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Illinois Soybean Association brings Nationally Acclaimed Nutrition Education Program to Illinois Schools

FoodPlay: Coming to an Illinois school near you!

Performance Date: _____ Time: _____ School Contact: _____
School/Venue: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is doing its part to make a difference in the health and wellness of the children in their community! ISA has partnered with the Illinois Farm Bureau and FoodPlay Productions to bring FOODPLAY, a national award-winning theater show that inspires and empowers children to make healthy choices, to Illinois schools. Activate Elgin has also partnered to bring the live program to the Gail Borden Library for a community wide event celebrating the culmination of March as National Nutrition Month!



FOODPLAY will bring its cast of colorful performers, amazing feats of juggling, motivating messages, music, magic, and audience participation to celebrate National Soyfoods Month at 38 Illinois schools throughout April 2012. The tour kicks off at the Gail Borden Library on Saturday, March 31 with a community wide event. The program, which follows USDA Guidelines and includes information about the new MyPlate, is designed make nutrition come alive for students, families and communities.

Illinois soybean farmers with their soybean checkoff have partnered with FoodPlay Productions this year to bring this updated and new FOODPLAY program to help celebrate National Soyfoods Month. In response to the nation's alarming childhood obesity epidemic and the need for nutrition education that can be accessible to all, the Celebrating Soy!—FOODPLAY tour will reach up to 17,000 children and their families with the nutrition and health information essential to helping Illinois families take charge of growing up healthy and fit.

“April is ‘National Soyfoods Month’ and our partnership with FOODPLAY is helping get a great message out to thousands of students throughout Illinois,” said Ron Moore, chairman of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) and soybean grower from Roseville, IL. “FOODPLAY is effective in reaching children with important nutrition information, including the importance of healthy proteins like the ones found in the soybeans growing throughout Illinois.”

FOODPLAY makes good eating great fun, but its messages are serious. In the last 25 years, childhood obesity rates have doubled among elementary school children and tripled among teenagers. One in three children is overweight, and less than two percent of the nation's youth are meeting their daily nutritional requirements. Kids on average are drinking more than 600 cans of soda and consuming more than 150 pounds of sugars a year, missing out on recommended levels of fruits, vegetables and whole grains needed for optimal health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over one-third of the nation's youth will develop diabetes if current eating and exercise habits don't improve.

During the fun-filled performance, children follow the antics of Janey the Juggler, who dreams of becoming a juggling star but keeps dropping the balls. The problem — her unhealthy diet! With the help of the “Coach” and the children in the audience, Janey learns how to juggle the foods he eats to wind up with a balanced diet.

As part of the Celebrating Soy!—FOODPLAY tour, FOODPLAY’s live theater assembly will be presented to children (grades K-5), and schools will be given a comprehensive resource kit to keep the nutrition and health messages alive at home and in school all year long. Follow-up materials are provided for teachers, students, parents, school food service, and health staff to help everyone work together to create healthy schools and healthy communities. According to USDA-sponsored evaluations, FOODPLAY programs produce dramatic improvements in students’ eating and exercise habits and trigger community-wide interest in building healthy environments.

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is the statewide organization for Illinois soybean growers. The farmers on its board administer soybean check-off funds to support research, promotions, and educational programs designed to increase demand for Illinois soybeans and administer legislation and membership programs. For more information, contact Mark Albertson at ISA at 309-663-7692 or visit: <http://www.ilsoy.org>.

Founded in 1982 by Emmy Award-winning nutritionist Barbara Storper, MS, RD, a leader in the field of children’s nutrition, **FoodPlay Productions** has spread its message of good health to over four million schoolchildren across the country. According to US Department of Agriculture-sponsored evaluations, FoodPlay has been shown to dramatically improve children’s eating and exercise habits. With its traveling theater shows and media campaigns, FoodPlay Productions has been using the power of live theater to promote healthy eating and exercise habits to the nation’s youth for over 25 years. For fun food tips, activities, and free nutrition handouts, visit <http://www.foodplay.com>.

Note: High-resolution images and digital press releases are downloadable from:
www.foodplay.com/news/press.html

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