



NEWS RELEASE

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Bayer, Nature's Reward and United Fresh Start Foundation Promote National School Lunch Week with New Broc-Stars Initiative for Kids

Monterey and Pajaro Valley Schools Offer High Rise Broccoli to Students, Highlighting Sweet Taste and New Uses for Broccoli Stems

SALINAS, CA (October 14, 2021) – Bayer, in collaboration with Nature's Reward and the United Fresh Start Foundation, is promoting a kid-friendly broccoli, just in time to celebrate National School Lunch Week, October 11-15.

This week, fresh from the field broccoli, from Bayer's High Rise™ Broccoli series, was made available to students in the Monterey Peninsula and Pajaro Valley Unified School Districts in California. Students were offered tasting samples during lunch, participated in a culinary demo, and Pajaro's elementary students sampled the broccoli as a mid-day snack, as part of the district's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Students enjoyed the locally grown broccoli's sweet taste, as well as the plant's tender, edible stem, which was cut into half-inch rounds, or "stars," a new Broc-Stars kids initiative.

"Broccoli is a mainstay on our menu, and we're always looking for new ways to offer and promote broccoli and other dark green vegetables to our students," said Linda Liu, Registered Dietician and Director of Food & Nutrition Services for the Pajaro Valley Unified School District. "The Broc-Stars are a fun, new way to eat broccoli by focusing on the stem."

"This past summer we had the chance to participate in the produce industry's foodservice conference, right here in our backyard, and that was a wonderful, eye-opening experience," said Micha James, Nutrition Services Director at the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District. "We are interested in local collaborations that can help our students enjoy fresh vegetables, as well as helping industry to understand how schools can be partners to expose children to fresh produce."

In addition to this week's collaboration, Bayer has committed \$20,000 to the United Fresh Start Foundation, supporting their mission to increase children's access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Bayer has sponsored virtual networking and education sessions for school nutrition professionals to connect with colleagues and industry suppliers, sharing best practices and strategies for sourcing, serving, and promoting fresh produce to students at school, despite challenges posed by the pandemic.

"Broc-Stars started as an idea we had when we were out in the field looking at our High Rise™ Broccoli series," said Jenny Maloney, Strategic Accounts Manager, Bayer. "The broccoli stems are often overlooked, but our

variety has a longer stem to help with harvest and other challenges farmers face. At the same time, it tastes amazing, and we thought this could be a real hit with young school children. The idea of cutting the sweet-tasting stem into easy-to-eat half-inch rounds, or really ‘stars’ given the stem’s shape, made us think this could be a hit with kids, and the idea of Broc-Stars was born.”

Bayer serves as a member of the United Fresh Start Foundation’s Board of Trustees, participating on the committee that is charged with providing guidance on new and innovative avenues to increase children’s access to fresh produce.

“Having the support of companies like Bayer to encourage healthy eating habits for the next generation of produce consumers is instrumental,” said Andrew Marshall, Director of Foodservice and Foundation Partnerships at United Fresh. “We’re pleased to have helped facilitate this connection and look forward to creating additional opportunities for produce companies to collaborate with school foodservice programs and their communities.”

Nature’s Reward, one of the leading growers in the Salinas Valley, grew and donated the broccoli to the two school districts. “Growing in California continues to be a challenge, but we were able to grow a great quality product that not only allows for ease of harvest, but also has a unique sweet tasting stem. As a part of this community, we are always looking for ways to give back, while at the same time promoting fruit and vegetable consumption at schools,” said Mark Mason, Nature’s Reward.

Bayer’s High Rise™ Broccoli series has been 20 years in the making. Developed in collaboration with growers, the High Rise broccoli series offers supply chain-wide benefits from field to store to table. The High Rise broccoli series delivers cleaner stems with fewer large leaves, and visible crowns that are firm and heavy. With uniform crown maturity, competitive yield potential and consistent product quality, the High Rise series can mean fewer harvest passes and is also well suited for time-saving machine harvesting. That means growers could significantly reduce their field labor; harvesters can make 1-2 passes through a field to cut plants, rather than the current three or more passes, and less leaf trimming is needed. And, the High Rise broccoli series firm heads and tender stems meet today’s market demands for broccoli crowns, bunches, and florets.

Bayer’s commitment to sustainability and agricultural education begins with the people it serves every day. This commitment extends to fighting food insecurity and encouraging healthier food choices for a happier and well-educated community. For additional information and background on Bayer and its other programs, please visit bayercropscience.us/our-commitment/bayer-initiatives.

National School Lunch Week is an annual celebratory week that recognizes the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child’s life, and the benefits of a program that has been serving nearly 30 million children each day for more than 70 years. This year, it is also an important opportunity to highlight the hard work and dedication of school nutrition professionals who have continued to make fresh fruits and vegetables available to students, despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic.

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About Bayer

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of health care and nutrition. Its products and services are designed to help people and the planet thrive by supporting efforts to master the major challenges presented by a growing and aging global population. Bayer is committed to drive sustainable development and generate a positive impact with its businesses. At the same time, the Group aims to increase

its earning power and create value through innovation and growth. The Bayer brand stands for trust, reliability and quality throughout the world. In fiscal 2020, the Group employed around 100,000 people and had sales of 41.4 billion euros. R&D expenses before special items amounted to 4.9 billion euros. For more information, go to www.bayer.com.

Natures Reward

Nature's Reward is owned and operated by the Huntington Family. The Huntington family's roots run deep in the Salinas Valley soil, and our company is one of the few remaining family-run agricultural businesses in the Salinas Valley. <https://www.naturesreward.com/>

United Fresh Start Foundation

The United Fresh Start Foundation is focused exclusively on increasing children's access to fresh fruits and vegetables and inspiring the next generation to "choose fresh" whenever and wherever they are eating their next snack or meal. Working with the produce industry, local nonprofits, healthcare organizations, allied businesses, and others, the United Fresh Start Foundation is committed to helping today's youth achieve the public health goal of making half their plate fruits and vegetables in order to live longer, healthier lives. Join our movement to ensure kids everywhere are "Growing Up Fresh!" www.unitedfreshstart.org.

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