ABSTRACT: Food4U and Mangia Bene Cresci Meglio: 2010 editions on the way; Sleep might help to prevent obesity in children; Presentation of the New Pyramid of the Modern Mediterranean Diet

Food4U and Mangia Bene Cresci Meglio (eat better, grow better): 2010 editions on the way

“I am convinced that we should continue to inform and provide communication to the citizens, especially the young, so that consumer may become aware of the importance of a healthy diet”. With these words the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Luca Zaia commented the start of the two school-targeted campaigns, FOOD 4U and Mangia Bene Cresci Meglio, for 2010.

"Informed eating – said the Minister – is first and foremost a cultural issue, that should be addressed at domestic and international level. For this reason FOOD 4U represents an important opportunity to train increasingly informed and free-choosing consumers. I hope the Ministry will be able to rely on the proactive cooperation of as many publishers as possible for the best dissemination of advertising for the FOOD 4U and Mangia Bene Cresci Meglio campaigns”.

The Mangia Bene Cresci Meglio campaign, now at its fifth consecutive edition, is addressed to all secondary schools in Italy. The students who join will be asked to develop a commercial with the help of their teachers. The classes who will produce the best 10 commercials will win a free stay, during May 2010, in a location in Italy where they will present their output and participate in educational tours and events on good and healthy eating.

The FOOD 4U campaign will be at its sixth edition in 2010. Targeted to students aged 14 to 18 in 15 European countries plus Italy, FOOD 4U has obtained huge success, also thanks to being spread via the most important social networks. Participating students are asked to make commercials and, apart from submitting them for awards, load them on the web (Youtube in particular), so as to contribute to spreading the topic of informed eating. The students and teachers who will produce the best commercials will be the protagonists of the FOOD 4U 2010 Video Festival that will take place in Italy in September. The first calls to join the 2010 edition are already available on-line on the www.food-4u.it, www.mangiabenevrescimeglio.it and www.politicheagricole.gov.it websites. The calls, in hardcopy and online, will soon be distributed to over 30,000 schools across Europe.
**Sleep might help to prevent obesity in children**

Sleep against child obesity. Staying in bed a little longer during weekends to recover from the stress of the past school week might help children to avoid overweight risks. This is the suggestion from a research carried out by the Chinese University in Hong Kong, supervised by Dr. Yun Kwok Wing and published in "Paediatrics" magazine.

According to research data, there is a significant difference in the hours slept by schoolchildren during school days and those slept during weekends or holidays. Too few hours of rest are associated with a higher BMI (Body Mass Index), however, their recovery on Saturdays and Sundays or during holidays may help to balance overweight. On the basis of these findings, the experts believe that further research on this aspect is required, especially in order to identify the risks and benefits deriving from an increase in sleeping hours for children and teen-agers.

The survey involved 5,159 children aged between 5 and 15 in the course of one year. Information were gathered about hours of sleep, lifestyle, height and weight. In particular, the experts noted that the loss of sleeping hours in children and teen-agers might also be associated with other disorders such as lack of attention, difficulty to concentrate, mood swings, behavioural problems.

**Presentation of the New Pyramid of the Modern Mediterranean Diet**

The Mediterranean diet has changed its looks. The New Pyramid of the Modern Mediterranean Diet was presented at the 3rd International Convention of CIISCAM (international inter-university research centre on Mediterranean nutrition cultures), in cooperation with INRAN (national research institute on food and nutrition), held in Parma, Italy, on November 3 last. “For the first time the base of the pyramid is composed of cereals, fruit and vegetables, i.e. food of vegetal origin” - was the satisfied remark by Prof. Carlo Cannella, President of INRAN. In fact, the main meals at the basis include fruit, vegetables, pasta, rice, couscous and other cereals.

“And this is the first time – Cannella continued - that the MD pyramid is structured with main meal components at its base and, in the upper layers, the other components required to complete the meal, distributed according to the recommended frequency of assumption, i.e. daily or weekly”.

The New Pyramid of the Modern Mediterranean Diet is addressed to all the people between 18 and 65 and takes into account the developments of our times and communities, mentioning the essential importance of physical exercise, of conviviality and of the habit to drink water. There is also a recommendation to prefer the consumption of local products of the season.
Apart from the pyramid, there many important suggestions to supplement the diet: avoid excessively generous servings, drink wine moderately respecting social and religious traditions, do physical exercise, prefer seasonal and local products. And, above all, drink water.

“It is a Mediterranean diet revisited in the light of modernity and well-being, yet paying attention to different cultural and religious traditions and different national identities. The new pyramid – Prof. Cannella concluded - is really an adjustable macro-structure that can meet the current requirements of the Mediterranean populations, respecting all the local variants of the Mediterranean diet”.