under Secretary Kevin Concannon:

I am writing this letter in support of the new USDA school meal nutrition standards.

My company, FarmLogix, provides farm to school technology to facilitate the delivery of healthy local foods to children during the school day. I personally spend time in schools, many in areas of food insecurity with many free and reduced lunch students.

Many of the children in these areas are not able to have their nutritional needs met in their neighborhoods. Grocery stores have disappeared, and all too often hunger need are met at gas stations and convenience/liquor stores. The picture above, which I took near a school meeting, is what I typically see.

Just today I was sampling farm-fresh produce in a cafeteria as part of Move and Crunch, and a young girl, a freshman in high school, refused to try a taste of pumpkin souffle. When asked she said, "I won't try what I don't know". After some prodding she tried it, and came back for more. Children that are never exposed to good nutrition can go well into adulthood without knowing what foods keep them healthy, which is how health issues arise. And the best place to teach children healthy habits, particularly those in food insecure locations, is where they are already learning and spending most of their day... at school.

Do kids complain when they can fill up on fruit instead of candy? You bet some do! But then again they also complain when asked to do their homework instead of hang out with their friends. Doing the right thing usually has a large, big picture benefit in exchange for sacrificing instant gratification. We have no problem teaching this to children regarding schoolwork and hobbies. Doing so in the school cafeteria just reinforces this important message to ensure they can succeed in all areas of their lives.

Regards,

Linda Mallers
Founder, President
FarmLogix, LLC