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City kids take on country cousins in fresh produce challenge

Former Olympic swimmer Craig Stevens and star netballer Susan Pratley urge schools to join forces and win

It's a long-distance food fight – New South Wales and ACT primary school students are being urged to stand in a city versus country challenge to prove who's best at healthy eating.

The 2009 Sydney Markets 'Fresh for Kids' Canteen Campaign challenges schools from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory in a competition to eat the most fruit and vegetables.

The campaign, which rewards students for buying fresh fruit and vegetables at their participating school canteen, has encouraged almost 1.5 million children to eat more fresh produce since 2000. Last year, almost twice as many country schools as city schools took part in the challenge.

Marketing Programs Manager for Sydney Markets Limited Melissa Kolc said it was up to schools to make sure they were the healthiest eaters. Schools must register by 3 July to be eligible.

"For children aged five to 12, the school canteen is one of the only places they make autonomous food choices, so it's the best place to establish a lifelong healthy relationship with fresh food.

"I challenge all schools in NSW and the ACT to register for the Canteen Campaign, which builds a team atmosphere and makes healthy eating fun," Ms Kolc said.

In 2009, NSW Swifts player Susan Pratley, and former Olympic swimmer Craig Stevens have joined the campaign as Ambassadors.

Mr Stevens, a two-time World Championship gold medallist and Olympic silver medallist, said dieticians, doctors and trainers reinforced to him that only fresh food would give him the energy he needed to perform.

"Getting kids to eat fresh food is one of the most important steps in promoting health. Kids don't have access to expert guidance, so rewarding them for smart food choices and being active helps to set the next generation on the road to a healthy lifestyle," he said.

About the 'Fresh for Kids' Canteen Campaign

In 2009, the 'Fresh for Kids' Canteen Campaign will urge school students to 'Join Forces and Win', with prizes donated by The Walt Disney Company.

Join Forces and Win Canteen Campaign 2009 registrations close **Friday, 3 July**. The campaign runs from Monday, 10 August to Friday, 4 September.



Developed in 1997, Fresh for Kids Program was created by Sydney Markets Ltd to help school-aged children achieve a healthy lifestyle by encouraging them to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and participate in regular physical activity.

In 2009, the 'Fresh for Kids' Campaign will run alongside the Premier's Primary and Secondary School Sport Challenge in NSW.

The Challenge aims to engage young people in sport and physical activity and encourages them to lead healthy, active lifestyles. The Challenge includes a range of initiatives with one common purpose - to have more students, more active, more often.

The 2008 'Fresh for Kids' Canteen Campaign

- In 2008, 440 schools and 146,969 students participated in the Canteen Campaign.
- More than 160,000 pieces of fruit and vegetables were purchased over the four week campaign.
- Of the schools that took part, an outstanding 91% of canteen managers reported an increase in students buying fruit and vegetables.

How the 2009 'Fresh for Kids' Canteen Campaign works

School students are rewarded with a token sticker each time they buy a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable from their participating school canteen.

When they have collected all four token stickers, they receive a Fresh for Kids finger projector. There are six coloured projectors to represent each of the Fresh for Kids Fruit and Veg Gang members.

They are then in the running to win one of five larger prizes donated by The Walt Disney Company., that will be drawn on Tuesday, 15 September 2009.

The Fruit and Veg Gang

'Fresh for Kids' Fruit and Vegetable Gang members include: Megabite Apple; Oscar Orange; Summa Strawberry; Tamara Tomato; Captain Capsicum; and Bazza Banana. These characters appear on the 'Fresh for Kids' multi award winning website (www.freshforkids.com.au).

Sydney Markets Limited

Sydney Markets Limited owns and operates Australia's largest market and is recognised as a world leader in fresh produce and community market management.

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