



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



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**Illinois Soybean Association brings Nationally Acclaimed Nutrition Education Program to Illinois Schools**  
*FOODPLAY: Coming to an Illinois school near you!*

Performance Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ School Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
School/Venue: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) is making a difference in the health and wellness of the children in their community! ISA has partnered with the Illinois Farm Bureau and FoodPlay Productions to bring FOODPLAY, a national award-winning theater show that inspires and empowers children to make healthy choices, to Illinois schools. This year the initiative welcomes a new partner, the Bloomington-Normal YMCA, which will host the Celebrating Soy! - FOODPLAY community event as part of the national YMCA's Healthy Kids Day!



FOODPLAY will bring its cast of colorful performers, amazing feats of juggling, motivating messages, music, magic, and audience participation to celebrate National Soyfoods Month to 30 Illinois schools throughout April 2013. The tour will culminate on April 27 at the Bloomington-Normal YMCA's Healthy Kids Day with the Celebrating Soy! FOODPLAY performance serving as one of the main attractions!

Healthy Kids Day is a national YMCA initiative to improve health and well-being of kids, the YMCA challenges families to *Take on Summer* by addressing critical gaps in kids' health and education.

Illinois soybean farmers, with their soybean checkoff, are bringing the FOODPLAY program to help celebrate National Soyfoods Month. In response to the nation's alarming childhood obesity epidemic and the need for accessible nutrition education, the Celebrating Soy!—FOODPLAY tour will reach up to 48,000 children and their family members. The FOODPLAY program, which follows USDA Guidelines and has been updated with an interactive MyPlate scene, makes nutrition come alive for students, families and communities.

"April is 'National Soyfoods Month' and our partnership with FOODPLAY is helping get a great message out to thousands of students throughout Illinois," said Bill Wykes, chairman of the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) and soybean grower from Yorkville, IL. "FOODPLAY is effective in reaching children with important nutrition information, including the importance of healthy proteins like the ones found in the soybeans growing throughout Illinois."

FOODPLAY makes good eating great fun, but its messages are serious. In the last 25 years, childhood obesity rates have doubled among elementary school children and tripled among teenagers. One in three children is overweight, and less than two percent of the nation's youth are meeting their daily nutritional requirements. Kids on average are drinking more than 600 cans of soda and consuming more than 150 pounds of sugars a year, missing out on recommended levels of fruits, vegetables and whole grains needed for optimal health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over one-third of the nation's youth will develop diabetes if current eating and exercise habits don't improve.

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During the fun-filled performance, children follow the antics of Janey the Juggler, who dreams of becoming a juggling star but keeps dropping the balls. The problem? — her unhealthy diet! With the help of the “Coach” and the children in the audience, Janey learns how to juggle the foods she eats to wind up with a balanced diet.

As part of the Celebrating Soy!–FOODPLAY tour, FOODPLAY’s live theater assembly will be presented to children (grades K-5), and schools will be given a comprehensive resource kit to keep the nutrition and health messages alive at home and in school all year long. Follow-up materials are provided for teachers, students, parents, school food service, and health staff to help everyone work together to create healthy schools and healthy communities. According to USDA-sponsored evaluations, FOODPLAY programs produce dramatic improvements in students’ eating and exercise habits and trigger community-wide interest in building healthy environments.

**The Illinois Soybean Association (ISA)** represents more than 45,000 soybean farmers in Illinois through the state soybean checkoff and membership efforts. The checkoff funds market development, soybean production and profitability research, promotion, issues management and analysis, communications and education. Membership and advocacy efforts support Illinois soybean farmer interests in local areas, Springfield and Washington, D.C. ISA programs are designed to ensure Illinois soy is the highest quality, most dependable, sustainable and competitive in the global marketplace. **For more information, visit the website [www.ilsoy.org](http://www.ilsoy.org).**

Founded in 1982 by Emmy Award-winning nutritionist Barbara Storper, MS, RD, a leader in the field of children’s nutrition, FoodPlay Productions has spread its message of good health to over four million schoolchildren across the country. According to US Department of Agriculture-sponsored evaluations, FoodPlay has been shown to dramatically improve children’s eating and exercise habits. With its traveling theater shows and media campaigns, FoodPlay Productions has been using the power of live theater to promote healthy eating and exercise habits to the nation’s youth for over 25 years. **For fun food tips, activities, and free nutrition handouts, visit [www.foodplay.com](http://www.foodplay.com)**

**Note: High-resolution images and digital press releases are downloadable from:**  
**[www.foodplay.com/news/press.html](http://www.foodplay.com/news/press.html)**

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