



Dear Colleague,

From the local foods movement to First Lady Obama's challenge to end childhood obesity within a generation, many voices across our nation are calling for change in the food supply and diet. Childhood obesity is not a challenge to take lightly as it threatens the lives and health of our children. It is quickly moving past epidemic status and becoming the norm. Without sustainable changes to our food and diet, we will soon have to view this as an endemic condition for American children.

The grain community has a long tradition of innovating and working with public health officials to utilize grains' role in the diet to improve health. In the past grains have been used to feed the hungry and address vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Grains are well positioned to allow gradual changes to occur in the food supply through incremental shifts to support dietary guidance. Gradually modifying the grain food supply chain related to school meals is one component of a child's environment that can be integrated into an initial attack on childhood obesity. It is one that can be done systematically and can have a sustainable impact.

We believe that this problem requires a forum, conducted in an environment of trust and mutual respect, which creates dialogue with all stakeholders to develop a plan of action. It is critical that we approach this problem with a solution-oriented, open mind, welcoming ideas from all sectors and placing each contribution into the overall context of how a change will impact a child's environment and ultimately their health.

Moving forward, we must continue the momentum of working together to solve childhood obesity in a caring spirit, thoroughly rooted in science, to implement sustainable changes to the grain food supply chain that positively impact the health of our children.

Sincerely,

Jean Kinsey
Allen Levine
Len Marquart
Sylvia Rowe