Study Showcases Benefits of Canned Foods

WASHINGTON (PRNewswire) — The vast majority of Americans need to eat more fruits and vegetables. In fact, only 33 percent and 27 percent of Americans meet government recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake, respectively.[1] And finding foods that are nutritious, affordable and safe can be difficult. But a recently published Michigan State University (MSU) study shows that canned foods offer all that, and more, helping people increase their fruit and vegetable intake, regardless of what area of the country they live, what time of year it is or how much money they make.

The MSU study analyzed more than 40 scientific journal studies and nutrition data, comparing canned fruits and vegetables to fresh and frozen, based on nutrition and cost. The key benefits of canned foods included:

Canned fruits and vegetables are on par nutritionally with fresh and frozen counterparts, and in some cases even better. Canned tomatoes, for example, have more lycopene, which is associated with reducing cancer risk, and more B vitamins than fresh tomatoes. Canning also helps make fiber in certain vegetables, like beans, more soluble, and therefore more useful to the human body.

Families can stretch their grocery budgets by choosing canned produce. Canned vegetables are often more affordable than fresh and frozen varieties, helping save up to half the cost of frozen and 20 percent of the cost of fresh, with virtually no sacrifices in nutritional quality. A separate study found that 15 percent to 20 percent of fresh fruits and vegetables purchased each year are wasted, making canned foods a smart choice for both the pocketbook and the environment. [2]

Canned fruits and vegetables provide great tasting, safe options to help Americans meet their dietary needs. The high-heat canning process is one of the safest for protecting food because it prevents the growth of microorganisms that cause foodborne illnesses. This is an important safety benefit considering that at least 128,000 Americans are hospitalized every year with foodborne illnesses.[3]

"Canned fruits and vegetables provide high quality nutrition to Americans regardless of income level and geography," said Steven Miller, PhD, lead researcher and assistant professor at MSU's Center for Economic Analysis. "By increasing accessibility to key nutrients many Americans need, canned foods are a year-round solution to help families prepare healthier, balanced meals."

Additional study highlights can be found at http://www.cancentral.com/food-cans/msu-canned-food-study [1].

About the Study
The Michigan State University (MSU) study, commissioned by the Can Manufacturers Institute, examined the nutrition delivered in 8 common vegetables

and 10 common fruits across multiple packaging options (fresh, frozen, and canned) relative to average costs. A method of scoring based on nutrient intake recommendations was used to calculate the nutrients per calorie, and average costs were obtained from the US Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. Nutrient scores for the vegetables were similar across the 3 packaging options, whereas canned vegetables generally had a lower cost per edible cup compared with frozen and fresh. Nutrient scores were variable for the fruits across the 3 packaging options, and canned fruits were either lower or comparably priced per edible cup. The evidence from this study suggests that fruits and vegetables packaged as frozen or canned are cost-effective and nutritious options for meeting daily vegetable and fruit recommendations in the context of a healthy diet.

About Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI)
CMI is the national trade association of the metal can manufacturing industry and its suppliers in the United States. The can industry accounts for the annual domestic production of approximately 124 billion food, beverage and other metal cans; which employs more than 28,000 people with plants in 33 states, Puerto Rico and American Samoa; and generates about $17.8 billion in direct economic activity. Our members are committed to providing safe, nutritious and refreshing canned food and beverages to consumers. For more information, visit www.cancentral.com *[2].*

References

1. *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009. Washington, DC. Available at* http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/StateIndicatorReport2009.pdf *[3].*
2. *Buzby, et al. The Value of Retail – and Consumer – Level Fruit and Vegetable Losses in the United States. Journal of Consumer Affairs, Fall 2011: 492-515.*
3. *CDC Estimates of Foodborne Illness in the United States.* http://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/2011-foodborne-estimates.html *[4]. Last updated: October 10, 2012. Accessed January 2, 2013.*

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