

AgriLife NEWS

August 18, 2009

MEDIA ADVISORY

Consumers, health to be spotlighted at Austin vegetable conference

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WHAT: 2009 Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center and Texas Produce Convention conference. Consumers are the hot ticket, and medical and plant researchers want to hear from them so they can develop tastier and more healthful fruits and vegetables. And consumers are invited to the conference to find out what researchers are cooking up at conference.

WHO: School officials Donna Pittenger of Katy, and Polly Wilson and Holli Strother, both of Bryan, will talk about kids as consumers and programs schools can use to promote vegetables. Austin fireman Rip Esselstyn will inspire people to "Light your health on fire!" Dr. Bhimu Patil, director of the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center at Texas A&M, will explain how medical scientists and plant researchers collaborate to make new, healthier varieties of produce. Elected officials and representatives of state agencies and Texas A&M University will attend a stakeholders' luncheon.

Retailers will convene for roundtable discussions in the afternoon.

WHERE: Omni Austin Hotel, 700 San Jacinto at 8th Street, Austin.

WHEN: Friday, Aug. 21.

Free public events: – 8-10:15 a.m., Exhibits showing current consumer-impact projects, Bouquet Room. – 10:30-noon: Talks by the teachers and fireman, Lone Star Room.

Media may attend events for registrants: – Noon, luncheon with Texas Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-Mission; Dr. Vincent Fonseca, Texas Department of State Health Services; Dr. Mark Hussey, vice chancellor and dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Texas A&M; and Dr. Jeffrey Seemann, vice president of research and graduate studies, Texas A&M. Videotaped remarks by U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, will also be shown (by video message). – 2-3:30 p.m. Round table discussion with retailers, including: Richie Jackson, Texas Restaurant Association; John Kreger,

Houston Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association; Jim Gratzek, General Mills; David Gombas, United Fresh; Hugh Topper, H.E.B.; Gary Huddleston, Kroger; and Chris Romero, Whole Foods. – 4-5:30 p.m. research updates with Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center scientists.

For more information, see <http://vfic.tamu.edu/2009vficconference/Schedule.htm>

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