

Healthy Food for Healthy Children

European School Fruit & Vegetables Schemes



European Commission
Agriculture and Rural Development

Obesity

who is affected?



According to current estimates, 22 million children in the European Union are overweight, and of these 5.1 million are obese. This means that almost one child in four in the European Union is already overweight or obese – and the number of cases is rising by more than 400 000 a year.

... and what are the consequences?

Being obese in childhood and adolescence can have a serious impact on health – for example, by causing heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes, osteoarthritis and some types of cancer. These conditions can lead to substantial disability and premature death.

Obesity is now responsible for up to 6% of total health sector bills in the European Union. The total cost of obesity has been estimated to be about €150 billion in health care bills and lost productivity.

Fruit and vegetables – an efficient tool in the fight against obesity

The best means to combat obesity is to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including physical exercise and a healthy diet. A high consumption of fruit and vegetables is an essential aspect of healthy eating habits.

... but Europeans are not eating enough

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends eating at least 400 grams of fruit and vegetables daily. In the European Union, the average consumption is estimated at 380 grams per head and is falling; children are consuming on average only 227 grams per day.

Sources:

World Health Organisation (www.who.int)

International Obesity Task Force IOTF (www.ietf.org)

School Fruit & Vegetables Schemes

in several European countries aim at sustainably increasing the share of fruit and vegetables in the diets of children at the stage when their eating habits are formed.



Examples of ongoing initiatives



Netherlands

www.schoolgruiten.nl



Denmark

www.frugtkvarter.dk



Germany

www.5amtag.de



Hungary

www.3x3.hu



Italy

www.fruitfitness.eu



Spain

www.5aldia.es



United Kingdom

www.5aday.nhs.uk



France

www.agriculture.gouv.fr/unfruitpoullarecre



Sweden

www.fruktogront.se



Belgium

www.starttoeat.be

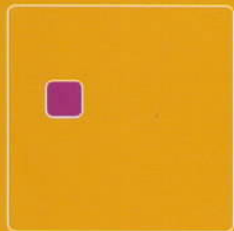


Ireland

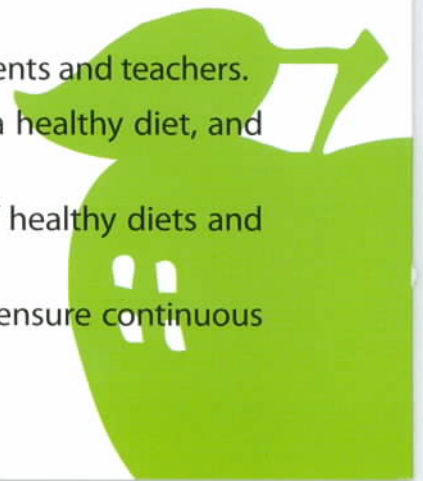
www.fooddudes.ie

Key Issues

for a successful School Fruit & Vegetables Scheme



1. Involve partners from the public health, education and agriculture sectors.
2. Only a long-term programme will have a long-term impact.
3. Achieve a multiplier effect by targeting not only children but also parents and teachers.
4. Provide fruit and vegetables for free so that all children can enjoy a healthy diet, and encourage them to keep the habit after the scheme has ended.
5. Carry out publicity campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of healthy diets and especially of fruit and vegetables for children.
6. Monitor and evaluate the scheme to measure its effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement.



What is the EU doing?



In its White Paper on 'Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity' published on 30th May 2007 the European Commission stressed the role of agriculture in this domain, as well as the need for coherent action at European level. It stated that a School Fruit Scheme would be *"a step in the right direction"*.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/keydocs_nutrition_en.htm

The EU Platform for Action on Health, Diet and Physical Activity was established by the Public Health department of the European Commission in 2005. It brings together stakeholders from all relevant sectors to take action against obesity and poor nutrition.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/platform_en.htm

The Council of the European Union has invited the European Commission Agriculture department to make a proposal for a School Fruit Scheme. The proposal is based on an impact assessment of the likely benefits, practicability and administrative costs of such a scheme.

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/fruitveg/sfs/public/index_en.htm

