



# STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

JAMES E. RISCH  
Governor  
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Director / Secretary

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **GOVERNOR RISCH ANNOUNCES RECORD USE OF IDAHO PRODUCTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

(BOISE) Governor Jim Risch announced today that the use of Idaho-grown foods in public schools has reached a record high. What began as a pilot project in two schools in 2004 has grown to encompass all 28 elementary schools in the Meridian School District and another 25 Idaho schools that participate in the USDA-funded Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program. And this year, the Meridian School District featured Idaho fruits on the menu of 28 elementary schools a total of 14 days – up from only 7 days last year.

The Governor and Mrs. Risch, along with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Idaho Preferred program, marked the accomplishment with a "Healthy Harvest" celebration at Silver Sage Elementary School in Boise. The lunch menu included Idaho baked potatoes, fresh local apples, peaches and pears. Milk produced by Idaho dairymen was also on the menu.

"We can't go wrong when we put Idaho products on the menu in our schools," Risch said. "The program benefits not only Idaho's agriculture industry, but also our children, who are eating the freshest and best products around."

Idaho Preferred is a product identification campaign that promotes the quality, diversity and availability of food and agricultural products grown, raised and processed in Idaho.

This fall, More than 15,000 elementary students in the Meridian District were treated to Idaho peaches, grapes, melons, pears and apples on their lunch trays. In August, students in year-around schools also enjoyed Idaho berries, apricots and nectarines. In addition to fruits, the district added baked Idaho potatoes to their school lunch menu – not just in September, but year-around. And, Idaho schools continue to be huge consumers of Idaho dairy products. In the Meridian district alone, more than 1,000 gallons of milk per day are enjoyed by students during school breakfast and lunch programs. Statewide it is estimated that nearly 500,000 gallons of milk are consumed in schools each month.

A separate and unique component of the Idaho Preferred Healthy Harvest program is a new fundraiser offered to schools and youth organizations. The fundraiser includes healthy local products such as apples, potatoes, dried herbs, soup mix, huckleberry products, pickled vegetables, honey and beef jerky. For more information about the Idaho Preferred® program, go to [www.idahopreferred.com](http://www.idahopreferred.com)

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