

**APPLE PRODUCTS IN THE WIC PROGRAM
FOOD & NUTRITION BOARD
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE
SEPTEMBER 9, 2004**

Members of the Apple Processors Association (APA), who process quality apple products from fresh whole apples, support the WIC Program and have supplied high-quality, affordable, and nutritious 100% fresh-pressed apple juice to the WIC Program participants. We agree that the *Proposed Criteria for Selecting the WIC Food Packages* will lead to food packages that can better serve the nutritional, economical, and social situations of the diverse population of women and children who currently participate in WIC. We applaud the Dietary Guidelines Committee and this Committee's recommendation to increase fruit and vegetable intake of children and adults. As this Food and Nutrition Committee translates the proposed criterion for WIC food packages into specific food recommendations, APA offers some additional comments.

First, the inclusion of potassium and fiber, in addition to vitamins A, C, and B₆ will be beneficial to the overall health of WIC participants, especially in preventing hypertension associated with obesity, a growing problem with the WIC population. We applaud the Committee's recognition that whole fruits will need to be added to the WIC food package to enhance intake of potassium, fiber, as well as important vitamins. Applesauce and cooked apples are affordable and popular sources of potassium and fiber, as well as vitamins C, A and B₆ that could be provided in selected WIC food packages.

Second, the Committee also addresses excessive nutrient intakes, such as fat and sugar, that should be limited in the foods selected for the WIC package. In identifying the type of fruits and vegetables for the WIC package, the FNB Committee should consider adopting the criteria for fruits and vegetables as developed by the National Cancer Institute and Produce for Better Health Foundation for the *5-A-Day-for-Better Health* program. A variety of applesauce contains no added sugar, and would be appropriate for the WIC food packages.

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Third, the Committee's finding that children under age two were consuming levels of fruit juice that exceeded levels recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, provides the opportunity to permit WIC agencies to substitute good and easily digestible sources of vitamin C, fiber, and potassium for infants introduced to solid food, such as fortified applesauce and cooked apples. In APA's written comments to the Committee, we cited an analysis of USDA data and other published research showing no relationship between children's juice intake and short stature or overweight, and when juice consumption decreased, intakes of less nutritious beverages increased. It is important to educate parents about choosing fruit juice, to assure that when they do, the product is 100% juice. The label should state that 100% juice is recommended for WIC food packages.

Lastly, the Committee wisely recognizes in Criterion 4 that foods selected to deliver essential nutrients must be easily accessed, stored, and prepared by low-income participants. Criterion 6 addresses the logistics of participants obtaining foods, of vendors selling and packaging foods, and of WIC agencies prescribing amounts and types of foods for WIC participants. The extension of the fruit and vegetable category does present challenges, but processed fruit and vegetable products are shelf-stable, and many are available in multi-serve and single-serve packages convenient for infants and children to meet storage and transportation limitations of low income households. They are a wise and healthy choice for this program.

Members of the Apple Processors Association are committed to improving the health of Americans, and look forward to working with the U.S. Department of

Agriculture and the IOM Food and Nutrition Board in this regard. Thank you for this opportunity to present our comments.

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