

School Nutrition

MAY 2010

Solutions & Strategies
for K-12 Foodservice

JAC 2010 HIGHLIGHTS • "STEALTH" NUTRITION • FOOD & FLAVOR TRENDS

FOOD Focus

A Y-Pulse survey reveals that "many youngsters clamor for more fruits and vegetables to be served in their school cafeterias." Respondents asked for fresh fruit over canned, and they were interested in fresh fruit smoothies and fruit toppings for breakfast foods.

Fruit with Flair

A number of exotic fruits are gaining attention in the food industry, as well. Dr. Esmail Fallahi, a professor in the University of Idaho's pomology research program, has been conducting research on alternative fruits for many years. He's worked with growers in Idaho to produce persimmons, which many thought couldn't be grown in the state's climate. In addition, Fallahi has worked with growers on producing the jujube and quince.

Quince produces an excellent syrup with the potential to be a flavor that kids will love. "The syrup is a deep maroon color and the flavor is really top of the line," explains Fallahi. A Y-Pulse survey reveals that "many youngsters clamor for more fruits and vegetables to be served in

their school cafeterias." Respondents asked for fresh fruit over canned, and they were interested in fresh fruit smoothies and fruit toppings for breakfast foods. (The survey also found that kids wanted pancakes and waffles for breakfast, and quince syrup could be incorporated nicely with that wish.)

According to Fallahi, hundreds of people—including kids—show up to tasting events coordinated by his program to promote new fruit varieties. "More of the younger generation are interested in these fruits, for the nutrition and for the taste," he asserts, adding, "When the consumer shows interest, the farmers jump to produce that variety."