



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

Corporate Communication

1300 E Avenue • Fort Lee, VA 23801-1800

Tel: (804) 734-8000, Ext. 8-6105 DSN: 687-8000, Ext. 8-6105

FAX: (804) 734-8248 DSN: 687-8248

[www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com)

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**Contact:** Kevin L. Robinson, DeCA public affairs specialist  
**Tel.:** (804) 734-8000, Ext. 4-8773  
**E-mail:** [kevin.robinson@deca.mil](mailto:kevin.robinson@deca.mil)

## DeCA named 'Role Model' in promoting fruits, vegetables

*By DeCA Office of Corporate Communication*

**NOTE:** To see photographs of commissaries promoting produce, visit <http://www.flickr.com/photos/commissary/sets/72157626302339317/>.

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Promoting the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables to its customers has placed the Defense Commissary Agency in select company. DeCA was one of seven retailers to earn top recognition as a “Role Model” by the Produce for Better Health Foundation.

DeCA joined Ahold USA Inc., Food Lion Stores Inc., The Kroger Company, Safeway Inc., Schnuck Markets Inc. and SuperValu/W. Newell & Company as retailers achieving role model status for 2010. This level of recognition goes to stores that demonstrate commitment to increasing their customers’ health awareness of the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.

Karen Hawkins, the DeCA dietitian, accepted the award for the agency during the foundation’s Role Model/Champion Recognition Luncheon April 1 in Monterey, Calif.

“DeCA has been actively promoting health, wellness and nutrition education and awareness through in-store events and online,” said DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu. “This recognition validates our hard work to exceed our customers’ expectations in produce quality, variety, presentation and personal service.”

To achieve Champion status, a retailer must demonstrate its dedication to promoting the health of their customers by doing the following:

- promoting messages that encourage customers to consume more fruits and vegetables;

- placing the “Fruits & Veggies-More Matters” logo on in-store signage; and
- linking to the “Fruits & Veggies-More Matters” website.

Retailers who reach Role Model status must fulfill all the requirements of a Champion, but also create other programs that support Fruits & Veggies-More Matters by promoting healthy eating, according to the foundation. The seven retailers that achieved Champion status for 2010 were The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Inc., Associated Wholesale Grocers Inc., Big Y Foods Inc., Meijer Inc., Redner’s Markets Inc., Save Mart Supermarkets and Weis Markets Inc.

DeCA promotes fruits and vegetables year round, including holding its own annual produce merchandising competition with the winning commissaries excelling in quality and team performance in areas such as creative displays, customer education events and increased produce sales.

“Whether customers are stocking up for family meals, school lunches or healthy snacks, or just making a quick stop for items at the peak of freshness, produce remains central to most shopping trips,” said Chris Burns, DeCA’s sales director.

Customers usually give the produce sold in military commissaries high marks. Results of DeCA’s 2010 Commissary Customer Service Survey, completed by more than 20,000 customers, rated produce as 4.62 on a 5-point scale – its highest mark in the agency’s history.

Commissary shoppers save an average of 31.7 percent on their overall grocery bills, compared to commercial prices. In addition, fresh produce frequently takes center stage at case lot sales or special “farmers market” events, which can deliver savings of 50 percent or more.

“Eating at least 2 1/2 cups of vegetables and fruits per day has been shown to reduce risk of heart disease, stroke and certain types of cancer,” Hawkins said. “And, if you are trying to lose or maintain weight, eating fruits and vegetables instead of higher-calorie foods is helpful.”

The Produce for Better Health Foundation is a nonprofit organization in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control behind the Fruits & Veggies-More Matters national public health initiative.

For more information, visit <http://www.PBHFoundation.org> and <http://www.FruitsandVeggiesMoreMatters.org>.

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**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices –*

*savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*