



June 2012

This past January, First Lady Michelle Obama and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced USDA's new nutrition standards for school meals. These new standards will cut salt and fat, limit calories, and increase the servings of fruits and vegetables. The comprehensive changes which school districts must implement in the 2012-13 school year, were made based on recommendations from the medical community and could have a positive influence on children's health throughout the United States.

Among the key changes, the new standards require that all students must be provided with greater quantities and varieties of fruits and vegetables; more than half of all grain products served must be whole-grain rich; all milk offered must be low-fat or fat-free; there are limits on sodium; and meals will have calorie minimums and maximums. Students who eat school meals each day will still see fewer starchy vegetables because there are minimum requirements of many other types of vegetables—dark green, orange, and red—that must be served in a given week.

Maschio's Food Services has already been providing a variety of healthy options which address many of the goals of these new regulations. All menus for next year will see the following:

- Increased servings of fruits and vegetables; more fresh produce including items from local Jersey farms.
- Increased use of whole grain rich breads, pastas, rice and ancient grains.
- All flavored milk will be fat free; 1% unflavored and fat free unflavored milks are available as alternatives.
- Lower sodium menu items will be gradually implemented over a period of several years.

Revisions are being made in our menus for next year to reflect the healthy changes coming your way. We understand the importance of students' food preferences and we will be offering a variety of options. Our staff is excited and energized to implement these changes. We will continue with the following programs to enhance nutrition and program awareness: Maschio's monthly promotions including "Chef-Days", "Fruit and Vegetable of the Month", and regularly scheduled calendar appropriate celebrations, Nutrition Education through the classroom, Health Fairs, Wellness Days, and Maschio's Newsletters. Our Farm to School Program will continue to provide fresh, local produce in many schools. The 2012-2013 school year will show more farm partnerships than any other year for Maschio's. We are eager to bring many more healthy options to the students in your district and we look forward to the challenge of improving school meals while keeping in mind affordability, acceptability and quality.